

# Heading For Home

## Capital Campaign Series

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As a former baseball player, I must say it is the epitome of excitement to be a runner on second base when a batter drills a ball into a wide gap in the outfield. Your goal is clear: sprint as fast as you can for home to score, and believe me, you don't have time to look over your shoulder and see where the ball is in relation to the outfielder. When you blow by the shortstop, you keep your eyes fixed on the third base coach. If his arm is going around in a circle like a big Dutch windmill, you know that's your sign you have to spring off the dusty third base bag and drive to the plate. Depending on the position of the catcher as he reads the action of the outfielder, sometimes you slide just to make sure you score. When the ball finally arrives as your walking away and dusting yourself off, you know you did your job. Now, it's time to walk to the dugout and high five all the players waiting to greet you. That, my friend, is fun.

Where we are in our church building program, this is the perfect analogy. In September of 2014, we launched our first capital campaign titled **Following God's Lead**. During this four-part series, I shared how we, as leaders, are merely pursuing the enlarging of our current campus to accommodate the spectacular growth God has sent us and to position us for reaching even more people in the future. In September of 2015, we launched our second capital campaign program



titled **Get In The Game**. During this ten-part series subtitled *Drills For Disciples*, we dug our cleats into what biblical discipleship is all about. We closed out this study with an emphasis on how committed disciples of the team owner, Christ, know what it means to give continually, sacrificially, and generously. In October of 2016, we introduced another short giving series called

*Batter Up!* The emphasis in this

study focused on what the Bible has to say about how power hitters on God's team hit when it comes to giving to His kingdom. With a turnover rate on our team each year of around 20%, mainly because of government and military moves, coupled with a replacement of those team players with

new ones who arrive typically in the fall season, each of these timely series strategically shared the



vision of what God is doing here, how we are responding to that divine movement and provision, and what the team can individually and collectively do to position us to fulfill our Lord's Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20).

The giving response so far has been, well, amazing. Our fixed budget for our new worship and educational facilities is \$17.2. The elder council believes we, a debt free church, need to raise \$8.7 million to position our loan in a highly conservative financial fashion. Through your sacrificial and generous giving to these three campaign programs, we currently have received \$6.2 million in offerings, with another \$1.1 million still pledged, which, combined gives us \$7.3 million. As one of your coaches I want to say how thrilled I am to manage a team with this level of commitment to the team owner, Jesus Christ. Way to go.

With another ball season before us, and with still needing an additional \$1.4 million to get us to that conservative \$8.5 million down payment on this worthy building endeavor, this fall we launch our final campaign program rightfully called **Heading For Home**. And this is the perfect title because we are financially running down the baseline, with time to spare, for that final big score in the game God has placed us in.



We are not the only team God has placed in a game of this nature. Back in 1446 B.C., the *Israelite Nationals* (just go with it) just out of big ten game win over the Egyptian (sun) Rays, came to place in the sand at the base of Mount Sinai where the team owner challenged them to **Head To Home** by giving to their first-ever worship center called the tabernacle. Believe me, they were not a wealthy team by any stretch since they had just spent some 400 years in slavery, but with the team owner's vision before them, it is exciting to see how they rounded third base, as it were, and scored the game winning run to advance God's kingdom. As God's new team, in a new place, at a new time, and in a similar setting, I'd dare say there is much to learn from this original winning group of players. To dig into their amazing, instructive, and challenging story, it is helpful to pose a pivotal question:

## How Did The Israelite Nationals Head For Home With Success? (Exodus 35-36)

The footage from day of play is readily available in Exodus chapters 35 through 36. Granted, we don't have enough time to go through all the instructive details in these chapters; however, we do have time to highlight two main points which tell us how this unique team headed to home in style.

### The Coach Led With Clarity (Exodus 35:1-17)

Before we isolate how Coach Moses led his team to victory, it would serve us well to remember game highlights prior to those of chapter 35:

- The Team Owner miraculously saved the players from hard, cruel Egyptian bondage (Exodus 1-15).

