

Exodus Chapter 1

Exo 1:1 Now these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob. 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, 3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, 4 Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. 5 And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already.

Exodus begins as if Genesis never ended, but rather continued on. The names listed are ordered by their mothers. For example, the children from Leah are named first (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun). Then the children of Rachel (Benjamin), then Bilhah (Dan, Naphtali) and Zilpah (Gad, Asher). The main point illustrated here is that Israel is technically born into slavery in Egypt, just as we are born into the slavery of our sinful nature: “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” (Psa 51:5).

The total number of Jacob’s descendants that entered Egypt was 70 according to verse five. The list of people are given in Genesis 46, however, it is not a passenger list since some were already in Egypt and others would be born there. From the list given we see that the total number of Jacob’s own seed who entered Egypt from Canaan was 66 people. Then when you count the sons of Joseph who were already in Egypt, there were 70 Israelites who would begin the nation of Israel in Egypt. The 66 plus Joseph, Manasseh, Ephraim and Jacob himself (verse 26 says “with” Joseph), equaled 70.

Again we see how seventy seems to hold special significance in Scripture. In Deuteronomy we read, “When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when He divided *all mankind*, He set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel” (Deut 32:8). This may suggest that these 70 were representative of the 70 nations that came from Noah (See Gen 10:32).

One problem for some comes from Stephen’s speech when he said, “After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy-five in all” (Acts 7:14). Why did Stephen record 75 rather than 70? Most commentators explain this by showing that Stephen used the Septuagint translation, which lists five of Joseph’s descendants coming from his sons Ephraim (two sons and one grandson) and Manasseh (one son and one grandson) in the Genesis 46 account.

Exo 1:6 And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. 7 And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

8 Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

The generation of Joseph all passed away and a new king took over Egypt who knew nothing of Joseph or the Israelites and their special relationship with the LORD. We see that the promise God had given Israel so many times in Genesis was, and is, being fulfilled as the Israelites became a great nation (see Gen 1:28; 8:17; 9:1-7; 17:2-6; 22:17; 26:4; 28:14; 35:11; and 48:4). When the Israelites leave Egypt there will be 600,000 men, not counting women and children (Ex 12:37). We know that God also told Abraham that this day was coming when the Israelites would become enslaved, "Then the LORD said to him, 'Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years'" (Gen 15:13).

We cannot be certain of who this new king is, but there is good evidence to suggest it is not the commonly accepted dynasty. The secular world generally says that Ahmose, the ruler of the 18th dynasty, came to power at this time. He expelled the Hyksos dynasty. In Genesis we saw that Joseph (a non-Egyptian) was made second in power. Earlier in chapter 39 when Joseph first came to Egypt, he was made a slave in Potipher's household. Over and over we were told that Potipher was Egyptian. This seems unnecessary to mention if in Egypt. However, the Hyksos dynasty was primarily of foreign Semitic origin and many non-Egyptian officials existed, therefore, possibly a need to mention that Potipher was Egyptian. Again, this is not fool proof evidence of the Hyksos ruling at this time, but makes it a possibility for some commentaries. I myself do not believe that the Hyksos were ruling at this time. After all, when Joseph came to power in Egypt he was given an Egyptian name. We will discuss in later chapters further evidence that would suggest the Hyksos dynasty is not the one in power during the reign of Joseph.

Exo 1:9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: 10 Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. 11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. 13 And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: 14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.

This new king felt threatened by the Israelites and their increasing number only added to this problem. His first attempt to deal with his uneasiness was to oppress them in slavery. However, God made sure that Pharaoh's mind was not at ease and they continued to grow in number at a faster rate. As a result, uneasiness turned into dread and the Israelites were treated all the more harshly. This was all part of God's plan to make His Name known throughout the world. He needed to have Pharaoh's pride and power built up so that God could show that even the most powerful nation in the world could not stand up

to even one of God's humble servants. We read in Romans about Pharaoh, "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display My power in you and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth" (Rom 9:17). It was also God's plan to have the Israelites cry out to Him and recognize their need of a Savior. God allows many of these storms in our lives today to "refine" our faith and help us to rely only upon Him. After all, "the LORD disciplines those He loves, as a father the son he delights in" (Prov 3:12). God wants the best for us and He will never leave us unattended in our hurt or affliction. At times it seems we are alone, but often this means we are growing and actually getting closer to our Father in heaven.

Because there are glories in heaven, God wants us to be the most successful we can be, much like our earthly fathers want the best for their children. They discipline them hoping that when they grow up they will be able to make wise decisions with few consequences. Scripture supports the fact that there are different glories or degrees of heaven. This is a puzzling thing for many Christians but the Bible makes it clear. As an analogy, if one person is represented by a 16 ounce cup and another person is represented by a 32 ounce cup, both will be filled with as much glory as they can hold when they get to heaven. The sixteen ounce cup would not desire more because he cannot hold any more, he is as full as he knows how to be. Those who love God enough to stand firm in these last days will indeed be blessed because of their perseverance and love for God. One must be careful to realize this is not works righteousness. Good works will not get you to a higher glory in heaven but, your faith will. The more you love God the more you see Him in your daily life. The more faith you have, the more you will produce good fruit in keeping with repentance (Mat 3:8). James warns, "But someone will say, 'You have faith; I have deeds.' Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! *Even the demons believe that--and shudder.* You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did" (James 2:18-22). Clearly we must be careful about having faith in faith. Believing in Jesus does not get you to heaven because even Satan believes in Jesus. Allowing Jesus to be your personal Savior whom you love, adore and follow daily because of your faith in Him; that is our free ticket to heaven. Again, James writes, "You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone" (James 2:24).

Let us look as at a few Scripture verses showing us degrees of heaven:

- "The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and *each will be rewarded according to his own labor.* For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because **the Day** will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each

man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; *he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames*" (1 Cor 3:8-15).

- "I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who *is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he*" (Mat 11:11).
- "Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called **least in the kingdom of heaven**, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called **great in the kingdom of heaven**" (Mat 5:19).
- "The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.' 'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, *take charge of ten cities.*' The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.' His master answered, '*You take charge of five cities*'" (Luke 19:16-19).
- Speaking symbolically of the wedding banquet of the Lamb: "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, . . . But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests" (Luke 14:8-10).
- "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever" (Dan 12:3).

WHO WERE THE PHARAOH'S OF EXODUS?

Who is this king of Egypt in verse 15? We may never know for sure, however, one thing I can say with certainty is that it wasn't Ramses. We often hear the secular news magazines telling us that there is no evidence for the Israelites occupying Egypt, and especially no evidence of the great plagues. The problem is that these people already have a preconceived notion of when these things took place. Therefore, they only look in the 18th dynasty of rulers which puts them in the wrong time zone to find evidence of the Exodus. Interestingly, there is more information recorded about the 18th dynasty than any other. One would think that somewhere it would at least allude to one of these events. Often, the Christian explanation is that the Pharaohs didn't record the bad news of the kingdom because it put them in bad light. It is true that this did happen, however, with so many remarkable events from Joseph's famine all the way to the Exodus, it seems to be a stretch that this explanation can work in this case.

The secular position is that the first dynasty began about 3100 BC and goes up to 332 BC. However, new evidences (even being supported by secular Egyptologists) shows that the reign of Egypt went from 2100 BC to 332 BC. Here are some reasons for this change. The exodus occurred in 1445 BC. According to secular thinking, the 18th dynasty was ruling at this time with the capital city being Luxor. However, the Bible clearly tells us Memphis was the capital (800 km from Luxor). Memphis, however, was the capital during the 12th dynasty of Egypt.

The secular timing of Egyptian dynasties comes from an Egyptian priest named Manetho who lived from 323 -245 BC. When Ptolemy ruled in Egypt he hired Manetho to record the kings of the past and their dates of rule. Now, this being a royal decree, Manetho wouldn't say "I don't know," therefore, he filled in the blanks with what he thought best. It is also important to realize that we do not have any book by Manetho. All we have are his works being quoted by other historians.

Manetho admitted that there were many cases in which there were two Pharaohs ruling at the same time; one over the north and one over the south. Egypt was a 1000 km long stretch and only a few miles wide. It was impractical, if not impossible, for one Pharaoh to rule over that kind of distance in those days. In short, rather than Pharaohs ruling consecutively, they ruled contemporarily. Knowing this, we automatically begin to shorten the dates of Egyptian rule according to secular thinking.

In addition to this there is the TIP, or Third Intermediate Period, which takes place between the 18th and last dynasty. It is called the Dark Ages of Egypt because we know nothing about it. In fact, many extremely reputable Egyptologists are beginning to say it never existed. Getting rid of this period also shortens up the secular timeframe for Egypt. In all, we shorten the reign of the Pharaohs about 1000 years and end up with 12th dynasty in power during the time of the Exodus. Let's see how this fits historically with the Bible.

If Sesothis I was Pharaoh during the time of Joseph we may have a good indication that Joseph was actually also called Mentuhotep. After all, he certainly wouldn't have been called his Hebrew name and many Pharaohs were called by two names. One record of this man says, "When he also held the office of chief treasurer, as did the powerful vizier Mentuhotep under Sesothis I, the account which he could give of himself . . . read like the declaration of the king's power. (History of Egypt. Breasted, p. 166). This sure sounds like Joseph whose word was like that of Pharaoh. In Genesis we read, "Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt'" (Gen 41:44-45).

Other evidence of Joseph in Egypt is a canal that even today is called Bar yusef, which means, Joseph's canal. No one knows how it got that name but its roots go back beyond tracing out.

In the city of Beni Hassan lie the tombs of Ameni from the time of Sesothis I. The recorded message there is, "No one was unhappy in my days, not even in the years of famine, for I had tilled all the fields of the Nome of Mah, up to its southern and northern frontiers. Thus I prolonged the life of its inhabitants and preserved the food which it produced" (Egypt under the Pharaoh's, Brugsch, p. 158). This seems to be good support of a famine and people being preserved through the famine just as the Bible says in the days of Joseph.

Still other evidence comes from the tomb of Kanuhotep of the 12th dynasty. Here we see pictures of what look just like Israelite men coming to trade with the Egyptians. Therefore, we have evidence of Semetic people in Egypt during this time, exactly what the Bible says.

In Exodus 1:8 we see a new king came onto the scene that knew not Joseph. Sesothis III was a very mean king. In fact, his statues always have

his outer lips descending down into a stern face. He is no doubt the nastiest looking of all the Pharaohs. His son was Amenemhet III, who reigned for 48 years and he, too, was a nasty looking fellow. According to the timeline, this Pharaoh would have been the one who reigned during the time that Moses was growing up.

Not far from the pyramids of Sesostris is an interesting city of the 12th dynasty called Kahun. Rosalie David (a secular Egyptologist) writes of this city in her book, Pyramid Builders of Ancient Egypt. It was excavated in 1890 and found to be a very well organized and laid out city. Apparently there were Semitic people living there and they just seemed to have disappeared for no reason. Does this sound like Jews leaving in an Exodus? On page 91 Rosalie states, "It is apparent that the Asiatics were present in the town in some numbers, and this may have reflected the situation elsewhere in Egypt. . . their exact homeland in Syria or Palestine cannot be determined. . . The reason for their presence in Egypt remains unclear."

Furthering support for the Biblical Exodus during the 12th dynasty we go to the Manchester Museum that has displayed a wooden box. Several such boxes were found in many of the homes in the city of Kahun. The boxes were in the floor of the houses and Rosalie writes, "Larger wooden boxes, probably used to store clothing and other possessions, were discovered underneath the floors of many houses at Kahun. They contained babies, sometimes buried two or three to a box and aged only a few months at death." Many of the babies that were killed by Pharaoh's edict were likely taken home and buried and this could be evidence of that very thing.

Even the daughter of Amenemhet III is recorded to have had no children. This could explain why she was so willing to take the baby Moses to be her own. In fact, this could be why she went along the Nile, a fertility god, and believed that the gods answered her prayers. Her name was Sebeknefrure and her statue was only discovered a few years ago.

The Ipuwer Papyrus in the Leiden Museum also records evidence that sounds like the Exodus in the 12th dynasty. "Nay, but the heart is violent. Plague stalks through the land and blood is everywhere. . . Nay, but the river is blood. Nay, but gates, columns and walls are consumed with fire. . . Nay but men are few. He that lays his brother in the ground is everywhere. People are stripped of clothing, perfume and oil. Everyone says, "there is no more." The storehouse is bare. . . It has come to this. The king has been taken away by poor men." This could certainly be talking about the hatred of the Israelites (heart is violent), the plague of blood, Passover (brother laid in the ground), the plundering of Egypt (stripped of clothing and perfume) and even the army drowning in the Red Sea (king taken away by poor men).

Again, in her book, Pyramid Builders of Ancient Egypt, Rosalie writes, "It is apparent that the completion of the king's pyramid was not the reason why Kahun's inhabitants eventually deserted the town, abandoning their tools and other possessions in the shops and houses" (pg 195). This is exactly what the quick Exodus of Israel would produce. Rosalie concluded, "There are differing opinions of how this 1st period of occupation at Kahun drew to a close. . . The quantity, range and type of articles of every day use, which were left behind in the houses may indeed suggest that the departure was sudden and premeditated"

(pg 199). Scripturally speaking, we may have the answer because when the Exodus took place, the Jews left in a hurry and this is exactly what is shown to have happened in this town.

Finally, another support is seen with the Hyksos dynasty that came in after the 12th dynasty and the Exodus. Manetho recorded “There was a King of ours whose name was Timaus. Under him it came to pass, I know not how, that God was averse to us, and there came, after a surprising manner, men of ignoble birth out of the eastern parts, and had boldness enough to make an expedition into our country and with ease subdued it by force, yet without our hazarding a battle with them” (Josephus against Ap. 1:14). How could a country come in and take over Egypt without a battle? What if there wasn’t an army? If Pharaoh and the army were at the bottom of the sea, there would be no army left to defend the country allowing them to walk right in. Manetho even recorded that God was averse to them, giving reason for this attack.

As I mentioned at the beginning, I don’t believe one can be absolutely sure as to which Pharaoh ruled when, however, to say that there is no evidence in Egypt for the Exodus and the plagues, is simply an outright denial of the truth. If people will stop looking into the secular position of the 18th dynasty for evidence and move to the 12th dynasty, I believe even more evidence will be found.

Exo 1:15 And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: 16 And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. 17 But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. 18 And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? 19 And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them.

The Hebrews had midwives to help them, apparently they were assigned to them by Pharaoh. Shiphrah and Puah must have been head of the midwives because with over a million Israelites, two midwives would be unrealistically busy. Their names are not of Egyptian origin, but Semitic, possibly indicating that these women were Hebrew midwives hired by Pharaoh.

Pharaoh’s first plan was secretive. When the Israelite women would sit on the stones (delivery stool) to have their babies, the midwives were to perform abortions so that the Hebrew women would think their babies were merely stillborn. They were only to kill the boys because they were the ones that could grow to be a fighting army. Also, it was easy for the women to lose their Israeli identity when the Egyptians took them as wives.

Shiphrah and Puah were God fearing women. When they were questioned about the many Hebrew boys being born in Egypt they deceived Pharaoh by saying that Hebrew women had babies quickly and by the time they arrived the babies had already been born. This would not allow them to kill the

babies secretly. This was probably not entirely untrue either. The delicate Egyptian women probably had a more difficult time in birthing just as we pampered Americans have a more difficult time birthing than the middle eastern women today.

Pharaoh can symbolize Satan's deception and his constant plot to have our souls even before we are born into this world. As we saw in Psalm 51, even at conception we have a sinful nature and Satan desires to have us. God, however, will not allow Satan's plans to succeed. This attempt foreshadowed Satan's plan through Herod, which also failed. Herod tried to kill all the babies to keep Jesus, our Deliverer, from coming. Likewise, Satan tried to kill Moses, the deliverer, by using Pharaoh to keep him from coming. Josephus records that Pharaoh was warned by the magi that a boy was going to be born that would deal a great blow to the Egyptians. This makes a strong connection to Herod of the New Testament who was also told by magi of a great King of the Jews that was to be born. In both cases, Satan used magi (occult practices) to try and keep Jesus from appearing. If Satan could keep Moses from leading the people out of Egypt, he could perhaps destroy the Israelite line from which Jesus was to come. In Revelation we read of Satan, that great dragon, waiting to destroy Jesus: "The dragon stood in front of the woman [Israel] who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to His throne" (Rev 12:4-5).

Exo 1:20 Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. 21 And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses. 22 And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

Some have questioned whether it was right for the midwives to lie, after all, that is a sin. There is a phrase that says, God will always take responsibility for the consequences of our obedience. God did take responsibility for the midwife's actions and blessed them for their obedience to His Word that was written in their hearts. As Isaiah said, "Hear me, you who know what is right, you people who have My law in your hearts: Do not fear the reproach of men or be terrified by their insults" (Isa 51:7). Peter even said to the Pharisees, "But Peter and John replied, 'Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God'" (Acts 4:18-20).

What torment it must have been for those pregnant women who knew that when their baby was born it would just be killed. How sad that the mind of mothers today have become so numb that many are not tormented, but even seek out a pharaoh to kill the child through abortion. Scripture uses this type of violence to describe the tragedy that would come upon Ephraim, "I have seen Ephraim, like Tyre, planted in a pleasant place. But Ephraim will bring out their children to the slayer" (Hos 9:13). How can women today make such violence a desired action?

Pharaoh was no longer going to be secretive about his plot to kill the Hebrew boys. Instead of making it look like they were stillborn, he had them

publicly thrown into the Nile river. Interestingly, the Nile was considered a god among the Egyptians and a vital source of life for them. Because of this, Pharaoh may have been killing two birds with one stone and viewed this as a sacrifice to the gods as well as a way of ridding himself of a problem. Some people today view their tithe as such. They give their money to “God” in ways that they benefit from it as well. If we give in hopes of our own gain, our giving is no better than Pharaoh’s selfish sacrifice. The true God expects a selfless surrender and trust to Him only.

Once more, however, Satan’s evil plot fails.

We are not told how long Pharaoh’s edict went on or when it began. Because Aaron is Moses’ older brother by only three years, we know Pharaoh’s murders had not been going on much before this. Because at the time of the Exodus there were 600,000 men it couldn’t have gone on long, at least, without God’s divine intervention protecting them.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 1

- 1) What does Israel’s slavery represent in our lives?
- 2) Give evidences of the possibility that the Hyksos dynasty reigned at the time of Joseph.
- 3) Why does Stephen record 75 passengers going into Egypt when Genesis only lists 70?
- 4) Give a Scripture verse explaining why God allowed Pharaoh to become so powerful.

- 5) List three Scripture verses talking about different glories of heaven? How might these relate to churches today?
- 6) According to traditional secular philosophy, which Egyptian dynasty ruled during the time of the Exodus? What were the dates of this dynasty?
- 7) Who was Mentuhotep?
- 8) What was significant about Manetho? When did he live?
- 9) Describe the TIP and how it fits with the 18th dynasty.
- 10) List three significant evidences that Kahun may have been inhabited by the Israelites.
- 11) What Papyrus tells us that the rivers turned to blood?
- 12) What dynasty seems to best fit the Exodus? Why?
- 13) What is an alternate explanation of the Hyksos dynasty from the traditional secular interpretation?
- 14) What statement by Josephus makes a strong connection between Herod and Pharaoh?
- 15) How many men were there in Israel at the time of the Exodus?

Exodus Chapter 2

Exo 2:1 And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. 2 And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. 3 And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. 4 And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

Chapter two begins with Moses being born into the tribe of Levi. At this point, the tribe of Levi has no association with being priests, but Jacob did prophesy that they would be scattered (Gen 49:5) because of their violent tendencies displayed at Shechem (Gen 34).

Often people think that we do not know the name of Moses' parents, but that is not true. We see in chapter six, "*Amram* married his father's sister *Jochebed*, who bore him Aaron and Moses. Amram lived 137 years" (Exo 6:20; see also Num 26:59). We don't know how old Amram was when he had Moses, but Moses will be 80 when he delivers God's people from Egypt. Therefore, if Amram was 57 years or younger when he had Moses, he was led out of Egypt by his son.

Jochebed hid baby Moses for three months. We see that this was an act of faith in God's deliverance as well: "By faith Moses, parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict" (Heb 11:23). Matthew Henry, a popular Bible commentator says, "duty is ours, events are God's." Faith will set us up above the evil intents of men.

Here in Exodus it says that he was a fine child. The Hebrew states he was beautiful. The beauty of the baby may have been one reason the Pharaoh's daughter was drawn to the child. Some commentators have tried to say that it was because Moses was a pretty baby that Jochebed decided to hide him. This is preposterous as no mother would find her child ugly and decide to just hand the baby over to its executioner. This would also imply that other mothers who had babies did just that. According to the Hebrews passage just read, it states that they knew Moses was not an ordinary child. We are not told how they knew this, however, it is most likely that God had told them just as Mary was told about Jesus. After all, Moses does represent the deliverer. In fact, Moses, as a type of Christ, had his life threatened from infancy just as Jesus did.

The basket Moses was put in was a small representation of a papyrus boat used often in Egypt. In Isaiah we see such a reference: "Woe to the land of whirring wings along the rivers of Cush, which sends envoys by sea in papyrus boats over the water" (Isa 18:2). It is interesting that the Hebrew word for "basket" here is the same word used for Noah's "ark" (*tebah*). This word is only used for these two purposes in all of the Scriptures. Both the ark and the basket were covered with pitch and tar. Just as the ark symbolized deliverance through water, now we see the basket doing the same. This is no accident as the water almost always represents today's baptism as we will see. For now one verse will suffice: "They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor 10:2).

The basket was set in the reeds and by faith the mother knew that God would take care of him. Meanwhile Miriam stood by and watched to see what would happen. A possible clue as to how they knew Moses was a special child may come from chapter 15 which tells us that Miriam was a prophetess, "Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing" (Exo 15:20). We know she was old enough at this time to stand by the waters and watch by herself without being seen. Also, because Miriam and Aaron were not killed as babies, it seems

that either Pharaoh's edict was just put into force or she was a fair bit older than Moses.

Two other noteworthy comments: First, I have often wondered how an ordinary slave girl like Miriam was able to get so close to a princess like Pharaoh's daughter. Obviously, royalty was not surrounded by the secret service as they are today. Secondly, the basket of Moses was placed in the reeds. We often envision it floating down the Nile River and ending up at the palace thanks to Hollywood. However, the basket was only set alongside the Nile bank among the reeds and it was seen as the princess was walking along the bank. This way Miriam did not keep running along the river either. There is a good chance that they placed the basket in an area that they knew the princess would come on a daily basis. This may also explain why Miriam was able to get so close to the princess.

Exo 2:5 And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. 6 And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. 7 Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?

One historical possibility is that a woman named Hatshepsut was the Pharaoh's daughter at this time. Her father was Thutmose II and she had a half brother called Thutmose III. Both Hatshepsut and Thutmose III ruled along with Thutmose II. Her older brother (Thutmose III) hated her because she was co-regent with him, and no doubt this hatred also extended to her son Moses as well. She died twelve years before Thutmose III but when she died, this brother desecrated her image and broke off the nose on her sarcophagus. For an Egyptian this meant they could not escape to the after life.

Another possibility, according to the Egyptian priest at the time of Ptolemy, is that Pharaoh's daughter was Thermuthis. Josephus records this as being Moses' now to be mother, we cannot be sure. I am of the opinion that it was in the 12th dynasty of Egypt that this took place for reasons described at the beginning of this book and, therefore, neither of the above possibilities fit.

When the princess took her daily trip to the Nile with her attendants they saw this basket stuck in the reeds. When the servant retrieved it there was a crying baby that drew sympathy from Pharaoh's daughter. She knew right away that it was a Hebrew baby that had escaped her father's hand. Miriam was still standing nearby and asked the princess if she should go and find a Hebrew woman who could serve as a wet nurse for the baby. While Pharaoh's daughter knew there must be many mothers who could nurse a child since many babies had been killed, Miriam knew who she would get – Jochebed.

Exo 2:8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. 9 And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. 10 And the child grew,

and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

Miriam found her mother and brought her to Pharaoh's daughter who unknowingly now offered to pay Jochebed to nurse her own child. What grace and mercy was shown to Jochebed by God. Not only did He protect her child, but He also provided for her well-being. God will ALWAYS take responsibility for the consequences of our obedience.

We are never told how Moses came to know his ancestry, but it is most probable that his mother shared this with him as he grew up. These days nursing usually went on until about the age of three so there is a good chance that Moses and his real mother became good friends and a strong bond developed. It is unlikely that Pharaoh's daughter would have then broke them apart and never let them see each other again. For those who saw the movie, "The Prince of Egypt" Moses simply remembers a song sung to him as a child. This is probably not the case as Hollywood took many freedoms in this movie.

This being drawn out of the waters may symbolize God's deliverance in baptism as well. In any case, it certainly is evidence of God's providential rescue as we see in 2 Samuel, "He reached down from on high and took hold of me; He drew me out of deep waters" (2 Sam 22:17).

Because the baby was "drawn out," he was given the name Moses, meaning "is born." This name has Egyptian roots seen in other names of the Pharaohs such as Ahumose, Thutmose or even Ramses.

Exo 2:11 And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. 12 And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. 13 And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?

Verse eleven says "one day," but according to Stephen, Moses was now 40 years old, "When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his fellow Israelites. He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian" (Acts 7:23-24).

Verse 12 clearly tells us that Moses knew that what he was about to do was wrong because he "glanced this way and that," implying he was trying not to be seen. So why did Moses do it? Stephen goes on in Acts, "Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not" (Acts 7:25). Moses knew he was to be the deliverer of God's people, but what he didn't know was when. Like we often do today, we become over zealous in God's work and try to take care of things ourselves rather than letting God handle it. Like God will later say to the Israelites when the Egyptians are coming after them, "The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still" (Exo 14:14).

What a shock it must have been for Moses' plan to backfire on him. He must have thought the people would rally together to fight with him and instead, they rallied against him. Nevertheless, it was by faith that Moses was doing these things: "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward" (Heb 11:24-26). The same should be true for us today. God asks us to give up our worldly pleasures and palaces to follow Him. Too many people are chasing after homes and automobiles and know not the Lord. They believe in His Name, but they don't bow down to it. Such people are double minded and will not inherit the true promised land. James wrote of praying, "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God" (James 4:3-4). Moses chose the better things in life and I know he never regretted it.

Exo 2:14 And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. 15 Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well. 16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. 17 And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. 18 And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to day?

Ironically, the Hebrew men fighting ask Moses who made him ruler or judge over them. Moses had every right to tell them God had, however, it just wasn't the right time yet. It is interesting that people often take righteous admonition as "preaching." However, we have a responsibility to judge those within the church. In Corinthians we read, "What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. Expel the wicked man from among you" (1 Cor 5:12-13). Regardless of how it is viewed, it is our God given responsibility, even command, to hold one another accountable. This Israelite took an attempt by Moses to help and admonish and turned it into an attempt to take his life. Once again we see a Moses foreshadow Jesus as Christ was also rejected by those He would save.

When Moses found out that the people were not going to rally with him he became afraid. Apparently the Hebrew man talking with Moses here was not present the day before because now Moses realizes that what he did in secret was no secret any longer. In fact, Thutmose III heard about it and tried to kill Moses himself. God wasn't ready for Moses to lead the people because Moses wasn't ready. In Genesis we saw that Joseph knew that his brothers were to bow

down before him because of his dreams, however, he was a cocky, proud youth at the time. God sent him to Egypt for more than one reason. Not only did God want to deliver Jacob out of the famine that was coming years down the road, but He also wanted to refine Joseph and get rid of his pride and arrogance. God must also do the same with Moses.

Moses fled to Midian, but it was not out of fear of Pharaoh that Moses fled because Hebrews says, “By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he *saw* Him who is invisible” (Heb 11:27). From this it may be possible that God came to him and instructed him to leave. In any case, Moses went from the lush plains of Egypt to the desert area of southeast Sinai in west central Arabia. Once Sarah died Abraham remarried Keturah, who gave birth to Midian, who must have settled in this area (Gen 25:2).

At a well in Midian he saw seven daughters of a priest in the area who were trying to get water for their father’s flock. However, a group of other shepherds came and drove them away. Moses, still in deliverance mode, chased the shepherds away and helped the girls water their father’s flock.

The fact that these daughters belong to a priest show that they were religious, in fact, they served the true God as we will see Jethro doing so later on in Exodus. His name is given in verse 18 as Reuel, meaning friend of God, also signifying his service to the true God. This suggests that many of Abraham’s offspring continued to serve God even though God had not made His covenant with them as he did with the Israelites. It is important to remember that the Israelites were not the only Christian people on earth. The Jews simply have a specific role and blessing in God’s eyes. Gentile believers in God have existed ever since God called Abraham out of them. In Genesis we saw Melchizedek was serving the true God in Jerusalem, yet he was not an Israelite and still better than Abraham (Gen 14, Heb 7). If he was a priest in Jerusalem he must have been serving some people who worshipped God. Who were they? They must have been those who descended from thousands of other people besides Abraham.

With this said, it is important to also point out Exodus 18:11 where Jethro says, “Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods.” This may imply that though Jethro knew the true God, he was still polytheistic and had accepted many gods up until this point.

Exo 2:19 And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock. 20 And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread. 21 And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. 22 And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

By all appearances, Moses looked Egyptian. After all, he had been raised in an Egyptian home and no doubt was wearing Egyptian clothing and perhaps even jewelry. Reuel sent his daughters after Moses to invite him into his house. Moses not only stayed with them, but he also married Reuel’s daughter, Zipporah.

Zipporah gave birth to Gershom, whose name means “alien there.” This is important because his name is an act of faith showing that Moses believed in the promise that God would deliver them into the land promised to Abraham. That is why Hebrews states, “All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth” (Heb 11:13).

It is possible that Moses married another woman later on after Zipporah died because in Numbers we read: “Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite” (Num 12:1). This does not seem to fit Zipporah, a Midianite. For the record, Aaron and Miriam were punished for this wrongful accusation.

Unfortunately, Gershom’s descendants would not follow God faithfully as we see in Judges, “There the Danites set up for themselves the idols, and Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses, and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan until the time of the captivity of the land” (Jud 18:30).

Exo 2:23 And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

Verse 23 tells us that a long period went by. According to Acts we see that this was 40 years: “After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai” (Acts 7:30). That means Moses is 80 years old now because he was 40 years old when he fled from Egypt. Here we see how the number 40 will be a recurring number in Moses’ life as he will also be on Mount Sinai 40 days and wander the desert 40 years. Forty is a number of testing and we will see that his 40 years in the Midian desert had refined Moses a great deal, turning him into a faithful, humble servant. This is a big contrast to the “take charge” kind of guy who fled from Egypt.

Because the Pharaoh who wanted to kill Moses died, that meant it was safe for Moses to return. God had been hearing the prayers of the Israelites because of their oppression. Over and over we see how Israel recognized this, yet they continued to fall away from God. Consider a few examples: “Then we cried out to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression” (Deu 26:7); “*After Jacob entered Egypt*, they cried to the LORD for help, and the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your forefathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place. But they forgot the LORD their God” (1 Sam 12:8-9); and “Our forefathers went down into Egypt, and we lived there many years. The Egyptians mistreated us and our fathers, but when we cried out to the LORD, he heard our cry and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt” (Num 20:15-16).

The fact that God remembered His covenant does not mean that he forgot it. It simply means that the time was right. Back in Genesis God told

Abraham that they would be slaves for 400 years and now that time was up (Gen 15:13). It is much like what God told Noah, “I will remember my covenant between Me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life” (Gen 9:15). God does not take His covenants lightly as He is always faithful to them. Consider this: “But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion and showed concern for them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To this day He has been unwilling to destroy them or banish them from His presence” (2 Ki 13:23). It is also important to realize that this covenant is not over yet either, “He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant” (Psa 105:10). Not until we reach heaven will this be complete. God still remembers His covenant today: “Remember Your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom You swore by Your own Self: ‘I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever’” (Exo 32:13).

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 2

- 1) Why were the Levites scattered?
- 2) What tribe did Moses belong to?
- 3) Moses was put into a basket. What other significant structure was also called by the same name? Why might this be?
- 4) In the Prince of Egypt there were many inaccuracies. Name some of them.
- 5) How old was Moses when he killed the Egyptian? Why did he kill him?
- 6) Name a time when you have gotten ahead of God’s plans for your life and things didn’t work out because the time wasn’t right. Can you see God’s fingerprints in that now?
- 7) Name some Christ-like characteristics of Moses in this chapter.
- 8) Was Jethro a Christian? Why or why not.
- 9) Who was the firstborn of Moses? What did his name mean? Does this meaning have significance in your life?
- 10) Give an example of how God has remembered His covenant to you.

Exodus Chapter 3

Exo 3:1 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. 2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

Here we see that Reul is also called Jethro. Moses, like David, was a shepherd when God called him away from sheep to lead people. It is no accident that Moses was by Horeb, of which Mount Sinai is one of its peaks. Though today we know for certain the general area, we do not know which peak is actually Sinai and which is Horeb, but the elevations can reach over 7,400

feet. It will not be too long and Moses will return here to receive the Ten Commandments.

While on Horeb, an angel of the LORD appeared to him within a flaming, but not burning, bush. This angel was God as we see in verse four. Many times throughout Scripture we see who seems to be Jesus, called the angel of the LORD. Fire will be another consistent visual evidence of God's presence throughout the Old Testament. We will read later, "By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night" (Exo 13:21; see also 19:18; 1 Ki 18:24,38).

Moses went over to see why the bush was not burning up though it was engulfed in flames. When the LORD saw Moses approaching, He called to him from the bush, "Moses! Moses!" The fact that God calls Moses is very important because we see that God is instituting the action now, not Moses as he had tried before. Every prophet in Scripture was called by God in a similar way. Samuel in 1 Samuel 3:4, Jeremiah in 1:4, Ezekiel in 2:1-8, Hosea in 1:2, Amos in 7:15. Moses will have much the same attitude Jonah did when he was called (Jonah 1:1-2) and desires to run from God. It is too bad that Moses didn't have the attitude of Isaiah. Isaiah was ready for the task, Moses didn't think he himself was. We see Isaiah's response to his call: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'" (Isa 6:8). In any case, Moses will turn out to be one of the best prophets who ever walked the earth. In fact, perhaps not all of his hesitation was bad, but rather stemmed from humility since he was a very humble man according to Numbers: "Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth" (Num 12:3). What a role model! Too bad we didn't have more of them like this to follow today.

Even though God is doing the calling, Moses had to take the initiative to go over to the bush to investigate. It is when we turn towards God that He answers and speaks to us. God's glory is burning all around us today but not many people are going over to the fire to see what it is all about and, therefore, they are not hearing God's voice, nor are they seeing His glory.

I pray that each of you reading this would be able to say as Isaiah said if called, "Here I am Lord, take me!" Perhaps I should rather put it this way. How have you responded to God's call (Matt 28:19-20)?

Exo 3:5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. 6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

As Moses approached, God warned him not to come any closer because the spot on which he stood was holy due to God's presence. The instruction to take off his sandals is something that the Muslims still practice today before going into their mosques.

God introduced Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Perhaps the most important words of verse six, however, are "I am." These two

words are packed with important meaning. First of all it tells us that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, though dead, are alive because God IS (present tense) their God. In fact, Jesus, the best expositor of Scripture, tells us this was the point of these words when He tells us in Luke, “But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord ‘the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to Him all are alive” (Luke 20:37-38). Secondly, this is an icon for who God is. He is unchangeable and constant. In John we see that the Pharisees tried to kill Jesus when He claimed to be the I AM. The Jews knew that only God is the I AM: “‘I tell you the truth,’ Jesus answered, ‘before Abraham was born, I am!’ At this, they picked up stones to stone Him, but Jesus hid Himself, slipping away from the temple” (John 8:58-59). Frank Peretti puts it best when he asks the question “Have you ever wondered why God didn’t say ‘I am whoever you want Me to be?’” Rather God said, “I AM WHO I AM.” God is the same yesterday, today and always. Too often we are involved in idol worship. Think about it. An idol was made by fashioning a god that suited man’s desires. If he wanted a god of fertility he put genital organs on it. If he wanted a god of battle he made it muscular. The point is that their god was fashioned as they saw fit. Today people are fashioning the “I AM WHO I AM” into “I AM WHOEVER YOU WANT ME TO BE.” People say, “Oh, God is a god of love and He won’t send me to hell.” Others are saying homosexuality is okay, evolution is fine and abortion isn’t that big of a deal. If that is your idol and you don’t mind heat, fine, but that isn’t the God of Moses, Abraham or Isaac. No matter how much you want to change who God is, you can’t. (See chapter 32 for further discussion on this).

Even Moses understood the significance of this statement because when he heard it he hid his face from God because he knew that no one can see God’s face and live. This was understood long before Jacob’s day. In fact, when Jacob wrestled with God (but not in God’s full glory which is why he was able to live after seeing God) Scripture says, “So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, ‘It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared’” (Gen 32:30). This is stated more plainly later in Exodus where God says, “You cannot see My face, for no one may see Me and live” (Exo 33:20).

It is interesting that Moses understood God’s presence here and hid his face, but later in 33:18 Moses will even ask to see God’s glory. The relationship Moses will build with Christ is amazing. This is seen in God’s response to Aaron and Miriam when they were upset with Moses: “Listen to My words: ‘When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal Myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?’” (Num 12:6-8)?

Exo 3:7 And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; 8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey;

unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

The Lord was concerned about the suffering of the Israelites because of their slave drivers. He knew the heart of the Egyptians and how they rejected Him. Because of this, the Israelites were being treated harshly.

Verse eight tells us that God came down from heaven to rescue His people. In Genesis we saw God came down to judge Babel (Gen 11:5-9) and Sodom (Gen 18:21). Here it is to judge Egypt. God also promises that He will lead His people out of Egypt and bring them into a spacious and fertile land. The Holy Land has long been called the land of milk and honey. Though today it does not seem to be as fertile, archaeology shows us at one time it was. Even in Numbers when they went to spy out the land they returned and said, “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit” (Num 13:27). In Deuteronomy we read, “For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land--a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land He has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God” (Deu 8:7-11). Despite this warning, the milk and honey later caused them to take things for granted and they became too caught up in themselves, forgetting about God.

This promised land was inhabited by the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Joshua gives us some spatial understanding as to the location of these tribes: “to the Canaanites in the east and west; to the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites and Jebusites in the hill country; and to the Hivites below Hermon in the region of Mizpah” (Josh 11:3). We also see in Judges, “all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites [were] living in the Lebanon mountains from Mount Baal Hermon to Lebo Hamath” (Jug 3:3). Eventually these tribes became a snare to the Israelites because they failed to drive them out of the promised land as God commanded: “The people of Israel, including the priests and the Levites, have not kept themselves separate from the neighboring peoples with their detestable practices, like those of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites” (Ezra 9:1).

God then gives Moses a command to go because He is sending him to Egypt to fulfill the promise He made to Abraham. What better credentials than a reference from God. Knowing that God was sending him, Moses should have felt secure, however, the following verses show otherwise.

Exo 3:11 And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of

Egypt? 12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. 13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? 14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. 15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

Moses has been humbled the last 40 years in the Midian desert. The old Moses would have said, “Okay” and took off before the Lord had finished speaking. Now Moses, realizing his faults and failures, asks how God could use a sinner like himself.

The comfort for Moses was that God would be with him. Though it would be a while for the sign of Divine approval to happen, Moses would return to this very mountain and receive the Ten Commandments after leading Israel out of Egypt. It is strange that such a sign would be needed. One would think the burning bush would be enough. God was giving Moses every bit of grace He could just as he did with Gideon, who had asked for a sure sign that it was God speaking to him: “Gideon replied, ‘If now I have found favor in Your eyes, give me a sign that it is really You talking to me’” (Jud 6:17). Perhaps this sign given to Moses was also for the Egyptians: “Give me a sign of Your goodness, that my enemies may see it and be put to shame, for You, O LORD, have helped me and comforted me” (Psa 86:17).

Moses remembered how 40 years ago the Israelites rejected him as their leader, however, back then he was trying to do this on his own. With these memories still fresh in his mind he fears the people may not listen again. What then? Moses knew it was God sending him, but how would the people know that?

