



Study Guide: Exodus – Chapter 35

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Exodus Chapter 35 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Exodus Chapter 35 marks a pivotal moment in the narrative of Israel's journey from slavery to nationhood. This chapter transitions from the giving of the law to the practical instructions for building the Tabernacle, emphasizing obedience and communal participation. Readers should watch for the interplay between divine command and human response, especially how the Sabbath is reaffirmed and how the people willingly contribute to the sacred work. The chapter sets the tone for the detailed craftsmanship that follows and highlights the importance of worship as a collective act.

Context

Immediately preceding Exodus 35, God has given Moses detailed instructions regarding the Tabernacle, its furnishings, and the priestly garments. This chapter serves as the opening of the implementation phase, where the community is called to action. The setting is the wilderness encampment at Mount Sinai, shortly after the covenant has been established. Moses is the key mediator between God and Israel, delivering God's commands and organizing the people. The Sabbath command is reiterated here, underscoring its covenantal significance as a sign of holiness and rest amidst the labor of constructing the sanctuary.

Outline

The chapter begins with a reminder of the Sabbath command, emphasizing rest and holiness. It then moves into a call for the people to bring offerings voluntarily for the Tabernacle's construction. Following this, Moses summons the skilled artisans and craftsmen, highlighting the Spirit's empowerment for their work. The chapter concludes with a description of the people's enthusiastic response, bringing abundant materials and talents to fulfill God's instructions. This progression from command to contribution to skilled labor sets the framework for the sacred project.



Verse-by-Verse Study

Verses 1-3: The chapter opens with Moses gathering the entire Israelite community and reiterating the command to observe the Sabbath. This rest is not merely cessation from work but a holy convocation, a sacred pause that honors God's covenant and creative order.

Verses 4-9: Moses instructs the people to bring offerings of materials such as gold, silver, bronze, fine linens, and animal skins. The offerings are to be given willingly, reflecting a heart of devotion rather than obligation. This voluntary giving is foundational for the communal nature of worship and service.

Verses 10-19: Moses calls upon the skilled artisans, including Bezalel and Oholiab, who have been filled with the Spirit of God, wisdom, understanding, and knowledge in craftsmanship. Their divine endowment equips them to oversee the construction and artistic details of the Tabernacle, underscoring that sacred work requires both skill and spiritual empowerment.

Verses 20-29: The people respond with overwhelming generosity, bringing more than enough materials. Men and women alike contribute, some offering precious metals, others fine fabrics and skins. The chapter closes with the people's willingness and joy in participating, demonstrating unity and dedication to God's purposes.

Key Themes

One key theme is the sanctity of the Sabbath as a covenantal sign that frames the people's work and rest. Another theme is voluntary generosity, highlighting that worship involves the willing giving of resources and talents. The empowerment of artisans by the Spirit of God reveals that sacred service combines divine gifting with human skill. Lastly, the communal nature of worship is emphasized, showing that building God's dwelling place is a collective effort reflecting Israel's identity as a holy nation.

Cross-References

The Sabbath command here echoes Exodus 20:8-11, reinforcing its foundational role in Israel's covenant life. The call for offerings parallels the instructions in Exodus 25:1-9, where God first commands the collection of materials for the Tabernacle. The empowerment of Bezalel and Oholiab is further illuminated by Exodus 31:1-11, which



details their divine gifting. The communal response recalls the generosity seen in 2 Corinthians 9:7, where giving is to be cheerful and voluntary, connecting Old Testament worship with New Testament principles.

Application

Modern disciples can learn from Exodus 35 the importance of honoring God's rhythms of work and rest, recognizing the Sabbath as a time for spiritual renewal. The chapter challenges believers to contribute their resources and talents willingly to the work of the church, understanding that sacred service is both a privilege and a communal responsibility. It also encourages reliance on the Spirit's empowerment for ministry, affirming that God equips His people for their unique roles. Finally, the joyful participation of the Israelites invites contemporary Christians to embrace unity and generosity in building God's kingdom.

Summary

Exodus 35 serves as the foundational chapter for the Tabernacle's construction, blending divine command with human response. It reiterates the Sabbath as a holy institution, calls for voluntary offerings, and highlights the Spirit's empowerment of skilled workers. The chapter culminates in the people's enthusiastic participation, demonstrating that worship is a communal act involving rest, giving, and gifted service. This passage sets the stage for the detailed work that follows and underscores the covenantal relationship between God and His people expressed through obedience and devotion.