- The Team Owner miraculously provided for their dietary needs in the desert as they headed to Mount Sinai (Exodus 16, meat and bread; Exodus 17, water).
- The Team Owner protected them from unruly fans like the Amalekites (Exodus 17).
- The Team Owner gave them the ultimate play book called the Mosaic Law at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20-23).
- The Team Owner signed a contract with his new players called the Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 24).
- The Team Owner challenged them to construct a portable facility to worship him as the only true God (Exodus 25-31).

With God's redemption fresh on their minds, coupled with a never-to-be-forgotten view of God's majesty wrapped up in the lightening filled clouds surrounding Mount Sinai, the people were primed for what God wanted them to do next. And so this is the way it is when God works in your life. His grace and faith-based redemption, provided by your faith relationship with Jesus Christ, wedded to his providential, and sometimes jaw-dropping, provision in your life should leave you asking, "Now what do you want from me, God? I am your player and I am listening."

For Israel, the answer to that question wasn't long in coming. Moses descended from the holy mount with a face pulsating with the glory of God and with two new stone copies of the Law in weathered, calloused hands (Exodus 34:29-35). After he gathered the 2 million players together in a strategic location in the desert plane, he set his team up for victory with clarity in two key areas.

*The Coach Talked About Proper Drive* (Exodus 1-9). To set up this pep talk, Moses, like a skilled coach, first gave his team the big picture from God. Read on and you'll see what I mean:

<sup>1</sup> Then Moses assembled all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and said to them, "These are the things that the LORD has commanded you to do: <sup>2</sup> "For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a holy day, a sabbath of complete rest to the LORD; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. <sup>3</sup> "You shall not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on the sabbath day."

What did he just emphasize? He told them in our vernacular, "Team, never forget that the most important thing you can do your life is to worship the living, true God." He drilled home the importance of this divinely revealed truth by weaving a special day of worship into Israel's work week. It was called Sabbath, a day of rest and reflection on who God is. God, also, revealed to them in chapters 24 through 30 that he wanted them to have a special place to worship Him in a building He called the Tabernacle.

Nothing has changed in the last 3,500 years, either. Nothing in our lives as players on God's team should ever eclipse the worship of God. Whether it is personal and private worship of Him during the week, or a special focus of Him on the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7), He is to be foremost in our minds (Colossians 3:1-4; Hebrews 10:25). Boating is not more important. Fishing is not more important. Biking is not more important. Movies are not more important. Attending a football game is not more important. We are specially designed to worship our Creator, and life is most complete when we live to this end (Ecclesiastes 12:1-14). And, even though we, as believers in Jesus as the Messiah, are now the temple of God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), we, too, are called to

give to create a special place to worship Him and teach people about Him. More on that in a moment, but for now let's focus on how Moses led this spectacular team.

Image this. The first thing Moses did when he came down from the mount with the tablets of the Law was to challenge the people to give to a building program. No, he didn't form a building committee to strategize how to raise the funds. He didn't hire a professional fund raiser. He didn't launch a huge marketing plan. He simply talked to the team about their interior drive or motivation in giving to this once in a lifetime opportunity.

<sup>4</sup> Moses spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded, saying, <sup>5</sup> 'Take from among you a contribution to the LORD; whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as the LORD'S contribution: gold, silver, and bronze, <sup>6</sup> and blue, purple and scarlet material, fine linen, goats' hair, <sup>7</sup> and rams' skins dyed red, and porpoise skins, and acacia wood, <sup>8</sup> and oil for lighting, and spices for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense, <sup>9</sup> and onyx stones and setting stones for the ephod and for the breastpiece.

Take note of the import of verse 5. Moses tells the players how they will raise funds for the new worship structure. It is to come from people who have willing hearts. God didn't want people shamed into giving, nor folks who felt they were pressured or it was part of their spiritual duty. How interesting. How counter-culture. God did not command for Israelites to give. He left the giving to the heart of the individual worshipper. God knew that based on all he had done for them, spiritually and physically speaking, they would be prompted to support his challenge freely. This is why their gifts are called a "freewill offering" in verse 29. They all knew this day was coming because God had said the same thing to them way back in Exodus 25:2.