I find it a comfort that God almost exclusively used people who were of no reputation to become leaders. Gideon states this when called, “‘But Lord, Gideon asked, ‘how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family’” (Jud 6:15). Saul said, “‘But am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me’” (1 Sam 9:21)? Later Samuel said to Saul, “‘Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel’” (1 Sam 15:17). David was also a mere shepherd boy, “‘But David said to Saul, ‘Who am I, and what is my family or my father’s clan in Israel, that I should become the king’s son-in-law?’” (1 Sam 18:18). Even after David became king he stated, “‘Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said: ‘Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?’” (2 Sam 7:18). The disciples were fisherman, Rahab was a prostitute, Joseph a slave and the list goes on and on. As we see, “God

chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong” (1 Cor 1:27).

This won't be the last time Moses questions or doubts God. In 4:1 we will see Moses again ask God what to do if the people don't listen. In 4:10 he will take another approach to get out of this responsibility by questioning his speech abilities. Finally, in 4:13, as a last effort he simply quits beating around the bush and says, “please send someone else.” We will discuss this further in chapter four.

Verse twelve should have made the hairs on Moses' neck stand up. God said, “I will be with you.” Way back in Genesis we read, “Stay in this land for a while, **and I will be with you** and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham” (Gen 26:3). The Hebrew words “I will be” in Genesis are the same words for “I am” here in verse 14. The Israelites knew the promise God gave to Abraham very well and this was a sure sign God was now fulfilling His promise. In the section on 3:6 we discussed this further as we saw what power and meaning the words, “I am” had in Jesus' day. John 8:58 shows us Jesus was nearly stoned because of this. It simply illustrates God's constant nature: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb 13:8), or as Christ said, “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty’” (Rev 1:8).

Verse 15 shows that Moses was also to tell them the LORD, the God of their fathers had sent him to them. The name “LORD” is God's eternal name. We read in Hosea: “the LORD God Almighty, the LORD is His name of renown!” (Hosea 12:5), and “But you, O LORD, sit enthroned forever; Your renown endures through all generations” (Psa 102:12). LORD is the personal, covenant God of all believers. Throughout Scripture the unbelievers refer to the God of the Israelites as “God.” But the Israelites almost always tie in the LORD. Our Creator is everyone's God (impersonal Creator), but not everyone's LORD (personal Savior). That is why, “no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 12:3). With all this said, there still remains a name for God that we just can't understand. We read in Judges when Manoah asked God what His name was, God replies, “Why do you ask My name? It is beyond understanding” (Judg 13:18-19). In Proverbs we read, “Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of His hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in His cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and the name of His son? Tell me if you know” (Prov 30:4)! There is a name of God that is too awesome for the flesh to comprehend. I like the fact that God has preserved His name so that no one can use it in vain. This could be the reason He has hidden it as we read in Revelation, “His eyes are like blazing fire, and on His head are many crowns. He has a name written on Him that no one knows but He Himself” (Rev 19:12-13).

Also in verse 15 we should note that God calls Himself the God of Abraham because it was through Abraham that the covenant was given. He is also the God of Isaac and Jacob because the covenant was renewed with them as well. Now He is the God of Israel because the covenant is once more renewed with the twelve tribes. Today, He is our God as He poured out His blood to be

the New Covenant to us (Luke 22:20). It just doesn't get any more personal than that. Praise be to God.

Exo 3:16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt: 17 And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. 18 And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. 19 And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. 20 And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

God told Moses to assemble all of the elders and tell them what He had said to him. Verse 17 does not say, “and I promise,” but “and I promised,” – past tense. This should have reminded them of God’s Word to Abraham hundreds of years earlier, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. . . . In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure” (Gen 15:13-14,16).

Further encouragement came when the Lord told Moses that the elders would listen. As we see in chapter four this does happen, “and they believed. . . and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshipped” (Exo 4:31).

We often think it was just Moses who approached Pharaoh, but that is not true. Moses, Aaron and the elders went to Pharaoh. God told them ahead of time that their words would fall on empty ears and it would take a mighty, outstretched hand of God to convince Pharaoh. Nonetheless, they must go and tell the king what God had said.

God had a plan to lift up His Name in all of the earth through Pharaoh and that is why it was done this way. Because of this supernatural deliverance the people would look back and say, “Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes” (Deu 4:34)? Also in the New Testament we read, “For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: ‘I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display My power in you and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth’” (Rom 9:17). In Chronicles we see that this deliverance would affect even foreigners, “As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of Your great Name and Your mighty hand and

Your outstretched arm--when he comes and prays toward this temple, then hear from heaven, Your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of You” (2 Chr 6:32-33).

These miracles would also serve as a pattern of a second deliverance ahead. Micah stated, “As in the days when you came out of Egypt, I will show them My wonders” (Micah 7:15). When we read of the two witnesses in Revelation chapter 11 it is interesting that many of the same miracles that will be used to deliver Egypt are used by these two witnesses. It is also interesting that most commentators believe that these two witnesses are Moses and Elijah. For some reason, Satan argued over Moses’ body when he died: “But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” (Jude 1:9). Perhaps Satan was concerned because of a future role of Moses.

Exo 3:21 And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: 22 But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

The God who created the mind also can control it. Though the Israelites are but slaves, God will make the Egyptians actually like the Israelites in some ways. The purpose of this was two-fold according to Scripture. The first thing God wanted to do was pass judgment upon Egypt. Often times we think of this as simply a deliverance for Israel, however, it is equally a judgment on Egypt. That is why we later read, “[Pharaoh] will not listen to you. Then I will lay My hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of *judgment* I will bring out My divisions, My people the Israelites” (Exo 7:4). Even many years later God told the Israelites why they were allowed to enter the promised land: “It is **not** because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; **but on account of the wickedness of these nations**, the LORD your God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” (Deu 9:5). Many people do not understand the Old Testament because if God is love why did He allow, even command, so much war and destruction by the Israelites. After all, He commanded them to kill woman, children, infants and even animals when going into the promised land. These same people do not realize that God is the Judge. He is coming again to do the same thing at the end of the world. When all who will listen to God have listened to Him, the rest will be judged. God simply had passed judgment on the wicked, and rather than simply kill them Himself, He used the Israelites to send a message and to display His power. We read in Romans: “What if God, choosing to show His wrath and make His power known, bore with great patience the objects of His wrath--prepared for destruction? What if He did this to make the riches of His glory known to the objects of His mercy, whom He prepared in advance for glory—“ (Rom 9:22-23)? Therefore, plundering the Egyptians was simply the completion of His

judgment upon Egypt, a wicked nation. After the plagues had wiped out their cattle and crops, their possessions were all that were left to take away. By having them give them away, Egypt was left in utter ruin by the time Israel left. Even Pharaoh's officials recognized this before the plundering: "Pharaoh's officials said to him, 'How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the people go, so that they may worship the LORD their God. Do you not yet realize that Egypt is ruined'" (Exo 10:7)?

The second purpose for plundering the Egyptians was to serve as an example: "If a fellow Hebrew, a man or a woman, sells himself to you and serves you six years, in the seventh year you must let him go free. And when you release him, do not send him away empty-handed. Supply him liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to him as the LORD your God has blessed you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today" (Deu 15:12-15). One might say that this also serves as an example for us today as well. Right now we are slaves to the law of sin because of our sinful flesh as Romans so clearly tells us, "Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful flesh a slave to the law of sin" (Rom 7:25). However, because of Christ's Blood, "You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness" (Rom 6:18). When Christ brought us out of our bondage to sin, He gave us every good and perfect gift in righteousness.

Finally, in plundering the Egyptians God was also showing Himself faithful to His promise given to Abraham, "But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions" (Gen 15:14). Oh what an awesome Lord we serve!

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 3

- 1) Give another name for Jethro.
- 2) God called Moses in the burning bush. What is your burning bush?
- 3) What insight does Numbers 12:3 give us into the personality of Moses?
How does this fit with what you know of him?
- 4) God said He was the "I AM." What does this mean?
- 5) How have you seen God's glory?
- 6) What were Moses' credentials?
- 7) List examples that show Moses' attitude towards God's call. Can you relate to any of these?
- 8) What does the name "LORD" mean to you?
- 9) Who did most of the speaking to Pharaoh?
- 10) What New Testament figures do we see that will do the same things as Moses did here in Exodus?
- 11) Give three reasons God led the Israelites into the promised land.

Exodus Chapter 4

Exo 4:1 And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. 2 And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. 3 And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.

Moses was still not putting his trust in the Lord. He feared that they would not believe him if he simply said that “I AM” sent me. I believe God would have shown Moses these miracles to perform even if Moses had not asked this question because God said that He would bring the Israelites out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

The Lord told Moses to throw his staff on the ground and when he did so, it turned into a snake. As I would have done, Moses ran from it. Perhaps he was thinking that since he wasn't trusting God and doubted that the Israelites would listen to him, God intended the snake for him rather than for a sign.

In Egypt, the snake was a symbol of power used by almost every Pharaoh. The serpent, being a sign of the devil, may be a good indication as to where the Egyptian magicians were getting their power from. Because in most cases the snake design worn by the pharaohs were cobra's there is a good chance that it was a cobra that this staff had turned into. We will discuss this further when Moses performs this miracle in front of Pharaoh. On the other hand, to the Israelites, for which this sign seems to also be intended, the serpent was a sign of Satan. Moses wisely ran from the snake, but with God's power will be able to subdue it and grab it by the tail. This was also a sign for Moses. Now Moses has humbled himself and needs to draw near to God in faith. James says,

“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up” (James 4:7-10). In submitting to God and fleeing from the devil, Moses was able to humbly subdue the serpent through the staff of God. There is no difference today for our lives. When we submit to the Lord and call upon His Scepter of Jesus Christ, we have the devil by the tail and we need not have fear of him.

Exo 4:4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: 5 That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. 6 And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. 7 And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh.

As what may seem to be a small show of faith, Moses picks up the snake by its tail and it returns to being a wooden staff. Note that Moses had just run from the snake so he must have a dislike towards serpents. For Moses to even attempt to get close would show faith that God was in control of the situation. If this was a cobra, how many of us would be willing to try and pick it up by the tail?

The second sign Moses was to show the Israelites was a disease called leprosy. This terrible ailment caused your flesh to dry up, become white and then flake off. Sometimes, lepers would even lose fingers or toes. When Moses put his hand inside his cloak and brought it out, his hand was white and flaky. This would not be just a little bit of a shock or terror for Moses. When God told him to put his hand back in the cloak he did so and his hand was healed. Moses was experiencing first hand God’s power, and in so doing, his trust in God began to grow as well. However, Moses is still not convinced that he wants to be the one for this job. One more evidence that miracles cannot produce faith.

Some interesting symbolism that may also have been implied with this leprosy is that Israel would become unclean or even thought themselves to be dead (Num 12:12), and later would be cleansed or healed. The bosom of Abraham was considered to be the resting place of Israel. Perhaps here, too, the bosom of Moses. The hand has been said to represent the Israelite nation. Whether this symbolism is warranted by the text or not, there is no question that Israel would become leprous and diseased to God, but He would cleanse them with the blood of Jesus as they would be brought to Christ’s bosom. If Moses is a type of Christ, this symbolism may be worth noting. After all, Isaiah says of Christ, “He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart” (Isa 40:11). See also Numbers 11:11-12.

Exo 4:8 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. 9 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land. 10 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

A third sign involved the Nile river, or the god Osiris to the Egyptians. Moses was told that he could take a bowl of water and pour it onto the ground. As soon as the water would hit the ground it would become blood. This particular miracle Moses would have to just have faith in because he would not get to try it out ahead of time.

Moses, becoming more scared, said he was not an eloquent speaker. In fact, he was even “slow in speech.” Some have hypothesized that Moses stuttered. Although this could be possible, there is no real support for this in the Bible. In fact, the opposite seems to be the case: “Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action” (Acts 7:22). Rather, his slowness in speech could attest to the humility God had given him these last forty years in the desert. It certainly seems to show God’s power because in verse 11 we will see that God can give one power in speech even if he doesn’t currently have it.

It is interesting that Paul was also an “unimpressive” speaker it seems, “For some say, ‘His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing’” (2 Cor 10:10). The power is not in our words or wisdom, rather it comes from God’s Word. If we read or voice the Scriptures, there is an unseen power at work. It does not need to be eloquent or powerful, only present. Besides, we have a promise: “the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous” (Psa 146:8).

Exo 4:11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? 12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. 13 And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. 14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. 15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. 16 And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. 17 And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.

If God made the ears and mouth, He can certainly make the words come out of the mouth. When Moses would speak it wouldn't be his words, but Gods: "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put My words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him" (Deu 18:18). As Isaiah professed, "The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught" (Isa 50:4). Jeremiah also had a similar experience, "Then the LORD reached out His hand and touched my mouth and said to me, 'Now, I have put My words in your mouth'" (Jer 1:9). And what peace we can have in our witness and confession that we too have the same promise, "But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Mat 10:19-20).

Despite these promises, Moses didn't want to go. Isn't that so typical of our lives today? God has called us as well, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Rom 8:28). What are we called to do, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Mat 28:19). Do we, like Moses, say, "please send someone else?" It is often easier to pull out the checkbook and let someone else be the missionary rather than we ourselves do the proclaiming and spreading to all nations. We want others to go out and do our job for us. Verse thirteen has become our theme in life, whether it be in witnessing, serving or just plain working at our jobs.

Note God's response to Moses' rejection of his call. God provided someone for Moses to use, but He was angry. Moses would give Aaron the words and Aaron would pass them on, however, God would help BOTH of them to speak according to verse 15. After all, both of them were chosen, "He sent Moses His servant, and Aaron, whom He had chosen" (Psa 105:26).

It is also interesting that verse 16 tells us that God will make Pharaoh see Moses and Aaron as gods. It would seem to be a miracle that Moses and Aaron were allowed to even speak to pharaoh. No ordinary man would have had the opportunity to even come into pharaoh's presence. But because Moses was like a god, pharaoh felt compelled to listen. It is rather strange that pharaoh didn't obey when he had such a high view of Moses. Respect of God is not the same as obedience, nor is knowledge the same as faith. Many today think that if they believe in God they are saved. Not true! Pharaoh believed in God but would not listen or obey Him. James says, "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder" (James 2:19). Faith involves a personal, trusting relationship with the Lord, not simply a knowledge based acknowledgment of His presence.

Exo 4:18 And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace. 19 And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go,

return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life. 20 And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

Moses went down the mountain and back to Jethro. It is interesting that Moses seemed to be sly about his request to go back to Egypt. Perhaps Moses thought that Jethro might find him a little strange if he told him that God had spoke from a burning bush. This seems improbable since Jethro was a religious priest, yet even today we often have doubts about spiritual experiences. In any case, Jethro honors Moses request to “check up on” the Israelites.

The reason God came to Moses at this time was because the Pharaoh who wanted to kill Moses (2:15) was now dead. The harvest was ripe and the time was now. It is interesting that Moses, the deliverer, had to flee from Egypt because someone wanted his life. Likewise, Christ, our Deliverer, as a child had to flee to Egypt because Herod wanted to kill him. Once Herod had died, the angel told Joseph, “Get up, take the Child and His mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the Child’s life are dead” (Mat 2:20).

Moses did not go alone. Zipporah his wife, and Gershom (2:22) and Eliezer (18:4), his sons, also went with him, though we will hear nothing of them while they are in Egypt. In fact, we hear nothing of Eliezer until chapter 18 but we know he was born while Moses lived in Midian. In Acts Stephen also testifies that Moses had two sons while in Midian (Acts 7:29). He also brought along the all important staff. Note that it was not the staff of Moses but the staff of God showing the power was not in the staff, but in God.

Exo 4:21 And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. 22 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: 23 And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.

As what seems to be not such an encouragement, God told Moses that Pharaoh would not listen, but be sure to perform the miracles in front of him anyway. In the section on 3:21 we discussed how these miracles were signs for the world, not just Pharaoh. Also, God was giving Pharaoh every chance to repent before He passed judgment on him. God will not only harden Pharaoh’s heart once or twice, not even three or four times, but nine times it is mentioned in Exodus (7:3; 9:12; 10:1,20,27; 11:10; 14:4,8). In addition to these nine where it says God hardened Pharaoh’s heart, there are another nine times where God tells us Pharaoh hardened his own heart (7:13-14; 7:22; 8:15,19,32; 9:7,34,35). It isn’t until the sixth plague that Scripture says God stepped in and hardened Pharaoh’s heart as He promised to Moses here.

Israel was God’s firstborn son. We read in Jeremiah, “They will come with weeping; they will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble, because I am Israel’s father, and Ephraim is My firstborn son” (Jer 31:9). God said in Hosea,

“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son” (Hos 11:1). The crucial point here is that if Israel is God’s firstborn, God is our Father. Isaiah said, “But You are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is Your Name” (Isa 63:16). The Israelites failed to recognize this relationship though God had not forgotten. God even later told the Israelites, “I Myself said, ‘How gladly would I treat you like sons and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation.’ I thought you would call Me ‘Father’ and not turn away from following Me. But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you have been unfaithful to Me, O house of Israel” (Jer 3:19-20). So too, we today often expect God to take care of us like a father loves a son, yet we do not recognize Him as our Father. We do not give Him respect, listen to Him, or love Him as a father is loved. We live our lives with teenager attitudes that parents don’t know what they are talking about, their rules are restrictive and not important, we can take care of ourselves and can’t wait to be on our own. God forbid that will ever happen. We have the same promise the Israelites had – heaven. Sometimes the journey to get there isn’t easy and often times there are trials and temptations along the way, but God is faithful and He will always provide if you let Him. Always remember, “Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you. Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in His ways and revering Him. For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land--a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills” (Deu 8:5-7).

Because Pharaoh would not let God’s son go, God would take the life of Pharaoh’s firstborn, the heir to the throne. This will not happen until the last plague on Egypt, but it foreshadows one of the most important events in Exodus – Passover. This promise was not something that one would easily forget about and must have been ever present in the mind of Pharaoh, but his heart was hardened and he would not listen. Not until 11:5 and 12:12, after Pharaoh has lost all but his own life, does he let the Israelites go, yet even then he will not repent.

Exo 4:24 And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him. 25 Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. 26 So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.

Verse 24 is a surprising yet understandable incident. God was going to kill Moses much like He was going to kill Balaam (Nu 22:22) because He is a just God. Back in Genesis God had made a covenant with His people saying that He would be their God, their Deliverer and Savior. As a sign of this great promise He spoke to Abraham and said, “You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner--those who are not your offspring. Whether born in your household or bought

with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, **will be cut off from his people**; he has broken My covenant” (Gen 17:11-14). To be uncircumcised was a serious matter and Moses had ignored this covenant by leaving his own son uncircumcised. Being circumcised was a prerequisite for the Passover meal that would later be celebrated (Ex 12:48). Without circumcision (God’s covenant) the Passover (salvation through the sacrificial Lamb of God) was not for you. Moses knew this. In fact, even Zipporah knew this. How Zipporah knew that the Lord was going to kill Moses we do not know, but she took a flint knife and quickly circumcised her son and then touched Moses feet with the foreskin.

The fact that Zipporah referred to circumcision as a “bridegroom of blood to me” shows the importance of circumcision for the wife. Moses having been circumcised meant that his wife was also under the covenant. God tells us that “the two become one flesh” in marriage (Gen 2:24). Christ is the bridegroom of blood for US. Apart from His faithfulness to His covenant we would be dead eternally.

It should be noted that flint knives do not mean primitive. In fact, they have proven to be sharper than metal ones and for surgical procedures like this, would have been much better.

We are not sure when Zipporah went back to her father, but many commentators believe it was at this point. We are not told why she goes back but must assume so since she isn’t in Egypt with Moses and does not meet with him again until after the Exodus (Ex 18:5).

Exo 4:27 And the LORD said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. 28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him. 29 And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: 30 And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. 31 And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

These last verses seem to be a summary of the chapter, or they may have actually taken place before verse 14 because there we were told that Aaron was already on his way to meet Moses. Also, Moses had already left the mountain and went to Jethro to get his blessing in leaving (v. 18).

Aaron went to meet Moses because the Lord had told him to. Whether or not they had seen one another since Moses fled we are not told, but they were grateful to see one another. Once Moses filled Aaron in on what he was to do and say they immediately moved on to obey.

When Moses and Aaron had reached Egypt they gathered all the elders together and Aaron began speaking and displaying miracles for Moses who was speaking for God. The elders not only believed, but were filled with joy knowing that the living Lord was concerned about them. Realizing that He is a

personal and loving God, a God who is near and not far away, they began worshipping God in great humility. Likewise, we too can realize that God hears our prayers and sees our misery. He does not ignore us, but is answering your prayers the moment you ask (and sometimes even before you ask). The problem is we don't always see the big picture and our prayers are answered in ways and at times that we wouldn't think of. After all: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa 55:9).

Aaron had told the Israelites everything the Lord had told Moses. That means they must have known that Pharaoh would not listen right away. Despite this, the next chapter will show that they did not take this part of the message to heart. Instead, they only heard the part that the "Lord will deliver." When it doesn't happen right away, the people become obstinate and angry with Moses, even though they had been warned that Pharaoh wouldn't listen.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 4

- 1) Why did Moses run from the snake?
- 2) What was this serpent a symbol of?
- 3) Besides simply grabbing it by the tail, how did Moses subdue the serpent? What is the serpent of your life? How can you subdue it?
- 4) What do Paul and Moses have in common?
- 5) Moses was told to go and evangelize just as you have been told. Find similarities between you and Moses.
- 6) How did Pharaoh view Moses?
- 7) Who went with Moses to Egypt?
- 8) Why was God going to kill Moses?

Exodus Chapter 5

Exo 5:1 And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. 2 And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go. 3 And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. 4 And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.

Once Aaron and Moses had filled the Israelites in on God's plan, they went to Pharaoh to tell him the same message. Verse two tells us why God was going to bring such great plagues upon Egypt: "But if any nation does not listen, I will completely uproot and destroy it," declares the LORD" (Jer 12:17). This was a divine judgment upon a country that knew not the Lord. Pharaoh was unwilling to listen to God, and worse yet, wouldn't let others follow Him either. God will not let any nation which does so go unpunished. Even Israel, when they rejected God, was punished: "Should I not punish them for this?" declares the LORD. "Should I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?" (Jer 5:9)? If Pharaoh would have only repented and listened to Moses, Egypt may have remained strong to this day: "If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned" (Jer 18:7-8). Nor is Egypt the only country this has happened to. Many nations were destroyed much like Egypt. One example was Moab: "Moab will be destroyed as a nation because she defied the LORD" (Jer 48:42). I fear that another example yet to come may be the United States of America. Because we are shedding innocent blood daily in abortion clinics around the country. Because we continue to have officials (that we put into office) that are ungodly and yet falsely claim to be Christian. Because violence and immorality flourish. Because sexual promiscuity and homosexuality are rampant. Because God as Creator is being denied even among churches. Because of all these things and much more, God has told us that Sodom's destruction was to serve as an example of what would happen to others that followed their pattern: "In a

similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings. But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!' Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals--these are the very things that destroy them" (Jude 1:7-10).

Pharaoh, like our leaders, did not know who the Lord was. Of course he knew of the Lord. One can't have nearly two million slaves who worship the Lord without knowing of Him. Pharaoh just didn't accept Him. As James says, "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder" (James 2:19). It takes more than knowledge of God to be saved from the coming destruction.

At first, Moses told Pharaoh they wanted to take a three day journey to worship God. Had Pharaoh listened and turned to the Lord, God's people would maybe have been freed while Egypt still grew. However, God knew Pharaoh's heart and, therefore, the plagues and destruction were inevitable.

Pharaoh's motivation for life seems to have been based on material things. He was more worried about progress being slowed down than some God of the slaves. Likewise when Israel does leave Egypt it is the realization that their "services" were gone that cause Pharaoh to pursue them. How many Christians today are blind to Christ because they only have eyes for money and that which it can buy? So many distractions only keep us from true joy and happiness. Consider Christ's Words: "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed" (Luke 17:26-30). Note that people were too busy for God. Eating, drinking, planting, buying and selling are not bad things, but getting caught up in these activities while neglecting God is a bad thing. We see the same thing with the parable of the wedding banquet. When people are invited to Christ's Holy Feast, they will have other "more important" things they would rather do. Luke recorded, "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come'" (Luke 14:16-20). Be careful not to let someone's services or financial things get in the way of your faith walk or you may find out, as Egypt did, it is all gone.

Exo 5:5 And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. 6 And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, 7 Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8 And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. 9 Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words. 10 And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. 11 Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished. 12 So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. 13 And the taskmasters hasted them, saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw. 14 And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and to day, as heretofore?

Out of spite, Pharaoh responded to Moses and Aaron by giving the Israelites more work to do. Pharaoh, not understanding the Gospel, tried to make the law change the Israelite's attitude. Little does he know how God works: "Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees" (Isa 10:1).

The work the Israelites were required to do was to gather the straw that was mixed with the clay and acted as a binder when making bricks. The foremen, who were told to pass this message along, were Israelites. This worked well for the Egyptians because the people were more willing to listen to one of their own people. Not to mention the fact that if the slaves didn't do their job the foremen got a beating. If compassion didn't motivate them to work, the beatings I am sure motivated the foremen to become true slave drivers.

Pharaoh knew the Israelites were not lazy, but by punishing them he had hoped that they would no longer make such ridiculous requests. If it wasn't for Moses, this plan may have worked.

Exo 5:15 Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? 16 There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people. 17 But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the LORD. 18 Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks.

The foremen had no choice but to confront Pharaoh because of the unrealistic expectation put on them. Instead of finding relief, Pharaoh simply reiterated what he had said before – you are lazy.

Little did Pharaoh know that this is exactly what God had planned. The Israelites should have recalled God's Word to Abraham: "Then the LORD said to him, 'Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years'" (Gen 15:13). Their being mistreated was reaching its climax and things were about to change. Not only was Pharaoh becoming more stubborn, but the Israelites were becoming more distressed. As often happens, God allows us to become as hopeless and desperate as one can get before stepping in to save. I can think of many times in my life when I tried and tried to work a situation out, but it wasn't until I finally gave up that God stepped in and basically said, "That is all I wanted – for you to surrender it all to ME." The sooner the Israelites would put their full trust in God, the sooner this mess would go away. If God didn't refine their faith while in Egypt they would never make it through the desert. As it was, most didn't make it through the desert because they never learned from their mistakes in Egypt. God not only wanted his people out of Egypt, but He wanted Egypt out of the people.

Exo 5:19 And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task. 20 And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: 21 And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.

Verse nineteen shows the utter desperation God was looking for. Finally, the Israelites realized they were in trouble, much more than they had thought. Pharaoh had put unrealistic expectations upon them and if they didn't do them they would die. They needed a deliverer! This is an exact model of our lives. We, too, were born into the slavery of our sinful nature and unrealistic expectations were put on us through the law. We needed someone not only to deliver us from our sin, but from the law. The only way we could accomplish this was to give up and offer it all to God who sent His Son and, "He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross" (Col 2:14).

Without a deliver we were expected to meet all the requirements of the law: "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it" (James 2:10). But for those who believe and trust in the Lord, "Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes" (Rom 10:4).

As the foremen left Pharaoh they met Moses and Aaron. Ironically, they had enough faith that God would judge Moses, but not enough faith that God could deliver them. A good friend of mine after quitting a job was out of work and not sure where he would go. I asked him what he was going to do and he replied, "Brian, I don't know but I am not worried about it. The way I figure it, if I can't trust God with my job, how can I trust Him with my salvation." What a witness! If these foremen couldn't trust God for their deliverance, their

God wouldn't have the power to judge. How discouraging this must have been for Moses and Aaron, seeing what little faith God's people had. Unfortunately, things won't change much, even in the desert.

The foremen saw Moses as the one who had made them a stench to Pharaoh, when in fact, it was God who was responsible. As discussed earlier, God was not only giving Pharaoh every opportunity to repent, but He was also preparing the faith of His people for their journey. God brought forth trouble that His grace and mercy might be all the greater. God brought forth the law that His grace might be lifted up. As Paul wrote, "The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 5:20-21).

Exo 5:22 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? 23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

Once again, when Moses thought the people would follow him, they seemingly reject him. In fact, this will be the story of his life. Things will not change as the people will forever complain and blame Moses and God for their troubles, which is why they will not enter the promised land, and perhaps heaven: "It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience. . . That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known My ways.' So I declared on oath in My anger, 'They shall never enter My rest'" (Heb 4:6,10-11).

Note, however, that the people rejecting him is not what bothers Moses. He isn't worried that trouble has come upon him, instead, he is bothered by the fact that the Israelites are being brought low and have not yet been rescued. What a difference from the "please send someone else" attitude Moses earlier had. This gives us a glimpse into the selflessness Moses will display many times throughout the desert wanderings.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 5

- 1) Compare the leaders of today to Pharaoh.
- 2) What does Luke 17:26-30 have to do with Pharaoh? Does this apply to you today? Why or why not?
- 3) Use these three words to make a spiritual connection to your life today: Moses, law, Deliverer.

Exodus Chapter 6

Exo 6:1 Then the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. 2 And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: 3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. 4 And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. 5 And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant.

God answered Moses telling him that now things were about to change. It seems that Pharaoh's heart was becoming like stone. Interestingly, God says that Pharaoh will not just send them away, but "drive" them away.

God also told Moses that the "I am" who appeared to his forefathers is also their "Lord." This is significant because the difference between "God" (*Elohim*) and "Lord" (*Yahweh*) is traced throughout all of the Old Testament. "God" is the impersonal Creator God, but "Lord" is the personal covenant God. Throughout Genesis, when Joseph was talking to the Egyptians he would refer to the "I am" as God. When speaking to his family it was "Lord." God is only "Lord" of those who believe in His name and what He has done for them. That is why, "Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3). The Jews understood that the "Lord" was their salvation. So while God is God to even the unbeliever, He is only Lord to those who believe.

The significance of "Lord" being used here shows that God will be faithful to His promise of keeping His covenant. Some like to say the Bible contradicts itself because of verse three. The "I am" was Lord of Abraham and Isaac, but the text seems to say that God never introduced Himself as such to them when it says, "but by My Name the Lord I did not make Myself known to them." In the Hebrew text there is no punctuation and this had to be added in for the English reader. What the text really says, and this makes much more sense in context, is "but by My Name the Lord **did I** not make Myself known to them? One need only switch around "I did" to "did I" and put a question mark rather than a period after the sentence and a complete different meaning is seen. God just said that He was the "Lord" of their forefathers and, therefore, is basically saying, "Didn't I promise them deliverance? Didn't I make it known

to them that I was their personal God? Of course I am going to save them, I am their Lord. I even made a covenant with them that they would possess the land of Canaan. Even more than keeping My promise, I have heard their groans and sufferings and I do not desire to see My people in bondage. I remember who I am and you are about to see it too.” Even the New Testament writers understood God’s promise, “He gave [Abraham] no inheritance here, not even a foot of ground. But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child. God spoke to him in this way: ‘Your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves,’ God said, ‘and afterward they will come out of that country and worship Me in this place’” (Acts 7:5-7).

Likewise, this promise also is for us today: “The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say ‘and to seeds,’ meaning many people, but ‘and to your seed,’ meaning one person, who is Christ” (Gal 3:16). Christ is our Deliverer and He will lead us into our promised land of heaven. Even Abraham waited not for the Exodus, but for heaven: “By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Heb 11:9-10). The fact that God doesn’t forget His covenant is a great comfort for me because He has made many promises for us today. When times are rough and one is down, we need only remember God’s faithfulness to His promises to keep our eyes on things above. What comfort and joy that His faithfulness can bring to the downtrodden heart.

God continually attempts to show the people what “Lord” means, but they continually deny Him as their Lord. Every time God would deliver His people it was evidence that He was their personal caregiver and provider. There are dozens of examples showing God’s personal care. A few follow: “My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. They will not belong to the council of My people or be listed in the records of the house of Israel, nor will they enter the land of Israel. **Then you will know** that I am the Sovereign LORD. **Because** they lead My people astray, saying, ‘Peace,’ when there is no peace, and because, when a flimsy wall is built, they cover it with whitewash, therefore tell those who cover it with whitewash that it is going to fall” (Ezek 13:9-11). “You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will My people be shamed. *Then you will know* that I am in Israel, *that I am the LORD* your God, and that there is no other; never again will My people be shamed” (Joel 2:26-27). If the people didn’t understand the meaning of Lord completely, they were about to experience His love personally. Whether they would accept this experience personally or not was a different story.

Exo 6:6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: 7 And I will take you to me for a people,

and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.

The true meaning of “Lord” as Redeemer is seen since He will deliver, free and redeem the Israelites. In so doing God will be both Lion and Lamb, Redeemer and Judge. With an outstretched welcoming and protecting arm He will redeem Israel, but with a mighty acts of Judgment He will destroy Egypt.

Not only will God rescue them, but He will not abandon them when it is all over. He will be their God and they will be His people. By their deliverance they would know this to be true and not some false prophecy. Also, the fulfillment of this would come shortly after their deliverance when God would speak to them on Mount Sinai. Unfortunately, they did not want to hear God’s voice, let alone listen to it. Once in the promised land they would know that God is faithful to His promises, even those of long ago. But sometimes knowledge is not good enough. One needs to accept it. The psalmist wrote, “I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it. But My people would not listen to Me; Israel would not submit to Me” (Psa 81:10-11).

Likewise, we wait for our delivery into our promised land. Though it seems like a long time, we will always be prepared like the widows with oil. Those who did not prepare, but grew tired of waiting, were not able to enter their promised land, “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’ But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you’” (Mat 25:10-12).

One of my favorite things about these verses is their connection with the Passover meal. God’s Word was prophetic here and is still repeated every Spring by both Messianic and non-Christian Jew alike for their celebration of Passover. I believe most Christians today do not fully understand Christianity, partly because we do not understand Judaism. I find it interesting that the early disciples never had the New Testament to tell others of Christ. They only had the Old Testament which the Jews would call the Tenach. Unfortunately, the very words “Old Testament” imply that the content therein is old and outdated or at least finished. One could be no more misled. On Pentecost of Acts 2 we see over 3000 souls were saved by hearing about Jesus from the Old Testament. The Old Testament speaks more clearly of Jesus than much of the New Testament; especially when understanding the Jewish Feasts that were given by God and commanded to be “lasting” ordinances (Ex 12:14,17,24). The modern Christian church has made it an “old ordinance.” Now before you turn me off please hear me out.

During the time of Jesus, on the tenth day of the first month of Nisan, the High Priest would walk from the temple mount out the city gate leaving behind him a long row of priests who would mark a trail from the city gate all the way to the Temple. Passover was one of the required feasts, meaning all

Jews had to go to Jerusalem to celebrate it as God commanded. Meanwhile, the High Priest went outside the city and picked out a lamb without blemish and would bring it to the gate. Once the lamb reached the gate, one of the priests would cry out, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" and everyone along the whole line would begin yelling out the same thing in unison. Now Jerusalem was literally bulging with people in every home and hotel. When they heard this cry, each one would grab their palm branches and run to the path already marked by the priests, and when the High Priest went by, they would cry out the same words and lay down their palm branches while the lamb was led up to the Temple Mount.

Let's examine this before moving on. Jesus, our High Priest and the Lamb of God, rode on a donkey on the tenth day of the first month, the very day the High Priest was doing the above mentioned. When Jesus reached the gate people began crying out the same phrase they repeated every year without fully understanding its true meaning (Mark 11:9). (Sounds like some churches I have been to). The Pharisees tried to get the disciples and the people to stop crying this out because it was ruining the "traditional" Passover ritual. Jesus replied by saying, "If they keep quiet, the stones will cry out" (Luke 19:39-40).

Next the lamb was to be taken and tied up on the temple mount to be examined for the next three days by every Scribe and Pharisee to make sure this lamb was without blemish. If it was, on the fourth day it was to become the Passover lamb, which was the 14th day of the first month. At 3:00 in the afternoon, the High Priest would say "I thirst" and was given a glass of wine to drink. He then would say, "It is finished" as he killed the lamb. This lamb had to be put in the oven before sundown without any of its bones being broken.

Where did Jesus go after His triumphant entry? To the temple mount where the lamb was to be taken (Mark 11:11). Like this lamb, Jesus was also examined by the Scribes and Pharisees for the next three days until, at the end of which, He was proclaimed to be "unblemished" by Pilate who said, "I find no basis for a charge against Him" (John 18:38). Jesus also cried out "I thirst" (John 19:29), and "It is finished" (John 19:30) before giving up His own life silently as a lamb is quiet before its shearers (Acts 8:38). And as on the Passover lamb, not a bone was broken (John 19:36).

Furthering this incredible fulfillment of God's Passover, the High Priest would go into seclusion for the next three days not to be seen or touched by anyone. When these days were over he then went to offer the first fruit offering to God in the temple. Likewise, Jesus was in the secluded grave for three days, and upon rising, told Mary not to handle Him because He had not yet ascended to the Father (John 20:17). Just as the priest was to make the first fruit offering, Jesus was that offering, "So in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: *Christ, the first fruits*; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him" (1 Cor 15:22-23). Not only was Christ the first fruit Himself but He also offered the believers to His father as first fruits as well. Revelation says, "They follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as first fruits to God and the Lamb" (Rev 14:4, see also James 1:18).

Obviously, without an understanding of the God given festivals the completeness of Jesus and prophecy cannot be understood. Perhaps we should not call these the Jewish festivals because they were not just for the Jews. They

only came to the Jew first, but now we have become engrafted branches (Rom 11:17). When a branch is grafted into another tree it doesn't change the tree, the branch is changed. Are we trying to change the tree by ignoring the festivals of God? Let us look at Easter for a moment. Is that described in the Bible? No! So how did it come about? The word was adopted from pagans and was celebrated long before Christ walked the earth. It was celebrated by the Assyrians, Phoenicians and even the Philistines. Look it up in a dictionary or two and you will see I am not making this up. The festival involved the "Rites of Spring" near the Equinox of Venus when it was believed that the Earth mother was impregnated by the Sun (Go to Carls bad caverns and you will hear the same thing). They engaged in ritual sex acts and used fertility symbols like eggs and rabbits and baked round cakes to the Queen of the Heavens. To ensure a good growing season, pagans then decorated eggs and hid them from the evil spirits.

According to the 1934 Britannica Encyclopedia under EASTER it says, "Ostara, or Eastre, was the goddess of Spring in the religion of the ancient Angles and Saxons. Every April a festival was celebrated in her honor. With the beginnings of Christianity, the old gods were put aside. From then on the festival was celebrated in honor of the resurrection of Christ, but was still known as Easter after the old goddess." That is interesting when God's Word says, "Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their *Asherah poles* in the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and *wipe out their names* from those places" (Deut 12:3). How did we corrupt the church so much with Easter? It started with Constantine I in 325 A.D. when 220 bishops gathered to establish common practices in the Nicene Council and universalized the Roman Catholic Church. However, it also rooted us in Paganism with a Christian twist. Constantine gave us the term "Sunday" which was also called *Sol Invictus Mithras* (the day of the unconquerable sun, Mithras). In 321 AD he made a decree that anyone working on the day of the Sun (Mithras) would be put to death. Monday was so named after the moon and really means the "day of the Moon." Tuesday is the "day of Tiu," a deity of war. Wednesday was Well, Duh or "Woden's Day," a deity skilled in magic. Thursday was "Thor's day" a son of Woden and a deity of thunder. Friday was "Frey day," the wife of Woden. Saturday was the "Day of Saturn," a deity for agriculture. Even the pagan months were labeled by Constantine with March (Mars), April (Aprilis, the month of Venus), May (fertility god Maia), June (Juno, a female deity), July (named after Julius Caesar who was thought to be a god), August (named after Augustus Caesar, also viewed as a god). I think you get the picture. Constantine allowed Paganism to infiltrate our society by "Christianizing" it. In order to unify the entire kingdom he allowed the Christians to "add" God to the pagan rituals and thereby pleased both sides. This may be very new to many reading this book but I ask that you do not take my word for it, check it out for yourself. Though I do not agree with all of the theological ideas in the book, an excellent understanding of the past can be achieved by reading Fossilized Customs by Lew White.

I am not trying to tell you to not celebrate Easter, I simply want you to see how the world has blinded us to certain truths of Scripture. Doesn't the celebration of Passover fit Christ's death and resurrection so much better than

our Easter? So why don't we celebrate it? Probably because we have never taken the time to research it. Remember, God did say it was a "lasting ordinance."

Some of you may think I have gone off on a tangent. Well, I had to in order for you to truly understand the verses we are discussing because they will deal directly with Passover and Christ TODAY.

