

## Bezalel: Co-Creating with God

### Opening Questions

- When have you felt the Spirit empowering you to do something important?
- What do you think of the idea that art is a spiritual gift?

### Read Exodus 31:1-11

### Information about Bezalel

- Name Meaning: "In the shadow of God."
- Jewish Tradition:
- Bezalel received direct revelation from God, mirroring Moses' instructions on Mount Sinai.
- He was given insight into the "ten utterances" used in creation.
- Bezalel's Role in God's Ongoing Creative Work:
- He participates in God's continuing creative activity by constructing the Tabernacle.

### Significant Historical Context

- The Golden Calf incident preceded the Tabernacle's construction.
- God's command to Bezalel provided a response to the people's need for tangible certainty.
- The Tabernacle's objects served as a buffer against idolatry, directing focus to God.
- Discussion Point
  - Can we become too dependent on physical objects for faith certainty?

- What would happen if we removed key physical objects from our worship?

## **The Spirit of God**

- What we learn about the Spirit of God
  - Empowers artistic and practical skills.
  - Permeates the physical world, enabling human creativity.
  - Widening our understanding of spiritual gifts:
  - Elevates art as a spiritual gift.
  - "Wisdom, understanding, and knowledge" are emphasized, aligning with wisdom literature.
  - Hiram, craftsman of Solomon's temple, was filled with those same gifts. (1 Kings 7:13-14)
  - Isaiah 11:2 shows the spirit of the lord as the spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and fear of the lord.
  - Job 33:4, "The Spirit of God is in every breath".
  - Discussion Point:
    - How does this understanding transform our view of everyday work and talents?

## **Understanding the Writing of the Biblical Text**

- The Spirit empowers various skills, including those of artisans, officials, prophets, and writers.
- Tim's Sermon takeaway: The inspiration of the text extends to the rhetorical devices, not just the words themselves.

## **Looking at Art**

- Art in the Tabernacle:

- Intended to lead people into worship.
- Encouraging Artistry and Creativity in Worship
  - [How can we foster artistic expression in our worship services?](#)
- The Nature of Art
  - Stimulates contemplation and reflection beyond the object itself.
- Discussion points
  - [How does art \(including performing arts\) point to a greater spiritual reality?](#)
  - [How can we extend this understanding to other creative skills?](#)
- Art and the New Creation
  - The Tabernacle foreshadows the New Creation.
  - As image-bearers, we participate in God's ongoing creative work.
  - [How does art point to the New Creation?](#)

Sources for Further Reading

<https://matts bibleblog.wordpress.com/2012/02/17/the-importance-of-art-the-story-of-bezalel-exodus-311-10/>

<https://theisraelbible.com/the-artist-behind-the-construction-of-the-tabernacle/>

There are also two great journal articles. If you'd like to read them, please reach out to Eric and he'll send you a copy ([erobinson@firstpressarasota.org](mailto:erobinson@firstpressarasota.org))