Interestingly enough, Paul echoes this thinking in his letter to the Corinthians, "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for the God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). As you, like Israel, think about what God would have you to give toward this new worship endeavor, I challenge you to ask yourself, "God, in lieu of the grace you have shown toward me, what can I give with great joy in order to see your local worship center enhanced to touch more lives for eternity?"

Moving from the right interior motivation in giving, Moses then got right to the heart of the matter. What did he do?

*The Coach Talks About Precise Details* (Exodus 35:10-19). Or to put it in more common terms: He shared vision with precision.

<sup>10</sup> 'Let every skillful man among you come, and make all that the LORD has commanded: <sup>11</sup> the tabernacle, its tent and its covering, its hooks and its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; <sup>12</sup> the ark and its poles, the mercy seat, and the curtain of the screen; <sup>13</sup> the table and its poles, and all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence; <sup>14</sup> the lampstand also for the light and its utensils and its lamps and the oil for the light; <sup>15</sup> and the altar of incense and its poles, and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the doorway at the entrance of the tabernacle; <sup>16</sup> the altar of burnt offering with its bronze grating, its poles, and all its utensils, the basin and its stand; <sup>17</sup> the hangings of the court, its pillars and its sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court; <sup>18</sup> the pegs of the tabernacle and

the pegs of the court and their cords; <sup>19</sup> the woven garments for ministering in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests.'

In the opening nine verses he told them why they were called to give, followed by how they were to give, and now he tells them exactly what God wanted them to build to His glory: A unique portable tent structure to worship Him.



During one of my trips to Israel, I took my tour group out into the Wilderness of the Sinai. Believe me, once you see it, you can easily imagine how the Israelites had a hard time following God in this rough region. While driving on a lonely, deserted stretch of desert road, off in the distance we saw a glistening white tent structure, a modern day replica of the Tabernacle. It was, well, breath-taking, humbling, and glorious all at the same time. Against the backdrop of austerity sat a replica of God's

glistening white worship center, a center of hope in a hopeless region. This Tabernacle, this unique dwelling place of God the Almighty, was what Moses told the Israelites God had commanded them to build after the heavenly pattern (Exodus 25:9, 40). Yes, God gave Moses the detailed blueprints, and he, in turn, informed the people exactly what God wanted to see built.

Moses knew, as we know today, that God's people give to vision. We do not have a precise command from God to build our new facilities; however, from God's blessing on this church and our continual prayer for His guidance, wedded to your commitment to where God is leading us, we, too, have cast a detailed vision to meet our current and future needs. What exactly is our Tabernacle? Good question and one that committed players want to know as they consider how to give.



- We have already finished our initial phase of the program by redesigning our basement area to contain multiple large classrooms for children.
- This December-January we will break ground on our 50,000 square foot 1,150 seat worship center. When it is finished, we will automatically have two services, instead of our current five. Knowing our site is limited space wise, part of our philosophy is to strengthen this hub so we can successfully plant video venue churches in our surrounding target areas.
- New adult classrooms will be designed to accommodate the instruction of adults in the Word of God.

- A massive lobby, replete with a bookstore, a coffee bar, a welcome center, and baptismal pool will enhance our fellowship when we meet.
- Our current worship facility will be turned into a massive, and much needed, youth facility to meet their many spiritual needs.
- Our old office space will be renovated and turned into a community care center to enable us to touch the lives of the needy in our community.
- Renovated children's classrooms will be designed to meet their growing needs.
- A commercial kitchen will position us to meet the physical needs of our body when we come together for times of rich fellowship.
- And just as the furniture of the Tabernacle was arranged in a way to point toward the cross of Jesus, the Savior, we will have two massive crosses built into the glass of our foyer to remind us of what the Lord has done for us and who we serve.

