

NIPS put some before the Tent of Meeting, where I will meet with you, it shall be most holy to you. But when you make this incense, you must not make any in the same proportions for yourselves; it shall be held by you sacred to the LORD. Whoever makes any like it, to smell of it, shall be cut off from his kin.

31 The LORD spoke to Moses: See, I have singled out by name Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. I have endowed him with a divine spirit. **RASHI** incense every day on the inner altar in the Tent of Meeting. Where I will meet with you, all the occasions that I set to speak with you, I set them for that place. 37 It shall be held by you sacred to the LORD. You must not make it except for My sake. 38 To smell of it. But you may make it at your expense, for public use.

31:2 I have singled out by name Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. I have endowed him with a divine spirit.

RASHI Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in RASHBAM handfuls of finely ground aromatic incense, and bring this behind the curtain (Lev. 16:12).
37 But when you make this incense. The verb is singular because it refers specifically to Moses. You must not make any. This time the verb is plural; it refers to all the Israelites.

31:2 I have singled out by name Bezalel. To be singled out in this way is a high honor, as when one of King Absalom's concubines "would be summoned by name" (Esher 2:14). I have discussed the story that Bezalel was not even 13 years old when he built the Tabernacle in my comment to 24:14. 3 Skill, ability, and knowledge. He had great skill, and knew all sorts of hidden mysteries. For only one who was extremely skillful was capable of constructing the Holy of Holies, and Bezalel understood mathematics, biology, physics, and metaphysics so far beyond anyone else of his generation, that he understood the mystery of the Tabernacle. [K] This too teaches us that he was not a boy, for when could a boy have learned all this knowledge? Solomon, who tradition says was 12 when he became king, does not prove the contrary. For we are not told how long he reigned, and therefore do not know how he acquired the wisdom to build the Tabernacle. The English does not specify in the text, but the Keri does not make clear whether Bezalel knew this because of his engineering skills, or because he understood the symbolic significance of the Tabernacle's dimensions.

31:2 Sec, I have singled out by name Bezalel. In 35:30, Moses will repeat this remark to the Israelites. In Egypt, the Israelites were so ground down by laboring with bricks and mortar that they learned nothing of how to work with gold, silver, and precious stones—they never even saw such things. It is a miracle that God found anyone among them who knew all the things Bezalel did. For even among those who have the opportunity to study one does not find a man who is expert in all of the different crafts simultaneously. Even the most skilled of the Israelites, spending all day with his hands in clay and mud, would lose the ability to do delicate, beautiful work. But Bezalel not only was expert in all crafts, but had the wisdom to understand the mystery of the Tabernacle and its furnishings, and everything that they symbolized. That is why God told Moses, "See! He wanted him to see what a miracle it was, and to understand that it was God who had 'endowed him' (v. 2) with the ability to make the Tabernacle. For it had always been God's will to make the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and "He who announced the generations from the start" (Isa. 41:4) created Bezalel for His own glory. "before I created you in the womb, I selected you" (Jer. 1:5). Eshed Rabbah has the following midrash: God showed Moses the book of Adam, and told him, "At the very first moment of creation, I prepared one person for every task, as the Torah says, 'I have singled out by name Bezalel.'" This is what I have explained. Our Sages also said, "Bezalel knew the combinations of letters by which heaven and earth were created." For the Tabernacle symbolized the universe, and it was Bezalel who knew and understood this mystery.

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31:2 I have singled out by name Bezalel. I have chosen Bezalel and Oholiab (v. 6); you choose the experts who will help them (Bechor Shor). I think many Israelites must have felt capable of doing the work of the Tabernacle, and there were factions supporting the different candidates. Moses knew that Bezalel was superior, but—since Bezalel was his sister Miriam's grandson—was afraid to appoint him until God instructed him to do so (Abarbanel). The work must be done by someone specifically chosen by God, who will work with the intent to fulfill the purpose of the commandment to make the Tabernacle (Sforno). 37 I have endowed him with a divine spirit. As I have discussed in my book Wars of the Lord, this verse shows us that any wisdom we acquire flows to us from God, may He be exalted, this goes even for practical skills (Crescendes). Knowledge in every kind of craft. Ordinarily one who reaches the highest level of intellect is lacking in practical knowledge; one finds that scholars who isolate

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS 36 Where I will meet with you. For the purpose of the incense was to bring down the divine flow of prophecy onto our master Moses (Abarbanel). 38 Whoever makes any like it... shall be cut off. V. 33 says the same about the sacred anointing oil. "It is not right for someone else to use the king's scepter." The same principle explains the prohibition of wearing a mixture of wool and linen, since this is what the priestly garments were made of (Bechor Shor).

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