When the Passover meal is celebrated there are four cups of wine used. Jesus would have used the same four cups when He celebrated the Passover. All four are taken from these verses in Exodus 6 from God's promises. They are as follows:

1. Cup of Sanctification – we are brought out from the yoke of slavery.
2. Cup of Judgment – we are freed by God's judgment of the enemy.
3. Cup of Redemption – we are redeemed by God.
4. Cup of the Kingdom – we are taken as God's people.

In verses 6-7 there are four main "I will" promises of God. I will put the number of the cup by each statement in the following section of these repeated verses. **"I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians (cup 1). I will free you from being slaves to them (cup 2), and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm (cup 3) and with mighty acts of judgment. 6:7 I will take you as my own people (cup 4), and I will be your God.** Keep in mind, I am not interpreting this. This understanding has been practiced for centuries all the way back to the Exodus as Jewish records clearly show. Two of the cups of wine are drunk before dinner and two are drunk after dinner in the Passover celebration. In examining the Gospels we see that what we call the Lord's Supper, is really the Passover celebration. Jesus says in Luke "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:15-16). Note that the Passover meal will find "fulfillment" later in the kingdom of God. (This is going to be the 4th cup). Then in verse 17 Luke states, "After taking the cup, He gave thanks and said, 'Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes'" Since there were two cups before the meal, we see the Gospels do not record the first cup, but here the second cup is discussed and Jesus said He will not drink again until He does so in the kingdom of God. This is the great wedding banquet of the Lamb in Revelation 19, and once again, is the predicted fourth cup. Luke continues, "And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body given for you; do this in remembrance of Me'" (Luke 22:19). This was the second cup, or the Cup of Judgment, that symbolized our freedom from the enemy of sin and the law through the body of Christ. Luke then says, "In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you'" (Luke 22:20). Here was the third cup of redemption that Jesus did not yet drink as He said back in verse 17. You will see why in a moment. Luke does not record the fourth cup being drunk, probably because of the foreshadowing of the fact that this cup symbolizes the future wedding banquet of the lamb.

Now lets go to the Garden of Gethsemane where we see Luke giving us further insight when Jesus prays, “Father, if you are willing, *take this cup from Me*; yet not My will, but Yours be done” (Luke 22:42-43). What cup was Jesus talking about? The third cup. The one he did not drink yet. The cup of Redemption that God promised, “I will redeem you with an outstretched arm.” Jesus was talking of the cross where He would outstretch His arms to redeem us. It is because of this redemption that Jesus now waits for us in heaven to drink the fourth and final cup with us, where here in Exodus, God promised that we would be His people and He would be our God.

Though we have only scratched the surface of the significance of the Passover I believe this is enough to show that the Passover is NOT completely fulfilled, and it is certainly not an out-of-date festival. I personally look forward to the fourth cup and as my family and I celebrate the Passover each year it is a great source of joy for us to remember the hope of our Lord’s second coming. I pray that this may spark some interest into the other Jewish Festivals as each one is very significant. Jesus was the Passover Lamb on the very day of Passover. He was the buried bread on the exact day of Unleavened Bread. The first fruits on the exact day of First fruits. The Holy Spirit was given on the exact day of Pentecost (The Jewish festival called Shavuot). It only stands to reason that the remaining four Jewish feasts have future significance as I believe the Scriptures indicate as well.

Exo 6:9 And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage. 10 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 11 Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land. 12 And Moses spake before the LORD, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?

The Israelites did not listen to Moses because they were too caught up in themselves to give attention to Moses. They still did not believe that God was speaking through him. Right now their own troubles were more important than figuring out who Moses really was. Besides, going back to what it was like before Moses came would be better than their present situation. Without faith in God and without Moses, His mediator, continued bondage is exactly where they were headed.

Isn’t this so typical of our lives? When trouble comes we pray, but when God doesn’t answer as we think He should, we try to fix our problems ourselves rather than letting God take the wheel. I personally can think of many examples in my life where I wanted something that I thought was best. I tried and tried to make my situation better (usually by getting out of my present situation) myself. It wasn’t until I became content wherever I was and surrendered it all over to God that He stepped in and accomplished what I had failed to do on my own. God wants us to stop and give it all over to Him. Sometimes it just takes a while for us to do that.

When God told Moses to go back to Pharaoh and command that he let the Israelites go, Moses was unsure. After all, if the Israelites wouldn’t listen

when they had every reason to believe, why would Pharaoh listen when he had no reason to believe? To make matters worse, Moses was still mindful of his “faltering lips.” (See section on 4:10 for more on this). Even Moses still showed lack of faith in a slightly different way than the Israelites, but this would soon change. Moses should have remembered back in 4:11 where God told him that if He made man, He made man’s mouth and can control his words. The difference here is that Moses listens and follows God’s command despite hesitation, whereas the Israelites ignore it.

Exo 6:13 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. 14 These be the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel; Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi: these be the families of Reuben. 15 And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman: these are the families of Simeon. 16 And these are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari: and the years of the life of Levi were an hundred thirty and seven years. 17 The sons of Gershon; Libni, and Shimi, according to their families. 18 And the sons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel: and the years of the life of Kohath were an hundred thirty and three years. 19 And the sons of Merari; Mahali and Mushi: these are the families of Levi according to their generations. 20 And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years. 21 And the sons of Izhar; Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri. 22 And the sons of Uzziel; Mishael, and Elzaphan, and Zithri. 23 And Aaron took him Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Naashon, to wife; and she bare him Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 24 And the sons of Korah; Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph: these are the families of the Korhites. 25 And Eleazar Aaron's son took him one of the daughters of Putiel to wife; and she bare him Phinehas: these are the heads of the fathers of the Levites according to their families. 26 These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies. 27 These are they which spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these are that Moses and Aaron. 28 And it came to pass on the day when the LORD spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt, 29 That the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I am the LORD: speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee. 30 And Moses said before the LORD, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?

God spoke to Moses and Aaron reassuring them that He was God. Pharaoh would have no choice and now Moses and Aaron didn’t either. God had commanded them to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. What God said to Moses and Aaron was not recorded, but it must have been encouraging as I am sure God would be quite the motivational speaker.

Next we see a genealogy of the first three sons of Jacob. All twelve were not given because this is more for the sake of Moses and Aaron. Since they both come from the third tribe, it stops there. Although this list seems to be given to trace us to Moses and Aaron, there is more than that. This list not only gives us the origin of the Levites, who will become priests, but it also helps us in keeping the lineage that will bring us to Christ, the ultimate focus of all of Scripture.

Some of the names listed are of Egyptian origin (Merari, Putiel and Phinehas) showing these people were taking upon the Egyptian culture into their lives. As said earlier, God didn't just want the Israelites out of Egypt, He wanted Egypt out of the Israelites. It won't be long after they are delivered that they go back to the Egyptian culture and worship the golden calf, an Egyptian god. God wants us to be set apart from the rest of the world and to have nothing to do with their practices. Consider the following verses:

- “Keep My requirements and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practiced before you came and do not defile yourselves with them. I am the LORD your God” (Lev 18:30).
- “Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character” (1 Cor 15:33).
- “But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat” (1 Cor 5:11).
- “So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach” (Mat 23:3).
- “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--His good, pleasing and perfect will” (Rom 12:2).

So that no one can mistake it, this genealogy shows the exact timing of Aaron and Moses. Once more it is pointed out that Moses has doubts about a ruthless king lending an ear to a lowly man like himself. But this will make God's deliverance all the more Divine: “But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him” (1 Cor 1:27-29).

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 6

- 1) Explain why God said that He had not revealed Himself to the Israelites by the Name of the “Lord” yet.

- 2) What does the promised land symbolize for us today? Moses? Pharaoh? Slavery?
- 3) How many cups were drunk during Passover? What does each one symbolize?
- 4) List the four “I will” promises of Passover? Where do these come from?
- 5) List 6 comparisons to Jesus and the Passover celebration.
- 6) Who is represented by the Asherah Pole?
- 7) Where did the days of the week come from and what do they mean?
- 8) What does Constantine have to do with Easter?
- 9) What is the origin of Easter?
- 10) Which cup of Passover was represented by the cross? What “I will” promise told of this cup? What does the Garden of Gethsemane have to do with this cup?
- 11) When is the fourth cup of Passover to be drunk? Is the significance of Passover finished today?
- 12) Why is Passover not “Jewish?”
- 13) List three Scripture verses that speak of God’s desire for us to separate ourselves from the ways of this world.

Exodus Chapter 7

Exo 7:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. 2 Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. 3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. 5 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. 6 And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they.

God was going to make Moses like a god to Pharaoh, which is probably why Moses is allowed to live and go unpunished throughout the plagues. Aaron was to serve as Moses' prophet. Therefore, in this case, God would speak to Moses and Moses would pass it along to Aaron, who would then speak to Pharaoh. Much like other Old Testament prophets, Aaron was still to serve as God's voice to Pharaoh. The only problem is Pharaoh didn't recognize Moses as a true prophet of God, only a god.

God warned them ahead of time that Pharaoh wouldn't listen. God would harden Pharaoh's heart so that even miraculous signs would have no affect. Therefore, God is telling Moses and Aaron, "don't be discouraged if he doesn't listen." The hope comes from the fact that AFTER he refuses to listen, God will pass judgment on Pharaoh and the land of Egypt. The miracles were not to act as convincing evidence to let the Israelites go as much as they were to be opportunities for Pharaoh to repent and recognize God as Lord. Likewise, God would do many miracles in the 40 year desert wandering after the Exodus to give the Israelites every opportunity to see their Lord and follow Him: "He led them out of Egypt and did wonders and miraculous signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty years in the desert" (Acts 7:36). But like Pharaoh, the Israelites refused to listen as well, "And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter His rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. . . And again in the passage above He says, 'They shall never enter My rest.' It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience" (Heb 3:17-19, 4:5-6).

Verse five tells us Pharaoh will indeed know that God is Lord after the Israelites leave. Years ago when the cosmonauts went into space one of them was reported as saying, "I didn't see God." A Christian response to that was, "If you would have only opened the door and stepped outside you would have seen Him." At the death of our physical bodies, your soul and spirit will know that God is Lord. By then it is too late for this information to do you any good, but you will know. Pharaoh will die in the Red Sea and in so doing will know that God is Lord: "Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should

bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:9).

Exo 7:7 And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh. 8 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 9 When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent. 10 And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. 11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. 12 For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. 13 And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

Moses spent the first 40 years of his life in Egypt as a prince. Then he spent the next 40 years in the desert of Midian as a shepherd where he learned patience and trust in the Lord. Now at 80 years of age he was back in Egypt standing before a new Pharaoh.

Aaron was 83, showing us that that he was three years old when Moses was put into the basket in the Nile.

It is interesting that Pharaoh would ask to have a miracle performed. This heathen attitude often appears among Christians as well. We want to see some proof that God is who He says He is. Faith does not need proof. Don't get me wrong, I don't believe God has left us without support for His existence and we certainly are not operating on blind faith. Romans tells us that creation is proof enough, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--His eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Rom 1:20). Also the stars have proclaimed His existence, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ. But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: 'Their [the stars] voice has gone out into all the earth, their [the stars] words to the ends of the world'" (Rom 10:17-18). The Psalms is where this is quoted from and it shows us "their voice" comes from the heavens: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world" (Psa 19:1-4). The Pharisees did the same thing Pharaoh did: "The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test Him, they asked Him for a sign from heaven. He sighed deeply and said, 'Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it'" (Mark 8:11-12). In Matthew He adds, "A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah" (Mat 16:4). He went on to explain that just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and rose again, so would He be in the belly of the earth for three days and

rise again. This is the only sign needed. Yet among others Jesus did perform many miracles. However, miracles do not produce faith. They operate on emotions, not the mind and the spirit. The excitement is short lived and the remembrance is foggy after a short time. That is why we read, “Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in Him” (John 12:37). They didn’t work for Pharaoh, they didn’t work in the Pharisees, and they wouldn’t work for us. True faith comes from the Spirit and His Word, not by proof through miracles. One should not chase after or desire them as they can also be deceptive: “For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time” (Mat 24:24-25). Remember, even Pharaoh’s magicians performed some pretty amazing things through Satan’s power.

One example of Satan’s power was displayed here in these verses. Once Moses’ staff became a snake, Pharaoh’s magicians did the same thing. There is no scientific explanation for this. Moses’ power came from God and the magician’s “secret” arts came from Satan. Some try to say they were simply snake charmers, but Moses staff was no snake to begin with. To show that God’s power was superior, Moses’ snake ate the other snakes. Despite this, Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, but I am sure he was just a little impressed nonetheless.

In verses nine and ten the word for snake is different than the word used in 4:3. In fact, it is a word that in other places in Scripture is called a dragon or sea monster. The same word is used in Ezekiel and is described as a monster representing Egypt, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, you great monster lying among your streams.’ You say, ‘The Nile is mine; I made it for myself’” (Ezek 29:3). Therefore, this may have been a sign for Pharaoh showing him that God’s power (Moses’s snake) would destroy Egypt’s power (snakes of the magicians).

Exo 7:14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go. 15 Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. 16 And thou shalt say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear. 17 Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. 18 And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river.

As God had said, Pharaoh’s heart would be hardened, so God instructed Moses to go to Pharaoh while he went out for his morning Nile meeting. It is very likely that this was a daily form of worship because the Nile was a god to the Egyptians. This also fits with the context of the upcoming plagues. The ten plagues were not mere judgments, but Divine messages to all the Egyptians

showing God was superior to their gods. Throughout the ten plagues God will destroy or overcome the Egyptian gods. The first example is shown here in these verses where the god of the Nile is slain and literally turned to blood. The Egyptians could not miss the message or the ramifications of this. In fact, the book of Numbers clearly shows this interpretation to be correct, “They marched out boldly in full view of all the Egyptians, who were burying all their firstborn, whom the LORD had struck down among them; for the LORD had brought judgment on their gods” (Num 33:3-4). The god of the Nile (Osiris) was the first to be judged.

This can be seen also in verse 17 where God says that by these plagues you will know that I am God. In other words, the Nile is not a god.

Other problems or consequences came along with the judgment on Osiris. The fish in the river died and the waters began to stink. This is more than an inconvenience because the Nile brought not just water, but food in the form of fish. As we go through the plagues you will see how God is bringing about utter destruction so that there will be no food for the Egyptians. The economic sources of Egypt have had their first wounding blow.

We also see a pattern develop within these plagues. The first nine can be divided into three groups of three. Pharaoh is warned by the Nile in the first of each of these three groups (7:15, 8:20, 9:13).

Exo 7:19 And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. 20 And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. 21 And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

The first plague upon Egypt was that of blood. Again, this served as a Divine judgment against the Egyptian gods since the Nile river served as a god for them.

It is often thought that Moses struck the water, but Scripture clearly tells us it was Aaron who did the striking and Moses who did the speaking.

This plague upon the fresh water of Egypt meant there was no drinking water standing open anywhere. In order to get fresh water they had to dig down into the water table according to verse 24. One can only imagine the chaos when millions of people had to go to the Nile and dig for water. In the process, each one had to look upon the blood covered god of the Nile. All of Egypt smelled of a dead god and nobody could escape this message. Even if they could not see the blood, the stench reminded them continually throughout the day that the god of the Nile was defeated.

I find it interesting that blood is used as a symbol of judgment. Christians typically view it as a symbol of forgiveness. However, we must

remember that those that deny the power of the blood of Jesus make it a condemning substance. Paul tells us, “Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world” (1 Cor 11:27-32).

In addition to drinking water becoming scarce, a major source of food had also been stricken. All the fish died and now an Egyptian staple was gone. These plagues were not just inconvenient, but life threatening. The scary thing is, it’s going to get much worse.

Exo 7:22 And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said. 23 And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also. 24 And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. 25 And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river.

The Egyptian magicians were also able to turn water into blood. Whether or not it was real blood or just the color of blood we are not told. As you will see in later chapters, there are ways to turn water blood red. Typically, it is said that this was some type of chemical trick, however, that does not explain their ability to do some of the greater miracles later on. The most probable answer is that they were using demonic powers and this was real blood. God allowed them to do this with the purpose of hardening Pharaoh’s obstinate heart. Satan can only do what God gives him permission to do.

The Egyptians then had to dig along the banks of the Nile to get their drinking water. The sand could have served as a filter much like modern day pool filters, allowing them to get clean water by digging.

One week will pass before the next plague is announced to Pharaoh, showing Pharaoh will receive no relief.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 7

- 1) When did God pass judgment on the Egyptians?
- 2) How old was Aaron when Moses goes to Egypt?
- 3) Where did the Egyptian magicians get their power to turn water into blood?

- 4) What is another possible symbolism of the snake based upon the different words used for it?
- 5) What seems to be a main purpose of the plagues?
- 6) Which Egyptian god was the Nile River?
- 7) How can the first 9 plagues be divided up?
- 8) Who struck the Nile and turned it into blood?
- 9) How were the Egyptians able to survive when the fresh water turned to blood?
- 10) Why is blood used as a symbol of judgment?

Exodus Chapter 8

Exo 8:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve

me. 2 And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs: 3 And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading troughs: 4 And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants.

Seven days after the plague of blood on the Nile Moses went back to Pharaoh with another warning. If Pharaoh still refused to let the Israelites go, God would send a plague of frogs upon the whole country. The frogs would be so thick that nearly every part of one's home would be filled with them.

Once again, the frog served as a god for the Egyptians. They saw the frog as the goddess Heqt, who supposedly helped women during childbirth. Perhaps that is the significance of mentioning the frogs being upon the beds. No house was left alone, "Their land teemed with frogs, which went up into the bedrooms of their rulers" (Psa 105:30). Now, to an Egyptian it must have appeared as if they were being overrun by their god. The book of Psalms says that the frogs even "devastated them" (Psa 78:45). So much so that they will later desire her to leave and to seek the only God that has enough (any) power to accomplish this.

Exo 8:5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. 6 And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. 7 And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt. 8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD. 9 And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only? 10 And he said, To morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God. 11 And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only.

"For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible" (Mat 24:24). The New Testament clearly shows that Satan does have power when he is allowed to. There is no explanation for the magicians being able to call upon frogs except by demonic intervention. Interestingly, in Revelation frogs are used to show demons, "Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet" (Rev 16:13). As already mentioned, frogs were also representative of the goddess Heqt, who assisted women in childbirth. A false god and demonic powers often go together.

Though the frogs could be summoned, they could not be sent away. Ironically, this is the way demons often work today. Though people can summon them while they pretend to bring good news or instructional advice, it isn't long before they become unwanted annoyances. Then, when people want to get rid of them they can't. Demon possession is a very real and serious matter, from which, only the Name of Jesus can deliver. It is no coincidence that Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, the fathers of psychology went insane after becoming very involved in talking with the dead to obtain instruction.

Pharaoh called upon Moses to call upon the Lord. Pharaoh couldn't do it himself because he didn't have a personal relationship with the Lord. Like many today, he maybe knew him as God (Elohim), an impersonal Creator, but only those that call upon the name of the LORD (covenant God) will be saved (Rom 10:13). Today, unbelievers will often ask believers to pray for them when a tragedy hits. Even in many of the school shootings, ungodly people request the country to pray without understanding the true meaning of prayer. Their words are empty and vain without a heart to go with the words. Throughout the lifetime of Moses, he would be called upon to pray for many Israelites who did not want to be in the presence of God. Even in the New Testament, Simon requested that the apostles pray for him because he did not have a proper understanding of Christ (Acts 8:24). Likewise, today many Christians ask a pope or priest to intercede for them not knowing that they could pray if they knew their LORD. As James said, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops" (James 5:16-18).

Pharaoh had the luxury of naming the time for the frogs to leave. This opportunity was given so that coincidence as an option in all attempts to explain the disappearance could not be used. Not only this, but Moses said ahead of time that the frogs would remain in the Nile. Pharaoh should have been able to say, "O Sovereign LORD, You have begun to show to Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do the deeds and mighty works You do" (Deu 3:24)?

Exo 8:12 And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. 13 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields. 14 And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank. 15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

Some commentators try to explain this miracle away with a heart like that of Pharaoh. They say the frogs probably died because of a bacteria in the Nile algae. If this is true, why did the frogs remain in the Nile? It makes no sense, but an unbelieving or doubting heart will come up with many excuses to lessen the miracles of God, however, the LORD is powerful enough to do things

beyond our understanding. If we can't trust Him with the simple everyday miracles, how can we trust Him with our salvation? "And the peace of God, *which transcends all understanding*, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:7).

Once again Pharaoh hardened his own heart and refused to contemplate this miracle. He only saw the relief and his selfish pride would not allow him to repent.

Exo 8:16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. 17 And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. 18 And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. 19 Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

Now Aaron was told to strike the dust of the ground with his staff in order that the dust could become gnats. Again we see that Aaron is doing the miracle, whereas people often think it was Moses.

Make no mistake about it, the dust became gnats. Some try to say that the gnats were simply as many as the dust of the ground in a symbolic sense, however, the Bible says this literally took place. There is no limit to God's power.

When the magicians called upon their gods to reproduce this miracle they could not. The demons were restricted from doing this miracle to show the superiority of God's power. Perhaps since gnats were not known as a god to the Egyptians they couldn't call upon anyone to perform the miracle. It is also interesting that the magicians said this was the "finger of God" because Jesus stated In Luke: "But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you" (Luke 11:20). Psalms attributes this miracle to God speaking, "He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, and gnats throughout their country" (Psa 105:31).

Exo 8:20 And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. 21 Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are. 22 And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. 23 And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be. 24 And the LORD did so; and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and

into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies.

This time Moses was told to go to Pharaoh and confront him on behalf of God. If Pharaoh refused to listen, flies were going to fill the land of Egypt, except where the Israelites lived. This is the first time Scripture says that there was a distinction made between the two. The purpose did not seem to be for the Israelites comfort as much as it was a message to Pharaoh, and what a message it was. By this miracle Pharaoh was to know that God was Lord. “Lord” is important because it shows the covenant, personal God who cares for His people. Pharaoh only knew God as a god, let alone Lord. While Pharaoh’s gods were unable to serve as a lord for him, the Israelites had a God that protected and watched out for them. One would think that this would make Pharaoh jealous of what the Israelites had, yet it had no effect on him.

When the flies did come they were so thick that they ruined the land, making it useless for anything.

Exo 8:25 And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land. 26 And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? 27 We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as he shall command us. 28 And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: intreat for me. 29 And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will intreat the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to morrow: but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD. 30 And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD. 31 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one. 32 And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

Pharaoh could take the flies no longer so he summoned Moses and Aaron to let them sacrifice to God, but he wanted them to stay in Egypt while they did that. Moses could not agree with that because it wasn't what God told him to do, besides the sacrifices the Israelites were going to kill would be detestable to Egyptians. The Israelites would sacrifice cows, so in effect, would be killing the Egyptian gods right before their eyes. This alone is quite a testimony against the worthless gods of the Egyptians. If slave people could simply decide to kill the gods, and the gods had no power to stop them, what kind of god would that be? These gods would need the help of the people by having them stone the slaves. This is a big contrast to the power of God who needs no help from men. In the New Testament the disciples were doing things that offended the Pharisees so Gamaliel addressed them saying, “Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their

purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God” (Acts 5:38-39).

When Moses explained that they were to take a three day journey as God had commanded, Pharaoh conceded providing that they go not far. Pharaoh was being motivated by the disruption and inconveniences of the flies and immediately asked Moses to pray for him. Moses assured him that he would pray immediately, but the flies would not leave until the next day. Pharaoh was also warned not to change his mind.

Once the problem was taken care of and relief came upon the land, Pharaoh hardened his own heart once again.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 8

- 1) How long was it after the plague of blood that the frogs came?
- 2) What was the Egyptian frog god known for?
- 3) Where did the gnats come from?
- 4) Why would the sacrifice of the Israelites be offensive to the Egyptians?
- 5) Describe what Luke 11 tells us about the finger of God.
- 6) What may be shown with the frogs going on the beds?
- 7) What is significant about Pharaoh recognizing the finger of God?

Exodus Chapter 9

Exo 9:1 Then the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. 2 For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still, 3 Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain. 4 And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel. 5 And the LORD appointed

a set time, saying, To morrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land. 6 And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. 7 And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

This time God instructed Moses to tell Pharaoh that he was coming on behalf of the God of the Hebrews. This should have made it all the more personal, leaving no room for mistaken identity. If Pharaoh refused to listen, all the cattle were going to be struck by a plague. Once more, the LORD would show that He was the God of the Hebrews by making a distinction between them and the Egyptians.

The time was set for the next day for this plague to take place and it occurred just as was said. In announcing the time and type of plague, God gave them the opportunity to bring in their cattle if they believed. Some trusted Moses and heeded the warning by bringing in their cattle because we see some remained in verses 19-21. Likewise, God announces His plans to His people before bringing judgment. We see this in Amos, "Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing His plan to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). In context we see that Amos was warning Israel of the coming Judgment upon them. Likewise, I believe that God is sounding the trumpet for us here in America as He sends warnings of drought (Amos 4:7), economic instability (4:6), insects destroying crops (4:9), unrest due to adversaries around us (3:9-11), big corporations storing up violence and dishonesty only to be brought down (3:10). God warned them that He was about to take away their safety in the horns of the altar (3:14). For us today, we may ask ourselves, have we brought in our cattle? Have we listened to the words of warning given in the Holy Word?

When it was all over Pharaoh still doubted the accuracy of God's servant Moses so he sent out some to investigate if in fact the Hebrews were spared this plague. Even after finding out all was true he still stubbornly refused to listen to God.

Make no mistake, this plague was not anything to take lightly. God was angry with Pharaoh and His wrath was growing. The Psalmist records, "He gave over their cattle to the hail, their livestock to bolts of lightning. He unleashed against them His hot anger, His wrath, indignation and hostility-- a band of destroying angels. He prepared a path for His anger; He did not spare them from death but gave them over to the plague" (Psa 78:48-50).

The plague upon the Egyptian cattle was another judgment against the Egyptian gods since the cow was worshipped. They got the idea of worshipping the bull from the stars just as many other pagan countries had done. Taurus the bull was the source of this idolatry and living in this pagan society affected the Israelites, because when the going gets tough in the desert they will look back to the Egyptian gods and build a golden calf forgetting that God was above all the Egyptian gods.

Exo 9:8 And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the

heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. 9 And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. 10 And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast. 11 And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. 12 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.

According to the text this plague was not announced to Pharaoh beforehand, rather it was simply performed in front of him, giving him no opportunity to change his heart. The furnace soot became a very fine dust that spread throughout the whole land of Egypt, causing festering boils that not only affected man, but animals as well. The text doesn't mention whether or not a distinction was made between the Egyptians and the Israelites, but it is very probable that there was a distinction made. This could perhaps be inferred from verse eleven where it only mentions the boils on the magicians and the Egyptians.

Up to this point the plagues have not been physically painful. Often times people can withstand all kinds of loss, but physical pain is the breaking point of their patience. Even in the story of Job we see that the devil first requested to take away his personal possessions and family. Even with all these losses Job still praised God. Once the physical pain came Job still refused to curse God, however, his attitude certainly changed and he became more bold in his speech to God. Now Pharaoh would have the opportunity to reflect upon his physical pain, but it would still have no affect.

The magicians, who were probably summoned on each of these plagues, were not able to set foot in front of Pharaoh because their bodies were also covered with boils. Apparently they especially attacked the knees and legs keeping one from standing up: "The LORD will afflict your knees and legs with painful boils that cannot be cured, spreading from the soles of your feet to the top of your head" (Deu 28:35). This was one more testament that God was above all gods because the false gods could do not thing to prevent those that were closest to them from being afflicted.

Exo 9:13 And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. 14 For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. 15 For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. 16 And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. 17 As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go? 18 Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation

thereof even until now. 19 Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die.

Moses went to Pharaoh early in the morning to announce God's coming wrath of wrath. This time there would be no way of denying that God was the only God. Elijah once said, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth below--You who keep Your covenant of love with Your servants who continue wholeheartedly in Your way" (1 Ki 8:23). After an amazing display of fire from heaven even those who worshipped Baal responded to this sign: "When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, 'The LORD--He is God! The LORD--He is God!'" (1 Ki 18:39). However, Pharaoh's heart was unyielding and he refused to listen to Moses.

What is remarkable isn't that God was able to do such amazing miracles, but rather that He didn't just wipe Egypt off the face of the earth. However, verse sixteen tells us that there was a purpose in these judgments. God used Egypt as a means of displaying His power to the Israelites and to the world. Isn't amazing that though this took place thousands of years ago, we believe it today as Christians, even though we did not see it. Pharaoh saw these things and still refused to believe.

Because Pharaoh was stubborn, God was going to use him as a means of displaying awesome power through an unprecedented hail storm. Once more God gave them an opportunity to trust Him and instructed them to bring in their remaining cattle or they would die. Also with this plague, God is going to continue his utter destruction of the Egyptian economy. Earlier we saw that the fish died and the Egyptians lost this source of food, but they still had the grains growing in the fields. Now, even that much needed source of food would be destroyed.

Exo 9:20 He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: 21 And he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field. 22 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. 23 And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. 24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25 And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. 26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.

There were some who feared the true God of Israel and obeyed His Word. Perhaps many of these were the same foreigners that left Egypt with the

Israelites (Exo 12:38). Others maintained their stubborn hearts and refused to heed the warning.

This hailstorm was the worst the land of Egypt had ever seen and the hailstones were so large that even the largest of cattle were killed by them. One can only imagine the terror as the lightning and thunder of God's wrath rang sharply all around.

Worse than the fear, the crops were now destroyed. Without food, what would Egypt do? Only the land of Goshen was untouched by the hail. Perhaps after the Israelites left Egypt the rest of the Egyptians went to Goshen to get their food because everything was destroyed elsewhere.

A lesson can be learned from these verses. Those who fail to heed the warning of Christ's second coming will themselves experience a doom beyond any that can be imagined. God has spoken to us in these last days through His Son. There are many miracles and evidences of our Creator's existence all around us, but people still find reasons to be stubborn and deny His work and power in our lives. As Moses, we must never give up in our witness and preaching of God's Word, both Law and Gospel.

Exo 9:27 And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. 28 Intreat the LORD (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer. 29 And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the LORD's. 30 But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the LORD God.

For the first time, Pharaoh recognizes and admits his guilt. However, in saying, "this time" he is suggesting that all previous times he was right. It could be that Pharaoh was saying this to make sure Moses would pray for him and remove the plague of hail and thunder. But most probable is that Pharaoh was scared out of his wits because of the great thunder that was an audible testimony to His judgment and wrath. Even pride can flee quickly in moments of terror.

Up to this time the plagues have consisted of blood, frogs, gnats, flies, animal disease and boils. Now for the first time it has affected the weather directly. Because of this, Pharaoh could not deny that God controlled not only the land and water but the heavens, and thus the whole earth. Yet even recognizing this, Moses could see that they only had fear of the thunder, not the Lord God. They saw God neither as an impersonal Creator nor their personal Lord, but rather a pain associated with Moses. With a heart so hard there seems to be little hope for Pharaoh.

Exo 9:31 And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was balled. 32 But the wheat and the rye were not smitten: for they were not grown up. 33 And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the LORD: and the

**thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth. 34
And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were
ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. 35
And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children
of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses.**

Although their fish, flax and barley are gone, they still have a glimmer of hope (for now) because the wheat and spelt had not grown yet. This information is important in helping us date the Exodus. In Egypt the flax and barley head out around February. The spelt, which grows well in dryer conditions, is an inferior grain, but close to wheat.

Just as Moses had promised, as soon as he left the city and raised his hands to the Lord of heaven, the hail and thunder stopped, but the damage had already been done. Because the fear was taken away, Pharaoh's heart remained hard and he would not let the Israelites go just as Moses had said he would.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 9

- 1) How does the warning of bringing in the cattle fit with modern day society?
- 2) What was the message of Amos and who was he writing to?
- 3) Read Amos and make 4 comparisons to the Israelites in the time of Amos to our society today.
- 4) What was different from the plague of the boils than all the previous plagues.
- 5) What was the unique message about the plague of hail?
- 6) What hope was left to the Egyptians after the plague of hail was over? What did this hope seem to produce?

Exodus Chapter 10

Exo 10:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him: 2 And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the LORD.

The entire time it took for the plagues is estimated to have taken nine months. We just discussed how the flax and barley head out in February and now a couple of months have passed and the month of Abib (April) has come. God waited a short time to allow Pharaoh to become even more obstinate so that He could perform these last great miracles in Egypt to make His power known. An important theme interwoven throughout the Bible is the need for fathers to teach their children what the Lord has done for them. Testimonies are important

in the faith walk of others. Psalms says, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Prov 22:6). Ephesians warns, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph 6:4). In Isaiah we read, "The living, the living--they praise you, as I am doing today; fathers tell their children about your faithfulness" (Isa 38:19). Deuteronomy clearly states, "Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when He said to me, 'Assemble the people before Me to hear My words so that they may learn to revere Me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children'" (Deu 4:9-10). Deuteronomy also says, "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. When the LORD your God brings you into the land He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you-- . . . be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery" (Deu 6:6-12). The upcoming Passover meal was to serve as a memorial of what God had done and what He would do: "And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' then tell them" (Exo 12:26-27). When Israel crossed the Jordan into the promised land they were to take up twelve stones out of the river. Why? God tells us, "These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever" (Josh 4:7). He even told us what the memorial was for: "In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' Tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD" (Josh 4:6-7). Likewise, we today have many stone memorials of Noah's Flood simply by looking at the Grand Canyon, the mountains, and the sedimentary rocks. Do we use these as reasons to tell our children about God's saving grace, or do we just see the mountains as ski slopes and the Canyon as a hiking challenge? Do we teach our children that famines and droughts are God's wake up calls, or do we simply give El Nino the credit for the crazy weather? Fathers have a tremendous responsibility to TRAIN their children. In the Proverbs verse quoted above it says that we are to train our young ones. Training means practice and teaching. One cannot properly train simply by going through the motions and forcing one to do right. The child who has no heart for the game and is forced to play basketball will never become a great player. Likewise, the child with no heart for Jesus will never learn to love Him and follow Him. Fathers, Deuteronomy told us that Jesus needs to be all in all in our life. When we get up, lie down, and walk around. People prioritize with God first, family second, job third and entertainment fourth. But God is not just first in your life, He is first in your family, your job, and your entertainment, or at least He should be. How many of us take God with us in our entertainment. WWJD? Would Jesus have gone to, and let His little children go to, rated R movies? Would Jesus watch sitcoms that joke about sex? Would Jesus know more about His favorite sports team rather than the Scriptures? Would Jesus intentionally set any vile

thing before His eyes? NO! NO! NO! We read in Psalms again, “I will set before my eyes no vile thing. The deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to me. Men of perverse heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with evil” (Psa 101:3-4). Fathers, do you model this verse? We often think that rated R movies are for adults, but not for children. Don’t let society fool you, what isn’t right for children isn’t right for adults. God even calls us children, “This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother” (1 John 3:10. After all, we are to have “faith like a child.” Think about it. In the Garden of Eden paradise was not knowing evil. Why do we think it necessary for our children to become acquainted with evil? We think being naive is a bad thing when clearly Scripture tells us it is good to be naive of evil. Fathers, you have an awesome responsibility. Tell your children what God does for you in your daily life for it is an amazing witness.

Don’t make the same mistakes the Israelites did. They forgot to tell their children about these mighty acts of God. Read Psalm 78 and you will see that the Israelite fathers neglected their responsibility, and in ONE generation, “They forgot what He had done, the wonders He had shown them” (Psa 78:11). Proof that it was only one generation comes from Judges, “Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten. . . . After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, *another generation* grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what He had done for Israel” (Judg 2:8-10). It only takes one generation to produce a Godless society. Look back to see what life was like twenty to thirty years ago. We have come a long way, and not in a good way. Thoughts that never even entered our minds are being acted out by seven and eight year old children because fathers have rejected their responsibility.

Exo 10:3 And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me. 4 Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast: 5 And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field: 6 And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh.

Here we see that pride was the source of Pharaoh’s stubbornness. Consider the words of wisdom: “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov 16:18), “Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him” (Prov 26:12). Pharaoh’s fall was about to take place because he refused to be humbled and admit his guilt. Likewise, today evolutionists refuse to humble themselves in admitting God to be their

Creator. To admit this would be to humble oneself into realizing that their entire life has been led by a lie. The complete educational system would change. NASA would have to admit they have wasted billions of dollars looking for life where they should have known there wasn't any. Professors would have to admit they have been teaching falsehoods to thousands of students. Paleontologists would have to admit their entire life's work was backward and all the museums would need to spend millions of dollars reworking their displays. The potential embarrassment and loss is far too great to achieve wisdom and God's blessing. At least this is what our nation and Pharaoh chose.

Because of pride, God was going to send locusts of great number to destroy the remaining flicker of hope in Egypt. What little was left from the hail would now be completely destroyed by locusts. When I was a teenager living in Plentywood, Montana, God called out to the people there by sending a plague of grasshoppers. It was rare to see a license plate that was readable because the grasshoppers were so thick that as you drove they constantly hit the windows and the front of your car. It was not uncommon that at any given point on the highway you could stop your car and count up to 50 grasshoppers underneath it. I never had to mow our lawn for three years because the grasshoppers ate it. Even the trees were leafless two years because every green thing was devoured. Even after spraying, almost every acre of wheat in Eastern Montana was eaten. Because of this experience I can somewhat relate to this plague, however, Egypt experienced a plague much worse than what we did in Eastern Montana. The similarities as to its affect, however, are not so far apart. Pharaoh would refuse to repent and listen to this warning so his entire country was devastated. Likewise, those in Montana had all kinds of explanations of why the grasshoppers were there. There were hopes of more crickets to eat grasshopper eggs, colder, warmer, dryer and moist seasons were all possible remedies to this problem. Interestingly, never once did I hear that God could have been the one who allowed this to happen, nor did I ever hear that He was the remedy. People refused to humble themselves and admit there was a higher power who blesses our every day and every gift. We read in Malachi: "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty" (Mal 3:10-11).

Exo 10:7 And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed? 8 And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: but who are they that shall go? 9 And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the LORD. 10 And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. 11 Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

Pharaoh's officials seem to be wising up as they advise Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. As they looked around them they realized that Egypt was ruined. Only the hope of one last crop and the lives of those in Egypt remained as their strength. Without food, rebellion by the people could even prove to be a weakness. However, when it comes down to it, the hearts of Pharaoh's officials were not for the Lord, instead, they were simply desperate for help and willing to try anything, even letting their slaves go. We see in 14:5 that Pharaoh and his officials both change their mind about freeing the Israelites.

Pharaoh listened to his officials and summoned Moses and Aaron to tell them they may go worship the Lord. But when Pharaoh found out that all of the Israelites would go along with their possessions he changed his mind. One can't blame Pharaoh for acting on this obvious realization. Pharaoh's sin was that he wouldn't free the Israelites, not that he wouldn't simply let them go worship. Pharaoh wanted to keep his slaves and he was unwilling to give that up. His heart was not on spiritual things, but worldly things. From a business perspective it was clear that the Israelites were not coming back.

It is interesting that the Moses only requested the men to leave at first. Was this a lie? Did God Moses to intentionally mislead Pharaoh to trick him? NO! First of all, Pharaoh was not naive. It isn't like one can sneak out a million women and children out from under the king's nose. Perhaps if Pharaoh would have had the heart to let the Israelites worship their God, then Pharaoh would have had the heart to come around and have his country spared by willfully giving the Israelites freedom. God knew he wouldn't because He told Moses that He was going to lead Israel out of Egypt with a mighty hand. However, in simply asking for the men to have the opportunity to worship, it gave Pharaoh one more chance to repent. Once Pharaoh blew his opportunity, the stakes were raised and God said if you are unwilling to serve and love Me, I will destroy you. One cannot say God was unjust or didn't give Pharaoh every chance to repent and be saved. Likewise, today God gives those on earth every opportunity to believe in Him, yet stubbornly, people continue to reject and refuse to listen. God's patience will run out, for He is coming soon, and when He does, then it will be too late.

Because of Pharaoh's obvious frustration, Aaron and Moses were driven out from his presence.