This is the vision we have been casting for several years now, and we are nearing the time of its getting off the ground. These are exciting times, are they not? You are being asked to give to a worship facility that will touch lives beyond your lifetime, and in this respects this is similar to the offerings the Israelites made to the Tabernacle. Figuring they built it around 1446 B.C. and that Solomon brought it to Israel when he dedicated the new and glorious stone Temple in 960 B.C., this means it served Israel's worship needs for a whopping 486 years. As you prayerfully consider our vision and ask God how He would lead you to give to support its realization, keep in mind your freewill offering will echo down the halls of time in countless lives. There could be no wiser investment than putting God's kingdom work first (Matthew 6:19-20).

Vision. That's what prompted Israel to round third and head for home. May vision capture each of our hearts as we follow God's amazing lead into the future. What does that leadership involve? It involves our financial involvement. It involves us being so moved by what God has done for us spiritually and church wise, we are individually moved to give like we've never given before. Consider how this truth plays out in the following verses.

### The Players Followed With Rarity (Exodus 35:20-29; 36:3-7)

What do I mean by rarity? I mean to emphasize that this rag-tag group of former slaves, these people who had for years owned nothing but their lives, gave to God's cause in a way we can never forget. Moses recorded what happened when the reality of their newfound freedom that God had orchestrated touched each person. We will read this detailed text and then circle back around and offer some salient observations.

<sup>20</sup> Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel departed from Moses' presence. <sup>21</sup> Everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit moved him came and brought the LORD'S contribution for the work of the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments. <sup>22</sup> Then all whose hearts moved them, both men and women, came and brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and bracelets, all articles of gold; so did every man who presented an offering of gold to the LORD. <sup>23</sup> Every man, who had in his possession blue and purple and scarlet material and fine linen and goats' hair and rams' skins dyed red and porpoise skins,

brought them. <sup>24</sup> Everyone who could make a contribution of silver and bronze brought the LORD'S contribution; and every man who had in his possession acacia wood for any work of the service brought it. <sup>25</sup> All the skilled women spun with their hands, and brought what they had spun, in blue and purple and scarlet material and in fine linen. <sup>26</sup> All the women whose heart stirred with a skill spun the goats' hair. <sup>27</sup> The rulers brought the onyx stones and the stones for setting for the ephod and for the breastpiece; <sup>28</sup> and the spice and the oil for the light and for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense. <sup>29</sup> The Israelites, all the men and women, whose heart moved them to bring material for all the work, which the LORD had commanded through Moses to be done, brought a freewill offering to the LORD.

Before we get into the minutia, I first want to pose a question. Where did they, former slaves, get all of this wealth? For the answer, you need to go back to Exodus 12:35-36. Just after Pharaoh freed Israel from slavery after the ten divine plagues broke his will to continue to enslave them, we read this interesting bit of history:

<sup>35</sup> Now the sons of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, for they had requested from the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; <sup>36</sup> and the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have their request. Thus they plundered the Egyptians (Exodus 12).

Did you get that? All they possessed post-deliverance God providentially gave to them. Don't you know that they, former slaves, would be tempted to keep it when the building program arrived? But they didn't because they knew God had blessed them, and that ultimately their wealth, whatever it was, came directly from His good, loving, caring hand. Again, nothing has changed in the last 3,500 years. Everything you have is from Him. He has blessed each of us to varying degrees, and all that we have is really on loan from Him to see how we will invest it in earthly pursuits with heavenly gain. What a mature perspective.

From our initial reading of this instructive narrative, we can glean several giving principles from team Israel.

