

Exodus 39:32-43

Verses 32 – 43 contain an inventory of the materials used to make the tabernacle and its furnishings. It signaled the completion of the tabernacle and listed the materials involved in its construction. Included in this section is a recognition of the people's obedience by following the LORD's instructions given to Moses. As a result, Moses blessed them.

Verse 32 is a summary statement of all that had occurred now that *all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was completed*. This is similar to the statement in [Genesis 2:1](#) after God had finished creating the earth: "And so the heavens and the earth were completed." It is interesting that the Bible covers the creation of the world in a couple of chapters, but spends sixteen chapters on the design and construction of the tabernacle and related items. This underscores its importance, and what it can teach us. As the book of Hebrews states, it is a copy of true things in heaven ([Hebrews 9:23-24](#)).

Once again, it was pointed out that *the sons of Israel did according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses; so they did*. The people, unlike their grievous failure with the golden calf in chapter 32, obeyed the LORD's instructions completely.

So, *they brought the tabernacle to Moses* so it could be inspected by him:

First came *the tent and all its furnishings*.

- *Its clasps* ([Exodus 26:6, 11, 33; 36:13, 18](#))
- *Its boards* ([Exodus 26:15 – 29; 36:20 – 34](#))
- *Its bars* ([Exodus 26:26 – 29; 36:31 – 34](#))
- *Its pillars* ([Exodus 26:37, 27:10; 36:36, 38](#))
- *Its sockets* ([Exodus 26:19, 21, 25; 36:24, 26, 40](#))
- *The covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red* ([Exodus 26:14; 36:19](#))
- *The outer covering for the tent of porpoise skins* ([Exodus 26:14; 36:19](#))
- *The screening veil to separate the Holy of Holies* ([Exodus 26:31; 36:35](#))

Next were the items in the Holy of Holies:

- *The ark of the testimony and its poles* ([Exodus 25:10; 37:1](#))
- *The mercy seat on the "lid" of the ark, where God stated He would meet and speak with Moses* ([Exodus 25:22; 35:12; 37:6](#))

Then, the items in the main part of the tent, the Holy Place were inspected:

- *The table* where the bread was displayed, and *all its utensils* ([Exodus 25:23; 37:10](#))
- *The bread of the Presence*, the bread which was to be displayed daily, likely symbolizing Jesus as the bread of life ([Exodus 25:23; 37:10; 1 Samuel 21:6; John 6:48](#))
- *The pure gold lampstand with its arrangement of lamps and all its utensils*. The *lampstand* provided light at all times, likely symbolizing Jesus as the light of the world ([John 9:5](#)).
- *The olive oil for the light* ([Exodus 25:6; 35:28](#)). The *oil* would be burned in the lampstand.
- *The gold altar* on which sacrifices were offered ([Exodus 27:1; 37:25](#)).
- *The anointing oil and the fragrant incense* ([Exodus 30:25; 37:29](#))
- *The veil for the doorway of the tent* ([Exodus 25:23; 37:10](#))

The courtyard and its contents were next (v. 39):

- *The bronze altar and its bronze grating and its poles and all its utensils* ([Exodus 25:23; 38:20](#))
- *The laver* (wash basin) *and its stand* ([Exodus 30:18; 38:8](#))

The curtains (*hangings*) were then brought to Moses:

- *The hangings for the court and its pillars and its sockets* that formed a portable “fence” surrounding the tabernacle ([Exodus 27:9; 38:9](#))
- *The screen for the gate* to mark the entrance *of the court* ([Exodus 30:18; 38:8ff](#))
- *Its cords and its pegs* to hang and secure the curtains, *and all the equipment for the service of the tabernacle* ([Exodus 35:18; 39:15](#))

All of these items comprised *the tent of meeting* (another name for the tabernacle).

Last in the list were the priestly garments:

- *The woven garments for ministering in the holy place*
- *The holy garments for Aaron the priest*
- *The garments of his sons, to minister as priests*

In a final statement about their faithful service to the LORD, Moses stated that *the sons of Israel did all the work according to all that the Lord had*

commanded Moses. The Israelites had been unfaithful in terms of their moral lives in chapter 32, but they showed that they were very devoted to God by building the tabernacle so that He would be present with them.

Finally, after all construction had been completed, *Moses examined all the work and behold, they had done it; just as the Lord had commanded, this they had done* (v. 43).

