

## THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OURSELVES

### A Devotional Meditation from

**Exodus 38:21-40:38; 1 Kings 7:51-8:21; Genesis 1:1-31; John 4:21-24;  
1 Corinthians 3:9-16, 6:18-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Revelation 21:1-3, 22**

Albert J. McCarn

March 5, 2022

What does *good* mean? The Bible opens with a refrain of God creating things, then declaring them good, and finally, when He is finished, declaring everything He made very good. So then, do we know what *good* is?

Our speech is full of “good” things, such as a good child, good game, good meal, good president, or good wife. We apply the word to whatever

seems pleasing to us, which is fine until we encounter someone with a different opinion. What do we say to a person whose dog was terrorized by our good child, or who felt he was cheated at our good game? What about someone who suffered indigestion after our good meal, or who didn't vote for our good president? Maybe we meet someone whose sad experience in marriage left no room for the concept of a good wife – or a good husband.

Good can be subjective, much like beauty is in the eye of the beholder. That is why the ultimate standard of good is the one God established. He explained that to our first ancestors, specifying that they should stick to His definition of good and avoid setting standards of good for themselves. The world is in a mess now because they chose to disregard His advice, and we have all followed their example.

Our only hope rests in Our Creator, Who promised to set things right, and has been about that business for several thousand years. We can rely on Him to produce a good result – meaning an outcome that is pleasant to everyone, that involves the best quality materials, that endures for eternity, and that reproduces the qualities our Creator defines as good.

It has taken a long time, though, and there is no end in sight. Circumstances may get better for a time, but they always get worse again, and there has never been a time when circumstances are pleasant for everyone in every place on earth. It would be nice if God would snap His fingers and makes things right in an instant, but He didn't even do that in the Genesis creation account. That also took time, whether six literal days or a longer period, as some believe. But maybe how long it took for God to make the world isn't as important as the fact that He did it. At some point, the process came to an end, and He declared it very good.

We don't like it when things take a long time. We would rather have instant gratification, but millennia of experience show us that this simply isn't the case. If we want



*Construction of the Tabernacle under direction of Moses. Jan Luyken, 1705, [Rijksmuseum Amsterdam](https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/SK-A-1499).*

something done quickly, then it probably won't be very good. That's something I learned in the Army. Producing anything involves choosing from three qualities, *fast*, *cheap*, and *good*. We can only choose two. If we choose *good* and *fast*, the process won't be *cheap*. If we want something *cheap* and *good*, it can't be *fast*. But if we want it *fast* and *cheap*, it most definitely can't be *good*.

Our God isn't interested in *fast* and *cheap*. He wants the results of His handiwork to be *good*, and He is willing to invest as much time and resources as necessary. This is true for individuals, such as Abraham, who endured a lifetime of preparation to become a suitable father for Isaac, the son of promise. It also happens with nations – especially the covenant nation of Israel, which was centuries in the making, and even now is still in the process of being populated and perfected to be the spotless Bride of Yeshua, Israel's Messiah-King.

We learn something about this long, costly, complicated process in the account of the Tabernacle. The Israelites contributed over 15,000 pounds of precious metals for the project. The gold and silver alone would be worth over four million dollars at current prices. Then there are the jewels, dyed wool, animal skins, linen, and spices. All those materials would be used for the tent, the Ark of the Covenant and Mercy Seat, the Table of Showbread and Menorah, the Incense Altar, the Bronze Altar, the Laver, the Courtyard Wall, the garments of the priests, the incense and anointing oil, and all the implements for the Tabernacle service. Every item was hand-crafted to specific standards. Making them required tools, scaffolding, worktables, forges and furnaces (and fuel for each), and all the food, water, and other necessities for the workers.

Oh yes, the workers. The skilled artisans Bezalel and Oholiab performed much of the work, and supervised thousands of willing men and women who contributed their talents to the project. Even the lowly water bearers and the children who hauled away the scraps performed essential tasks. Considering that all this was done in the barren Sinai desert with no power tools, and that everything had to be made from scratch, it's a wonder the project was completed within the first year after Israel left Egypt. But that's just the construction project. There was also training for Aaron and his sons to be priests, and for the Levites to carry, set up, tear down, and serve in the Tabernacle.

Even then we're not done reckoning the full tally for this project. It really wasn't completed in a year. The preparations began years earlier, when the skilled artisans were apprentices in their fathers' workshops, or little girls learning weaving and sewing from their mothers. The raw materials were long in the making as well, from the wool growing on the backs of sheep, to the flax maturing in the Nile Delta, to the raw ore resting under mountains until dug out by the ton and refined to produce the finest silver and gold.

Then there's the spiritual preparation. The Tabernacle, after all, is a picture of the human heart, where God Himself wants to dwell. He wanted that from the moment He redeemed our Hebrew ancestors from Egyptian bondage, but their hearts weren't ready to receive Him, so He gave them a pattern in the Tabernacle that would illustrate His ultimate intent.

He has never ceased His work preparing a people with new hearts to be not only His dwelling place, but His partners in creation. Our Messiah explained this by saying our Father is spirit, and the true worshippers worship Him in spirit and truth, regardless

whether there is a building specially dedicated for that purpose. Messiah's apostles explained how we are the temples of God's Spirit. Because of that there will be no need of a Temple in the New Jerusalem where His people live with Him in the age to come.

There is, however, another element of becoming temples of the Holy Spirit. Moses directed the work of the Tabernacle according to the pattern God showed him. God provided the materials and poured out His Spirit on the workers to follow that pattern, but the workers were simply that: workers. They were not the Tabernacle, but the instruments God used to build it. In these temples He is building in our hearts, He has again provided the pattern, the materials, and the Spirit of inspiration. He has also called us not only to be His workers, but the actual work. Progress depends on each individual. Our God is always ready to continue, no matter how costly and time-consuming the process, but He can only do as much as the material is capable of handling, and the worker is willing to labor.

How willing are we to be His chosen artisans in the reconstruction of ourselves? It's a heavy question to ponder. The process is neither fast nor cheap, but when our Creator is finished, the result will be very, very good.