- Everyone gave toward the dream of building God's worship tabernacle. Go down through the verses and underscore each time the word "every" or "all" appears (Exodus 35:21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29). Such excitement swept through the camp that no one wanted to miss out on the opportunity to show their gratitude and obedience to God. Men gave. Women gave. Young people gave. Singles gave. Divorced people gave. Widows and widowers gave. People were not sitting in their tents thinking, "Well, look at all of these givers. They certainly don't need me." No one thought, "Now, there go some heavy hitters, some real deep pocket folks who will get this project off the ground, so I don't think I'm needed." Once the vision was cast, the team collectively rose to the occasion. We have had a large part of our church step up the proverbial plate to give toward the endeavor God has placed before us, but I can't say it's one hundred percent of our people. But I am praying to that end as your coach.

- Everyone gave based on how God moved on their heart. It says this much in verse 21 (two times), 22, and 29. The Spirit of God recorded this to detail the proper motivation from giving comes from the heart in light of God’s work of grace in your life. Could we safely say that the more you understand the grace of God, the more you will be moved to give magnanimously to His cause, be what it may? I think so. Is God moving on your heart right now? Is He speaking to you? What is He telling you and what will you do about it?
- Everyone gave sacrificially things of great worth to accomplish the goal. Let’s work our way down through the list. God provided it for our instruction, not so you can read quickly over it when you’re reading through the Bible in a year:
  - Some people gave gold jewelry (v. 22).
    - Brooches
    - Earrings
    - Signet rings
    - Bracelets
    - Amazing. They, who probably had never seen nor owned gold, gave their gold to God’s cause because they loved Him. This is tantamount to being given a \$2,300 Tiffany’s gold chain bracelet, and then turning around and giving it to the building of a worship center.
  - Some people gave blue, purple, scarlet material and fine linen (v. 23). We take these items for granted today because we can walk into any Joann Fabrics and walk out with them. They couldn’t do that. Colored cloth was priceless. Philip Ryken and R. Kent Hughes teach us about why this type of cloth was costly when they write, “The first stuff,’ writes Umberto Cassuto, ‘is ... wool dyed the colour of ... a dye extracted from a species of shell-fish found in abundance in the sea, by the coasts of the Mediterranean, and especially by the shores of Phoenicia and the Land of Israel. The dyers used to prise [sic] open the shell-fish whilst they were still alive, and the transparent liquid secreted from their glands acquired in sunlight a deep violet colour.” It took thousands of shells to collect enough dye for even a single robe, and thus the process was extremely expensive. The other yarns—the purple and the scarlet, which was collected from a type of worm—were less costly, but no less opulent. The Israelites also brought fine linen (an Egyptian specialty), as well as expensive spices and perfumes. Then there were the gemstones that studded the robes of the high priest (cf. Exod. 28:17–20). These materials were not everyday items; they were treasures. The Israelites brought their finest and rarest possessions to build a sanctuary that was good enough for God, who always deserves our very best. <sup>1</sup> How many worms would you need to catch to secure enough juice for the color in question? How many man hours would you pour



<sup>1</sup> Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, *Exodus: Saved for God’s Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 807.

into digging up these worms? Talk about a sacrifice. Will you give God that which is priceless and costly to you?

- Some people gave goat's hair, rams' skins dyed red (which was an expensive process), and porpoise skins (back to that in a moment, v. 23). To give goats' hair you had to have goats, and you had to get the hair off the goats. I'm sure that was a lot of work because you don't just shave them, right? Now what about those porpoise skins. Where did they come from? Well, they came from the Egyptians. Where did they find porpoises? In the Red Sea. What was their skin used for? Sandals because it wore so well on the desert sands. Imagine giving God the very thing you would need to keep your feet from getting burned with each step of the way when your old sandals wore out. Talk about a sacrifice. What was all of this material used for? Four coverings served as the roof of the Tabernacle: *the linen, the goat, the ram, and the porpoise*. The blue, purple, scarlet, and white linen curtain embroidered with numerous cherubim angels served as the first part of the roof. Imagine your material being woven into this curtain which would remind the priests of those angelic beings who are close God and His holiness. The goat covering represented the goat used on the Day of Atonement, viz., Yom Kippur, for the cleansing of the sins of the people. By way of typology, Jesus became the ultimate Yom Kippur sacrifice when he laid his life down on the cross. Again, imagine your gift being used to cause worshippers to reflect on the need for the proper blood sacrifice to secure forgiveness. I'll stop there for the sake of time, but one can't help but see how they gifts were used to enhance the worship of God while instructing the worshippers.
- Some people gave silver and bronze (v. 24).
- Some brought acacia wood (v. 24). Think about this for a minute. If, for whatever reasons, you were not able to get any gold, silver, bronze or costly materials from the Egyptians, you could, at least, walk straight out into the desert of the Sinai and cut down acacia trees to give for the construction of the forty-eight massive locking boards and artifacts of the Tabernacle, like the Ark of the Covenant, Table of Showbread (Exodus 25:10, 23). Don't think for a minute that cutting down acacia wood would be an easy venture in the dry desert. Here's a picture of the Sinai area I took several years ago. Do you see a forest? No. But you