In light of all that the people had done, *Moses blessed them*. This was quite different from chapter 32 where Moses angrily confronted them. This is the only place in Exodus where Moses said a blessing. Jewish tradition holds that Moses *blessed them* by saying:

“May it be the will of God that His Shechinah (visible glory) rest upon the work of your hands; ‘and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us’
(Sifra, Shemini, Mechilta d’Miluim 2:15).

This statement is similar to [Psalm 90:17](#), which could reflect oral tradition.

The phrase “just as the Lord had commanded Moses” was repeated in every section of this chapter. One reason for the repetition was to show that the Israelites were completely faithful to following the word of the LORD. Another reason was to show that Moses related the LORD’s commands accurately to the people. Still another reason was to show that the people had moved on from the apostasy in chapters 32 – 34 and strove to be faithful followers of their LORD.

Such a move from apostasy to complete obedience was needed because God’s covenantal blessings of Israel were conditional upon their obedience. If Israel obeyed, they would be blessed by their Suzerain God. Such blessings included military victory, good physical and mental health, prosperity, and abundance of crops and livestock ([Leviticus 26:1–13](#); [Deuteronomy 28:1–14](#)). Many of the blessings would be a natural consequence of a people living in harmony with one another because they are self-governing and care for one another, according to God’s commands. But God promised to add divine blessings to boot.

God chose Israel as His own people irrespective of their obedience. God would be their inheritance no matter what ([Deuteronomy 7:8](#); [Romans 11:25-30](#)). But to gain the blessings, they had to live according to the way God set forth. This is the same pattern as in the New Testament. All who believe are

placed into God's family as His child based solely on Jesus ([John 3:14-16](#)). However, in order to experience the blessings of the life placed within us requires walking in faith, by the Spirit ([Galatians 5:13-17](#)).

Conversely, if the Israelites disobeyed their Ruler God, they would be cursed. The curses the Suzerain God would bring on Israel include poor crops, diseases of various kind, plagues such as those that hit the Egyptians, military defeat, and famine ([Leviticus 26:14–33](#); [Deuteronomy 28:15–68](#)). Thus, Israel (as God's vassals) needed to obey their Suzerain (Ruler) God wholeheartedly to receive all His blessings. This truth will be emphasized throughout the rest of the Pentateuch, especially in the book of Deuteronomy.

In like manner, if New Testament believers choose to walk in the flesh, to love the things of this world, they gain the rewards of the world rather than the rewards of God. This includes the fruit of the flesh rather than the fruit of the Spirit ([Galatians 5:19-23](#)) as well as reaping what we sow ([Galatians 6:7-9](#)). Paul emphasizes that anyone who chooses to sin will be turned over to their own lusts as judgement ([Romans 1:24](#)). Anyone who persists in lust will be given over to "degrading passions" ([Romans 1:26](#))—we might say "addictions."

Again, anyone who persists will be given over to a "depraved mind" ([Romans 1:28](#)). Someone who can't even think straight. These are natural consequences of sin, "baked in" to how the world operates. God never has and never will forsake Israel, His people ([Romans 11:29](#)). But the actions, the choices of Israel had immense consequences. With freedom comes great responsibility ([Galatians 5:19-23](#)).

The New Testament tells us that the experience and actions of Israel were written for our instruction, so we can learn from them and not make the same mistakes ([1 Corinthians 10:6](#)). God's grace makes us His people through simple faith in Christ, enough faith to look, hoping for healing ([John 3:14-16](#)). But God has granted each person the amazing gift of making choices. The choices we make determine how rewarding our life is. The lessons of Israel are a precious resource that can lead us to make choices that lead to the greatest reward and fulfillment for our lives.

Biblical Text:

³² Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was completed; and the sons of Israel did according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses; so they did. ³³ They brought the tabernacle to

Moses, the tent and all its furnishings: its clasps, its boards, its bars, and its pillars and its sockets; ³⁴ and the covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering of porpoise skins, and the screening veil; ³⁵ the ark of the testimony and its poles and the mercy seat; ³⁶ the table, all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence; ³⁷ the pure gold lampstand, with its arrangement of lamps and all its utensils, and the oil for the light; ³⁸ and the gold altar, and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the veil for the doorway of the tent; ³⁹ the bronze altar and its bronze grating, its poles and all its utensils, the laver and its stand; ⁴⁰ the hangings for the court, its pillars and its sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court, its cords and its pegs and all the equipment for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; ⁴¹ the woven garments for ministering in the holy place and the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests. ⁴² So the sons of Israel did all the work according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses. ⁴³ And Moses examined all the work and behold, they had done it; just as the Lord had commanded, this they had done. So Moses blessed them.