Exo 10:12 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. 13 And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. 14 And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. 15 For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there

remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

The Lord told Moses to stretch out his hand as a sign for the people. Indeed, God was able to bring locusts upon the land without Moses' dramatic act. But this was not only a sign for those who saw it, but for Moses as well. Moses knew that God was working through him, and most importantly, Moses was obedient to God. Everything has a purpose and ours is not to question.

The hail had wiped out the flax and barley, but the wheat had not yet headed out, so the Egyptians still had hope of food. The locusts would now take even this hope away. About 24 hours after Moses stretched out his staff, the locusts were brought in by an east wind. Here again, we see that God is in control of all of nature. Not only did Moses obey the Lord, but so did the wind.

As explained earlier in the Montana plague, locusts can indeed devour every green thing. If Egypt was not ruined before, it certainly was now.

It is also interesting that the plagues of Egypt seem to foreshadow the plagues of the end times. In Revelation 11 the two witnesses will do many of the same plagues described here in Exodus.

Locust-like armies are described in Revelation in a terrifying way. This is no doubt the locusts in Exodus symbolize a greater judgment in end times as they are a recurring theme throughout the book of Revelation:

“And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man. During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them. The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months” (Rev 9:3-10).

In Joel God gives a vivid description of locusts as a destroying army in the last days as well. Many of the same descriptions are used here as in Revelation. It is important to also realize that just before the locusts of Revelation the earth is burned and shaken by a great earthquake. Joel writes the following:

“Blow the **trumpet** in Zion; sound the alarm on My holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the **day of the LORD** is coming. It is close at hand-- a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and

mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come. **Before them** fire devours, behind them a flame blazes. Before them the land is like the garden of Eden, behind them, a desert waste-- nothing escapes them. They have the **appearance of horses**; they gallop along like cavalry. With a **noise like that of chariots** they leap over the mountaintops, like a crackling fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle. At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale. They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks. They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows. **Before them the earth shakes**, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The LORD thunders at the head of His army; His forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey His command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?" (Joel 2:1-10)?

Exo 10:16 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. 17 Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only. 18 And he went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD. 19 And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. 20 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

Pharaoh didn't wait around but immediately called Moses and Aaron in after driving them away just a day earlier. He asks for forgiveness, probably out of politeness and the hope that Moses would help him, more than out of genuinely being cut to the heart. Desperate times called for desperate measures so Pharaoh asks for help.

Pharaoh realized that this plague was "deadly." Without food, everyone would starve. This time, however, there is no mention of any conversation regarding the Israelites freedom. Perhaps it was just assumed or perhaps Pharaoh tried to get by with a cheap miracle of deliverance.

If Pharaoh wasn't convinced that God was in control of even the wind when He brought forth the east wind, now that the opposite west wind came, there should have been no question. Even the disciples realized what this meant when Jesus calmed the storm: "He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to His disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?' They were terrified and asked each other, 'Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him'" (Mark 4:39-41).

Exo 10:21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. 22 And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: 23 They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. 24 And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. 25 And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God. 26 Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the LORD our God; and we know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither.

Next came the plague of darkness. Many commentators try to say that this was an eclipse so they look for one to date the Exodus. Others say it was a severe sand storm. However, this is poor judgment because it limits God's power and lessens the severity of this plague as a Divine judgment. Besides, this darkness lasted three days. No eclipse does that.

An interesting concept with darkness is that it seems to be the absence of God. The main Egyptian god was Ra, the sun god. Now darkness shows that Ra has left the country. From a Christian standpoint, it is also a sign that Christ had left the Egyptians as well. We know that Jesus is the Word of God and the Light of the world. We read in John, "*In the beginning* was the Word, and the Word was *with* God, and the *Word was God*. He was with God in the beginning. *Through Him* all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the *light* of men. The *light* shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it" (John 1:1-5). Or, "In Him was life, and that life was the *Light* of men. The *Light* shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood It" (John 1:5). Similarly, we read regarding the new city to come, "The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and *the Lamb is its lamp*" (Rev 21:23). If Christ is the Word of God then Psalms says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psa 119:105). 2 Corinthians 6:14 states, "What fellowship can light have with darkness?" This light may also symbolize truth, the opponent of evil. Note at creation the light was good but nothing is said of darkness. If the light is not caused by the sun, but rather by the Son, then what is the darkness? Absence of Christ? If so, that is not good. Job refers to the morning light as instrumental in ridding the evils of darkness: "Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place, that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it" (Job 38:12-13)? The light brings forth good, but darkness brings forth evil.

Pharaoh had hardened his heart to the point of final judgment. That is why this darkness could be felt. In Genesis we see that when God gave the covenant to Abraham a great and dreadful darkness came over him. As I have explained in my book on Genesis, Satan was trying to keep this covenant from happening, but God came down and removed this dreadful darkness, replacing it with Christ, the Light that shines out of darkness (Genesis 15). This explains

why the Israelites had light but the Egyptians did not. Christ was with the Israelites but God had left the Egyptians. The Egyptian darkness was so thick that they could not even see one another or leave their house. Without Christ we are indeed blind.

There is no accident that this was three days. When Christ died on the cross there were three hours of darkness that fell upon the land as well (Luke 23:44-45). This was enough for the centurion to realize that Christ was the Son of God. This nearly scared the hell out of Pharaoh, literally, but not quite, as hell is something that love, not fear, overcomes. He was willing to let even the women and children leave as a result of the fear and dread that this darkness (or absence of God) brought. Even the unbeliever cannot handle the absence of God. We all need Him.

Pharaoh keeps coming closer in the negotiations but Moses is not there to negotiate. First Pharaoh simply gave lip service saying, “sure I will let you go” but having no intention of doing so. Once the plague was over, he reneged (Exo 8:8). Then Pharaoh said, all right go ahead and worship God but do it here in Egypt (Exo 8:25). Then it was, “okay but you must not go very far, not three days like you are asking for” (Exo 8:28). After the hail Pharaoh said, okay you may go but again changed his mind (Exo 9:27). After the locusts Pharaoh said, “okay, but only the men go” (Exo 10:11). Now, after the darkness, Pharaoh says, “go with your women and children, but no livestock” (Exo 10:24). Pharaoh is having his arm twisted until everything God has asked through Moses is given. Just as in the Christian life today, every attempt at compromise causes nothing but problems.

Exo 10:27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. 28 And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die. 29 And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.

Moses has been a type of Christ or Holy Spirit, serving as a mediator between God and man. Pharaoh pronounces his own doom in demanding that Moses leave and never return. Likewise, when we today reject the Holy Spirit we pronounce our doom. Without Christ, our Mediator, there is nothing but darkness for our future. Pharaoh’s heart was now hardened by the LORD and there was no chance of repentance anymore. Moses acknowledged this judgment by admitting that he would no longer pray for Pharaoh, he was on his own.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 10

- 1) How much time is estimated for all 10 plagues to take place?
- 2) How are fathers today suppose to “Make His power known?”
- 3) Read Judges 2. How long did it take the Israelites to become godless?
- 4) What is the true source of Pharaoh’s stubbornness?
- 5) Did Moses lie to Pharaoh? Why or why not?
- 6) What last hope did the plague of locusts take from the Egyptians?
- 7) What do the plagues foreshadow (especially the plague of locusts)?
- 8) Could the plague of darkness be an eclipse? Why or why not?
- 9) Give two spiritual significances of the plague of darkness.
- 10) What spiritual significance might there be in the plague of darkness lasting three days?
- 11) How did Pharaoh pronounce his final doom?

Exodus Chapter 11

Exo 11:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. 2 Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. 3 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.

Because Pharaoh had just told Moses that if he ever saw his face again he would die, it has been said that chapter 11 is a flashback that occurred before 10:29. Verse one states that the LORD HAD said to Moses, suggesting it was in the past. Flashback is common throughout the Scriptures, but by no means is it necessary here. The fact that the loss of Pharaoh's son seems to be the straw that broke the camels back suggests that Pharaoh simply changed his mind once his anger settled a bit. After all, Moses was "highly regarded in Egypt." The other possibility is that Moses was simply continuing his speech from 10:29. This seems to be the most probable explanation.

Way back in chapter three God told Moses that they would not only leave Egypt, but they would plunder them as well: "And I will make the

Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed” (Exo 3:21). It is interesting that the plundering was voluntary. All the Israelites had to do was ask. In the most dire straits, God can make your worst enemy your best friend.

Exo 11:4 And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: 5 And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. 6 And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. 7 But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. 8 And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.

Moses went to Pharaoh again to give him one last warning. That very night the firstborn of all Egypt would die unless there was a Redeemer for them. It mattered not the position of the person, nor whether it was an animal. This is extremely important because this very night would foreshadow a time 2,400 years in the future. The Israelites are about to celebrate a God given celebration of Passover, in which a perfect lamb would be killed and its blood put on the houses of those who believed in God. As we will discuss in chapter 12 this foreshadowed our Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ, whose blood saves us. The reason the firstborn would die is because Jesus was the firstborn. We read in Romans, “For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers” (Rom 8:29). Being firstborn meant you received a doubled inheritance. The blessing was yours. Jesus, as firstborn, showed that through Him the inheritance would come. Again, we will discuss this further in chapter 12, however, here I want to point out why even the animals were affected. We often think that Jesus died only for the human race. NO! He died for the world, all of creation, plants, animals, dirt and sky. Don’t get me wrong, there is no life in dirt, plants or trees. As I have discussed in my Genesis commentary, animals do have a soul according to the Hebrew language, however, they do not have a spirit. That is what sets us apart from them. Everything that has life or *nephesh* (soul) in it went on the ark and was redeemed, as the ark symbolized salvation. The curse of Genesis three affected everything, even those things without a *nephesh*. This is why we read in Romans, “The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the One who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” (Rom 8:19-22). Therefore, even the animals, indeed even all of creation, was affected by the Passover.

Why the great wailing? Again, this is not just a plague upon Egypt. It foreshadowed the redeeming grace through the blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We see that God made a distinction between Egypt and Israel. In other words, God makes a distinction between His own, and those who reject Him, both then and now. Those who will perish during this Passover, will do so because they do not have the blood of the lamb on their house. Likewise, today, those who will perish at judgment will perish because they do not have the blood of the Lamb covering them. The day of judgment will be a day of great wailing for the ungodly. Egypt's wails foreshadow this great and dreadful day of the Lord as described in chapter ten along with the army of locusts.

Furthering this line of thought, Moses said that all of the officials will come and bow before him on this day. We read in Romans, "For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before Me; every tongue will confess to God.' So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God" (Rom 14:10-12). The officials of Egypt will come before Moses, who represents Christ and the Holy Spirit (as we will describe in later chapters) and bow down before they are led out of slavery, into the promised land. The Psalmist writes, "He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt, the first fruits of manhood in the tents of Ham. But He brought His people out like a flock; He led them like sheep through the desert. He guided them safely, so they were unafraid; but the sea engulfed their enemies" (Psa 78:51-53). God is a gracious God who shows compassion to all who believe on Him, but just judgment on those who refuse to listen to Him.

Moses, was hot with anger before he left Pharaoh. Normally, it seemed that Pharaoh was the one angry. Now we see Moses, as a Christ figure, when He shall return to bring final judgment upon the earth. We read in Revelation, "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of His wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb" (Rev 14:9-10). God's wrath is only shown to those who refuse to believe in Him, and make no mistake, His wrath is coming soon.

Exo 11:9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. 10 And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

Though outwardly it seemed that Pharaoh controlled the situation, God was using Pharaoh to accomplish a Divine purpose. As Romans tells us, "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: 'I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display My power in you and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth'" (Rom 9:17).

Sometimes people question how a loving God could intentionally harden someone's heart so that they cannot believe. First of all, God only did so once Pharaoh himself had rejected God's grace. Pharaoh had committed the unforgivable sin; rejection of the Holy Spirit. As people continue to refuse to

see and believe in the one God who created the universe, God eventually uses them to accomplish a purpose for those whom He loves. Once again, Romans addresses this issue: “Therefore God has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy, and He hardens whom He wants to harden. One of you will say to me: ‘Then why does God still blame us? For who resists His will?’ But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to Him who formed it, ‘Why did You make me like this?’ Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use? What if God, choosing to show His wrath and make His power known, *bore with great patience* the objects of His wrath--prepared for destruction? What if He did this to make the riches of His glory known to the objects of His mercy, whom He prepared in advance for glory--even us, whom He also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles” (Rom 9:18-24)? In essence, Pharaoh was warned by Moses as we are today, “But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when His righteous judgment will be revealed” (Rom 2:5).

Moses was told ahead of time that Pharaoh would not listen and, therefore, it was no surprise to him. Often times in our lives we wonder why things don’t go well. God seems to put up road blocks to hinder what we believe is a good purpose. God never makes mistakes, he only does things in a better way than what we know how. He used Pharaoh to tell the world about His power, judgment and love, and this story is still being told almost 3,500 years later. For everything there is a time (Eccl 3:1), but we need to remember it is God’s time, not ours. When we try to do things independently on our own time we usually mess things up. Moses tried to be the deliverer before it was time back in chapter two and he had to spend 40 years in the Midian desert. I often wonder how much more difficult we make our lives by trying to be lord of our own ring. We let God deal with the big things like sunsets, cancer or salvation, but when it comes to taking care of a bill, a slandering enemy, a flat tire or a skinned knee, we like to think of it as too small of a matter to need help with. But as I am learning much too late in my life, God wants us to give everything (not share, He wants it all) to Him; a believers absolute surrender. You ever stop to think about the things you share with your best friend. You share everything with them because you have a relationship that is treasured. How much more should we desire a relationship with Jesus and give every detail of our lives with Christ, no matter how small or great. By letting God steer the car, we will always be going in the right direction.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 11

- 1) Explain 10:29 and chapter 11:1. Is this a contradiction? Why or why not?
- 2) How did the plague of the firstborn affect the animals? Why?
- 3) What is the spiritual significance of the wailing during the plague of the firstborn in connection with God's warning for us today?
- 4) What is the spiritual significance of the officials bowing down in connection with God's future judgment?
- 5) What is the spiritual significance of Moses becoming angry in connection with God's warning for us today?
- 6) Explain how God can be a God of love but yet bring this kind of judgment upon Egypt? How might this fit with 9-11 here in this country?

Exodus Chapter 12

Exo 12:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. 3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: 4 And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:

For years I wondered why God gave us so much detail when it came to dates. I always thought the Scriptures would have been much easier to read and less intimidating. Now I realize that these dates are part of what makes Scripture so fascinating and proof of its inspiration. This month and day marked a historical event that would be practiced for centuries and celebrated into eternity because Jesus Christ would be slain the same time almost 1,500 years later (Mark 14:12).

On the tenth day of Nisan (used by Babylonians), or Abib (used by Canaanites and means “young head of grain”), a lamb was selected for each family. No family was to be left out and nothing was to be left over. Likewise, each individual today has had the sacrifice of Jesus Christ which gives just the right amount of holiness, no less, no extra. Christ’s blood was measured out before the creation of the world for everyone who would believe in Him (1 Peter 1:20).

During the days of Jesus the Passover lamb was still being selected on the 10th of this month. The high priest, along with other priests, would leave the temple mount and make a path out the north gate of the city by laying down palm leaves. This was a huge celebration and one of the required feasts for every Jew. Therefore, the city of Jerusalem would have been filled to about twice its normal population. All the inns were filled and every house would invite in those without a place to stay free of charge. Each person also had palm leaves and, therefore, virtually every building would have had these leaning up outside their homes. As the priest went down to the fields he would select a perfect lamb and lead it back to the gate of the city. Once there he would yell out, "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." When the people heard this they would all rush to this same path and keep praising God while the priest led the lamb down this path. There could have been almost 200,000 people crying out this phrase but not truly understanding what it meant. This time, however, as the priest reached the gate it seemed that Jesus was there riding upon a donkey on the tenth of this month. Little did the people know that this was indeed the perfect lamb selected by God. Even the disciples were puzzled as to what was going on: "At first His disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about Him and that they had done these things to Him" (John 12:16).

The animal must be without defect, in other words, perfect, just as Jesus Christ was perfect. Only a perfect sacrifice would be able to make atonement for our sins. We will discuss the significance of this further in later chapters, but for now one can see this portrayed in chapter 29 where we read, "This is what you are to do to consecrate them, so they may serve me as priests: Take a young bull and two rams without defect" (Exo 29:1). In order for the priests, who were models of the holy man or saint, to be consecrated and made holy, a perfect sacrifice had to be made. Both the Passover lamb and the later sacrificial animals pointed to Jesus Christ who consecrated every believer so that they may have access into the throne room of God - heaven. The author of Hebrews put it this way, "How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself *unblemished* to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God" (Heb 9:14). Other references to such a perfect sacrifices are Leviticus 1:3, 3:1, 4:3, 22:18-21, Numbers 6:14 and 1 Peter 1:19.

Exo 12:6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. 7 And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. 8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9 Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. 10 And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. 11 And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your

shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD's passover.

The animals were to be taken care of until the 14th day of the month when they would be killed just as Jesus was sacrificed on the 14th day as our Passover lamb. The blood of the lamb was put over the doorframes of the house where the communion took place. The blood cleansed homes sealed the salvation of those within.

Even more to the point, at the time of Christ the Lamb was taken to the temple mount and examined for four days making sure it was the perfect lamb. Likewise, Jesus went straight to the temple (Mark 11:11), and for the next four days would be questioned and examined by the Pharisees, Sadducees and all religious leaders who tried to find fault with Him.

The celebration in Jerusalem continued and the lamb was to be killed at twilight and put in the oven before the sun went down on the 14th. The evening of the 13th (Beginning of the 14th day because their days end at sundown) began the day of preparation, the very night of the Last Supper. It was this night that we saw Jesus preparing the disciples and Himself in the Garden of Gethsemane. Once the day of preparation was over, the lamb could be slaughtered but must be put in the oven before sundown because the 14th ended at sundown. In the same way, Jesus was crucified at the same time and put into the grave before the sun went down. However, before the priest could kill the lamb there was a final proclamation that it had been inspected and found to be clean. Pilate and Herod both gave a final proclamation of Jesus being innocent and spotless. The crowd wanted to kill Jesus even though Pilate pronounced Him innocent: "They all answered, 'Crucify Him!' 'Why? What crime has He committed?' asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, 'Crucify Him!' When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. 'I am innocent of this man's blood,' he said. 'It is your responsibility!' All the people answered, 'Let His blood be on us and on our children'" (Mat 27:23-25)! This is exactly what the Israelites did with the Passover lamb's blood in putting it over their doorframes.

The high priest, upon slaughtering the lamb, would cry out, "It is finished" just as Jesus cried this out with His last breath. Before the priest killed the lamb he would say "I thirst" and was then given a drink. Likewise, Jesus uttered these words before His death. Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the Passover Lamb to its every detail. Often Christians miss these connections not understanding the Jewish feasts in which God instituted to be a rehearsal pointing us to the Messiah.

One last point of interest. Jesus was in the grave three days and nights just as Jonah was in the belly of a fish for that length of time. When Mary saw Jesus He told her not to touch her. Why? He said because He had not yet ascended to His Father. This is the day of First Fruits. The Jewish high priest was to stay in seclusion for 3 days before the first fruit offering just as Jesus remained in seclusion for three days before His first fruit offering. This is why Paul says, "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 15:20). Other feasts point to the second coming of Jesus as well, but we will not discuss those here.

The bread was to be made without yeast for a number of reasons. One reason was because yeast was often times referred to as the evil practices of the world. One example of such imagery comes from Jesus' words to His disciples, warning them to stay away from the yeast of the Pharisees (Mat 16:6). A life without yeast was a life without corruption as Paul explains "Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast--as you really are. For Christ, our *Passover Lamb*, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of *sincerity and truth*" (1 Cor 5:7-8).

However, the yeast also symbolized the speed by which Israel was being redeemed and brought out of slavery. This is why they were to eat with their cloaks tucked into their belt and the sandals on their feet. They were to be ready to leave the old life of sin and slavery to enter into a life of forgiveness and rest. Yeast takes time to work through a batch of dough, however, there was no time because the Israelites would be led to freedom in a few short hours. Likewise, Jesus death on the cross was fast, and this expedient death brought the kingdom of heaven for all who believe on Him.

Just as Jesus' body was not left on the cross overnight to experience decay, the food was to be eaten that night only. Any meat left overnight was to be burned. As we will talk about in later chapters the Old Testament daily sacrifices (represented the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross) were also to be eaten immediately as we see in Leviticus, "The meat of his fellowship offering of thanksgiving must be eaten on the day it is offered; he must leave none of it till morning" (Lev 7:15).

Exo 12:12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. 13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

Not only would the first born of every human be killed, but also the first born of every animal. In so doing God was judging many of the gods of Egypt since they had worshipped so many creatures. Even more so, however, up to this time judgment was only affecting natural things. Death is and was the fear of all people. That is why they needed the gods. Now God would show the Egyptians that even life belonged to Him. As the Psalmist proclaimed, "For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods" (Psa 95:3), and "For You, O LORD, are the Most High over all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods" (Psa 97:9).

God also used His covenant name here. The Egyptians only knew God as *Elohim*, the creating God, and they really didn't even accept that. They did not know Him as *Jehovah*, the covenant God who promised salvation through His Son. Indeed God is Lord and salvation to those who believe in Him. To all unbelievers He remains only *Elohim*, and whether they want to admit it or not, they know it and, "It is written: 'As surely as I live,' says the **Lord**, 'every knee will bow before Me; every tongue will confess **to God**'" (Rom 14:11). To

Satan, God is only Elohim, his Creator. Satan can never know Christ as Lord, but Jesus is *our* Lord, *our* Passover Lamb and *our* personal hope for salvation. These destructive plagues were a symbol of the final day of Judgment when God will judge all people as symbolized by the Egyptians here. The only way to escape is through the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ (1 Cor 5:7). This is why in the book of Revelation the two witnesses are able to bring the same plagues upon the world (Rev 11) that were brought upon Egypt; the Egyptian plagues foreshadowed THE judgment day.

This Passover, as Jesus, was only salvation through FAITH. We read in Hebrews about Moses, “By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel” (Heb 11:28). This again clearly shows the connection of Christ to the Passover celebration.

Exo 12:14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. 15 Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. 16 And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. 17 And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. 18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. 19 Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. 20 Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

The Passover was to be celebrated for all generations to come. Though the Jews continue to observe this feast today, they do not realize the scope of its true meaning. Today, all Christians observe this feast every time we celebrate the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The celebration continues!

The feast was to last seven days as the Bible seems to indicate the earth will only last seven thousand years. (See my book on Revelation for further details). This is why the seventh day was sacred because it represented a sacred day of rest in the future, “Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, ‘So I declared on oath in My anger, “They shall never enter My rest.”’ And yet *His work has been finished since the creation of the world*. For somewhere He has spoken about the seventh day in these words: ‘And on the seventh day God rested from all His work.’ And again in the passage above He says, ‘They shall never enter My rest.’ It *still remains* that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience. Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it

Today, when a long time later He spoke through David, as was said before: 'Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.' For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. *There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God*" (Heb 4:3-9).

We also see that the work of God was finished from the creation of the world, perhaps showing why the first day was to be sacred as well. Another possibility is seen through examining the days of creation. Day seven was a day of rest and symbolizes heaven as seen in Hebrews 4. Day one was separation of light and dark. There is good evidence to show that this was also a separation of good and evil and indeed making it a day to be sacred. 2 Corinthians 6:14 states, "What fellowship can light have with darkness?" This light may also symbolize truth, the opponent of evil. Note that the light was good but nothing is said of darkness. If the light is not the sun (created on day 4), but the Son, then what is the darkness? Absence of Christ? If so, darkness is not good. Job refers to the morning light as instrumental in ridding the evils of darkness: "Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place, that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it" (Job 38:12-13)? The light brings forth good, but darkness brings forth evil.

Furthering this line of thought, a man once told me that sin entered the world before Adam sinned and, therefore, evolution with its death and disease prior to man could be true because death was not a result of sin. First of all, this false philosophy makes God a liar in passages such as Romans 6:23; 5:12; and 1 Corinthians 15:21, where death was clearly the punishment for sin. His reasoning for this belief was that Satan had already fallen before Adam or Eve had, as indicated by his tempting with the fruit. This is true, but Satan was not told "do not eat, or else." Further, Satan's fall is dealt with separately and differently than man's fall. Satan is to be crushed (Gen 3:15), while man was to simply die and have troubles and hardships. Also, man's sin was curable by Christ's death and he has heaven awaiting as a result. Satan, however, is doomed to everlasting torment and destruction, with no chance of salvation ever (Rev 20:10). Man was created for different purposes than angels and, therefore, man's sin had different consequences than the fall of angels. Now to the point at hand. Could the darkness represent the side of Satan's fall. . . or evil? The timeline suggests that it is possible that Satan had fallen by this time. We know that angels were created before the third day because Job says, "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone-- while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy" (Job 38:4-7)? The angels were in existence and shouted for joy when the foundation of the earth was laid. Therefore, perhaps they were created here on the first day to be "ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation" (Hebrews 1:14). If this is true, Satan and 1/3 of the angels may have fallen almost immediately after their creation; thus darkness being separated from light. This can only be a hypothetical conclusion, as Scripture is not clear on this, but it does seem plausible. One other possibility is that Satan fell sometime after the sixth day before man fell into sin. The Bible does not say how long after Adam and Eve were in the garden that they fell into sin (I'm sure it wasn't long). One

possible argument against this idea is that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil may have been put in the garden along with the vegetation on day three of creation and, therefore, knowledge of evil was present. Either way, it gives us some indication as to why the first day could be held sacred.

Yeast was a symbol of corruption and, therefore, none was to be present for all seven days or else they would be cut off from God's chosen people. The Passover began on the 14th of the month and then ran through the 21st of the month. Obviously this yeast symbolized something very serious. Man's sin is a serious matter. Apart from the blood of Christ there is no hope of salvation, we need His blood to have the yeast of corruption and sin to be taken away from our hearts. We read again from Corinthians, "Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast--as you really are. For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor 5:6-8).

Exo 12:21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. 22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. 23 For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

Moses told the elders to go out "at once" showing the speed at which all of this took place. That was one other reason for no yeast in the bread; to show the expedience of God's deliverance. Again, this shows the quickness of Christ's return as well. In the parable of the ten virgins (Mat 25) those that did not keep themselves ready were caught off guard by their Lord's quick return. To those who do not believe, Christ will come as a thief in the night (1 Thes 5:2).

The hyssop is important because it was later used to sprinkle the blood (symbolic of Christ's blood) of the sacrifices in the Temple. We read in Psalms, "Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow" (Psa 51:7).

When the destroyer comes the only way to be saved is to have your home sealed with the blood of the Lamb. Likewise, at the end of the world the only way to be delivered is to have the seal of the living God, "They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who *did not* have the seal of God on their foreheads" (Rev 9:4). No one should leave the protection of the blood stained doors until Christ comes. Likewise, we today should never exit the shadow of the cross, for every sin committed can only be made clean through Christ's blood. The good news is that every sin a believer commits is already forgiven. We don't need to ask for forgiveness as we confess our sins, we can thank Him for it because it was already given 2000

years ago. “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed” (1 Pet 2:24). How many sins had you committed before Jesus died on the cross? None! But Christ died for them on that cross even before they were in existence. Every sin you do was paid for 2000 years ago. We don’t live in a constant up and down state of forgiven, need forgiveness, forgiven, need forgiveness, saint, sinner, saint, sinner. We live in a constant state of forgiveness under the protection of faith; our blood stained door to the house of our body.

The destroyer in verse 23 is none other than God’s angels sent to do His bidding. We read in Psalms, “He unleashed against them His hot anger, His wrath, indignation and hostility-- a band of destroying angels” (Psa 78:49).

Exo 12:24 And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. 25 And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. 26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? 27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. 28 And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

Obedience after the Passover ended wasn’t for salvation. The blood brought forgiveness, faith in that blood brought salvation and obedience to that blood brought glory, peace, happiness and joy. Likewise, today obedience is vital to a joy filled life in Christ. Being obedient doesn’t save you, but it sure makes life better. John wrote, “And this is love: that we walk in obedience to His commands. As you have heard from the beginning, His command is that you walk in love” (2 John 1:6). Paul wrote, “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and *we take captive every thought* to make it *obedient* to Christ” (2 Cor 10:5). He also said, “In the same way, count yourselves **dead to sin** but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore *do not let sin reign in your mortal* body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death **to life**; and offer the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace” (Rom 6:11-14). Now put this Scripture to practice. All true knowledge is the outgrowth of obedience. Everything else is just information if not acted upon.

Outside of personal awareness, God wanted the Israelites to tell their children about the wonders God showed in bringing about deliverance. As I read through the Bible it is amazing how many times God tells us to give testimonies to our children. We discussed this back in 10:2, but it is worth being reminded of again. Talking out problems is helpful in cleansing the soul, likewise, talking out praise uplifts the Spirit and strengthens others.

Notice what the outcome of the Israelites obedience was. . . worship. A true sign of faith is response. Faith without works is dead. Grace given without a response is evidence of grace misunderstood. How could the Israelites see God's deliverance through the Passover lamb and not respond with heartfelt joy and praise? How can we not respond to God's great gift of salvation through Christ without telling the world by shouting it on the mountaintops. We get all excited about a football game. We respond to the winning touchdown. How can we not respond to the greatest score of all time. . . salvation through faith in the blood of the Lamb? What do you tell your children when they ask, "what does this ceremony mean to you?"

Exo 12:29 And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. 30 And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. 31 And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. 32 Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. 33 And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men. 34 And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. 35 And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: 36 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

It did not matter what position you held, from the lowliest prisoner to the highest official, the first born died. Salvation does not depend upon our earthly status, but on our faith in God's redemption.

Pharaoh did not wait until morning to release the Israelites, it was immediate, just as our forgiveness came immediately after the shed blood on the cross. The Egyptians were ready to rid themselves of the Israelites because they were of afraid of them and their God.

Historically, Amenhotep II may fit the proper Pharaoh for this event but we can't be sure. (We know it was not Ramses). We have found this child's mummy and X-ray shows him to be less than two years old at death. His title was "King, Lord of the Two Lands, Amenhemhat."

Just as commanded, the Israelites asked the Egyptians for silver and gold, and in so doing, would give one final blow to the country of Egypt. Not only had their crops, water and land been destroyed, but now their belongings were gone. I believe another reason God had the Israelites take the gold and silver was to test them. After all, what good is gold in the middle of a desert? There aren't too many stores to go shopping in. God wanted to know what gold they truly desired. The gold of heaven or the gold of earth. Soon after leaving

they will take this gold and make a golden calf out of it to worship the star Sirius, the god of the Egyptians. Sometimes I wonder if God doesn't bless us financially at times to see what we will do with our money. There is great wisdom in Proverbs when it states, "Two things I ask of you, O LORD; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God" (Prov 30:7-9). Sometimes financial blessings can be more of a burden than a blessing when our hearts are not fully focused and dedicated to responding to God's love. Remember, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked" (Luke 12:48).

Along with the message of "Go," Pharaoh asked Moses to bless him. Perhaps Pharaoh wanted to make sure the plague would end by having Moses pray as he had done with the other plagues. This also portrays a works righteous attitude. Pharaoh felt that if he let the people go, his act of good works was deserving of being blessed. Christians today often feel the same way. They think that if they are obedient to Christ and do good works, then God will pay them back with financial and material blessings. It doesn't work that way. Faith is the only thing God blesses. Indeed, even a good work, if not done in faith, is hay and stubble that will be burned in the fire (1 Cor 3:12). Romans states, "everything that does not come from faith is sin" (Rom 14:23).

Exo 12:37 And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. 38 And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. 39 And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual.

There must have been close to two million people leaving Egypt. The men numbered a total of 603,550 according to 38:26, which is why here it says "about" six hundred thousand. We know that the "other people" are Egyptian foreigners that believed in the God of Moses and followed them (Josh 8:35).

We again see the expedience of the exodus shown in the unleavened bread. For the first few days this was their food. It would be three days before they reached and crossed the Red Sea. "The Israelites left Rameses and camped at Succoth [day 1]. They left Succoth and camped at Etham, on the edge of the desert [day 2]. They left Etham, turned back to Pi Hahiroth, to the east of Baal Zephon, and camped near Migdol [day 3]. They left Pi Hahiroth and passed through the sea into the desert" (Num 33:5-8). Just as Jesus rose from the dead three days after He was slain on Passover, the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and were brought into a new life. We will discuss this further later, but for now understand the significance of the symbolism here. "For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed *through the sea*. *They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea*" (1 Cor 10:1-2). The Israelites were not free from slavery

until they had been baptized in the sea. Likewise, baptism today is a sign of our freedom brought through Christ on the cross. The baptism does not save you, but faith in the one who chooses you as His child does.

Exo 12:40 Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. 41 And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. 42 It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

Verse 40 is often used to say the Bible contradicts itself because in Genesis we read, “Then the LORD said to him, ‘Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years’” (Gen 15:13). Why does Exodus say 430 and Genesis say 400? Some say God was just giving a round figure in Genesis, however, I don’t see the context of supporting this interpretation. Rather, if one looks at things from a slightly different angle, things fit perfectly. Genesis tells us 1) Israel would be enslaved in a foreign country and 2) mistreated for 400 years. This does not necessarily mean they would be slaves for 400 years, only mistreated for 400 years. Certainly one can be mistreated without being enslaved.

The first question we must answer is who Israel really is. Because this is so important to understand we will look at a number of verses to make this point. In Isaiah we read, “Before she goes into labor, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children” (Isa 66:7-8). The nation of Israel was born in just one day, through just one person, Jacob. Jacob was the father of the Israelites, which is why his name is later turned to Israel. In fact, at times the name Jacob refers to all of Israel, “And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion; He will turn godlessness away from Jacob’” (Rom 11:26).

Next we see that God viewed Jacob as His *firstborn* son, yet keep in mind all of Israel was called Jacob: “Then say to Pharaoh, ‘This is what the LORD says: Israel is *My firstborn son*, and I told you, ‘Let My son go, so he may worship Me.’ But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son’” (Exo 4:22-23). We see that all of Israel is called God’s servant (singular): “But you, *O Israel, My servant, Jacob*, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham My friend” (Isa 41:8). Finally we see that when Jacob goes into Egypt the Bible gives us a list of people that went with him. The problem is, some of the people named had not been born yet: “All those who went to Egypt with Jacob--those who were his direct descendants, not counting his sons’ wives--numbered sixty-six persons” (Gen 46:26). (Compare 42:37 and 46:9 to see those that have not yet been born). From all of this we can see that Israel, or the descendants God was referring to when He gave the covenant to Abraham in Genesis 15 could be viewed as “Jacob.”

Understanding this, let us look at the next step. In Exodus we see not 400, but 430 years given for the time Israel were in Egypt. We know how old Joseph was when he became the 2nd most powerful man in Egypt, “Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh’s presence and traveled throughout Egypt” (Gen 41:46). After this, according to Pharaoh’s dream, there were 7 good years for the crops and 7 poor years of famine. After two years of famine had passed Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and Jacob was brought to Egypt DURING the 3rd year of the famine: “For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping” (Gen 45:6). Therefore, Joseph being 30 when he was exalted, plus 7 years of good, plus 2 years of famine make Joseph 40 years old during the 3rd year of the famine.. This is important because we also know that Joseph died at the age of 110 (Gen 50:26). After Joseph died, the Israelites became slaves (Ex 1:8). That means from Joseph’s 40th year, when Jacob came to Egypt, to his 110th year, there were a total of 70 years of PEACE for JACOB in Egypt.

Next we need to see how old Jacob was when he came to Egypt. Jacob told Pharaoh, “The years of my pilgrimage are *a hundred and thirty*. My years have been *few and difficult*, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers” (Gen 47:9). The Hebrew word for difficult is literally translated “evil.” It is almost as if Jacob is saying that so far in his 130 years of life he has been oppressed and mistreated so that his life has been bad. Therefore, from Jacob’s birth (technically, the beginning of Israel), to being delivered to Joseph for peace, was 130 years. Then there were 70 years of peace for Jacob in Egypt until Joseph died. After that, slavery began. (Note: Israel clearly was not in slavery the whole time they were in Egypt and, therefore, one cannot read the Genesis 15 verse as 400 years of slavery). So 130 years of hardship, plus 70 years of peace, equals 200 years. Since we read here in Exodus that the Israelites were in Egypt 430 years, regardless of hardship or peace, we can deduce 430 – 200 accountable years equals 230 years left that the Israelites must have been slaves. Since Exodus states it was 430 years to the very day, it cannot be a round number. In short, 130 years from Israel’s birth to entering Egypt + 70 years under Joseph in Egypt + 230 years of slavery = 430 years.

Perhaps this sound strange so far, but it will become more clear. What do we do with the 400 years of oppression god told Abraham about? We know Jacob had 130 years of oppression and there were 230 years of slavery. Then after that, 40 years of desert wandering during the time of the Exodus. 130 + 230 + 40 = 400 years of oppression for Israel before entering the promised land. Therefore both 400 and 430 years fit when properly understood. Israel was indeed in a country not their own for 430 years and they were oppressed for 400 years.

God kept vigil over Israel all night, and as a result, they were to remember this by doing the same feast every year. Once again, God gave the Israelites excuses and reminders to tell their children about all He had done. As far as the date of the Exodus, Biblically speaking one can be almost certain that it took place 2540 years after creation, or 1461 BC.

Exo 12:43 And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof: 44 But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. 45 A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. 46 In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. 47 All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. 48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. 49 One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. 50 Thus did all the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. 51 And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.

The Passover was only for the chosen people of Israel. No foreigner could eat of it UNLESS he had been circumcised and brought into the covenant God gave Abraham (Gen 15). God chose the Israelites to be His people, but others were welcomed into the kingdom if they had faith in Israel's God. We see that when Jesus came He ministered to the Jews, not the Gentiles. He told the woman from Canaan when she was seeking the Israelites inheritance in Him, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs" (Mat 15:26). In verse 28, after humbling herself, recognizing Christ as her master, and believing in Him by faith, she was told, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." All this before the Gentiles had been openly welcomed into God's chosen people. Today, all who believe are considered to be children of Abraham: "Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. . . it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring" (Rom 9:7-8). Though at one time we Gentiles were just as these Egyptians who followed the Israelites now, "you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household" (Eph 2:19). We have been grafted into the same olive tree as the Jews (Rom 11), and now the Gentile church is growing. Romans states, "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part *until* the full number of the Gentiles has come in" (Rom 11:25). Paul continues, "As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you" (Rom 11:28-31). God chose Israel to be a sign for the world to show His omniscience and omnipotence. The fact that no other nation in history has experienced the hardships and persecutions like that of Israel, yet still remain, is a sign of God's providence. The fact that Israel is still in their land is a sign of God's covenant promise (Gen 17:8). When the Jews come back to Christ and recognize Him as

the Messiah, that will be a sign of the end times (Hos 5:14-6:2). We see Israel is even called a sign by Isaiah, “Here am I, and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion” (Isa 8:18). Praise be to God that He has included the Gentiles to be included as His chosen ones and that we have a right to eat of the Passover Lamb through communion with Him (John 6). For we too have been delivered out of slavery and are being brought through the Red Sea in baptism through the Holy Spirit.

None of the meat was to be eaten outside the home, or in other words, away from the blood of the Passover Lamb. None of the lamb’s bones were to be broken to foreshadow Jesus’ death on the cross. We read about Christ’s death on the cross in John, “These things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: ‘Not one of His bones will be broken’” (John 19:36). This was a direct quote from the prophecy of Christ in Psalm 34:20.

All of Israel was to celebrate the feast. Indeed, without it one could not be considered Israel, God’s children.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 12

- 1) About how many years was there from the Passover to Christ?
- 2) Who came to Jerusalem during the Passover?
- 3) What happened on the 10th of the month during Passover?
- 4) What Scripture verse tells us that Jesus was the “unblemished” sacrifice?
- 5) Where did Jesus go after He walked through the city streets as the “Passover lamb?”
- 6) When was the Passover lamb killed? When was Jesus killed?
- 7) Why was Mary not to touch Jesus after His resurrection?
- 8) What does Yeast symbolize in Scripture?
- 9) Why was there to be no yeast in the Passover meal?
- 10) Why was Jesus taken off the cross before sundown?
- 11) What Scripture verse shows the Passover was to be celebrated in faith?
- 12) What did the first day of creation symbolize?
- 13) Give two verses that tell us death came as a result of sin.
- 14) What significance did the hyssop used in Passover have?
- 15) When were you forgiven of your sins you committed last week? Give a verse to support this.
- 16) How many men crossed the Red Sea? How many people were there most likely in all?
- 17) What did the Red Sea symbolize in our spiritual walk today?
- 18) Exactly who is meant in the word, “Israel?”
- 19) In the covenant promise God gave to Abraham it was said that Israel would have what two things happen in 400 years?
- 20) How old was Joseph during the 3rd year of the Egyptian famine?
- 21) How many years of peace did Israel have under Joseph?
- 22) What was the date of the Exodus? How many years after creation was this?
- 23) What was the condition necessary to allow a foreigner to eat the Passover?
- 24) Explain the difference of 400 years and 430 years given for the time of Israel in Egypt.