do see those trees off in the distance, right? Those are acacia trees. Here's a close-up of one. Think of how many you would need to cut down to make one usable board? Think of all the work in cutting down a tough tree like this without a gas powered chainsaw. Think of how hard it would be to drag the wood across the desert back to the camp so you could prepare it as a gift



for God. The costly nature of this gift boggles the mind, doesn't it? Even a poor person could have said, "Well, gold and silver I have none, but I do have two good hands and a strong back to walk out into the wilderness to cut down wood for God's dwelling place." The point should not be missed. We all can give sacrificially to God, can we not?

- Leadership gave God costly stones to be used in the stones which would represent the twelve tribes of Israel in the breastplate of the High Priest (Exodus 35:27). The onyx were used to hold the ephod together, which, turn, held the breastplate (Exodus 25:7). The twelve stones were costly as well: smaragd, topaz, sardis, onyx, sapphire, ruby, amethyst, mixed, liqire, jasper, beryl, and chrysolith. Leaders also gave costly spices, oil, and incense. Just acquiring the incense speaks of its costly nature. According to Exodus 30:34, there were four types of incense: stacte, onycha, galbanum, and frankincense. The first came from a gum which oozed out of the myrrh tree in the mountains of Gilead, the second came from shellfish in the Red Sea, the third originated from gum from a shrub in the mountains of Syria, and the last came from sap which oozed out of a special tree when an incision was made. Again, all of this was a costly gift to God the leadership.

What team Israel gave tells us much. They all sacrificed and God accepted each and every gift. How much did they give? Exodus 38:21-31 gives us the totals:

- One ton of gold.
- Four tons of silver.
- Two and half tons of bronze.

Figuring gold at \$1,324.00 per ounce, currently, and estimating that a talent weighed around 75 pounds, they gave \$1,588,800 in just gold alone. Quite a feat for a rag-tag group of formerly poor slaves who have never even own gold before.

This was some capital fund drive. Moses led clarity and the people gave with what I call rarity: They gave collectively and they gave liberally and lavishly. How do I know? Because of what happened as they brought their gifts to leadership every morning . . .

<sup>3</sup> They received from Moses all the contributions which the sons of Israel had brought to perform the work in the construction of the sanctuary. And they still continued bringing to him freewill offerings every morning. <sup>4</sup> And all the skillful men who were performing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work which he was performing, <sup>5</sup> and they said to Moses, “The people are bringing much more than enough for the construction work which the LORD commanded us to perform.” <sup>6</sup> So Moses issued a command, and a proclamation was circulated throughout the camp, saying, “Let no man or woman any longer perform work for the contributions of the sanctuary.” Thus the people were restrained from bringing any more. <sup>7</sup> For the material they had was sufficient and more than enough for all the work, to perform it (Exodus 36).

As we collectively as a team prayerfully consider the \$1.4 million we need to raise in order to conservatively move forward with the vision God has given to us based on His blessing, let us so be used of God on October 11, 2017 when we turn in our giving cards that the gifts will be so like the *Israelite Nationals* leaders will joyfully have to say, “Please, we have more than enough.”