Exodus Chapter 13

Exo 13:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine. 3 And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. 4 This day came ye out in the month Abib. 5 And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. 6 Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the LORD. 7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. 8 And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. 9 And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the LORD's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt. 10 Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year.

Every firstborn male was to be consecrated or made holy to the Lord. This was done for a few reasons. First, Israel was called God's "firstborn" (4:22). Secondly, Jesus was the "firstborn among the dead" (Col 1:18, Rom 8:29), the firstborn of all creation (Col1:15). Even Jesus, the firstborn of Mary, was consecrated in accordance with the law (Luke 2:22-23). The book of Hebrews explains that all of the firstborn that were not consecrated were to die and only the consecrated firstborn would live. Since Israel was God's firstborn, all Israel would be saved: "By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel" (Heb 11:28). Likewise, today we are Israel and part of the firstborn protected by the blood of the Lamb: "You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, *to the church of the firstborn*, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect" (Heb 12:22-23).

The very day of the Exodus was to be commemorated mainly because it was the day they were coming out of slavery. Likewise, our Passover celebration of Jesus Christ is a celebration of our freedom from the slavery of sin. "For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under

grace” (Rom 6:14). Before Jesus, we were all bound by our sinful nature inherited through Adam. Now, however, that sinful nature is crucified along with Jesus and we don’t resurrect it either. “For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--because anyone who has died has been freed from sin” (Rom 6:6-7). Wow! What a wonderful deliverance to celebrate. We no longer have a sinful nature. Now don’t write me letters pointing out the NIV texts of Romans 7 and 8. The NIV has mistranslated “sinful flesh” in those passages. In fact, the NIV is the only translation that does so. Even the Living Bible uses “flesh.” Indeed, sin lives in us, but we no longer have that inherited Adam nature because it was “crucified” with Christ. I am not asking you whether you feel that its gone, I’m asking you whether you believe Romans 6:6? This is why Paul could write, “And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, ***it is no longer I myself who do it***, but it is sin living in me” (Rom 7:16-17). I can find no better reason to celebrate.

The land of the Canaanites, as well as the land of other nations, was promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was called the “promised land.” It is no accident that Exodus uses this term, or that God planned for Israel to enter it only after slavery. Today, because Jesus has killed our old nature and we live as new creations in Him, we look forward to our promised land of heaven. A land flowing with milk and honey, or perhaps better said for us, a land of precious stones (some of which are white) and gold.

The feast was to be celebrated for seven days, during which no yeast was to be eaten. We have already discussed the fact that yeast symbolized corruption (See 12:8,20). But why seven days? Seven days is a clear reference throughout Scripture as the time of complete history. Scripture points to an earth that will remain for only 7,000 years. This, too, was discussed in the section on 12:15. A great festival was to take place on the seventh day because that is when our great festival of deliverance into our promised land of heaven shall take place as well: “Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, ‘So I declared on oath in My anger, “They shall never enter My rest.”’ And yet *His work has been finished since the creation of the world*. For somewhere He has spoken about the seventh day in these words: ‘And on the seventh day God rested from all His work.’ And again in the passage above He says, ‘They shall never enter My rest.’ It *still remains* that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience. Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later He spoke through David, as was said before: ‘Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.’ For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. *There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God*” (Heb 4:3-9). Therefore, the yeast, or corruption, is not to be part of our lives as seen by the seven days representing the complete history of the world.

Verse eight tells us that the reason we are to celebrate and abstain from yeast is simply a response to God’s love and grace in deliverance. We too, celebrate and are obedient to Christ, not because we want to save ourselves by being good, but because we don’t want to do bad things as a result of what Christ “did for me.” People are often afraid of becoming a Christian because

they will have to stop drinking, smoking, swearing, etc. It isn't because we "have" to, its just that our wants change. We no longer want to drink, smoke etc. That is what true love is all about, serving because we want to, not because we have to.

We also see in verse eight another reminder for fathers to tell their children about Him. We discussed in the section on 10:2 how important it was for fathers to give testimonies to their children and here we see another Godly reminder of that. Do your children see this celebration of God's deliverance in your life? Too often when we come home from work our children see worn out, depressed parents. How often do they see us basking in the love and forgiveness of our Savior at the supper table, in the car, or anywhere else we happen to be. I believe this is what David meant when he said, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies" (Psa 23:5). Satan hates nothing more than watching us dine on God's forgiveness without experiencing guilt over our sins. Our children need to see us dine on God's table in the presence of Satan's attacks on our daily lives.

Do we dine with Christ throughout our week or only during our prayers before meals and bedtime. The Lord told the Israelites to make this observance like a sign on their hand to remind them daily of God's deliverance. We, too, can put signs in our lives to continually remind us of God's freeing us from our bondage to sin. Whether it be Christian radio, filling your house with Christian artwork, daily devotions and prayer, or preferably, all of the above, we can have signs all around us to take us out of the business of life and bring us back into God's rest that will last for an eternity. The last few years I have been convicted by a special verse which states, "Everything is permissible for me--but not everything is beneficial" (1 Cor 6:12). I have found that I want to fill my life with only beneficial things. For example, my children could watch videos on Sesame Street, but why? Though they are permissible, they have no benefit in them. But what about ABC's and 123's? There are plenty of Christian videos and other materials out there that teach the same things, but with an added benefit of Jesus Christ and the wisdom that can only come from Him. Knowledge and wisdom are two different things. One can have knowledge and remain a fool. There are many fools in Harvard because, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 14:1). Information apart from wisdom does no good. I believe with wisdom comes knowledge but not vice versa. We tell our kids to eat vegetables because we know that its good for them. How much more would God's Word be beneficial for an eternity for our children. Again, the more reminders of God we put in our daily life, the more we think and meditate on Him. The more we meditate on Him the more we have peace and strength throughout our day. The more peace we have, the more we dine in the presence of our enemies. The more we dine in peace the more our children learn from our example. Tie these reminders on your fingers and let the world see you belong to Jesus.

Exo 13:11 And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, 12 That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the

males shall be the LORD's. 13 And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem. 14 And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: 15 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. 16 And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.

The Lord mentions His covenant promise over a dozen times in Genesis before we get to Exodus. Now, and throughout the Scriptures, God reminds us that He is faithful to His promises. This is important for us because we, too, have the promise of His return. He will not fail in this promise even though some have become tired and have begun to doubt.

Again we see the mention of the firstborn. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter this points us to Christ, the firstborn of the dead and Israel, God's first born. The consequences of not being redeemed was certain death. "But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15:57). Today, we are redeemed through Christ's blood and are not consecrated through sacrificing a lamb or donkey. However, in a sense we are to offer our life: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship" (Rom 12:1).

We again see God telling fathers to give testimonies about God's wonders as discussed earlier. The whole act of sacrifice and redemption was not only to make Israel look to the source of that redemption but also to remind them of the past love and faithfulness of God as well. Just as Israel would be saved by the sacrifice of Jesus, God's firstborn, they would be saved from hell and death in the future. They were going to be saved from their bondage now by the death of Pharaoh's firstborn.

Why did the animals need to die? Again, the curse of Genesis was not only upon human beings but upon the entire Creation. It, too, needs to be redeemed from the curse. As we read in Romans: "For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the One who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom 8:20-23).

Exo 13:17 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent

when they see war, and they return to Egypt: 18 But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. 19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you. 20 And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. 21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: 22 He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

God wasn't deciding what to do as things went along. He knew all the time where the Israelites would go and when they would be freed. That is why God warned Moses that Pharaoh would not let the people go at first. That is also why God warned Abraham that his descendants would be slaves in a foreign land. Even though God had promised deliverance He knew the people didn't really have faith in Him yet. Therefore, He did not lead them through the land of the Philistines because the Israelites would have scattered at the first sign of danger. In God's omniscience, He would lead the Israelites to a place that they couldn't scatter, between an army and a sea. Not only would this test their faith, but it would give God one more opportunity to show His power and faithfulness to a doubting nation, not to mention judgment upon an unbelieving Egypt. Though these words had not been written down yet, they certainly should have known them in their hearts: "The LORD Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" (Deu 31:8).

It is easy for us to criticize the Israelites for their lack of faith, but I find it convicting when much smaller problems in my life arise and I find it difficult to surrender it to God and let Him lead and deliver me from my enemies. Though not life threatening, these situations prove to be faith strengthening, not to mention a true test of faith and a little sobering reality to what I may have done in the shoes of those leaving Egypt.

Some may wonder why it matters. The Israelites doubted God, but I don't. In Deuteronomy we see that their children would reap the effects of Israel's obedience or their disobedience, "Keep His decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time" (Deu 4:40). Likewise, though God does not judge your children for your sins, what you do does affect your children. Children of alcoholics are often alcoholics. Children of abusive homes are often abusive. Even today children deal with the sins of their fathers and they need to break free from these chains through the power of Christ.

Verse 18 is interesting because it tells us that the Israelites were armed for battle. This may allude to their initial cockiness. They felt they were ready for war, but God obviously knew otherwise. Little did they know, their strength was not in their weapons but in God's deliverance. They seemed to trust in their own power but doubted God's.

During the day there was a pillar of clouds to lead the Israelites through the desert. But even more than a roadmap, it was a shield from the sun, “The LORD watches over you-- the LORD is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night” (Psa 121:5-6), and “He spread out a cloud as a covering, and a fire to give light at night” (Psa 105:39). This cloud also served as a type of baptism, making the Israelites God’s people under His care. We read in the New Testament, “For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Cor 10:1-2). In Psalms we read, “He makes the clouds His chariot and rides on the wings of the wind” (Ps 104:3). Likewise, we read in Isaiah, “An oracle concerning Egypt: See, the LORD rides on a swift cloud and is coming to Egypt” (Isa 19:1).

Throughout the Bible this cloud will be seen as God’s presence. It will descend upon Mount Sinai, fill the temple, lead them through the desert for the entire 40 year period, descend upon the Mount of Transfiguration, take Jesus up in the clouds and He will return in the clouds. There are many more such references to God’s presence among them but too many to list here. We also see that at Christ’s return this cloud will again be a protection for His people, “Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy” (Isa 4:5). Next time you set foot outside, don’t forget to look upon the clouds and remember God’s glorious deliverance and His promised return.

This generation of Israelites was a stiff-necked people, which is why none of them outside of Joshua and Caleb would get to enter the promised land. Only the children of these 600,000 men (excluding women and children) would get to enter God’s rest (Heb 4). So why did God lead them out of Egypt? Deuteronomy says, “Because He loved your forefathers and chose their descendants after them, He brought you out of Egypt by His Presence and His great strength” (Deu 4:37). Ezekiel gives us a second reason: “But for the sake of My name I did what would keep it from being profaned in the eyes of the nations they lived among and in whose sight I had revealed Myself to the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt. Therefore I led them out of Egypt and brought them into the desert” (Ezek 20:9-10). Indeed the Israelites are a sign for the world to know about the Almighty: “Here am I, and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion” (Isa 8:18).

Joseph’s bones were brought out of Egypt with them. More than likely they were mummified as the rich people of Egypt usually had this done. Since Joseph was second in power when he died, there is little question about it. Back in Genesis 47:29 we see Joseph made a request to have his bones taken out of Egypt. This showed great faith that God would deliver the Israelites, a greater faith than what the Israelites were displaying now. The author of Hebrews writes of this great faith: “By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones” (Heb 11:22). Later in Joshua we see what happens to Joseph’s bones: “And Joseph’s bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at

Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph's descendants" (Josh 24:32).

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 13

- 1) Give two reasons why it was the first born consecrated.
- 2) What word does the NIV use for “sinful flesh?”
- 3) Do you have a sinful nature? Why or why not. You must use Scripture to support your case.
- 4) Describe Psalm 23:5 where we are to “dine in the presence of our enemies.” What does this mean for you life?
- 5) Why did animals need to be killed during the plague of the firstborn?
- 6) What two purposes did the cloud that led the Israelites have?
- 7) What “dead weight” did the Israelites bring into the promised land with them?

Exodus Chapter 14

Exo 14:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. 3 For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. 4 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so.

God told the Israelites to turn back and head North in the basic direction from which they had come. This not only made the Egyptians think they were lost, but perhaps caused further doubt in the minds of a few Israelites as well. God planned to gain glory through this judgment, however. I have received letters in the past calling God a murderer. People think that a loving God could not kill the Egyptians just to make Himself look good and, therefore, there is no God. What people do not realize is that God wasn't killing them just to gain glory, but to pronounce judgment upon them. When the Israelites were about to enter the promised land they were told to kill everyone in that land. In Deuteronomy we see that this wasn't just to give the Israelites their gifted land: "It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the LORD your God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people" (Deu 9:5-6). It was on account of the evil of the inhabitants of the land that God killed them. They had rejected the true God and worshipped other gods, refusing to listen or obey. Likewise, the Egyptians had refused to listen and follow the true God. We all know they had every opportunity to give God a chance, but they refused. The only thing left was to judge them for unbelief. These same people who tell me there is no God will one day be judged by this non-existing God. Their judgment will not come about only to lead us believers into our promised land, but it will bring upon the unbelievers their due penalty. It is as Paul wrote, "They are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them" (Rom 1:31-32, see also Rom 3:4-8).

Interestingly, historically it seems that God did make sure the Egyptians knew He was Lord. Though secular historians would like you to think that the Israelites received their monotheistic (one God) view of religion from the Egyptians, we see that the Egyptians actually had a Pharaoh that brought in monotheism right after these events (Akhnaton). It is also interesting that the Hebrew word for Lord is Adon and the "d" and "t" are often interchanged in different languages. Could the Egyptian "Aton" be from the Hebrew "Adon?" It seems that perhaps the memory of Amenhotep's destruction and the demise of the Egyptian kingdom could have convinced at least Akhnaton to consider one God.

Exo 14:5 And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? 6 And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: 7 And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. 8 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand. 9 But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon.

Here we see that even the thoughts of man are not always his own. God moved Pharaoh to think this way. We read in Psalms, “The LORD made His people very fruitful; He made them too numerous for their foes, whose hearts He turned to hate His people, to conspire against His servants” (Psa 105:24-25). We also read in Romans, “For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: ‘I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display My power in you and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth.’ Therefore God has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy, and He hardens whom He wants to harden. One of you will say to me: ‘Then why does God still blame us? For who resists His will?’ But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to Him who formed it, ‘Why did You make me like this?’” (Rom 9:17-20)? But for the believer, God has written His law in our mind: “I will put My laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds” (Heb 10:16) “‘For who has known the mind of the Lord that He may instruct him?’ But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16). I for one am thankful that God uses my mind for His glory, for it is when we reject Christ that our mind becomes a battle field for evil: “Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done” (Rom 1:28). Or consider this: “The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so” (Rom 8:6-7). It is only through Christ that we can be changed and that our minds can be opened to see the spiritual things of this world that those who reject God can not see: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is--His good, pleasing and perfect will” (Rom 12:2).

We see that all of Pharaoh’s officials were coming out after the Israelites and even seemed to have trapped them. We discussed earlier how all of Egypt was destroyed by the admission of their own officials (10:7) as a result of the earlier plagues. But this wasn’t enough. Egypt still had their leaders and officials, but that won’t be for long either. Like Pharaoh, the officials had their hearts hardened and could not see the spiritual things. They had brought condemnation upon themselves. There were other Egyptians that went with the Israelites as we will see them later in the desert. These officials could have chosen to believe when God was offering them that grace, but now it was too

late. Likewise, for us today, the time is drawing near and once the Lord comes back to get His own, it will be too late.

As for the location of these cities we cannot be sure. Some claim that the Israelites crossed only shallow waters, but this would not kill an entire army. Nor would it take all night to cross such a place. All we know for sure is the water was deep and there was no place to go. The moral of the story is that there is no way out apart from Christ. We all need to cross our red sea as we saw in Corinthians, “For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Cor 10:1-2). The point of the sea is not how deep but how much faith you have in God to deliver you, not just from the armies of the world, but from the sins of the flesh, from death, the devil and all the world. Today, our cloud is the blood of Jesus Christ that parts the stormy waters of life, and as Peter found out, we won’t sink in the water with the faith that Jesus will carry us.

Exo 14:10 And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD. 11 And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? 12 Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. 13 And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. 14 The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

If anything will make you seek God, its fear. Unfortunately it wasn’t a very good fear. Instead of believing God could and would keep His promise to deliver them, they began to grumble and test God. Since they didn’t think God was answering, they took out there frustrations on Moses. Moses called upon God and literally told the people to just stand still. Samuel also said the same thing before a great miracle of weather, “Now then, stand still and see this great thing the LORD is about to do before your eyes” (1 Sam 12:16, see also 2 Chro 20:17)! Why stand still? That was the last thing the Israelites wanted to do. They wanted to take things in their own hands and run, not stand still. Psalms tells us the purpose of being still: “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth” (Psa 46:10) and, “Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes” (Psa 37:7). This is exactly what God wanted. He wanted to be exalted and to overcome all the odds when it seemed the enemy had won. But more than that, He wanted His people to love and trust Him, to be still and to know that He was God of the universe, kings, nature, and gods. The Psalmist writes of the only true God, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor Me” (Psa 50:15).

But because they did not call upon God, He later tells them, “Not one of the men who saw My glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert but who disobeyed Me and tested Me ten times--not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated Me with contempt will ever see it” (Num 14:22-23, see also 21:5 and Deut 9:7).

Today, we often do the same thing as well. We grumble and complain, dragging our feet instead of “being still.” Trials and troubles come and we want to solve them ourselves. Just as the Israelites had preferred to go back to Egypt in their state of sin, we find it easier to leave God and follow our carnal desires. Rather than be hungry, some would prefer to steal. God promises, “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ‘For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well’” (Mat 6:28-33). Luke writes, “Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows” (Luke 12:7).

God did deliver the Israelites out of this mess as He promises to do with ours. Again, the book of Psalms gives further details of these events: “When our fathers were in Egypt, they gave no thought to Your miracles; they did not remember your many kindness’, and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea. Yet He saved them for His Name’s sake, to make His mighty power known. He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up; He led them through the depths as through a desert. He saved them from the hand of the foe; from the hand of the enemy He redeemed them. The waters covered their adversaries; not one of them survived. Then they believed His promises and sang His praise” (Psa 106:7-12).

Exo 14:15 And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: 16 But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. 17 And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. 18 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. 19 And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: 20 And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

God didn't want the Israelites to just stand there crying. He wanted them to be still in their minds and hearts knowing full well God would deliver. Doing so would make them move forward taking a step in faith. That is often what God wants us to do. To move on, go forward boldly in His Name. I am reminded of a story where a man was hanging from a small branch sticking out of a cliff about 30 feet down from the top. He yelled and yelled for help until he could say no more. When no one came to his rescue he cried out to God and an angel appeared and said, "let go and I will catch you." The man thought for a while and then with one more desperate yell cried out, "Is anyone else up there?" The point is, sometimes God wants us to just let go and move on. Whether it be letting go of pride, fear, anger, distress, worry, or the multitude of other sins that block our spiritual vision.

It is important again to point out that the term Lord is being used again. When talking to the Egyptians it is "God" but when it deals with His people it is the personal "Lord."

The Lord told Moses what to do and though it may have seemed like Moses was doing the miracle, Jesus was the one doing all the work, using Moses and Aaron as icons for people with unspiritual eyes to see. Earlier we saw the Pharaoh viewed Moses as a god. His unspiritual vision could not see he was only a servant of the true God.

It is interesting that most view this event as the waters simply parting and a group of people yelling and hurrying to get across, but they envision little more. In fact, we will see there was a great wind howling (v.21), and even an earthquake, thunder and lightning according to the Psalmist who gives a praise filled account of what was going on, "With Your mighty arm You redeemed Your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. The waters saw You, O God, the waters saw You and writhed; the very depths were convulsed. The clouds poured down water, the skies resounded with thunder; Your arrows flashed back and forth. Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind, Your lightning lit up the world; the earth trembled and quaked. Your path led through the sea, Your way through the mighty waters, though Your footprints were not seen. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron" (Psa 77:15-20). Mount Sinai was not the first time they had experienced the rumblings of earthquakes, dense clouds with thunder and lightning associated with God's presence.

Verse 19 tells us the angel of God had been traveling in front to lead them through the desert. Now, He moved behind them to separate them from the Egyptians. The pillar of cloud (God's *shekinah* glory) also moved, showing them to be two different things, yet the same Lord. I believe the angel of God was Jesus Himself as we have seen many other times in Genesis alone. We know that this was not an appearance of God in His full glory, as no one could see God and live. In Genesis 12:7 the Lord appeared to Abraham. How? Almost all commentators would agree, this was Christ Himself who appeared. John records that, "grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known" (John 1:17-18). The "Him" is Christ. We see other evidence suggesting that this is Christ in other appearances of the "Angel of the Lord." In Genesis 18, three "visitors came to Abraham" and we see that two were angels (19:1) while one was the LORD Himself (Gen 18:10, 13, 17). God did appear in

human form at times before the New Testament. Jacob wrestled with God. These people may have seen Jesus before He was known as the Messiah. A difficult concept to understand, but it is one that is theologically sound.

The cloud brought light to one side and darkness to the other, symbolizing not only what they could see, but their spiritual state as well. Though the Israelites were rebellious, God was on their side and that is all that mattered. For us, though we are sin filled people, it does not matter when Christ is on our side for He has made us white as snow. "Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him" (Rom 4:8).

When the Lord comes back He will separate the sheep from the goats as He is doing here. The pillar of cloud and fire separated God's people from the devil's own. The sheep were gathered to be taken into their promised land but the goats were assembled to be destroyed. As we read in Matthew, "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world'" (Mat 25:32-34).

Exo 14:21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. 22 And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. 23 And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. 24 And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, 25 And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians. 26 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. 27 And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28 And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.

Again, it was the Lord who dried up the waters, not Moses. It took all night for the Israelites to cross because it wasn't until daybreak that the waters came upon the Egyptians. I wonder if God didn't wait to make sure that the Israelites could see His deliverance.

The east wind is significant as well. Scientifically we can discuss weather patterns etc., however, even more significant is the spiritual meaning behind the east. We see that Jesus is to return in the east. The tabernacle had its door on the east. The Garden of Eden was entered through the east. Over and

over we see that the east in reference to the entrance to God's throne and His presence. Cain, when he was cast out of the Lord's presence went away from the east. Here the wind blew from the east parting the waters in front of them and, therefore, the Israelites were heading east. (Please, do not fall into the trap that the waters were shallow so that a strong wind could simply part them. NO! There was a wall of water on each side, the wind simply dried up the ground in front of them). Where were the Israelites going? To their promised land. Our promised land will also be entered from the east when our Lord returns (see Revelation 7:2).

I believe the wind may also be a reference to the Holy Spirit. I mentioned in our discussion on verse 19 that both God and Jesus were there. This is most likely the third part of the Trinity here. The word for wind is *ruwach* and means wind, spirit or both, depending on the context. When the waters of Noah's Flood were dried up it was the same *ruwach* that did it. I believe it was a wind, but perhaps the Holy Spirit was present in that wind. We see in Acts when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples in tongues of fire that, "Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting" (Acts 2:2). If nothing else, it certainly should remind us of the presence of the Holy Spirit. This being the case we can also see how the Holy Spirit led the Israelites to the promised land just as we today can do nothing on our own, for none of us can believe unless the Spirit of God leads us: "No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3).

There is the question of whether or not Pharaoh died with the army. Here in exodus it does not say that Pharaoh was killed. There is only one verse that may allude to the fact that he did perish in Psalms where it states God "swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea" (Psa 136:15). There are arguments on both sides of this issue. One can point out that verse 28 states not one of them survived, however, verse 28 also states that this refers only to those that "had followed the Israelites." Now the question becomes who followed them? In verse 23 we see that ALL of the horsemen and chariots went in after the Israelites, but were there some on foot? The other thing is that it doesn't ever say Pharaoh went in after them, only his army. One thing is for sure, if he went in, he died. If he didn't, he probably wished he had for he would return to his country ruined. Historically, if Amenhotep II was Pharaoh, it seems he had lived past the date of the Exodus.

When the Lord looked down and saw the Egyptians, He threw them into confusion, perhaps much like He did with the Philistines by thundering: "But that day the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites" (1 Sam 7:10). Even their chariot wheels began to fall off, enough of them to make the Egyptians realize God was fighting for the Israelites. It amazes me that something as simple as wheels falling off could convince them there was a God, but yet the ten plagues weren't enough to keep them from chasing after them. All common sense would tell you not to go, but our answer to this puzzling stupidity is found verse 17 where it says that God hardened their hearts. Man has no sense, common or otherwise, we only have what God gives us. That is why we cannot find wisdom on our own, only God can grant such sense. James

says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind" (James 1:5-6). An interesting side-note on wisdom. You can't have any of it without faith in Jesus Christ. The Egyptians did not know the Lord and, therefore, could not have any wisdom. When I really think about it, I should be amazed they could have walked and chewed gum at the same time. Proverbs tells us why this is when speaking of wisdom: "The LORD brought Me forth as the first of His works, before His deeds of old; I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began. When there were no oceans, I was given birth, when there were no springs abounding with water; before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, before He made the earth or its fields or any of the dust of the world. I was there when He set the heavens in place, when He marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when He established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when He gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when He marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was the craftsman at His side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in His presence, rejoicing in His whole world and delighting in mankind" (Prov 8:22-31). This entire chapter talks of wisdom, but the question I want to ask is, when did wisdom come about? It was there before the Creation. How can that be? Only if wisdom is the very essence of Jesus Christ. Jesus is wisdom because He was there before Creation. He is eternal! That is why you can't have wisdom without knowing Jesus. It is interesting to take the passages that deal with wisdom in Scripture and substitute the word "Jesus" in its place because it always makes sense. This is why the world can't see the spiritual things unless they first have faith. The problems in our society have easy answers to fix them, it is just that the majority of the world can't see that. We know that school prayer and Bible based curriculums would stop the school shootings, but the government can't see it. Instead, they think more rules and regulations will change the heart of man. Pray for our leaders to have wisdom!

The fact that the waters covered the Egyptians is also important. The Scriptures have many references to evil being buried in the sea. In Matthew, the demon-possessed pigs ran into the lake (Matt 8). Noah's Flood buried the evil world of Noah's day. Perhaps that is why so much evil comes back out of the waters. There are four evil angels bound in the Euphrates river (Rev 9:14). Also in Revelation, the Anti-christ is said to come up out of the sea (Rev 12-13). Maybe this is also why there is no sea in heaven (Rev 21:1). At this point we can only speculate the significance of this, but it makes for an interesting thought.

Exo 14:29 But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. 30 Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. 31 And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians:

and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

The Israelites were protected by the wall on either side of them. Finally, it seems the Israelites learned to fear God and to trust in Him. However, this fear would be short-lived. This is exactly why miracles do not bring about faith. One must be careful in thinking that seeing a miracle would make your faith stronger. The Bible warns that the devil will give power to some to have people follow him: “The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders” (2 Th 2:9). In Galatians it seems to show that miracles are only good for those who already have faith: “Does God give you His Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard” (Gal 3:5)? No doubt they have strengthened the faith of some, but miracles do not give faith. In fact to ask for a sign is testing God. Luke says, “Others tested Him by asking for a sign from heaven” (Luke 11:16). We also see Ahaz refusing to test God: “‘Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.’ But Ahaz said, ‘I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test.’ Then Isaiah said, ‘Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a Son, and will call Him Immanuel’” (Isa 7:11-14). The only sign we need is the sign of Jesus birth, death and resurrection. In fact Jesus alludes to this when he says, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah” (Mat 12:39). What was the sign of the prophet Jonah? Jesus rising after being in the depths of the earth for 3 days, just as Jonah rose from the sea after three days.

It is interesting the God was about to be praised by the Israelites now that they had been delivered. What God really wanted was to see the Israelites praise Him on the other side of the sea. God did want the Israelites out of Egypt, but more than that He wanted Egypt out of the Israelites. It won't be long before we see that the golden calf, an animal worshipped in Egypt, spring up into their rebellious hearts. Faith without works is dead. As long as things were going well, they trusted Moses and God, but when troubles arose, faith went out the window. Does this happen in your life? Do we question, perhaps even test God when our life troubles arise? Again, God wants us to simply be still and surrender our life and troubles to Him. There is nothing too great or small that He cannot handle.

God doesn't necessarily want us out of the world, He wants the world out of us. In Jesus prayer for His disciples He said, “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth. As you sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify Myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You” (John

17:15-21). Jesus, our High Priest, intercedes for us in this marvelous way. How can we not overcome with that kind of intercession?

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 14

- 1) Why did God tell the Israelites to head back North while they were escaping?
- 2) Why did God lead the people into the promised land?

- 3) Which Egyptian Pharaoh was monotheistic? How might this have come about?
- 4) What name does God use in the Scriptures while talking to Pharaoh? While talking to Moses and Israel?
- 5) What do you call the glory of God that was in the cloud?
- 6) Name times that Jesus appeared in human form before the New Testament.
- 7) What spiritual significance is there with the cloud giving light to one side and darkness to the other?
- 8) What spiritual significance is there to the east?
- 9) What spiritual significance may there be in the wind that dried up the sea?
- 10) Did Pharaoh die in the sea? Why or why not?
- 11) What significance is there in burying the Egyptians under water?
- 12) When did Israel praise God? Where did God want them to praise Him?
- 13) Explain this statement in how it relates to you: “God didn’t just want the Israelites out of Egypt, He wanted Egypt out of the Israelites.”

Exodus Chapter 15

Exo 15:1 Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. 2

The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. 3 The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. 4 Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. 5 The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.

This song of Moses is a song of praise, deliverance and of God's grace. It is possible that this song will be sung in heaven because we see it referenced in the book of Revelation when the saints are delivered from the beast: "And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: 'Great and marvelous are Your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are Your ways, King of the ages'" (Rev 15:2-3). Again, we see an attitude of deliverance and praise that only God deserves. For it was the Lord's deeds and might that brings all of this about, nothing from themselves.

Note that the Lord didn't just bring the Israelites into safety, but He is also the author of their eternal salvation according to verse two. Though a warrior He is still known as Lord, the personal covenant God of which one desires to have a relationship with. Not a far off God who is only there to watch over his pawns, but a God who loves intimate relationships, who is faithful, near and compassionate.

As far as the Egyptians being cast into the sea like a stone, this is a foreshadowing of eternal judgment. The very word, "hurled" shows the attitude of God in this event. This wasn't just letting the waters flow back over the Egyptians but a certain pouring out of God's wrath. The Hebrew word for "thrown" or "hurled" used here is only used 23 times in Scripture and is used to show judgment on the Amorites (Josh 10:11), Saul throwing his spear at David (1 Sam 18:11, 20:33), or in giving insults (John 9:28). One verse in particular that shows this word being used in connection with God's anger states, "How the Lord has covered the Daughter of Zion with the cloud of His anger! He has hurled down the splendor of Israel from heaven to earth; He has not remembered His footstool in the day of His anger" (Lam 2:1). We see that Babylon is often described as being thrown into the sea as a reference to her judgment: "When you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it and throw it into the Euphrates. Then say, 'So will Babylon sink to rise no more because of the disaster I will bring upon her. And her people will fall'" (Jer 51:63-64). The city of Babylon was an icon for the mother of evil in the world. In the book of Revelation we see that the city of Babylon figuratively represents another city or nation that will be judged by God. Though almost all of chapter 18 talks of this city we see a connection with the Egyptian destruction in the following section: Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: 'With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again'" (Rev 18:21).

These verses almost suggest Pharaoh did not follow his men into the sea and, therefore, did not drown himself. Pharaoh's chariots, army and officers are mentioned, but nothing of Pharaoh.

Exo 15:6 Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. 7 And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. 8 And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. 9 The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. 10 Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. 11 Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? 12 Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.

There are 34 verses in the Psalms alone that discuss the significance of God's right hand. A small sampling from over 100 possible verses follow:

- “You have made known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand” (Psa 16:11).
- “Show the wonder of Your great love, You who save by Your right hand those who take refuge in You from their foes” (Psa 17:7).
- “Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He answers him from His holy heaven with the saving power of His right hand” (Psa 20:6).
- “It was not by their sword that they won the land, nor did their arm bring them victory; it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your face, for You loved them” (Psa 44:3).
- “Like Your name, O God, Your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is filled with righteousness” (Psa 48:10).
- “When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead. Then He placed His right hand on me and said: ‘Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last’” (Rev 1:17).
- “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of Him who holds the seven stars [angels of the churches] in His right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands” (Rev 2:1).
- “He came and took the scroll [which held seals of judgment] from the right hand of Him who sat on the throne” (Rev 5:7).
- “It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to Him” (1 Pet 3:22).
- “But when this Priest [Jesus] had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God” (Heb 10:12).
- “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:2).

- “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God” (Col 3:1).

From the above verses we can see that from God’s right hand comes eternal pleasure, salvation, victory, comfort, judgment, and rest. Many other verses tell of Jesus sitting at God’s right hand. With this being the prominent position of Christ, perhaps it was through Christ (the Word of God) that Pharaoh’s army was judged. Again, the word “Lord” is used consistently here, not the impersonal “God.” John 1:3 tells us that even at Creation Jesus was there being the very source of Creation. God’s right hand does indeed bring about majestic power and deliverance. Our ultimate deliverance came from Jesus’ death and resurrection, after which, He sat down at the right hand of God.

We had earlier discussed the possibility of the Spirit of God pushing back the waters instead of a simple wind in 14:21. First of all, the wind there had come out of the east, the very direction of God’s throne. Secondly, here we see it was the blast of His nostrils that pushed back the waters into a wall. God, also with His Spirit, breathed life into man, “The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Gen 2:7). We see also in verse ten that God blew His breath to cover the Egyptians with water as well. Either way, it was a Divine miracle.

In verse 11 we see that there is no one like the true God. The Egyptians had many gods, all of which were proven to be impotent in the presence of THE God. The ten plagues had shown His superiority over their gods, and now their gods could not protect them from Divine judgment either. God’s ways were indeed holy and just as well as glorious and awesome. There was nothing unfair about this judgment since the Egyptians had every opportunity to repent and believe. Even the great miracles never produced faith in them because their hearts were hard. May this be a lesson to us who struggle with pride. I know many intellectuals who cannot let go of their pride and supposed knowledge to give God a chance. They blindly accept evolution without even taking the time to look at all of the scientific evidence to support Creation. In my lecturing on creation, I have had many chances to offer free materials to a doubting Thomas. Rarely does anyone accept the offer because they do not want to take the time to research something they have no faith in. If they would only spend the time and open their hearts to the possibility, the Holy Spirit would bring them close to Him with His right hand. Then He would soften their hearts and bring them into the peace and wisdom of God that surpasses all human understanding. They would see that a young earth and a loving God is not only supported scientifically, but theologically, historically, archaeologically, philosophically, and spiritually. Instead, they reject God’s grace and Spirit, and like the Egyptians, instead of being held by God’s right hand to experience eternal pleasures, they will be swallowed by it. Let’s not allow history to repeat itself.

Exo 15:13 Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. 14 The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. 15 Then the dukes of Edom shall be

amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. 16 Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased. 17 Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. 18 The LORD shall reign for ever and ever. 19 For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea. 20 And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. 21 And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

The Israelites are being brought into God's holy dwelling. Where is that? Some say it is the tabernacle set up at Shiloh, the place God set up for worship: "Go now to the place in Shiloh where I first made a dwelling for My Name, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel" (Jer 7:12). However, Shiloh did not remain as a holy dwelling because of Israel's wickedness.

Others say the holy dwelling is the promised land. In a sense that may be correct, however, I believe it is a bit more specific. In verse 17 it says God will bring them to the mountain of their inheritance, which is also called God's sanctuary and dwelling place. This mountain can be none other than Mount Zion in Jerusalem where the temple would be built. We see that when the temple was dedicated, Solomon's prayer alluded to this site's importance: "Hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, Your dwelling place, and when You hear, forgive" (1 Ki 8:30). Though heaven is called God's dwelling place, we also see that Solomon said, "I have indeed built a magnificent temple for You, a place for You to dwell forever" (1 Ki 8:13). However, he went on to say, "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain You. How much less this temple I have built" (1 Ki 8:27)! We also see that the Lord does say He dwells in the promised land, "Do not defile the land where you live and where I dwell, for I, the LORD, dwell among the Israelites" (Num 35:34). In fact, in Revelation 21:2 there is a new Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven in which God dwells with His people, a type of heaven if you like. Over and over the Scriptures talk of the land of Israel as the place God dwells and watches over. God also told Abraham that "All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever" (Gen 13:15). Perhaps with the New Jerusalem coming out of heaven the Holy Land will be around eternally but in a renewed state of course.

Though the place where God dwells seems to focus on the Holy Land, and more specifically, Mount Zion in that land, the New Testament shows us that now God's dwelling is in His redeemed. Paul wrote that, "Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph 3:17). To the Romans he wrote, "And if the

Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you” (Rom 8:11). In Revelation we are told, “To him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of My God” (Rev 3:12). However in heaven there is no temple (Rev 21:22) because God is the temple. We see in Corinthians, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God” (1 Cor 6:19)? The word for “temple” here is the word used for the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle, God’s dwelling place. God now dwells in us, His Most Holy Place. The realization of this fact also will help in succumbing to the fact that we are saints because God cannot dwell with anything sinful. Yes you sin, but you’re not a sinner or else God couldn’t live in you.

It is worth noting that verse 13 mentions God is leading the people He has redeemed. Redemption is not delivery out of trouble, it is salvation. Redemption was the covenant promise, not just dirt in a holy land. God promised to bring the Israelites into the “promised land” which is only a type or foreshadowing of heaven. In Hebrews 4 we see that those who rebelled did not get to enter that land because they did not have faith, the very thing needed for redemption. We also see a promise of New Testament believers inheriting their Sabbath day rest in their promised land of heaven as well. Though Gentiles, we are Israel, as engrafted branches into His redeemed kingdom (Rom 11:15-21).

Verse 13 also tell us God is the one guiding people to their promised land. On our own we could never find it, but it brings me great comfort to know that God guides me to His dwelling just as He promised, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” (Heb 13:5).

Verses 14-16 prophesies about all the nations Israel will drive out as the go into the promised land. Though many of these events would not happen for forty years, not one of them did not come true. The Canaanites melted with fear when the Israelites were about to cross over the Jordan. Rahab said, “I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you” (Josh 2:9).

We see a reference to being still as a stone with Nabal, an enemy of David. When he found out how the Lord was with David and how his wife kept them from being killed, the Scriptures record “Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone. About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died” (1 Sam 25:37-38). Indeed the fear of the Lord is debilitating.

In verse 16 we see another reference to God’s people being redeemed in that they are said to be “bought.” Psalms also speaks of this: “Remember the people You purchased of old, the tribe of Your inheritance, whom You redeemed-- Mount Zion, where You dwelt” (Psa 74:2). How did God buy His people? Revelation answers that question: “And they sang a new song: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because You were slain, and with Your blood You purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation’” (Rev 5:9). Now at this point in Exodus Christ had not yet died, however, He had already come in other ways. The Passover foreshadowed His death and simple faith in God’s promises counted as righteousness. This is one

of the great lessons of Abraham, even before he was circumcised he was saved because, “What does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness’” (Rom 4:3). Once God made a promise, it was in effect before its fulfillment. God is not bound by time, only His promises. So, in a sense, the Israelites were purchased from the moment God promised to do so. Faith in Christ, or faith in the promise of Christ, was the same thing.

Miriam, the sister of Moses, led all the women (probably about 600,000) in singing and dancing as they praised the Lord. I guarantee there was no one just saying the words with their minds being idle in that church service. God had done a wonderful work and the people could only respond with dancing and joy. How much more should we, the people in whom God now lives because of His Son, sing and dance in giving Him praise. Too often we forget the great price He paid for us and church simply becomes fire insurance or a release of a guilty conscience. Going to church doesn’t do any good if it is just your body there. Your soul and spirit need to be there as well. Let us respond to God’s love appropriately.

Exo 15:22 So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. 23 And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. 24 And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? 25 And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, 26 And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee. 27 And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

It only took three days for the people to begin to grumble against God. How quickly we forget God’s grace amidst bodily suffering. I believe we have many Marahs in our life as well. The question is, what do we do with them? Verse 25 shows that a piece of wood or part of tree was thrown into the water to make it sweet. Surely this is to point us to that tree that makes our bitter Marahs sweet as well: “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed” (1 Pet 2:24). Christ threw Himself on the tree that we might live and be healed. He tells us that, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him” (John 7:37-38). The people had cried out “What are we to drink” but God was testing them to see if they would see that God is all they need. If they would only come to Him they would have their thirst quenched. However, they only had eyes for themselves and could not see the living waters. Peter wrote, “Therefore, since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves also

with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin” (1 Pet 4:1). How true that is. If every time we had a thought of relieving a self-centered discomfort of hunger, thirst, pain or even an itch, and we re-routed those thoughts to God, how often could we say, “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God” (Col 3:1). If that is where our focus is, how could we thirst for anything else. David said, “O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You, my body longs for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water” (Ps 63:1).

The Lord made a decree with them telling them to keep their eyes on Him. If they would only “listen carefully to His voice” and “pay attention” they would be healed. However, this would not be the last test they would fail. Over and over they will grumble to Moses. However, it wasn’t Moses they were really grumbling against. As we will see in the next chapter it was a grumbling against God, “You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD” (Exo 16:8). Paul warns us today, “And do not grumble, as some of them did--and were killed by the destroying angel” (1 Cor 10:10). Do we grumble against our boss, our teachers, parents, spouses? The Bible says, “Do everything without complaining or arguing” (Phil 2:14). Do we not trust that God can handle even the smallest of our problems, or do we save Him for the big things like sunsets and cancer? The more we put God into the little things of our life the more He is able to help us with the big problems. After all, God is “all in all” (1 Cor 15:28).

The Israelites went from the bitter waters to refreshing palm trees in Elim. Like our life, bitterness almost always turns to sweetness. For God says, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose” (Rom 8:28). God was not punishing the Israelites, He was testing and disciplining them. In Hebrews we read, “No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it” (Heb 12:11). The many trials and tribulations of our life are not there to punish us either. God wants the best for us if we can only be patient and remember, “When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other” (Eccl 7:14). And also remember “The Lord disciplines those He loves. . . Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons” (Heb 12:6-8). If you are not being disciplined, you are not loved so let us therefore, “rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us” (Rom 5:3-5). Next time we thirst remember the words of Isaiah, “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare” (Isa 55:1).

It is no accident that at Elim there were 12 springs and 70 palm trees. Both numbers are Biblically symbolic of completeness. There were 12 tribes of Israel, 12 disciples, 12 foundations, gates and angels in the New Jerusalem. We know that when all of Israel entered Egypt there were 70 people in all. (Gen 46:27). We also see that there are 70 weeks (Dan 9:24); 70 elders (Num 11:16;25); 70 members of the Sanhedrin in the New Testament era; 70 year captivity in Babylon (Jer 25:12); the temple of Jesus' day was destroyed in 70 AD; 70 scholars translated the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint); and perhaps most fascinating, the number 70 appears 71 times in Scripture in 70 verses. Therefore, we see a picture of the Israelites being brought out of their bitterness of the world into the rest of God's healing waters.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 15

- 1) Where else do we see the song of Moses besides here in Exodus?
- 2) What spiritual significance is there to the Egyptians sinking as stones?
- 3) What is the spiritual significance of God's right hand?
- 4) Where is God's holy dwelling today?
- 5) Who led the Israelites in song after the Exodus?
- 6) How long after crossing the Red Sea did the Israelites begin to grumble?
- 7) What is the spiritual significance of the wood that was thrown into the bitter waters of Marah?
- 8) What is the spiritual significance of the Israelites going from Marah to Elim?

Exodus Chapter 16

Exo 16:1 And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. 2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: 3 And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

Elim was the place of rest with the palm trees and streams. They had wandered for three days in the desert before reaching Elim. Note verse one says it was the 15th of the second month *after they had left Egypt*, not necessarily the second month of the year, which would have been May on their calendar. So

the Israelites either reached the two months after leaving the city of Ramses or exactly one month after leaving. It depends on your point of reference when counting. Either it is the second month of the year or the second month after leaving Egypt. Assuming the latter this means God gave them rest at Elim for nearly 50 days, realizing that a Jewish month has only 30 days since they used the Lunar calendar. Another interesting side note is when using the Lunar calendar the 15th of the month is always a full moon and the end of the month is always a dark sky with no moon. This is especially significant when we see that Jesus died at a full moon along with other important spiritual events. Therefore, the Israelites would have crossed the Red Sea with a full moon and they now also reached the desert on a full moon.

Note they went from the paradise of Elim, and in only the time it took to travel to the Desert of Sin, they were complaining again. They had it nice for a while and now they decided that the desert doesn't have enough food. The text says that they grumbled against Moses and Aaron, but we will see that they were really grumbling against God (16:8) because He had chosen these servants to represent Him.

What was the source of complaint? Personal, selfish pleasures were now being missed. They used to sit around pots of meat and eat all they wanted. Now they were unable to do that. In Numbers we see other foods that the Israelites craved: "We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost--also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic" (Num 11:5). Isn't this typical of human nature? The Israelites would have rather lost their freedom and gone to a pagan country than lack food for a short time. Even worse, they were willing to sell out on God for bodily pleasures and rejected God's grace and power through their lack of faith. Apparently, they knew God could part the waters of a sea but didn't think He could provide food for them. What do you do when the going gets tough? Would you rather lie than be humbled by a mistake? Would you rather cheat on a test than flunk and take the consequences of not studying? Would you rather cheat on your taxes because you don't have enough money and don't trust that God will provide than be honest and please the Lord? Once again we are reminded, "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe" (Phil 2:14-15).

Exo 16:4 Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. 5 And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. 6 And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: 7 And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and what are we, that ye murmur against us? 8 And Moses said, This shall be, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him:

and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD.

God promised bread from heaven, but only enough for each day. This limitation was not only a test to see if they would obey, but also a test of their love. On the day before the Sabbath each person was to collect twice as much so that they would not need to work on the Sabbath. Note that the Israelites were not to be tested through hardships this time, now it was with abundance. God was providing more manna than what was needed and this prosperity would test a man's worth. Likewise, today people can be tested by their prosperity. When God blesses someone financially He expects more out of them. There is no need to store up and live excessively when there are those who do not have much at all. Perhaps that is why the early church shared everything they had, "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. . . . There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sale and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need" (Acts 4:32-35). Can you imagine if the church worked that way today? Instead, we like to hoard our blessings and take extra just like the Israelites. That is why Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Mat 19:23-24). Perhaps our prayer should be more like that of the words in Proverbs: "Two things I ask of You, O LORD; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only *my daily bread*. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown You and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the Name of my God" (Prov 30:7-9).

Another point to make is that this was a test of stamina. God was going to rain down Himself from heaven. We know that this bread was no ordinary meal, it was communion with God. John shows us Jesus' statement about this bread: "I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, 'How can this man give us His flesh to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you'" (John 6:49-53). You see, the Israelites were having communion with God much like we have today. The difference is, they, like the Jews, grumbled about it. We are warned in the New Testament, "Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself" (1 Cor 11:27-29). The Israelites were eating the bread in an unworthy manner and, therefore, they still died. The Israelites would get tired of this manna and no longer cherish and revel in its abundance.

So today, our Lord has given us His body in abundance. We can go daily to Him and be refreshed by the power of His Word. Are you getting tired of Him? Do you grumble and complain rather than seek Him. Do you look forward to church and worship with the Lord or has it become a task that is no longer coveted and longed for? If so, Pray that the Lord would restore this joy and longing for His Word, the Bread which came down from heaven. May our voices lift up with the Psalmist who wrote, "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me" (Psa 51:12).

It wasn't just manna that God would bring forth but also a taste of Egypt. The morning brought bread from heaven and the evenings brought quail. Many Egyptian paintings show quail as a regular meal as they could catch them in their hands. The Israelites were longing for Egypt and now God would give it to them: "They ate till they had more than enough, for He had *given them what they craved*. But before they turned from the food they craved, even while it was still in their mouths, God's anger rose against them" (Psa 78:29-31). These two meals are in contrast. They had both the food from heaven (manna) and that of man (quail). Only one would truly satisfy if taken properly. In fact, the quail would even make them sick.

God tells us this manna was the food of angels: "He rained down manna for the people to eat, He gave them the grain of heaven. Men ate the bread of angels; He sent them all the food they could eat" (Psa 78:24-25). Again we must ask the question why did God send this manna? Deuteronomy gives us the answer, "He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, *to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD*" (Deu 8:3). These are the same words Jesus quoted to Satan when He was being tempted. Therefore we see that the manna as representative of the "bread from heaven," or the body of Christ which was to be the life giving nourishment of the Israelites.

This manna came daily just as we are to seek God's Word daily in our lives. The Lord's prayer says, "Give us this day our daily bread." Did you think He was talking about Wonder Bread here? Not at all! He is talking about our daily supply of Him, the Word made flesh (John 1:1-3). Do we get our Bread daily or are we satisfied collecting it only once a week on Sunday? People, we must eat more than once, or even twice a week. God wants us to collect our ration daily.

On the Sabbath, twice as much was to be collected. In reference to the above paragraphs we could also say that on our Sabbath, God's Word should be collected double as well. It is still wise to make the Sabbath a holy day, dedicated to the Lord. It is the one day a week that there is time to study His Word throughout the entire day. Do we do that? Or is it the one day we have to catch up on the things we didn't get done throughout the week? The law no longer demands we rest on this day, but our hearts and lives would sure benefit if we did. The law is not abolished, only its consequences have disappeared because of its fulfillment through Christ (Mat 5:17).

Note also that it was in the morning that the Israelites would see the glory of the Lord. It wasn't just because there would be a miracle happening, it was because of the nature of this miracle. God's glory would be shown in Jesus

Christ, the bread which came out of heaven. Here, too, we see God's glory in the morning manna representing the Bread which was to come.

Exo 16:9 And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings. 10 And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. 11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12 I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God.

God did indeed hear the grumbings because they were against Him according to verse 8. Aaron was to tell all the Israelites to come before the Lord. If I were them, I would have been scared to come before God after Moses had said I was complaining against Him.

The glory of the Lord appeared in a cloud again. This is called God's *shekinah* glory. This is the only glory the Israelites knew. Moses' face shone because of the back side of God's glory so this was just a small taste of what was available. Just as Moses was able to witness this glory, we too, will be witnesses of the same thing but in an even better way: "But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you" (1 Pet 4:13-14). Peter said, "I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed" (1 Pet 5:1). We will share in the brilliance of a glory that for us is unimaginable. Revelation gives us a peak at what God's glory is, "The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp" (Rev 21:23). Keep in mind however, only believers can see God's glory, "Then Jesus said, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God'" (John 11:40)?

Why did the manna come in the morning according to verse 12? Note it says that you will be filled in the morning. Keeping in mind that the manna was representative of God's Word we read in Lamentations: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are *new every morning*; great is Your faithfulness" (Lam 3:22-23). Just as the manna was fresh and new every morning, so is God's Word for us to start the day. I find the mornings to be the best time of study with the fewest distractions. In fact, I am writing this now before the sun is up. Is there a better way to start the day than to seek God's strength for you today. God would have us be in His Word throughout the day, but when we only read His Word at night, how much of the day do we benefit from it. Sure, you will grow in the knowledge and love of Christ through doing that, but how much more do we get from Him on a daily basis taking Him with us to fight the battles of our daily life? The key is, you must go and get it. God rained down the manna from heaven, but He didn't put it in the bowls for the people. Six times in chapter 16 alone, God tells the people to "gather" the manna. God doesn't get you out of

bed in the morning to read the Bible, you have to do that yourself. You have to gather His Word and He will nourish you with it. “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Mat 6:33). You must seek it out, God won’t do that part for you. Once you begin to seek Him first thing in the morning, all the rest of the day will come together as well. As the Psalmist stated, “I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it” (Psa 81:10).

Exo 16:13 And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. 14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. 15 And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. 16 This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. 17 And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. 18 And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. 19 And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning.

Here we have a description of the manna. It was white like frost on the ground. The very word manna means “what is it.” We have already discussed the answer to that question as fulfilled in Christ, but the Israelites showed their ignorance of this with their complaining.

One important connection to be made with this manna is its relationship to the Garden of Eden along with heaven. In my book on Revelation I showed how Revelation is a final fulfillment of Genesis. Almost everything in the paradise of Eden pointed us to our heavenly home and existence. In Genesis we read, “The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there” (Gen 2:12). The resin mentioned here is closely connected with manna. The manna was like frost, though not cold. Therefore, it was also white in color just as we will see in 16:31. Numbers also gives us insight into this manna: “The manna was like coriander seed and looked like resin” (Num 11:7). The Hebrew word used for resin in both Genesis 12 and Numbers 11 is *bedolach*. Therefore, not only do we see that manna was white, but we get a good description of it as well. . . it looked like the resin of the garden of Eden. The word *bedolach* is only used in these two verses in all of Scripture. There can be no mistake about it, the manna represented the resin of the Garden of Eden. (Note that if manna was white, so must have been the resin in the Garden). Perhaps this is why we read in Revelation: “To him who overcomes, I will give some of the *hidden manna*. I will also give him a *white stone* with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it” (Rev 2:17). The white manna, in some way then, points us to heaven in that it symbolizes our paradise where we live and walk with God just as Adam did in the Garden of Eden. We will discuss further significance to Genesis 2:12 and the onyx stones in chapter 25.

Each person was to gather one omer of manna a day. This shows the amount of ones daily need and it is important when connected with the bread put on the table of shewbread in the tabernacle. Each loaf set on that table was to have 2/10 of an ephah which is 2 omers worth. There was a double portion set on the table of communion with God. We also see that the firstborn was to receive a double portion of the blessing from his father. Why? To point out that God considers Christ His firstborn and, therefore, doubly honored. Romans says, "For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers" (Rom 8:29). This is precisely why there was a double portion of bread put on the table in the tabernacle.

Those who had gathered a lot had just what they needed, just like those who had only gathered a little were not short. God always makes sure our needs are met. Keeping in mind that Jesus is represented by the manna, we see that Jesus is just right for everyone. Some of us may need more forgiveness than others, but in both cases it is just the right amount, complete forgiveness.

Exo 16:20 Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. 21 And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. 22 And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. 23 And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. 24 And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. 25 And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. 26 Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. 27 And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. 28 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? 29 See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. 30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

Many Israelites still were practicing disobedience and paid no attention to God's Word through Moses. None of the manna would keep. It had to be gathered daily or else it began to rot and smell. The same thing happens with God's Word. One cannot store it up by reading the Bible in a week and then be done for the year. It just won't work. You will find that your days will be rotten and your actions won't smell any better either. We need our DAILY fill of forgiveness and love. I have heard it likened to vitamin C. You can't take it all at one time, it needs to be regular to do any good. All the extra will come right out while doing its job only at the present. Don't get me wrong, God's Word

never comes back void, but He only give spiritual growth in bits and pieces. Sometimes you grow fast and sometimes slow, but one thing is for sure, it is just as much as you need when you need it. However, it doesn't come unless you step out and gather it.

What an interesting substance. It came down like dew, dried like flakes, but melted in the sun. Dew is something you can't see falling, its just there. God's Word is also like that. You don't see it working, it just does. You can't always feel the power of God working when you read your Bible, but its there when you move forward through the day in unexplainable ways. The manna melted when the sun came up, but that was only the manna left on the ground, that which was collected still did its work. I suppose in some ways one could view the sun as our trials and tribulations in life. When the heat is turned up one must rely on what has been collected. Too often when the trials occur, one doesn't feel like collecting God's Word. In one of my favorite books of all time, What God Wishes Christians Knew About Christianity by Bill Gillham, he describes our relationship with the Lord like this. Imagine you had never driven a stick shift in a vehicle before and you went out to buy a brand new car with a manual transmission. Would you drive it off the lot without practicing first? Of course not. First you would drive around in the parking lot for a while and then move out into the deserted streets while staying away from heavy traffic. After awhile you would feel comfortable enough to hit main street. But all of a sudden, after you stalled the car at a red light you revert back to day one and in a panic you can't get moving forward without getting whiplash and having people honk behind you. The point is this. You can't expect God's Word to be there if you haven't built up a relationship first. Some people rarely read the Bible and study it fervently. Then, when troubles come, they blow up and act exactly how they didn't want to act. That is because you tried to take your car straight from the parking lot to the interstate. One must first build a relationship so that there is actually manna to be brought out of your bowl. If you haven't gone out and collected any manna for the past month, your body, mind and soul will be weak and you won't have the strength you should have to face these problems. Consider some of the following verses:

- “Whatever you have learned or received or heard from Me, or seen in Me-- put it into **practice**. And the God of peace will be with you” (Phil 4:9).
- “But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into **practice** by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God” (1 Tim 5:4).
- “Share with God's people who are in need. **Practice** hospitality” (Rom 12:13).
- “I will show you what he is like who comes to Me and hears My words and puts them into **practice**” (Luke 6:47).
- “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into **practice** is like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Mat 7:24).
- “This has been my **practice**: I obey Your precepts” (Psa 119:56).

One must practice or use God's Word daily to receive the full benefits of the peace God has to offer us. Don't let the heat of trials take away your manna's power.

We have already discussed that one omer was a daily ration of food and how Jesus is our "double portion." This all took place on the Sabbath, a day that was to be set aside and kept holy. The Israelites were to cook and boil all the manna and meat they wanted on the sixth day so that they would have to do no work on the 7th day. We discussed how it is wise to not work on the Sabbath even today, simply so that we can focus on Jesus and truly get rest. I find that most vacations bring people home in need of a vacation. The most restful vacation one can take is to set aside a day for the Lord and meditate upon His Word. You will find more refreshment in one day than three weeks in the Bahamas. But there is more to the restful Sabbath than peace here on earth. The whole Sabbath day was a pattern of history to show the Sabbath rest for all God's people in heaven as discussed in Hebrews 4. Understanding this, heaven must take place on a Sabbath of years, perhaps the seven thousandth year, whenever that may be. In any case, there will be no work in heaven, either from us or Christ. The grace of Jesus is done. As the Scriptures tells us, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor 13:13). The reason love is the greatest is because all of our work is done. There will be no more hope or faith in heaven because both are fulfilled. As Paul said, "Hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has" (Rom 8:24)? Today, through Christ, we have a double portion of God's grace to take us into our Sabbath rest. As we see in Acts, "In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people" (Acts 2:17).

Some people refused to listen and tried to go out and collect manna on the Sabbath anyway. This was just one more hint of the continuous rejection of God by these people. They didn't desire a relationship with the Lord, they just wanted to satisfy their own carnal desires. This type of attitude is described in Ephesians where we read, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath" (Eph 2:1-3).

Verse 23 is the first time we see the actual word Sabbath is used in all of the Bible. However, though we are just reading about it, the Jews understood it from Creation. Later in chapter 20 we read, "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work . . . For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (Exo 20:8-11). Here we see the purpose of this Sabbath. We don't work and keep it holy because God set a pattern at Creation for us to follow. As already mentioned, the Genesis account fits closely with Revelation and, therefore, this Sabbath again points us to our heavenly rest (Heb 4). Just as God worked six days and rested on the Sabbath, we too may be destined to work the ground for 6,000 years and rest on our Sabbath. Perhaps

that is why God said, “But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day” (2 Pet 3:8). Could these days be references to the days of Creation? This idea is discussed further on my book on Revelation.

Exo 16:31 And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. 32 And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. 33 And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. 34 As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. 35 And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. 36 Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.

Not only was the manna white, but it tasted like wafers with honey and looked like coriander seed. We discussed the color earlier in 16:14. As for the honey taste, this simply shows God was gracious and gave them something sweet. Keeping in mind the manna was representing Jesus, the Bread of life, Psalms may give another indication as to why the manna was sweet: “Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him” (Psa 34:8). Knowing Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1) we again see that the honey represents Jesus: “How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth” (Psa 119:103)! Even in Revelation, the Word of God written on the scroll tasted like honey, “So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, ‘Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.’ I took the little scroll from the angel’s hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour” (Rev 10:9-10). The reason John’s stomach turned sour was because of the content of the words on the scroll that was judging the unbeliever. Judgment day is sweet for those who are delivered from God’s wrath, but bitter for those who are being judged. God would have His Word be sweet to all, but unfortunately, it isn’t always the case. In fact, later the Israelites will find this food detestable and its sweetness will have no affect on their souls.

As discussed earlier, the manna should have also reminded the Israelites of the Garden of Eden, and thus heaven as well. Not only was it white like resin, the same color in Eden and heaven, but it also pointed to the heavenly blessings represented in the promised land: “Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you” (Deu 6:3).

One omer, a daily portion of the manna, was to be kept in a jar. Hebrews 9:4 tells us that this jar was gold and was kept inside the ark of the covenant in order that future generations would see God’s providence. Though

you may be getting tired of it, once more we see that God is telling us to give testimony to our children about what God has done in our lives. The very fact that it appears so many times in the Bible must mean it is important.

As we have been seeing, the 40 year wandering is representative of our life. How we go through these days is up to us. We can grumble and complain so that we never reach our promised land because of God's judgment upon us, or we can call upon Christ to see us through the wilderness and lead us into the promised land. The manna as the body of Christ was to be eaten all 40 years, all of our life. It is the body of Christ that gives us our strength today as well.

If we only needed forgiveness, why do we celebrate communion with both the bread (body) and the fruit of the vine (blood). Wouldn't the blood be enough? It was Christ's blood that brought forgiveness. Paul wrote, "Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ" (1 Cor 10:16)? Communion is a participation of both the body and blood of Christ, so what does that mean? Consider the following:

- "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the *forgiveness of sins*" (Mat 26:28).
- "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).
- "God presented Him as a sacrifice of *atonement*, through faith in His blood" (Rom 3:25).
- "Since we have now *been justified by His blood*, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him" (Rom 5:9)!
- "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the *forgiveness of sins*, in accordance with the riches of God's grace" (Eph 1:7).
- "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, *purifies us from all sin*" (1 John 1:7).

Here we can see that the blood of Christ brought forgiveness. I am not trying to separate Christ into pieces, but I merely pointing out that the manna symbolized something that many do not try to take hold of today. Again I ask, why not only participate in Christ's blood during communion? Because then we would only be forgiven. There is much more to life than being forgiven? What about sanctification, living a life of obedience out of love? What about living a life of peace, joy, comfort, and happiness rather than just forgiven depressed, tired and unhappy people? God wants more than our salvation, He wants us to be joy filled and victorious on this earth that we may better serve Him now and forever. While the blood of Christ brings forgiveness, the body of Christ gives us this peace. It was through Christ's body that your old self (old nature) was crucified: "So, my brothers, you also *died to the law through the body of Christ*, that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, *in order that we might bear fruit to God*" (Rom 7:4). Paul also says, "For we know that *our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with*, that we should no longer be slaves to sin" (Rom 6:6). Your Adam-nature

died with Jesus on the cross, enabling your new spirit nature to be born. You see why you can't completely separate the body and blood, but you need to make a distinction between them. You can't be born again unless your old self is first crucified in Christ's BODY. But you can't be crucified without going through the BLOOD. That is why Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3). Hebrews gives this meaty truth as well: "And by that will, we have been made holy through the *sacrifice of the body* of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10). Just as Christ's blood was necessary for our forgiveness, Christ's body was necessary for us to be born again, to be made a saint, not a sinner (noun, not a verb). We are now saints that sin, but not sinners. Sheep, but not goats through the body of Christ. Again we see in Hebrews that there is "a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body" (Heb 10:20). It is just as important for a Christian to realize that he is a new saint as it is to know he is forgiven. Without recognizing your sainthood, forgiveness can only remain head knowledge and never sink twelve inches down to the heart. You can't be a sinner saved by grace any more than a married person can be single. When the body of Christ was broken for you, your identity as sinner (noun) died: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal 2:20). From all of this we see how important it was to partake of the manna in the wilderness. Again, do we gather it up? Jesus, as the Word of God, is the Holy Scripture. We can daily partake of Him in studying Him. In so doing, we will lead a victorious and sanctified life through the Spirit. This is the first step in a love relationship with the Lord. He forgave us, how do we respond?

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 16

- 1) What time of month does the full moon come?
- 2) What would the moon have been like when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea?
- 3) What was the manna a symbol of?
- 4) Did the quail satisfy the people? What does the quail symbolize? What is the spiritual significance of the outcome of the quail and its satisfaction for the people?
- 5) How often did the manna come? What is the spiritual significance of this?
- 6) Why did the manna come in the morning? How does this apply to your life today? Give Scripture verses to support this.
- 7) Describe what the manna looked like. How does this fit with the Garden of Eden? How does this fit with heaven?
- 8) How much manna was each person to collect each day as a daily portion?
- 9) How much grain was each loaf of bread used in the Tabernacle made of? What is the spiritual significance of this?
- 10) What spiritual significance does the daily collection of manna have to do with putting our faith into practice?
- 11) One of the commandments is to keep the Sabbath holy. How does the manna support this commandment?
- 12) What is the spiritual significance of the Sabbath day and all of history?
- 13) What did the manna taste like? What is the symbolism of this?
- 14) What does the 40 year desert wandering represent?
- 15) Why is there both the body and blood seen in the practice of communion? Give Scripture verses describing the significance of the body of Christ.
- 16) Why can't you be a sinner saved by grace?

Exodus Chapter 17

Exo 17:1 And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? 3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

God had provided before, but Israel didn't care about that now. God kept telling them to give testimony and not to forget His power and deliverance, but now that didn't matter. God said not to test Him, but thirst was more important. Moses warned them that complaining against him was really complaining against God which was a sin. It is no accident they wandered around the desert of Sin.

They traveled from place to place as the Lord commanded, probably through the cloud that led them as we read in Numbers: "When the cloud remained over the tabernacle a long time, the Israelites obeyed the Lord's order and did not set out. Sometimes the cloud was over the tabernacle only a few days; at the Lord's command they would encamp, and then at His command they would set out. Sometimes the cloud stayed only from evening till morning, and when it lifted in the morning, they set out. Whether by day or by night, whenever the cloud lifted, they set out" (Num 9:19-21). As for the places they went, Numbers 33:12 gives us a detailed trip itinerary.

It is interesting that God was testing the people and the people were testing God. The only thing is, God is not to be tested. Who are we to judge

perfection? That is why it is written, “Do not test the LORD your God” (Deu 6:16). These grumbings were recorded to be a testimony for us today. God is telling His children what He did for the Israelites and warning us not to act as they did.

Exo 17:4 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. 5 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

Up to this point we have seen Christ through the manna, but now we see Him through the rock. Paul tells us of the Israelites, “They all ate the same spiritual food [manna] and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, *and that rock was Christ*” (1 Cor 10:3-4). Just as we go through our 40 year desert wandering of life, we have access to the same spiritual food and drink that the Israelites had, Jesus Christ. This is why God gave us communion: “Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf” (1 Cor 10:16-17). It was through the manna and rock that the Israelites were to recognize God’s deliverance, but they ate and drank in an unworthy manner. They didn’t eat or drink to participate with the Lord, but only to quench their thirst and fill their own stomachs. Paul wrote, “Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself” (1 Cor 11:27-29). This is exactly what Israel was doing.

All of the elders of Israel saw this miracle and should have been able to return and tell the people all about it. Keep in mind, with close to two million people this couldn’t have been a little trickle of water coming out of the rock. This was an abundance of life-giving water.

The names of these places were even given to remind Israel of their sin here. Massah means testing and Meribah means quarreling. Every time they talked of these places, they should have remembered, repented, and changed. However, it doesn’t seem to do much good as this is not the last time we will see them arguing and complaining.

The Israelites wondered if the Lord was with them or not. The problem was, they were looking for Him in the wrong places. Though they should have been able to see Him in the past miraculous deliverances, they didn’t. However even more to their shame, they didn’t see Him in the most important of places,

in the manna, the rock, or even the cloud. The Lord is also present in our lives in many obvious and miraculous ways. Do you see Him? Sometimes we are so busy looking for the miracles we can't see Him in our daily lives with every breath and thought we make. The Bible tells us He lives IN us, yet we can't see Him without the Holy Spirit opening our eyes and allowing us to recognize this powerful fact. Do you recognize Him in communion, the SAME spiritual food and drink they failed to see Him in? Do you recognize Him as He has led you through life, providing for your daily needs? His fingerprints are all over your life if you only take a closer look. I can see how God has worked through many situations to bring me to the place I am today, both physically and spiritually. God promises to lead us like He led the Israelites in the cloud with light, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psa 119:105). He leads you not just to get you to the point you're at now, but for eternal purposes as well: "You guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but You? And earth has nothing I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Psa 73:24-26). Let's not make the same mistake Israel did by ignoring this.

The next time we see Moses getting water out of the rock is in Numbers chapter 20. At first glance it seems like it could almost be a parallel account, however, they are two separate events. It is almost as if history is repeating itself. In Numbers Moses was to speak to the rock, but he strikes it like he does here. As a result, God does not allow Moses to enter the holy land: "But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not trust in Me enough to honor Me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them'" (Num 20:12). The reason in bringing this up is more for the timing than anything. Here in Exodus they are in the Desert of Sin within months of leaving Egypt (Num 33:11). In Numbers they are in the Desert of Zin on the first month of the 40th year of their wandering (Num 33:36). In other words, the people are going to still be complaining against God right up to the time they enter the promised land. It is noteworthy to see the events of the last year in the wilderness. Miriam (Moses' sister) died about 5 months before Aaron, then Aaron died about 6 months before Moses, who died right before going into the promised land. (Num 20:1, 33:36-39). Moses knew he would not be entering the promised land for almost a year before his death (Num 20:1, Josh 4:19, Num 33:14,36). In other words, this last year of wilderness wandering was not a joy ride. I used to think that the Israelites had finally learned to follow God with trust but nothing could be further from the truth. Even the story of the bronze snake being built to save the complainers took place at Mount Hor on the way to go into the promised land (Num 33:37-39, 21:4). As our day draws nearer to our entry into the promised heaven, let us put our full trust in Jesus to deliver us without complaint. In the Name of Jesus may this be so.

Exo 17:8 Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9 And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. 10 So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with

Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

This section gives the credit of winning the battle to both Joshua and the Lord. Joshua was also called Hoshea, the son of Nun (Num 13:16). He would later lead the Israelites into the promised land after Moses dies (Jos 1:5). Joshua was also Moses' aide throughout the desert wandering (24:13, 33:11). Joshua's name means "salvation" and is the Hebrew form of the New Testament name, Jesus. We therefore see yet another picture of Christ fighting for the Israelites. Though Joshua did the fighting, he could not have done so without the Lord's intervention, therefore, God won the battle using Joshua as His instrument. Likewise, God won the battle for our souls using Christ (God in man form) as His instrument of salvation on the cross.

The staff of Moses was called the "staff of God," also showing this had nothing to do with Moses, but rather God working through Moses. The staff was the means through which God brought salvation through Joshua, just as the cross was the means by which God brought Salvation through Christ. As the cross was on the hill of Calvary, the staff was also lifted up on a hill. Moses could be viewed as a Christ-figure here as well. He was tired and his hands were held up on both sides, perhaps imaging a man on a cross silhouetted by the sunset.

The Amalekites were descendants of Amalek, a grandson of Esau and, therefore, we see the promise of Genesis 25:23 fulfilled in that the descendants of Jacob would rule over the descendants of Esau. These two nations would be at war all the way until God finally destroys them completely in 70 AD as prophesied throughout the book of Obadiah.

Another prophesy fulfilled comes from Genesis when we see Jacob blessing Ephraim. Joseph was displeased when he saw his father blessing the younger son but Jacob said, "[Manasseh] too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations" (Gen 48:19). Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim and here in Exodus he becomes great. It was no accident that Joshua was the man God chose to help lead His people.

Aaron and Hur were obviously close to Moses as well. Hur may have been the son of Caleb (1 Ch 2:19-20). We know that Caleb will be one of the spies sent to check out the promised land and he trusted that God could deliver them into it.

We also see a lesson in support here. Moses grew tired and needed help from his aides. We too need to help those that are weak as they stand up for others in Christ. Some find it hard to stand up for someone brave enough and bold enough to witness for Christ. At times people are ridiculed for their

beliefs and other Christians don't jump in to give support. Consider the following verses:

- “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work” (1 Th 5:11-13).
- “These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you” (Titus 2:15).
- “Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2).
- “But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first” (Heb 3:13-14).
- “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb 10:25).

As we fight the spiritual battles of today it is important for us to call upon others for help and to accept their gifts. Even more so, we must call upon Christ to fight for us. For it is in our weaknesses that He is made strong (2 Cor 12:10).

Exo 17:14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. 15 And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi: 16 For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

The Amalekites were the first nation to fight against Israel after they left Egypt and God would punish them for this. In fact, God would judge them for this just as He promised, “I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians . . . and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment” (Exo 6:6).

Since God used Joshua for this battle, he was to record it and listen to it because God would not let the memory of the Amalekites go on. The Psalms record, “You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked; you have blotted out their name for ever and ever” (Psa 9:5) and “The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth” (Psa 34:16). God would not blot out the Amalekites yet however, as we still seem them fight against David in 1 Samuel 30:18, but they are no longer around today.

In response to God's deliverance Moses built an altar of thanksgiving to the Lord and called it "The Lord is my Banner." Indeed, God is our Banner as we see in the following verses:

- "But for those who fear You, You have raised a banner to be unfurled against the bow. Save us and help us with Your right hand, that those You love may be delivered" (Psa 60:4-5).
- "In that day the Root of Jesse [Jesus] will stand as a Banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to Him, and His place of rest will be glorious" (Isa 11:10).

Hands had been lifted up to God's throne and that was what won the battle. What does it mean to lift up hands to the throne of God? Obviously, it was shown with Moses lifting his hand high in the air, but what was Moses really doing? I believe He was praying. We read in the Psalms, "Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the LORD. May the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth, bless you from Zion" (Psa 134:2-3). In Lamentations we read, "Lift up your hands to Him for the lives of your children, who faint from hunger at the head of every street" (Lam 2:19). When we lift up our hands to God He hears our prayers. Timothy said, "I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer" (1 Tim 2:8). God defeated the Amalekites when holy hands were lifted up. Just think what He would do for our nation if everyone would do the same.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 17

- 1) What was the rock that the Israelites drank water from? What New Testament Scripture makes this clear?
- 2) What does Massah mean?
- 3) List the two events where water came out of a rock.
- 4) How long before entering the promised land did Miriam die?
- 5) How long before entering the promised land did the Israelites complain in the desert of Zin?
- 6) What was Joshua's other name?
- 7) What picture of Christ is seen with Moses and the battle against the Amalekites?
- 8) What did Moses do in response to winning the battle with the Amalekites?

Exodus Chapter 18

Exo 18:1 When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt; 2 Then Jethro, Moses' father in law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, 3 And her two sons; of which the name of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land: 4 And the name of the other was Eliezer; for the God of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh:

Jethro was a priest of Midian. The question really is, a priest of what? It seems that he knew the true God and worshipped Him. Again, this makes us realize that though God chose the Israelites to be a sign for the world, others were serving God at the same time (see more back in 2:16). It is interesting that in verse one, though Jethro is a believer, the word “God” is used for Jethro yet, “Lord” is used when talking of Moses. The reason for this is “Lord” is the covenant God for only those under Abraham’s roof. If you were not under the roof of Israel He was not Lord for you until after the cross. This is why when Hagar left Abraham’s household the term God began to be used for her as well (Gen 21). We also know that the Midianites came from Abraham’s descendants, however, not through Sarah, who received the covenant promise with Abraham, but with Keturah, his wife after Sarah’s death.

It doesn’t seem that Moses got rid of his wife, but only sent her to tell Jethro what had happened, possibly explaining how he had heard about it. Though this is the last time we hear of Zipporah in the Bible, we see that her grandson, Jonathan, Gershom’s son, is mentioned in Judges 18:30. Apparently Jonathan was with them throughout the wilderness wanderings. However, neither of Moses’ sons are mentioned during their living days after this point in Exodus (outside of genealogies).

In naming Eliezer, Moses said that his “father’s God was my helper.” The same thing was said by Jacob when blessing Joseph in Genesis: “Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall. With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility. But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, *because of your father’s God*, who helps you” (Gen 49:22-24). It seems that this had become another name for the Lord, yet at the same time, a description of His deliverance.

Exo 18:5 And Jethro, Moses' father in law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God: 6 And he said unto Moses, I thy father in law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her. 7 And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. 8 And Moses told his father in law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the LORD delivered them. 9 And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. 10 And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. 11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them. 12 And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father in law before God.

Jethro, Zipporah, Eliezer and Gershom all came to Mount Horeb (3:1), the mountain of the Lord. Moses showed great respect to Jethro even though Moses was the leader of all the Israelites. He bowed down before Jethro.

It seems most likely that Zipporah and her children did not experience the Exodus first hand and Moses sent them to Jethro while he did his duty. Now they were returning and Moses told them everything about what the Lord had done. Verse one shows us that Jethro already had some idea of what had happened, either from Keturah or other travelers. An event like the Israelites and the fall of Egypt would certainly not go unnoticed among the world. Moses seems to relate the story only to Jethro, making it possible that Keturah had seen what had happened and was only sent away to get her father. Either way, they all knew now that the Lord was with Israel.

Jethro was thrilled about what the Lord had done for Israel and praised His name. Back in verse one we see that Jethro only referred to God as “God.” Now Jethro is using the personal name of “Lord.” Though Jethro was priest of Midian, perhaps he had some type of polytheism in his life. In verse eleven we see Jethro say that “now” he knows that the Lord is above all gods. Does this mean he didn’t realize this before? Possibly.

We would do well to realize, as Jethro did, that God did this to those who treated Israel arrogantly. I believe one of the reasons the United States still flourishes, despite its sin-filled cities and degenerate leaders, is that we bless Israel. We give more money to Israel than any other country. Jethro may have even known what the Scriptures said about this: “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen 12:3, see also Gen 27:29 and Num 24:9). I dread the day that the U.S. no longer gives aide to Israel.

Jethro made sacrifices to the Living God and Aaron and the elders ate bread with him. This was also a type of communion or fellowship shared with one another. Because Jethro is about to go on his way back home, this fellowship could perhaps also be a sign of friendship through a treaty as well. However, I believe the largest truth being shown is that Jethro was a true believer in the Lord.

Exo 18:13 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. 14 And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? 15 And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God: 16 When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws. 17 And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. 18 Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. 19 Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to Godward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: 20 And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. 21 Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: 22 And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. 23 If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.

Moses was a dedicated man but the Israelites were continually arguing from morning to evening. What an example Moses was for us. Too often when people complain and even talk about us behind our back, we respond by doing the same in order to protect our reputation and pride. Rather than dealing with them by interceding in prayer and uplifting them we retaliate and let the root of bitterness well up inside. Often we rejoice when we see our enemies fall, but Moses did what the Scriptures would later record, “Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice” (Prov 24:17).

Moses continued to love, lead and intercede for these people despite their shortcomings. That is exactly what God calls on us to do for those with weak faith today: “Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters” (Rom 14:1). For you know that you yourself have cursed others when they were not listening. Are you not glad they did not hear and judge you?

Jethro found it foolish to try and take the responsibility of judge for all these people alone. He was right. Perhaps Moses felt that the others were not capable of judging and, therefore, did it all himself. Many pastor’s and leaders of congregations have this attitude. Sometimes we feel that we know more about the Bible and God’s decrees than the other person and, therefore, if we are going to get it done right we need to do it ourselves. Doing is how people learn. How will they learn unless they are given a chance? Jethro recognized that it was best for both sides to give and take. Moses, being a humble man, was not slow to admit his mistakes and take Jethro’s advice.

Moses did not just pick anyone to help him settle disputes. They had to be honest and trustworthy men who hated wrong practices. God had to be working in their heart already to some extent. As we just talked about leaders taking upon all the responsibility, we also need to warn about just anybody taking upon these responsibilities. Often in churches their constitution tells how many elders or deacons should be elected and the people fill these positions with warm bodies only. Timothy gives us a strict guide as to who can be an elder of a church. He says, “Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church)? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap” (1 Tim 3:2-7). The moral of the story is to get people involved in the church, but some positions of leadership are better left empty if there are not people ready for the task. We all need help and should all recognize our gifts and call upon one another to make us complete. Paul wrote, “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully” (Rom 12:4-8).

Exo 18:24 So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said. 25 And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 26 And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter

they judged themselves. 27 And Moses let his father in law depart; and he went his way into his own land.

Moses was the most humble man that had ever lived (Num 12:3) and he was not above listening to advice. Jethro was a wise man and we, too, can learn from his advice. Sometimes people try to do everything on their own and in so doing burn themselves out. Other times, we fill positions with warm bodies just because they were willing to serve in that position without first making sure they were capable of it.

One would think that among Christians there would be little argument and, therefore, little need of judging. However, with the past track record of these Israelites, complaining and arguing came all too easy. Still today we need to take heed of Paul's warning: "Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? But instead, one brother goes to law against another -and this in front of unbelievers! The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers" (1 Cor 6:4-8). How often do Christians get upset at tellers or rude drivers rather than being content to be wronged. When rude people get in your face, do you act as an unbeliever would, or do they see the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ in your face? A close examination may show that many Christians are not much different than these Israelites. Jesus said, "But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles" (Mat 5:39-41). I have great respect for my father who taught me many valuable lessons, one of which I would like to share with you. My father loved his cattle, in fact, for some years they consumed him. However, even though he loved the cattle, he kept their importance in perspective when compared to God's purpose for his life. Once while moving a herd of registered cows across states he hired a semi-driver to get the job done. The truck arrived days later than it was supposed to have as a drunk truck driver came swerving down our driveway. This man had never stopped to water or feed the cows and over half of the herd had died. My dad had every right to sue this man and get his herd back, instead, he did nothing. Some Christians tell me that we are not here to be walked on by others. My reply to that is: Tell Jesus that, the innocent One who was silent before His accusers. There is nothing more important in this life than the love of Jesus. Try showing someone that as you sue them.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 18

- 1) List everything you know about Jethro.
- 2) Why isn't the word "Lord" used in connection with Jethro?
- 3) Where did the Midianites come from?
- 4) What may indicate that Jethro was polytheistic?
- 5) What may indicate that Jethro was a true believer in the Lord?
- 6) Describe the humility of Moses.
- 7) Why should a Christian not sue when they are wronged?

Exodus Chapter 19

Exo 19:1 In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. 2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. 3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

It was exactly three months after the Israelites left Egypt when they reached the desert of Sinai on the 15th of the month, a full moon. Little did they know that this area would become their home for the next 40 years. Virtually everything from here through Numbers takes place in this wilderness.

Many people think that they went straight from Egypt to the promised land but this isn't true. God was testing their faith and being patient with them. If only they would have been patient. Once again, the Israelites illustrated another lesson to be learned for us today: "Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near" (James 5:7-8). I am thankful that God is more patient than I am. The Lord wanted the Israelites to trust Him and He was giving them every opportunity to make the right choice. His testing wasn't setting them up for failure. They had already set themselves up for that. God's testing was to provide them an opportunity to get out of the hole of selfish doubt that they were already in and enter the promised land. We read, "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is

patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Pet 3:9).

Once arriving at Mount Sinai the cloud of God’s presence must have rested on top of the mountain because Moses went over to God who then spoke from the mountain.

God began speaking to Moses giving him a message to take back to the Israelites. He called them the “house of Jacob” which should have reminded them of the covenant promise God gave Jacob and his descendants.

God is said to have brought Israel out of Egypt on eagle’s wings. In Ezekiel 1:10 we see that the cherubim have one face like an eagle. We know God used angels in His deliverance of Israel from Egypt, but even moreso, wherever God is the cherubim go. Though the Israelites did not see the cherubim they must have been there if God was. In Revelation we see the same protective imagery used of this eagle: “The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of” (Rev 12:14). In a way, that is exactly what happened to Israel. The wings of a great eagle brought them to the place of the desert where they were taken care of. Perhaps these cherubim also will announce God’s judgment just as what had happened to Egypt: “As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: ‘Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels’” (Rev 8:13)! In any case, the eagle’s wings represent God’s deliverance.

Note also that God brought the Israelites to Himself, they didn’t go to Him. Jesus said, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44). The Israelites could no more come to faith in God apart from being drawn to Him than we can today. One way God draws us to be His is through baptism, however, like the Israelites, just because God calls you His doesn’t mean you will call Him yours. We all have that free will to choose to accept or reject God’s gift to us.

God told the Israelites that if they would follow Him they would become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Because God kept a remnant we see that this has happened. And now, as grafted branches, we who are not physical Israel have become spiritual Israel and are included in this holy priesthood (Rom 11). We see in Peter, “You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2:5). It was only through Jesus Christ and being drawn to Him that this was made possible. We are now God’s treasured possession. Even though the whole universe is His, we are the most treasured of all things. Greater than the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the sun, and even the Milky Way. That is why God sent His Son, that His most treasured possession may live with Him.

Another aspect of this treasured possession is that though all people on earth belong to God, physical Israel (those that are spiritual) has a special purpose and spot in God’s kingdom. Though we are grafted in among them and share in their glory, God has specific promises that are only for the believing Jew, not the Gentile. Consider this passage in Romans:

“I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: **Israel** has experienced a hardening in part **until** the full number of the **Gentiles** has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; He will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them when I take away their sins.’ As far as the gospel is concerned, **they** are enemies on **your** account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God’s gifts and His call are irrevocable. Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you. For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that He may have mercy on them all” (Rom 11:25-32).

In this passage above the Gentiles are separated from the Jews. Though both receive salvation, God makes a distinction between them because He made a promise to them specifically, and His promises are irrevocable. They are loved on account of the patriarchs. That is why God uses the term “Jacob” here. “Jacob” refers to only physical Jews while “Israel” can refer to all believers at times. The Jews are a sign for the Gentiles as well. It is through the nation of Israel that God has given and will give many signs of His love, presence and even His second coming. Isaiah said, “Here am I, and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion” (Isa 8:18).

When Moses spoke these words to the Israelites it must have brought great joy and comfort to them. To think that a God who just showed them powerful wonders chose them over everyone else in the world. What a privilege and blessing this was. Unfortunately, it only filled them with pride rather than an attitude of thanksgiving.

Exo 19:7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD. 9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.

Moses was a type of Christ, foreshadowing the true Savior to come. Many analogies can come from carefully examining his life and role.

These verses remind me of what a wonderful blessing the New Covenant believer has. The Israelites were not able to approach God personally, only through Moses and later through the priests. Today we have free access to God’s throne through Jesus Christ who is God: “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5). This is far better than what the Israelites had because Moses was inferior to Jesus: “But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which He is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises. For if

there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another” (Heb 8:6-7). The Israelites did not trust in Moses and God gives us warning about not listening to Jesus, “the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. See to it that you do not refuse Him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him [Moses] who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from Him who warns us from heaven” (Heb 12:25)?

God came in a dense cloud with the purpose of making it possible for the people to hear Him speaking to Moses. Hearing this should have made the Israelites realize that God was with Moses. Likewise, we have no excuse to accept the fact that Jesus was approved by God. Rather than a dense cloud, God voiced His opinion of Jesus at His baptism when a dove landed on Him and a voice from heaven said, “This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased” (Mat 3:17). God was drawing the people to Himself through Moses just as He does today through Christ, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44).

Exo 19:10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, 11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. 12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: 13 There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. 14 And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. 15 And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives.

Something big was about to happen. So big that the people needed to consecrate or spiritually clean themselves for an appearance of God on the third day. Nothing unholy can be in God’s presence, thereby explaining the need to be consecrated. Why three days? Three is a number used many times to show completeness. I tend to think that Jesus coming upon this mountain is also symbolic of His second coming when He will descend upon Mount Zion. I believe this event will take place on the third day after the cross. By “day” I mean on the third thousand year period after the cross. There are many references to such a thing as I discussed in my book on Revelation. However, here may it suffice to see Hosea make reference to a third day restoration: “Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but He will heal us; He has injured us but He will bind up our wounds. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will *restore us*, that we may *live in His presence*” (Hosea 6:1-2). Perhaps just as Jesus was raised to life on the third day, we too will have a new life on our third day when Christ comes back to Mount Zion.

No one was able to go near the mountain because if they would touch it they would die. A lot of this has to do with what Mount Sinai represents. We see in Galatians: “For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave

woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent *two covenants*. One covenant is from *Mount Sinai* and bears children who are to be *slaves*: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother” (Gal 4:22-26). The point Galatians is making is that Mount Sinai stands for the old covenant that made us slaves. Therefore, to suggest that this third day cleansing was representative of Jesus third day restoration is not a stretch. This whole section was a landmark event in bringing forth the old covenant.

As we have been saying, the Israelites were born into slavery in Egypt just as we were born into a state of slavery through our sinful nature (Ps 51:5). However, through Christ Jesus we are no longer slaves to sin or children of the slave woman as Galatians pointed out. We are now slaves to righteousness: So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir” (Gal 4:7, see Romans 6:18). We also read, “Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman” (Gal 4:31). The old covenant killed us but the new covenant brought life.

Another reference to Mount Sinai bringing death can be found in Romans where we read, “Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death” (Rom 7:9-11). Mount Sinai representing the law shows why death was imminent on that mountain. The law can only bring death because man is unholy by nature. Only through Christ can we be saved because He fulfilled the law in our stead. Paul wrote, “He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant--not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor 3:6). The other way of looking at it is that if God’s presence was there, man could not touch the mountain because he is unholy and God cannot be near anything unholy. This is why if anyone touched the ark of the covenant they would die. Today, however, God lives in us. How can that be if God cannot be near anything unholy? God has made us saints, holy men through the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. Can you see why the new covenant is far better than the old. When Christ died on the cross, the unholy sinful nature that we once had died: “For we know that our *old self was crucified* with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— ” (Rom 6:6). Consider some of the following verses showing that we not only live in Christ, but He now is able to live in us:

- “For God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple” (1 Cor 3:17).
- “To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:27).
- “It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—” (1 Cor 1:30).

- “Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ” (1 Pet 5:14).

The people were to prepare and be consecrated by not having sexual relations for three days. This was a symbol of purity similar to that of the New Testament where we are warned to abstain from sexual immorality. However, it is different in the sense that here people were to abstain from sexual relations even with their wives. Now they were to focus only upon God and cleanse themselves from all selfish thoughts and ambitions in order to meditate upon the Lord. Sex with a spouse is not wrong, but as Paul wrote, “A married man is concerned about the affairs of this world--how he can please his wife--and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord’s affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world--how she can please her husband. I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord” (1 Cor 7:33-35).

Mount Sinai brings up an interesting point as well. Mountains are very significant throughout the Scriptures from beginning to end. The Garden of Eden was a mountain. Certainly not like what we think of mountains today but more like large hills which are often called mountains by middle easterners (Mount Zion where Jerusalem is built). One reason for this is the mountains were not as high nor the valleys as deep before Noah’s Flood. You can read up on this in my book on creation. How do we know the Garden in the land of Eden was a mountain? Ezekiel describes this Garden when describing Satan before his fall: “You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on *the holy mount of God*; you walked among the fiery stones” (Ezek 28:13-14). We also see dozens of verses throughout the Bible pointing us to the Mount Zion of the future when Jesus returns as the dwelling place of God (Is 4:5, 8:18, 18:7, 24:23, Rev 14:1, Heb 12:22). Jesus was transfigured on a mountain, sacrificed on Calvary, Isaac was nearly sacrificed on Mount Moriah, the ark rested on Ararat, Elijah called down fire on Mount Carmel and more. God dwells on mountains, specifically Mount Zion and, therefore, mountains are important when discussed in the Bible.

Verse 13 tells us anyone who touched the mountain would need to be shot or stoned. The reason for this type of death was so that they would not be touched. Both arrows and stones could be thrown.

The mountain could not be touched without death for the offender because God’s presence was there. Not only would the man who touched the mountain be disobeying God and deserve death, but an unholy presence would be too close to the holy presence of the Lord. God cannot be near anything unholy and without the blood of the sacrificial animals (symbolic of Christ) no man or animal was clean. Yes even animals are unholy in God’s sight. For when the curse was put upon the earth, even the animals were subjected to this decay. Animals die just like man because death came upon the whole world. I

believe animals are included in Paul's statement, "The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the One who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom 8:19-21).

People often ask me if I think animals will be heaven. I tend to think so. They have souls like a man does (*nephesh* in Hebrew) they just do not have spirits (see book on Genesis). The Garden of Eden was a model of heaven and we see the tree of life, gold and a river flowing from the center of heaven in Revelation just as in the Garden. Animals were friendly to man in the Garden and we see this future friendship alluded to in Isaiah, "The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (Isa 11:7-9). Animals did not eat meat in the Garden because there was no death, just as there is none in heaven. Isaiah also states, "The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food" (Isa 65:25). If they couldn't touch the mountain because they were unclean and the whole creation is waiting for its liberation as Romans states, there must be some result of being liberated.

Exo 19:16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. 18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. 19 And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

The morning of the third day was the 17th. Verse one of this chapter told us this was taking place on the third month AFTER Israel left Egypt on the very same day. Israel left Egypt on the 15th. ON the third day means the 17th. This is important because many other important events also take place on this day.

The mountain was covered with God's shekinah glory and there was thunder and lightning. God's presence is often seen with such events; especially when He is coming in connection with the law or judgment. We read in Revelation when Christ is coming to Judge the world, "From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. . . In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back" (Rev 4:5-6). Note the creatures are before the throne (Revelation tells us they are cherubim) and are always seen near God in the Bible. I point this out because perhaps they have some connection with the lightning: "The

appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it. The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning” (Ezek 1:13-14). If the cherubim are always near God’s throne and lightning is almost always described with God’s appearing, perhaps the lightning is coming from the cherubim. We read in the Psalms, “Out of the brightness of His presence clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning” (Psa 18:12). Other verses discussing lightning and thunder near God are 2 Samuel 22:14, Psalm 29:7, Ezekiel 1:4, Daniel 10:6, and Hosea 6:5.

The trumpet blast was not coming from any man but from the sky. This is significant because either God’s angels were announcing God’s presence on earth or God’s voice was like that of a trumpet. I tend to think it was the angels here. We know that when Jesus comes back we will go to heaven at the sound of the angels blowing the seventh trumpet from heaven (1 Cor 15:52, 1 Thes 4:16). The fact that the Israelites hear this clearly at Mount Sinai leads me to suggest that we will hear it plainly when Christ comes back as well. God gives the angels these trumpets according to Revelation chapter 8. But we also see that God’s voice is likened to a trumpet at times: “After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet [Rev 1:10] said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this’” (Rev 4:1). Therefore, we can see why the very sound of this event would send chills up one’s spine even without the smoke, fire, thunder, lightning and earthquake. But combining all these things there is no wonder that the Israelites begged Moses to do this alone. Hebrews speaks of this fear while showing us that the Gospel of Mount Zion stands for a better means of salvation than that of the law of Mount Sinai: “You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; to a *trumpet blast* or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded: ‘If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned.’ The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, ‘I am trembling with fear.’ But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly” (Heb 12:18-22). Wow! Even Moses was scared! What a sight the Israelites must have beheld. However, that sight is nothing compared to the glorious revealing Christians will have at the Lord’s second coming. At that time only the unbeliever will tremble.

As the trumpet blast grew louder and louder Moses finally mustered the courage to speak, and when he did, God answered him. What a relief this must have been for Moses. I can’t help but wonder that if the world could see this powerful display of God’s presence that we would never hear another blasphemous name or cursing of the Lord’s Name ever again. I am sure it wouldn’t be that way as this memory seemed to fade for even the Israelites because it didn’t stop their complaining.

Exo 19:20 And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount; and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. 21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the

people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. 22 And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them. 23 And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. 24 And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. 25 So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

Up to this point the Lord must have been above the mountain because now He descends to the top of it to call Moses up. Once Moses reached the top he had to go right back down to get Aaron and to warn everyone not to come near the mountain. This seems strange that God needed to tell them this. A moment ago the people were so afraid they wanted to run away from the mountain. Now that the trumpet blast was over, perhaps they were a little more curious. Moses had put up a barrier of some sort that made it obvious that they could go no further. In fact, Moses even said they couldn't get to the mountain. However, God obviously knew something Moses did not because a warning was necessary. Under no circumstances or merit could one go near God and not die unless God had summoned them and made them clean. Even the priests were not allowed near the mountain, but only Moses and Aaron.

Who are these priests God talks about? The priesthood of Aaron has not yet officially been established. We know that there were priests of God even as far back as Abraham since Melchizedek came to see him (Gen 14:18). However, I believe they went back all the way to Adam. The rules for this priesthood were different from what we normally think with the Aaronic priesthood. It is possible, though doubtful, that this was in anticipation of the priests that would soon share in this new Levitical priesthood.

Perhaps one reason for warning the people not to go near the mountain is that God saw that they would become jealous of Aaron (Num 17:5) and think that if he could go up the mountain than they could go up the mountain. In any case, Moses did as he was told and the people seem to have obeyed as well.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 19

- 1) What description is used to tell of how God brought Israel out of Egypt? How might this fit with the end times according to Revelation?
- 2) What did God promise to make those who followed Him?
- 3) The Israelites could not go to God directly. How did they get to God? How does this fit with Moses as a Christ figure?
- 4) How long did the Israelites have to purify themselves before God would come down on Mount Sinai?
- 5) What does Mount Sinai represent according to Galatians 4? Hagar? Ishmael? Isaac?
- 6) What did it mean in Galatians 4 when it was said that Ishmael continues to persecute Isaac to this day?
- 7) What Scripture shows the Garden of Eden was a mountain?
- 8) Why was anyone who touched Mount Sinai to be stoned or shot with arrows?
- 9) On what day did God come down to Mount Sinai? Why is this significant?
- 10) What may the lightning have been on Mount Sinai?
- 11) Was the trumpet heard on Mount Sinai a literal sound? How might this fit with the trumpets of Revelation?
- 12) Who were the only people who could come near Mount Sinai? Why?
- 13) God said that there was a priesthood. What priesthood is He talking about? Why is this significant?

Exodus Chapter 20

Exo 20:1 And God spake all these words, saying, 2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. 7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. 8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

God began giving His people the Ten Commandments. The first ones listed above were the most important because they dealt with man's relationship with God. The next ones will deal with man's relationship with man. If one could only do the first, the second would come naturally. In Matthew we see a man coming to ask Jesus which of these commandments was the greatest and Jesus replied by saying, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Mat 22:37-40). Love is the key issue for all the commandments. That is also why we read in Romans, "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not covet,' and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Rom 13:8-9). When we love our Lord we will love our neighbor. When we love our neighbor, all the other laws will fall in place, but the foundation to them all is loving the Lord.

Love is a gospel motivated commitment and, therefore, the Ten Commandments are no longer meant for you and I as Christians. Just as the Israelites had the Ten Commandments, we have a law today. Though it is not the law that motivates us to do good, it still applies for all who willingly do evil.

We read in Romans, “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith *apart from observing the law*” (Rom 3:28). And, “through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life *set me free from the law of sin and death*. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so He condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of *the law might be fully met in us*, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit” (Rom 8:2-4). What a glorious truth, Jesus who lives in us has fully met the requirements of these Ten Commandments so that we might have eternal life. There are many verses showing us that these commandments are no longer to be the guide of our life. Consider the following verses as a small sample of this truth:

- “We also know that **law is made not for the righteous** but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful” (1 Tim 1:9).
- “To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though **I myself am not under the law**), so as to win those under the law” (1 Cor 9:20).
- “But now, by **dying** to what **once bound** us, we **have been released from the law** so that we serve in the **new way of the Spirit**, and not in the old way of the written code” (Rom 7:6).
- “For sin shall not be your master, because **you are not under law**, but under grace” (Rom 6:14).
- “But if you are led by the Spirit, **you are not under law**” (Gal 5:18).

All of these verses point out that the commandments cannot guide us today. Jesus, the Love and Light of this world can be our only guide to motivate us to do right. Besides, Christ in us, has already fulfilled these requirements. This idea is discussed further on the section “Saints or Sinner.” I encourage you to look over this carefully because it lies at the heart of a joy filled life as a Christian. We can no longer put ourselves under the old covenant of Moses because there is now something better: “But God found fault with the people and said : ‘The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. *It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers* when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt’ . . . By calling this covenant ‘new,’ He has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear” (Heb 8:8-13). With all of this said, remember that though we are no longer under the law, it doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t want to keep this commandments. This will be discussed again later but I don’t want you to get the wrong idea.

These commandments were given on Mount Sinai. To understand this story completely we need to go back to Genesis where we see Ishmael being driven away from the household of Abraham and his offspring. Galatians gives us a beautiful explanation of why this had to happen. “For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman [Hagar] was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman [Sarah] was born as the result of a promise. These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One

covenant is from *Mount Sinai* and bears children *who are to be slaves*: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. . . Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born in the ordinary way *persecuted* the son born by the power of the Spirit. **It is the same now**" (Gal 4:22-29). The quarrel between Isaac and Ishmael in Genesis was no ordinary matter. What does it mean that this quarrel is the same NOW?

This relationship between Isaac and Ishmael goes much deeper than what is first seen. As we see in Galatians, Ishmael represents the law given on Mount Sinai and Isaac represents the covenant promise of Jesus. We see that the son born in the ordinary way (our sinful nature and desire to follow the law) persecutes the son born by the Spirit (the new man of God who clings to Christ's love and forgiveness). This is exactly what goes on today. Often when we do something wrong and sinful, we continue to beat ourselves and feel guilty long after we have been forgiven. The law continues to work when it should not. When I was first told that the Ten Commandments had no meaning in my life I was shocked at first. The Ten Commandments don't have any use in the Christian life unless they fall away and begin doing something sinful. Then the law is needed to convict you. However, once you are convicted we throw the law away so that we can get rid of the guilt, and let Christ's loving forgiveness take hold of our life. After all, is it the law that causes you not to murder? NO! It is the Gospel and the love of Christ that motivates us to lead a Godly life. But, when we allow the law to remain in our Christian lives when it shouldn't, it *persecutes* us into an attitude of works righteousness. That is why we read in Romans, "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in His sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (Rom 3:20-22). Also, "Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes" (Rom 10:4). And, "So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God" (Rom 7:4). Galatians also states, "What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions **until** the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator" (Gal 3:19). Again, "So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. **Now** that faith has come, **we are no longer under the supervision of the law**" (Gal 3:24). In chapter two it says, "For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God" (Gal 2:19). These are just a few more examples of Scripture where we clearly see that those who live by faith need not hold the Ten Commandments near their minds. If this person of the faith begins to fall away or sin unrepentantly, only then does the law need to be brought back into their lives. We must not let the "son born naturally" persecute "the son born of the Spirit." For, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring" (Rom 9:7). Therefore, we,

as children of the promise, are Abraham's offspring and we will not be persecuted by the law (children from Ishmael) any longer. We, like Abraham, need to chase Ishmael away from under our roof. I used to beat myself up for doing something wrong. In essence, I was saying, "thanks for your forgiveness Lord, but until I stop doing this, your forgiveness isn't good enough. I need to help out a little bit to get rid of the guilt." Understanding the above truth, however, has freed me and now I claim the forgiveness of my sin which sparks a greater love for Christ. This love then sparks the motivation not to do the sin again. All this without the continuing guilt of my sin persecuting me.

I must also comment on verse seven. One of my pet peeves is people taking the Name of my Lord in vain during casual talk. I often hear people say "O my God" when they aren't even thinking of Him. The television is filled with this vain talk as well. I find it interesting that swear words are censored on television, and in most households, however, cursing is allowed. In Revelation we see that Jesus is coming with a new name written on Him that only He knows (Rev 19:12). I love this because God has a name that is unblemished or corrupted that no one has been able to take in vain.

In verses 8-11 we see that God wanted us to keep the Sabbath. Why? Verse 11 tells us that because God rested on the seventh day, we are to do the same. God used the pattern of creation as a model for our lives as we live through this creation with weekly cycles. It is no accident that this cycle has never been altered since creation began. As mentioned briefly earlier and explained in more depth in my book on Revelation, this creation pattern also shows that we have a Sabbath rest that will be holy in the future as well (Heb 4). God is a symbolic God who loves patterns. Not only the Bible itself, but His whole creation is patterned as a model of many things. We have seen how Eden foreshadowed heaven, likewise the seventh day of creation foreshadowed heaven. The deeper one goes into Scripture the more these patterns are revealed. Much of this book so far has shown you parallels between God's deliverance of Israel to our lives today. I pray that God would reveal these applications to you personally.

Exo 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 13 Thou shalt not kill. 14 Thou shalt not commit adultery. 15 Thou shalt not steal. 16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. 17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Now that man's relationship with man is addressed we see that these also affect man's relationship with God. A common thread woven throughout this tapestry of laws is man's selfish desires. One wouldn't honor their parents because they don't want to be put out or humbled. One would commit adultery because they don't want to practice self control over lust. One would lie to protect himself or get false gain. One would covet to satisfy selfish pleasures. One will reject God simply to please the flesh.

I find one of the most interesting passages in Scripture deals with overcoming selfish desires. Peter writes, “He who has suffered in his body is done with sin” (1 Pet 4:1). What a deep truth. When one can surrender his all to God, he is done with sin. Think of how many sins we fall into as a result of our concern for self. Whether it be hunger, escape from pain, being tired, lazy, sexual desires needing fulfillment, or need of attention, it all comes back to me, me, me. When we can surrender all these aspects of our life to God, allowing ourselves to suffer hunger or lack of sleep, etc., it keeps our focus on God and, in a sense, we are done with sin. Obviously we don’t ever stop sinning because of our sinful flesh, but we certainly lead a sanctified life through the Spirit of God and receive the forgiveness of Christ.

I have found fasting to be such a blessing to help me be aware of self. The first time I fasted I was surprised at how many times my attention was directed toward self. The blessings came when each time those desires of self appeared, I immediately directed my thoughts to God and looked to Him for comfort rather than to food, etc. It made me realize how many fleshly desires take our focus off Christ. But suffering allows us to redirect our thoughts to God for deliverance. If you have not set aside a day for prayer and fasting, I would encourage you to do so, not as an experiment or for personal health, but as a day dedicated to the Lord. I believe you will see what I am talking about.

Honoring one’s parents is important for another reason. I always ask my children, “If you can’t learn to listen to me, your earthly father, how will you ever learn to listen to God, your heavenly father?” Praying that the Holy Spirit gives you self control and discipline is so important because it is no easier to obey God than your own parents. In fact, if you are not obeying your parents you’re not obeying God. Without this obedience stemming from love, your life will be filled with trials that sap the joy out of life. God wants us to listen to Him so that we may live a long, joy filled life on earth even though the trials are there. Jesus said, “If you obey My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have obeyed My Father’s commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete” (John 15:10-11). Note that He said His joy would be in us and it is that joy that makes our joy complete. Don’t get the idea that you can obey His commands yourself. Only with Christ working *through* you can true obedience come.

Exo 20:18 And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. 19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. 20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. 21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

Because the law is being given, there is thunder and lightning present. The Israelites also heard a literal trumpet blast coming from somewhere among the smoke. All of this was enough to literally put the fear of God into them. We may sometimes look at this as a bad thing, but it wasn’t. This is what God

wanted. He wanted them to fear and respect His presence and Name. It is the proper understanding of the fear of the Lord that would bring about obedience. The law can't bring obedience, but fear in the right sense, is love. We read in Psalms: "The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever" (Psa 19:9), and "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow His precepts have good understanding" (Psa 111:10). Proverbs states, "Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil" (Prov 16:6), "Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD" (Prov 23:17), and "The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death" (Prov 14:27).

The parallel account of this section is seen in Deuteronomy and it shows us that God wanted the Israelites to have this Godly fear:

And you said, "The LORD our God has shown us His glory and His majesty, and we have heard His voice from the fire. Today we have seen that a man can live even if God speaks with him. But now, why should we die? This great fire will consume us, and we will die if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer. For what mortal man has ever heard the voice of the living God speaking out of fire, as we have, and survived? Go near and listen to all that the LORD our God says. Then tell us whatever the LORD our God tells you. We will listen and obey." The LORD heard you when you spoke to me and the LORD said to me, "I have heard what this people said to you. *Everything they said was good.* Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear Me and keep all My commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever" (Deu 5:24-29)!

In verse 19 we see that the Israelites requested a mediator to speak to God for them. This is obviously serving God's purpose in having Moses foreshadow the great Mediator to come: "For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant" (Heb 9:15). The mediation of Moses could only do so much. From the time of Israel to the present, everyone has committed sins under the first covenant and now Jesus has stepped in to cancel that written code, in order that we may no longer be in fear of God. No longer do we need to stand off at a distance and tremble, being unable to approach Him. Now, because of Jesus, we have access to the very throne of the Father: "For through Him we both have *access* to the *Father* by one Spirit" (Eph 2:18).

In fact, not only are we *not* standing at a distance, we are sitting with Him: "And God raised **us** up with Christ and seated **us with Him** in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6). I know this is hard to understand but the Bible says it is true. When we realize that we are IN Christ and Christ is IN us it makes more sense. Our sinful nature died with Christ (Rom 6:8), and our spirit was raised with Him. Though my identity on earth is known by my flesh by my friends, that is not who I am. I am a spirit that is IN Christ Jesus and my true identity is not what you see in the flesh, but who I am in the spirit. This is discussed further in the section on saint or sinners.

Exo 20:22 And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. 23 Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold. 24 An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. 25 And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. 26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

The Israelites had actually seen the glory of the living God. How could they ever even think of making an idol of stone? As Isaiah wrote, "He cut down cedars . . . It is man's fuel for burning; some of it he takes and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it. Half of the wood he burns in the fire . . . From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, 'Save me; you are my god.' They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand. No one stops to think. . . 'Half of it I used for fuel; I even baked bread over its coals, I roasted meat and I ate. Shall I make a detestable thing from what is left? Shall I bow down to a block of wood'" (Isa 44:14-19)? How could the Israelites go from a living, seeing, omniscient God, to a blind, deaf and dumb one?

The Israelites were also to build an altar to God. One would think such a great God would require gold, gems and all the fixings, but He doesn't. His altar was to be pure, not the work of human hands, but the work of God Himself during creation week. God made the stones and the dirt and those were the things the altar was to be made out of. Man can give nothing to God, God gives everything to man. Paul says in Romans, "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen" (Rom 11:34-36). This dependence upon God is all the more meaningful when we see what the altar was used for. Burnt offerings were used as a voluntary act of worship and even more importantly, atonement for sins that were unintentional (Lev 1; 6:8-13; 8:18-21; 16:24). The fellowship offerings were done to offer thanksgivings in a communal meal (Lev 3; 7:11-34). Both of these things could not be done as man's act of "giving" to God. Man confessed his sin and returned thanks for what God had done in bringing about atonement. Man could not even have fellowship with God unless God had first allowed it and, therefore, the altar must show that this was the result of God's hands, not mans. This is why God said He would come and bless the people where His name was honored (v. 24). This also shows the Christian who walks in faith that by feeling guilty for their sins they become no more forgiven than they were before they sinned. Their guilt doesn't bring about forgiveness, only what Christ has already done for them can make atonement for their sins.

There were to be no steps going up to the altar because one could expose his nakedness to those below as they would see up into his robe. This would defile the person, making him unholy and, therefore, he would not be allowed to go near God. Nakedness has been a symbol of shame and sin since the Garden of Eden. When man became naked, they were no longer allowed to walk with God in the Garden. It was not until sin entered the world that nakedness became shameful. Isaiah wrote, “Your nakedness will be exposed and your shame uncovered” (Isa 47:3). Later on Aaron and the other priests would make sacrifices on stepped altars, however, they were told to wear linen undergarments (Lev 9:22, 6:10) so that their shame would not be exposed.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 20

- 1) Which is the greatest of the Commandments?
- 2) List four verses showing that the law is not for the righteous person.
- 3) What verse shows God has a Name that nobody has ever misused?
- 4) What does 1 Peter 4:1 say to you?
- 5) What purpose did the thunder on Mount Sinai have?
- 6) Describe the altar God had the people make for Him.
- 7) Why were there no steps going up to the altar?
- 8) Explain how the law isn't for the Christian.

Exodus Chapter 21

Exo 21:1 Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. 2 If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. 3 If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4 If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. 5 And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: 6 Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.

A Hebrew slave was only to work for six years and was to be freed on the seventh. There is significance in the connection with this and creation as well. We just saw in chapter 20 that people were to work six days and rest on the seventh day, or Sabbath, because God worked six days and rested on the Sabbath. We have lightly discussed this pattern as a possibility of a blueprint for history as well. It is discussed in more detail in my book on Revelation, but it seems that it is very possible that there will only be 7,000 years of history. At the end of 6000 years Jesus will come back and bring us into our Sabbath rest (7th day). (Heb 4; see also Hosea 5:14-6:4). Likewise, an Israelite was to be freed on the seventh year to model the pattern of our freedom on our Sabbath day rest.

This freed slave was not to pay anything. There was nothing he could do to bring about his freedom, only God could grant it through His laws. Likewise, we cannot enter our freedom of heaven by any merit of our own, but only through the blood of Christ. God took this law seriously as He brought judgment upon those in Jerusalem for not freeing their slaves after six years: “Every seventh year each of you must free any fellow Hebrew who has sold himself to you. . . Your fathers, however, did not listen to Me or pay attention to Me. Recently you repented and did what is right in My sight: Each of you proclaimed freedom to his countrymen. You even made a covenant before Me in the house that bears My Name. But now you have turned around and profaned My Name; each of you has taken back the male and female slaves you had set free to go where they wished. . . Therefore, this is what the LORD says: You have not obeyed Me . . . So I now proclaim ‘freedom’ for you, declares the LORD—‘freedom’ to fall by the sword, plague and famine” (Jer 34:14-17).

A slightly different allegory could be viewed. Whether or not God intended this, I do not know, but it is food for thought. If one views the freedom as a freedom to leave God’s presence we see a judgment day scene. At the end of the six years (history as we know it) one could make the choice to stay with his master (God) if he loved him. He was taken before judges (judgment seat), and at that point, if he was deemed worthy (by his master), the servant’s ear was pierced with an awl and they were a servant for life. Anyone or anything given by the master stayed with the master (God). I know this sounds like a long shot but there are verses that seem to allude that this isn’t such a crazy thought. In

Psalms we read, “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but my ears you have pierced; burnt offerings and sin offerings You did not require. Then I said, ‘Here I am, I have come-- it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart’” (Psa 40:6-8). The piercing of the ear was a symbol of ownership to God and a desire to follow Him. Even with the guilt offering we see a marking of the ear: “The priest is to take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed” (Lev 14:14). Again this allegory is not water tight but we can count on the fact that God included it for some purpose to foreshadow a future event of some sort.

Exo 21:7 And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the menservants do. 8 If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. 9 And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. 10 If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. 11 And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money. 12 He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. 13 And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. 14 But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die. 15 And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death. 16 And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. 17 And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death. 18 And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed: 19 If he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed.

More laws continued to be given, many of which seem strange and have no explanation for us today. However, be assured God had a purpose for each one.

The female servant had different rules than that of a male slave. However, the bottom line came down to treating them with respect, love and fairness. A slave’s role was to serve. There was nothing wrong with that. However, a master’s job was not to unjustly and unfairly treat anyone, even a slave. As mentioned in the previous section, this must have something to do with the spiritual life as well. Perhaps the woman represents the church (bride of Christ) in some way. John talks of the Christian as being freed from sin: “Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:34-35).

Murder was one sin that was certainly forgivable but the consequences were harsh. The death penalty was something supported by the Bible, however, we are also warned, “Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent-- the LORD detests them both” (Prov 17:15). This is one reason why it so important

to put God back into our country as king. Without Christ to open our eyes and give us true wisdom and understanding, our judges and courts cannot judge with justice. We need the wisdom of God to know right from wrong and often innocent from guilty. Without these “God eyes” I suspect that many of the guilty are acquitted and many innocent are found guilty (sometimes because of false motives in the courts).

Accidents that resulted in death were to be treated differently. God would provide a place of refuge for the accused party. Later we see the Levites were given 48 towns to live in among the tribes of Israel. Six of these cities were to be places of refuge and were spread out so that no matter where you lived in Israel there would be a city not far away.

It is also interesting that God allows some accidents to take place because that person’s time is up. One must be careful about blaming oneself for accidents. As Job said, “Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble” (Job 2:10)?

Then there were matters dealing with parents. One of the commandments was to honor your father and mother. Therefore, attacking them was a severe offense with the verdict of death. In fact, even cursing your parents was punishable by death. In today’s society this is one commandment that has been left far behind, and if this rule was practiced, we would have few young people around. Sad as it is, parents are rarely honored among children of the secular world. Even more sad, is the fact that these parents have done nothing in their training of their children to be honored. Their own disrespect and evil attitudes are simply mirrored through their children. We can blame a number of things for our countries problems. TV, schools, teachers, government, other people’s children etc., however, the bottom line is parents. Parents have been given a responsibility in training their children. We have seen many places in Exodus alone that show fathers were to teach their children about what God had done for them. When this doesn’t happen, God is removed from the family and the family values are removed from society. When family values are removed from society the rest comes naturally. Honoring your father and mother was put in the top ten list of commands for a successful, God-fearing life. This is why the punishment must be so severe for anything that would threaten this foundation. For, “When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do” (Psa 11:3)?

Kidnapping was a severe offense perhaps because it destroyed the family.

Verse 18 discusses quarrels that end up in fist fights. If death results you know the rules. However, if one is only hurt the other must only pay for the hospital bill and his lost time. It also seems to suggest that the man who beat the other should also visit the hospital and perhaps even help the nurses bandage the wounds. The point being, forgiveness and responsibility must be practiced, not just said. It would be difficult for one to help the healing of an enemy. God is saying, don’t hold a grudge and don’t have enemies. Sometimes you may do dumb things and get angry, though wrong as it is, one need not continue acting that way. By swallowing pride and overlooking offenses, healing can take place on both sides. It is like the old saying goes, holding a grudge is like drinking poison and hoping the other person dies.

Exo 21:20 And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. 21 Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money. 22 If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. 23 And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, 24 Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. 26 And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. 27 And if he smite out his manservant's tooth, or his maidservant's tooth; he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.

One can get mixed feelings about these verses without reading them with the right cultural eyes. Verse 20 seems to suggest that God supported treating slaves like we remember seeing in movies about slavery in the South. This is not so. The Bible talks about disciplining children with the rod. Discipline is not a bad thing provided it isn't carried too far. I do not believe God was condoning harsh treatment here. Instead, He was saying that the slave is the property of the owner and he has the right to punish them. Because these are laws He is stating that if an owner would get carried away he does not deserve to be punished for getting carried away unless that servant dies. Does he condone getting carried away? Certainly not! In fact, if an owner of a slave would knock out a tooth or eye those slaves were to go free. Therefore, excessive abuse was spoken against.

Others have used these verses to say that slavery is okay. It is, provided one doesn't think of it the way we do here in the United States. I do not believe God would have ever given approval to the harsh treatment of the black people in the Americas. However, using slaves as servants was okay provided they were treated well. This is why many slaves chose to stay with their masters and have their ears pierced with an awl.

A second view of slavery is that of servant hood. As Christians we are slaves to Christ. Is that slavery a bad thing? Not when we view slavery as the Bible sees it. Yes, God does discipline us at times for He says, "The Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons" (Heb 12:6-8). God considers us His and He will guide us through discipline. Like these verses state, what kind of father would let his son do whatever he wanted to do? Paul wrote, "Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you-- although if you can gain your freedom, do so. For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave" (1 Cor 7:21-22). Paul also stated, "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible" (1 Cor 9:19). Clearly slavery has taken upon new meaning for us today because of our sin-filled history of abusing it.

Another interesting aspect in these verses lies in the fact that God considers the unborn baby LIFE. Hitting a pregnant woman and causing the baby injury meant death for the guilty person. God says He knew us even at the moment the sperm met the egg, and even at that time, we needed a Savior, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” (Psa 51:5). Today, people argue that abortion is okay as long as the baby is only so old etc. Under old covenant law, doctors who perform abortions would have been killed. Today, as Christians we are not to go out and kill abortionists. Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Mat 5:38-39). This does not mean abortion is now okay and that the man who struck someone was not guilty, it means our approach as a Christian is different today. Don’t get me wrong, I do believe the Bible speaks of the death penalty, however, it also speaks of forgiveness for those who will willingly receive it. It is also interesting that in this Matthew verse it is said the right cheek is struck. Standing in front of someone you will see that this means one would have to be back-handed, which is more of a slap across the face, rather than an all out beating. In any case, God will not look past the shedding of innocent blood.

Exo 21:28 If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. 29 But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death. 30 If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him. 31 Whether he have gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him.

I believe the key to these laws is found in Genesis where we read, “And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man” (Gen 9:5-6). Because man is made in God’s image, his life is precious and neither man nor animal should be allowed to take away this life.

Also, neglecting to take responsibility was punishable by death if death resulted from your negligence. In our society we have gotten carried away and sue happy, but the foundational practice of accountability is Scriptural. Today, when a dog bites someone when it is not in the habit of doing so the animal is often put to death just like the Bible says. However, often the owner is sued when it was indeed an accident. This is not Biblical.

I do find it interesting that God said animals would be held accountable for bloodshed after they got off the ark and almost 4,000 years later they are. God’s Word is indeed trustworthy.

Exo 21:32 If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned. 33 And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein; 34 The owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them; and the dead beast shall be his. 35 And if one man's ox hurt another's, that he die; then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money of it; and the dead ox also they shall divide. 36 Or if it be known that the ox hath used to push in time past, and his owner hath not kept him in; he shall surely pay ox for ox; and the dead shall be his own.

Now we see that if a bull gores a man's slave, the same consequences are to take place, however, in addition, the owner must pay 30 shekels of silver, the price of a slave. Therefore, if someone's bull destroyed your property the owner was responsible to pay for that property. Likewise, today it is a common and good practice to take responsibility for things your animals or children may destroy. This is also why the man who dug the pit needed to pay for the donkey if it fell into the pit. All of these things keep going back to the idea of accountability, plain and simple.

Though we are not under these laws any more, they would be good rules to practice. God intended them for our safety and a controlled government. Without laws, society would be in chaos. All of these are good laws that merely hold people accountable.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 21

- 1) How many towns did the Levites have?
- 2) How many years was a slave to serve before being freed? How might this fit with our deliverance?
- 3) Finish this sentence: Holding a grudge is like drinking poison and hoping . . . _____?
- 4) What was the consequence of murder in Biblical times?

- 5) What was the consequence of disobeying your parents? Why was this so harsh?
- 6) How are Christians slaves today?
- 7) What was a slave to do if he wanted to stay with his master?
- 8) What evidence is there to show that slavery was not as abusive as most think of when talking of slavery?
- 9) How did God view a child in the womb?
- 10) What did God institute after Noah got off the ark that is still in effect today?

Exodus Chapter 22

Exo 22:1 If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. 2 If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. 3 If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. 4 If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double.

Thievery and self defense are addressed in these verses. As a safety measure, God said that if a thief broke in after sunrise there was no need to kill him. People would be up and a scream or two would make people aware of what was going on. Therefore, there is no need to shed blood.

Exo 22:5 If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution. 6 If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution. 7 If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, let him pay double. 8 If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods. 9 For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour. 10 If a man deliver unto his neighbour an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it: 11 Then shall an oath of the LORD be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods; and the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good. 12 And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. 13 If it be torn in pieces, then let him bring it for witness, and he shall not make good that which was torn. 14 And if a man borrow ought of his neighbour, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make it good. 15 But if the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good: if it be an hired thing, it came for his hire.

Here again we see simple rules of accountability. The only added information is that a judge was to decide who was guilty. This is why it is so important to have Christian leaders; especially judges. If I went to court I would pray that God would grant a wise, Christian judge who could discern truth through the Spirit of God. If only our leaders would pray Solomon's prayer, "So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours" (1 Ki 3:9).

If a wolf came in and attacked a flock of sheep the shepherd was to chase off the wolf. If that shepherd did his job the wolf would run away without the sheep and then he could take the torn remains back to the owner as evidence that he did his job. If the shepherd wasn't responsible, the wolf would simply run off with the sheep because there would be no one there to stop him. We see that many of these Levitical laws or practices, such as this one, were being used even before this period of time in Leviticus. While Jacob was with Laban hundreds of years earlier, even before the nation of Israel had begun, he defended himself by saying, "I did not bring you animals torn by wild beasts; I

bore the loss myself. And you demanded payment from me for whatever was stolen by day or night” (Gen 31:39).

Genesis 9:4 and Acts 15:20 gives us another example of a supposed Levitical law that is still to be practiced today. Though not often realized, we are not to eat meat with blood in it according to the Gospel preachers of the NEW TESTAMENT (Acts 17 and 21). Therefore, we see that these are not all laws that should be null and void simply because they are in the book of Exodus and Leviticus. Too often people throw out everything like this saying that we no longer need to follow them because it is Old Testament Levitical law. WRONG! Many of these laws were practiced before and after the law was given and, therefore, should still be used today. After all, these are not unjust laws, but they would enforce a rule of government that would keep peace and accountability. In fact, when our founding fathers wrote the constitution, almost all of their philosophies came from the Scriptures. One can watch the video called, “*America’s Godly Heritage*” by Wall Builders for more information on that topic.

Exo 22:16 And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. 17 If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins. 18 Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live. 19 Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death. 20 He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed.

Sexual immorality was a sin punishable by death. How far we have fallen from these rules today. Sex was created by God with a purpose, that being reproduction (Mal 2 :15) and a sign of unity to foreshadow the unity we have with Christ. This is precisely why God says the church is the bride of Christ. This imagery is used throughout the Scriptures. Any defilement of this sacred covenant was a violation of God’s intent. The Lord is holy and any aspect that deals with His holiness is to be taken seriously. Sacrificing to any other god but the true God was, therefore, also punishable by death.

In God’s eyes when one sleeps with someone they become one with them. Therefore, whether the woman who was seduced is taken as a wife or not, the bride-price was to be paid and the woman was no longer to marry again. There would be consequences to this event. This may not seem fair, but God didn’t put us on earth for our own pleasures and desires. In fact, I believe He allows many trials and temptations to come into our lives to drive the selfishness out of us. The fact is, God wants us to be partnered or unified with only one person throughout this life, unless your first spouse dies. Maybe that doesn’t seem fair but it is what God wants. To do anything else compromises the unity of a marriage, the very unity God wants of the bride (church) with Christ. As Paul wrote, “I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ” (2 Cor 11:2-3). I bet Uzziah didn’t think it was fair that he needed to die because he wanted to keep the ark of the covenant from tipping over and reached out his

hand to stabilize it. However, what Uzziah thought didn't matter. God said don't touch so don't touch. Likewise, there are many practices today that we put our own opinions into. Some say abortion would be okay if the mother's life was in danger. NO! God said not to kill, period. Do you really think God isn't aware of your situation and isn't looking out for you? The sanctity of marriage is of utmost importance and is one that needs to be preserved and practiced as God had intended it to be. If you sleep with someone, you are one with them, regardless of whether or not you take them as your wife or husband. In God's eyes, that is it.

Exo 22:21 Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. 22 Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. 23 If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; 24 And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless. 25 If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury. 26 If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: 27 For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.

Once more we see that mistreatment or oppression was not suitable for aliens or slaves. The Israelites were aliens and were mistreated by being used as slaves and treated harshly. Likewise, taking advantage of widows, orphans or any helpless person was sinful in God's eyes. The Israelites cried out to God in 3:7 and He answered their prayer by destroying the Egyptians. He would treat the Israelites no differently if they acted like the Egyptians either.

Though only widows, aliens, slaves and orphans are mentioned in these verses, other areas of Scripture show that virtually anyone who was defenseless was to be treated with kindness (Deut 16:11-14; Ps 10:14-18; 68:5; 82:3; Mat 25:34).

When lending money to any fellow Israelite there was to be no interest added on to it. Instead, it was to be an act of love and helpfulness. Even pledges that were vital to life were to be returned at night. Today, banks will take a house from people and leave them homeless. God will not turn a deaf ear to the cries of the oppressed even today. Jesus said, "And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:34-36).

One way God will look out for the poor is to provide for them by taking money from the wealthy who are unjust. In Proverbs we read, "He who increases his wealth by exorbitant interest amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor. If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are

detestable” (Prov 28:8-9). God later judged the Israelites because of their unfair usury practices (Ezek 18:13; 22:12).

Exo 22:28 Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people. 29 Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me. 30 Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with his dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me. 31 And ye shall be holy men unto me: neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs.

Another rule still in effect after Jesus had come was to not curse the ruler of the people, even if they are wrong. Paul rebuked the high priest in Acts and when he found out who he was replied, “Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: ‘Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people’” (Acts 23:5). This high priest was clearly in the wrong, however, Paul realized being right or wrong was irrelevant because of God’s instructions. Please also note that Paul was in the New Testament era, but still found it important to follow God’s law from his heart, not simply out of obligation. Even in Romans we read, “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer” (Rom 13:1-4). We do not speak evil of our rulers because God has placed them there for His purpose. Though many of our presidents have been morally bankrupt we still do not speak evil of them. We don’t need to respect them, but we do need to respect their office and their position in which God has placed them. Even evil people are used by God as we see in Pharaoh, “For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: ‘I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display My power in you and that My Name might be proclaimed in all the earth’” (Rom 9:17). So who are we to question God?

God was to come first in life. If people were not giving their offerings and dedicating their firstborn, they would forget about God. These were also things that took self-control and rid the selfish desires in ones life. Giving an offering is not always easy because we want to hoard things ourselves. If we practice self-control and love, Satan has a harder time getting his foot into the door of our lives.

Why the firstborn? First of all they were the most treasured. Those of you who have children will know that your firstborn is special because they are fresh and new. It is a bigger sacrifice to give the firstborn. However, there is much more than the sacrifice here. Jesus is also the firstborn: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation” (Col 1:15); “And again, when God brings His firstborn into the world, He says, ‘Let all God’s angels

worship Him” (Heb 1:6); and “To the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. . .” (Heb 12:23). The Passover meal in Egypt protected the firstborn as well. Israel was God’s firstborn son. We read in Jeremiah, “They will come with weeping; they will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble, because I am Israel’s father, and Ephraim is My firstborn son” (Jer 31:9). All of this was to show us that we are God’s firstborn as well. If we are one in Christ and Christ is the firstborn; if Israel was God’s first born and yet we are spiritual Israel; if the Passover symbolized God’s salvation through His firstborn to save the firstborn (His people), then we are God’s sons, dedicated to Him through Christ Jesus. This dedication took place on the 8th day just as did circumcision, an act that made you God’s child (Gen 17:12). Likewise, circumcision was replaced in the New Testament by Baptism (Col 2:11) and, therefore, our Baptism is God’s dedication to us that we are His children. (Keep in mind, just because God is there for you doesn’t mean you will accept that gift). As God said in these verses, we are to be His holy people.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 22

- 1) What Scripture verse in the New Testament shows that we are still not to eat meat with blood in it? When was this rule first given? What does this mean for us today?
- 2) How was a shepherd to show that he was doing his job in defending the sheep?
- 3) What happens when you sleep with someone?
- 4) What Scriptures indicate that Christians should not charge one another interest?
- 5) Why was it the firstborn that was dedicated to God?
- 6) What seems to have replaced circumcision? What verse indicates this?
- 7) What should our relationship be with rulers that are ungodly?

Exodus Chapter 23

Exo 23:1 Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. **2** Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment: **3** Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause. **4** If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. **5** If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him. **6** Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. **7** Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked. **8** And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous. **9**

Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Justice and fairness is the theme of this section. Sometimes fairness can be a difficult thing; especially when one feels sorry for a poor man. However, to side with a poor man and go against a rich man because your heart is touched isn't just. God is both fair and just. Sometimes we wonder why bad things happen to good people but whatever the answer, you can be sure that it is just. In other cases we think about God judging the people of the promised land as the Israelites slaughtered them. Women, children and even animals were killed as the Israelites took over the promised land. People have often asked me how my God could be a loving God when He did that. My answer is simple. My God is a just God. God wasn't bringing Israel into the promised land just so that they could inherit a new home. It was judgment day for the people on the other side. They had their chance to recognize and worship the true God but had continued to reject Him. The people of Noah's time had their judgment day, Sodom and Gomorrah had its judgment day, and this was judgment day for these people as well. Likewise, God promises us there is another judgment day coming when all women, children and men who do not follow Christ will be destroyed. He warned us, loved us and is "just" because of it. Deuteronomy shows the above to be true, "After the LORD your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, 'The LORD has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.' No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is going to drive them out before you" (Deu 9:4). In Genesis we see that God was giving these people time to repent of their ways, "In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure" (Gen 15:16). The only thing unfair in the whole story is that a loving Creator made a race of people and these people mocked and despised the very Being that formed them. They didn't give thanks to God, but worshipped created things instead of their Creator. God told them what to do and they did the exact opposite.

A second thing to understand in answering people who question God's love when bad things happen is the fall. Technically, one cannot answer why bad things happen unless one first understands sin. One can't understand sin unless Adam and Eve were real people with real sin bringing us into a real fallen world. If you don't believe in Adam and Eve, you can't answer why bad things happen in this world. This is why Carl Sagan couldn't understand God. He didn't see a God of love because of the disease in the world. If only he could have accepted creation, he could have understood the foundation for the disease.

Kindness is also addressed in helping others out, even when they are your enemies. As Paul stated in Romans, "If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you" (Prov 25:21-22). Obviously our goal isn't to heap coals upon our enemy, but rather to show the love of Christ. If your enemy continues to act in an ungodly manner he will suffer for it. Either way, God will reward you for your loving kindness.

Another underlying theme is selfishness. The only reason to do most of the above forbidden acts is to try and protect yourself or for personal gain. Selfishness is the root of many sins. In fact, the believer's absolute surrender is to give up himself. In Romans we read, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--His good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom 12:1-2). Rather than live life trying to satisfy our carnal desires, we are to give our bodies to God as living sacrifices. A sacrifice was usually something killed and dedicated to God. Now, we offer God our bodies as a sacrifice that has not been killed. This is why Paul also wrote, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:3-5). There is no room for selfish ambition in the Christian life. Indeed, the above verses would not need to be written if man was not selfish because, "For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice" (James 3:16). Thanks be to God who has delivered us from ourselves.

Exo 23:10 And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: 11 But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard. 12 Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed. 13 And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.

Just as there was a Sabbath day of the week, there was also a Sabbath (7th) year that was to be kept holy to God. Every 7th year the crops were to be left unplowed. This would serve a worldly purpose of replenishing the nutrients in the soil as well as give everyone a rest and time to worship the Lord all the more. Even more than this however, it would force the people to look to God for their supply of food. If there were no crops coming in, one needed to rely on God to bring in triple on the sixth year. This is exactly what God promised to do, "You may ask, 'What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not plant or harvest our crops?' I will send you such a blessing in the sixth year that the land will yield enough for three years. While you plant during the eighth year, you will eat from the old crop and will continue to eat from it until the harvest of the ninth year comes in" (Lev 25:20-22). This would take a great faith and reliance upon God, exactly what He wants the Christian to do. . . rely upon Him only and not on yourselves. Paul wrote in Corinthians, "Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead" (2 Cor 1:9). If we can't rely on God to do such a simple task as provide enough food for one year, how can we rely on Him to

deliver us from death? Christians need to practice relying on God with the little things before they will truly be able to rely on Him for the big things. We may say we trust that God will take care of our problems, but saying and truly believing are two different things. If we believe it, we will act like it.

Neglecting the Sabbath's was one of the primary sins of the Israelites before they were taken captive by Assyria and Babylon. Once they began neglecting God's Word, their hearts began straying from Him as well. In Ezekiel we read, "Also I gave them My Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the LORD made them holy. Yet the people of Israel rebelled against Me in the desert. They did not follow My decrees but rejected My laws--although the man who obeys them will live by them--and they utterly desecrated My Sabbaths" (Ezek 20:12-13).

First of all we see that the Sabbaths were a SIGN between God and man. It is interesting that when one studies the dates given in the Bible that many Sabbath patterns are found. Often times, every so many Sabbaths an important event will take place. The antichrist is going to try and change the set times and laws (Dan 7:25) because he knows that the set times are a sign to God's people. As mentioned already, it seems most possible that all of time will only be 7,000 years with our Sabbath being the millennial thousand years representing heaven as described in Hebrews, chapter four.

Secondly, we see that Israel couldn't even keep the Sabbaths during their 40 years of wandering let alone once they inherited the promised land. This day and year was to be kept holy because it represented a holy time of the future (Hebrews 4). We would do well to continue practicing our trust and reliance upon God today. Not because we have to, but because we should want to spend that restful time being close to God and reap the benefits of obedience in a life of salvation. Though obedience does not bring salvation, salvation brings about obedience and great joy.

Exo 23:14 Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. 15 Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) 16 And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. 17 Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

There were three festivals throughout the calendar year that all Jews were to go to the temple and worship the Lord (Lev 23:4-44, Dt 16:1-17). The Feast of Unleavened Bread was celebrated around the time of our Easter. It was celebrated from the 15th through the 21st days of the first month on the Jewish Calendar (March or April). This feast was to remind the Israelites of the great deliverance from the bondage of slavery in Egypt when they ate the Passover meal without yeast.

The Feast of Harvest was also called the Feast of Weeks due to the fact that it was celebrated seven weeks after the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This

was on the 6th day of the third month on the Jewish Calendar (May, June). It was celebrated to commemorate God's blessings in the harvest and, therefore, could be likened to our Thanksgiving in some ways. In New Testament times it was called Pentecost. Pentecost means 50 and since this feast was 50 days after the Feast of Unleavened Bread it became known as such.

The Feast of Ingathering is also called the Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Booths. The Israelites lived in stick shelters that they built out on the plains when God brought them out of Egypt. This was a time when they needed to trust in God's protection from wild animals and other enemies. Camping out in the open was dangerous so this showed God's Divine protection. It was celebrated from the 15th through the 22nd of the 7th month on the Jewish calendar (September, October). Today, most Jews still celebrate this feast by living in a home-made hut put up in their garage. It is also considered to be Jesus birthday. See chapter 34:22 for further explanation.

All three of these feasts would serve to be memorials for Israel in order that they would not forget God's care and love for them. Just three more reasons to tell their children what the Lord had done for them.

Exo 23:18 Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning. 19 The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

Yeast was a symbol of corruption, which is why it was not allowed to be offered to God. These sacrifices foreshadowed Jesus Christ, the great and final Sacrifice. In Christ there was no corruption and, therefore, none could be symbolized here in the Old Testament either. Likewise, nothing was to be left until morning just as at the Passover meal. Both showed that Jesus body would not be left on the cross overnight either.

Bringing the best of the firstfruits was not only acknowledging God's provision but showing trust in Him as well. The first harvest was the most important because once harvested, you had a guarantee of food. But if one gave their firstfruits away they needed to rely on God to bring about the rest of the Harvest before hail or drought could destroy it. Also, the firstfruits represent Jesus Christ, the first born: "For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers" (Rom 8:29), "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation" (Col 1:15), and, "Again, when God brings His firstborn into the world, He says, 'Let all God's angels worship Him'" (Heb 1:6). God gave His firstfruits for us. As we discussed on the section dealing with the Passover, Jesus offered Himself as the firstfruits by being in seclusion for three days prior to the offering, just as the priests were supposed to do.

The cooking of a young goat in its mother's milk is somewhat of a mystery. Some commentators say it mimicked a pagan Canaanite practice, which could make sense, but it seems to be out of context with the rest of the text. In any case, this is why Jews today do not let any dairy product touch any meat product. They will have separate pots, pans and utensils to cook any meat

and separate pots for things like macaroni and cheese etc. While in Israel, they would never serve cream with the coffee if there was any sort of sausage or meat for breakfast. It all stems from this Levitical law.

Exo 23:20 Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. 21 Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. 22 But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. 23 For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off. 24 Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. 25 And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. 26 There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil.

Who is the angel God is sending ahead of the Israelites into the promised land? It is none other than Jesus before we knew Him as such. In my book on Genesis I show many examples of Jesus appearing in the Old Testament as the Angel of the Lord. In Genesis 16: 7 we read, “The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur” (Gen 16:7). But only six verses later we see Hagar respond to this Man: “She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: ‘You are the God who sees me,’ for she said, ‘I have now seen the One who sees me’” (Gen 16:13). Hagar realized that this Angel was God. This is the same Angel we saw earlier during the Exodus, “Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel’s army, withdrew and went behind them” (Exo 14:19). It is the same Angel that Jacob wrestled with at Peniel which received its name because of the person he wrestled, “So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, ‘It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared’” (Gen 32:30). In Genesis 18, three men came to Abraham’s house and told them Sarai would have a baby. Later these men were called angels when they went to Sodom. But Scripture also tells us who one of these men was, “Then the LORD said to Abraham, ‘Why did Sarah laugh and say, Will I really have a child, now that I am old’” (Gen 18:13)? Clearly, Jesus (God in man form) appears in the Old Testament a number of times.

To further solidify this event we look at the allegory that we have been tracing throughout this book. Knowing that entering the promised land was a symbol of a future deliverance into the promised land of heaven we see a strong connection here with Jesus, who also said of this future deliverance: “In My Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2). Just as the angel was going on ahead of the Israelites to the promised land to bring them into the *prepared* place, Jesus has gone on ahead to prepare our heavenly home as well. Some commentaries say that this Angel was Moses, but he did not go into the

promised land ahead of the Israelites, in fact, he never went in at all. Moses cannot be this Angel.

Further evidence that this Angel is Jesus is seen in the fact that He won't forgive the sin of rebellion. Only God can forgive sins. This is why the Pharisees were so upset with Jesus when He forgave the sins of the paralytic. Blaspheming was claiming to be God and in forgiving sins this is who Jesus was claiming to be. We read in Matthew, "At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, 'This fellow is blaspheming!' Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, 'Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, "Your sins are forgiven," or to say, "Get up and walk?" But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . .' Then He said to the paralytic, 'Get up, take your mat and go home'" (Mat 9:3-6). Therefore, this Angel must be Jesus based upon His authority to forgive.

The allegory continues. Not only does Jesus prepare a place for us and lead us there, but He also destroys the evil around us. When the Lord returns He will be a Lamb for us, but a Lion for the ungodly. In Revelation 19 we see that Jesus will destroy the wicked with the sword that comes out of His mouth (Rev 19:21). Likewise, Jesus will destroy the nations of Canaan (Promised Land) for the Israelites simply by speaking the word. Not only will He destroy them, but God will then bless His people by giving them food and water and taking away their sicknesses. In our heavenly home there will be no sickness, tears or death and we will feed at the banquet table of God in Revelation 19 as well.

Life can no doubt be better when we let Jesus lead our life today. Following Him brings forth many blessings. Don't get me wrong. Just because one is a Christian does not mean that all will go well, but I promise all will go better. Trials and temptations, though great they may be, are handled and received differently. Today we go after the lottery as if it were a hidden treasure. We spend so much time and energy seeking material things, better jobs, and the greener grass on the other side of the fence. If we would only seek in our own pasture the hidden treasure God offers, the grass wouldn't look so green on the other side. Jesus was leading us when He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it" (Mat 13:44-46). If we seek out the great treasures hidden in God's Word, you will find more than you bargained for.

Exo 23:27 I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. 28 And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee. 29 I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. 30 By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land. 31 And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive

them out before thee. 32 Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. 33 They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.

God is also called the Hornet here. This word is only used three times in the Scriptures and all three of them tell of the same action. The purpose was to show that it would not be the Israelites who were winning these battles, but God, who was fighting for them and chasing the enemy out ahead of them just as a hornet makes people flee today. We read in Joshua, "I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove them out before you--also the two Amorite kings. You did not do it with your own sword and bow" (Josh 24:12). When a hornet flies around you there is a sense of urgency and terror. When God's people went into the promised land the same terror fell upon the men of that land so that their hearts melted in fear (Josh 14:8).

God also said that He would not drive out all the Canaanites in one year. It would take time because there were not enough Israelites to possess all of the land. Without controlling the animal population through hunting there would be problems of animals killing people. The Holy Land had bears, lions and other deadly animals roaming about and when these are not controlled they can become very dangerous.

God outlined the promised land of Israel and then warned them to keep pure. Unfortunately, Israel didn't obey God's command to get rid of all the Canaanites and they did ensnare Israel. Though today we are not to destroy the ungodly, we are to stay away from those who claim to be Christian and are ungodly. We read in Corinthians, "But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. Expel the wicked man from among you" (1 Cor 5:11-13). Very rarely will the good influence the bad, the bad usually influences the good. We are no different today. If we hang around and associate on social levels with the ungodly you will be ensnared by some of their ways.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 23

- 1) What do you say to someone who questions a God of love when He commanded the Israelites to kill people?
- 2) How can God be a loving God today with all the death, disease and suffering?
- 3) What was to be done with the crops every seventh year? What was the purpose of this?
- 4) Why did God allow the Assyrians to capture Israel? Be specific.
- 5) What was a “sign” between God and man?
- 6) What three festivals were to be celebrated in Jerusalem yearly by all Jews? What was the purpose of each of these festivals?
- 7) What was yeast a symbol of?
- 8) What did the firstfruits represent?
- 9) Why do the Jews in Israel today not mix cream with their coffee?
- 10) Who was the angel that was sent ahead of the Israelites into the promised land? How do we know the identity of this angel?
- 11) What spiritual significance does the angel being sent ahead into the promised land have?

- 12) Who was the hornet?
- 13) What three Scripture verses talk of the “hornet?”
- 14) Why did God not drive Israel’s enemies out all at once?

Exodus Chapter 24

Exo 24:1 And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. 2 And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him. 3 And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do. 4 And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. 6 And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. 8 And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and

said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

Moses was to bring Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's two sons along. These two were to succeed Aaron as priest, however, they will later offer unauthorized fire before the Lord and will be struck dead (Lev 10:1-2). The fire of the tabernacle altar of burnt offering was lit by God Himself and it was to be kept burning. Any other fire would have been unauthorized. Perhaps they felt a little pride having been able to go up the mountain along with Moses. Again, God desires obedience, not sacrifice (1 Sam 15:22). The 70 elders were also allowed to go up the mountain, but only worship at a distance. Many have a tendency to think that this honor should have awed these people into obedience. But neither faith nor obedience can come from seeing such great events. Only the Spirit of God touching the heart will make one act as he should. Even these elders would gripe and complain against Moses and God throughout the 40 years of wandering in the desert.

Only Moses was allowed to enter God's presence. As we will be discussing in greater detail in the next few chapters, God has offered us what Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the elders did not have, free access to the very throne of God. Only Moses was allowed to experience this honor, perhaps because he truly understood, knew and loved the Lord his God. Moses was the most humble man that ever lived according to Numbers 12:3. However, it wasn't because of his humility that he had this honor. Instead, he was humble because of his faith and, therefore, his faith brought him honor. God tells us of Moses, "Listen to My words: 'When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal Myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD'" (Num 12:6-8). We often marvel at this privilege not realizing that we now have access to God's throne as well. The ark of the covenant resided in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle and it was a clear picture of God's throne as we will discuss later. When Jesus died, the curtain that kept people out of this area was torn open allowing us access to this throne. Paul wrote, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand" (Rom 5:1-2). We read in Hebrews, "Therefore, brothers, since we have *confidence to enter the Most Holy Place* by the *blood of Jesus*, by a new and living way opened for us through *the curtain, that is, His body*, and since we have a great priest over the house of God let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb 10:19-22). Just as Moses was the mediator for the people, Jesus had now become our Mediator: "For this reason Christ is the Mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—" (Heb 9:15). The Israelites were inheriting the promised land just as we, too, await our inheritance of our promised land in heaven. But we inherit this gift only through the blood of Jesus, our Mediator: "For Christ did not enter a man-made

sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; He entered heaven itself, now to *appear for us in God's presence*" (Heb 9:24).

Because of all this pointing to Christ, it is no accident that Moses, God's mouthpiece presented the Word of God to the Israelites, writing it down and calling it good. Jesus, the Word of God came to earth and uttered the words and laws of God, even leaving us a written record of Himself. We, like the Israelites, should utter that we believe in all that Jesus did rather than what we will do. That is what makes the covenant of Jesus so much greater than the one of Sinai. We can't, nor do we need to do anything, but believe on Jesus. Moses also made an altar to sacrifice to God while Jesus, a better Mediator, offered Himself as the sacrifice for us that we may have true fellowship with God.

Just as half of the blood was poured out on the altar and half put in bowls, we today, celebrate Christ's cleansing blood in the cup of communion, while also recognizing the altar of the cross upon which this blood was shed. Communion makes the cross an individual experience. If the blood stays only on the altar it doesn't become personal. Half of the blood that was kept in the bowls was thrown out over the people for each individual needed to make the sacrifice personal. Most often this was done with the hyssop plant to sprinkle it upon them. Though today the thought of getting blood splattered on us seems gross, it was not only a command of God, but a necessity for spiritual life. Likewise, the blood of Jesus is the only means of salvation for us today. Not only do we inherit our promised land through this blood, but it becomes personal and we realize that we are not inheriting a place of heaven, but the person of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Savior, and Friend. May His blood be upon all of us.

Exo 24:9 Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: 10 And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. 11 And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

Many people think that Revelation is mostly symbolic literature. Nothing could be further from the truth. I am not saying that there are not symbolic events in Revelation, however, most of it is not symbolism. In fact, it is the exact opposite of what one would think. Exodus is more symbolic and Revelation is more literal. In the next few chapters we will be discussing the Tabernacle, a very literal structure that was filled with symbolic meaning to point to a literal heaven described in Revelation. In Hebrews we read of the Tabernacle, "They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven" (Heb 8:5). Likewise we now see a glimpse of heaven when Moses and his companions go up the mountain and see the very throne of God. How do I know this was God's throne when it doesn't say that here. Revelation describes the exact same picture. As God sits on His throne John wrote, "Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal" (Rev 4:6). Ezekiel described it as, "Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man" (Ezek 1:26), and "I looked, and I saw the likeness of a throne of sapphire

above the expanse that was over the heads of the cherubim” (Ezek 10:1). Clear as the sky itself, Moses was looking at the throne of God seen later by Ezekiel, Daniel and John. The reason the color was sapphire was probably because of the sky color. This same color is given in the Tabernacle as a symbol of God’s throne, but this will be discussed in chapter 25.

Even though these mere mortals were in the presence of the living God, their Lord did not send wrath, but a blessing. They ate and drank in communion with the Lord. Though it does not say what they ate and drank, chances are it was bread and wine, just as was shared at the Lord’s supper (Mat 26:26) every Passover (Exo 12) with Abraham and Melchizedek (Gen 14:18), and perhaps we will enjoy the same meal at the Wedding Banquet of the Lamb as told in Revelation 19:9. Why bread and wine? To symbolize the very body and blood of Jesus. The Israelites ate bread from heaven that John 6 tells us was the body of Christ. The Lord’s Supper points to the body and blood of Jesus and, therefore, every heavenly meal seems to be a partaking of Jesus Christ in remembrance of Him.

Exo 24:12 And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them. 13 And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God. 14 And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them. 15 And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. 16 And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17 And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. 18 And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

God called Moses up to the mountain to receive the laws that he was to share with the people. Laws that were intended to bring life. As Romans states, “I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death” (Rom 7:10-11). This is precisely why the believer needs Jesus who brought forth a new and better covenant nailing the law along with our sins to the cross so that we can confess as Paul did, “To those under the law I became like one under the law (*though I myself am not under the law*)” (1 Cor 9:20).

The mountain of the Lord being covered for six days and then being revealed to Moses on the seventh is no accident. As mentioned before and discussed in great detail in my book on Revelation, there seems that there will be only six thousand years of history before the seventh and final heavenly reign is ushered in. Each 24 hour day of Creation stood for a thousand year period of history. The six days of man and the seventh day dedicated to the Lord for rest. Hebrews 4 makes it very clear that the seventh (Sabbath) day rest was a pattern

or shadow of heaven. Therefore, Moses was not allowed to enter the glory of God until the seventh day, foreshadowing the very day we too will enter the cloud on Mount Zion, the mountain of the Lord. Though this is Mount Sinai, God is coming back on Mount Zion. Galatians 4 tells us that Mount Sinai represented the old covenant and Jerusalem, or Mount Zion, represents the new covenant. This is why there are so many references to deliverance and the Messiah's return on this mountain. A few examples of well over 100 follow:

- “What answer shall be given to the envoys of that nation? ‘The LORD has established Zion, and in her His afflicted people will find refuge’” (Isa 14:32).
- “Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000 who had His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads” (Rev 14:1).
- “But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly” (Heb 12:22).
- “And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion; He will turn godlessness away from Jacob’” (Rom 11:26).
- “This is what the LORD says: ‘I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain’” (Zec 8:3).
- “Many nations will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths.’ The law will go out from Zion, the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore” (Micah 4:2-3).
- “Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau. And the kingdom will be the Lord's” (Oba 1:21).
- “And everyone who calls on the Name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls” (Joel 2:32).

For six days Moses could not see God or the mountain clearly because it was covered with a cloud. Likewise, we today do not have a clear view of heaven, but we will have 20/20 vision when our seventh day comes just as Paul said, “Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known” (1 Cor 13:12).

For the Israelites, down under the cloud looked terrifying, like a consuming fire. This is because, for some, God is just that; a God of wrath and anger. Romans says, “But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger” (Rom 2:8). The Israelites would bring upon God's wrath more than once because of their stubborn disobedience. Deuteronomy warned them, “For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God” (Deu 4:24). These warnings fell on deaf ears

and many were destroyed as His enemies were, “Smoke rose from His nostrils; consuming fire came from His mouth, burning coals blazed out of it” (Psa 18:8). It is interesting that God’s tongue is called a consuming fire, “See, the Name of the LORD comes from afar, with burning anger and dense clouds of smoke; His lips are full of wrath, and His tongue is a consuming fire” (Isa 30:27). In Revelation we see that the final Armageddon battles will be won by the sword that comes out of the mouth of Christ. As Hebrews 4:12 tells us, that sword is God’s Word. Moses was up on the mountain receiving God’s Word, the very thing that would either save or destroy every human being that has ever lived. For the believer, God’s word is sweet. The Psalmist wrote, “How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth” (Psa 119:103)! However, as we have seen in some select verses above, God’s Word is the destroying power for the ungodly. Moses was allowed to enter that consuming fire because, for Him, it was salvation. Isaiah could have been describing Moses along with all the saints when he wrote, “The *sinners* in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the *godless*: Who of us can dwell with the *consuming fire*? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning? He who walks *righteously and speaks what is right*, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil-- this is the man who will dwell on the heights, whose *refuge will be the mountain fortress*. His *bread will be supplied*, and water will not fail him. *Your eyes will see the King* in His beauty and view a land that stretches afar” (Isa 33:14-17). As a saint, I stand in awe of the sweet consuming fire because of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Moses remained on top of this mountain for 40 days and nights just as Jesus went into the wilderness for this time. In Jesus case, He was being tempted by Satan, in the case of Moses, he was being fed by God. However, the Israelites below were being tempted by the devil with the thought of a leader that had disappeared into the consuming flames and was never coming back. Likewise, many today are being tempted with the same thought as Peter clearly tells us, “First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, ‘*Where is this coming He promised*’” (2 Peter 3:3-4)? Do not fall asleep my dear brothers, for the Lord will be coming back soon.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 24

- 1) Who were Aaron's two sons? What was their great sin? What happened to them?
- 2) What do we have that Nadab did not have?
- 3) What was unique about how God spoke to Moses?
- 4) $\frac{1}{2}$ of the sacrificial blood was poured on the altar and the other half was poured where?
- 5) Describe the throne of God. Where else do we see this throne described?
- 6) What symbolism is seen in the Israelites making the golden calf as they thought Moses, their leader, was dead?
- 7) What does the sapphire of God's throne represent?
- 8) What does the Tabernacle symbolize?
- 9) What was the law intended to bring for man?
- 10) How long was the mountain covered by the cloud and smoke?
- 11) What is the significance of Mount Zion?
- 12) How many days was Moses on Mount Sinai? What is the significance of this?

IMPORTANT NOTE ON CHAPTER 25-30

Though often times chapter 25 begins the “skimming” section of Exodus for many readers, I encourage you to hold firm and if anything, slow down on your reading at this point. The description of the tabernacle is one of the most amazing and meat filled sections of Scripture. Each and every part has meaning for our lives today because it is centered around Jesus, heaven, and the body of believers. Jesus told us the Tabernacle was a pattern or model of what is in heaven. Therefore, when one looks carefully, he can find glimpses of heaven in the next few chapters. These chapters were one of the big motivations for me to continue writing and go one more step with the book of Exodus. I found these chapters too important and fascinating not to share. Slow down, say a prayer, and make time to read these chapters in one setting. You won’t be disappointed.

Exodus Chapter 25

Exo 25:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. 3 And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, 4 And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, 5 And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, 6 Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, 7 Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate.

It is interesting that the first command God gave to the Israelites was to bring an offering. It is even more interesting where this offering was to come from. It wasn’t to come out of obedience or guilt, but only from the heart. Just as God had brought His people out of slavery because He loved them, God was now asking them to respond to His love through a love offering. What is really incredible is to see a glimpse into the joy that Israel was feeling because of their God. According to Exodus 36:5, the giving had to be stopped because so much was coming in. Can you imagine any pastor saying that the collection plate has been too full and we must stop passing it around. That is exactly what

happened. The Israelites were overwhelmed with thankfulness, at this point anyway. Certainly they realized that just a short time ago they were poor slaves with nothing and now they were rich because they had plundered the Egyptians upon leaving them (Ex 12:31-35). We would do well today to remember where our blessings come from. Too often we think that we worked for the money and, therefore, we deserve it. Seldom do we stop to realize that without God we wouldn't have a job, let alone the ability to do it. Recognition of the source of our gifts spawns the joy of giving.

The gifts that were being given were to be used to build a house for God. The Scriptures have over 50 chapters dedicated to the Tabernacle. There are more pages dedicated to this structure than any other in the Bible because of its purpose to point us to Christ and our heavenly home. We read, "They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the Tabernacle: 'See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain'" (Heb 8:5). Perhaps this realization gave them a sense of ownership in the building. Today, people often tithe out of obedience and are left with nothing but an empty wallet. On the other hand, when people give from the heart they have a sense of joy and feel a part of that to which they give. Knowing that the Tabernacle to be built was a pattern of what God has for us in heaven, we see that a heartfelt tithe gives us a sense of ownership in heaven.

The items to be donated are very symbolic and are of much importance. We will discuss this further as we get into the next few chapters, but for now it is important to understand the meaning behind these gifts. Gold is mentioned more than any other metal in the Scriptures, perhaps because it is symbolic of God's deity and holiness. This is why gold was brought to the baby Jesus (Mat 2:11), and why the holy city in heaven has streets of pure gold (Rev 21:22).

Silver is continually shown as symbolic of our redemption and the price of atonement. The following Scriptures support this:

- Exo 30:12-15 "Each one must pay the LORD a ransom for his life at the time he is counted. . . Each one is to give a half shekel [of silver]. . . This half shekel is an offering to the LORD. . . The rich are not to give more than a half shekel and the poor are not to give less when you make the offering to the LORD to atone for your lives."
- Zec 11:12-13 "I told them, 'If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.' So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said to me, 'Throw it to the potter'--the handsome price at which they priced Me!"

Bronze was used to show power and judgment. Three supporting verses follow:

- Job 40:18 "His bones are tubes of bronze, his limbs like rods of iron."
- Num 21:9 "So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived." (This was after God judged Israel for complaining).

- Rev 1:15 “His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of rushing waters.” (Describing Christ when He comes to judge the world).

Blue, purple and scarlet were the three colors that were to be used in the Tabernacle and all three had heavenly meanings (Heb 8:5). The blue would be a reminder of the sky, where the heavenly throne sits above. Scripture shows this when we see that the throne of God in heaven sits on a foundation of sapphire, which is a blue color. Ezekiel’s vision of God showed, “Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a *throne of sapphire*, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man” (Ezek 1:26). Isaiah says of the future Jerusalem where Jesus will reign, “O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires” (Isa 54:11; see also Ezek 10:1 and Rev 21:19).

Purple is a color of royalty. Jesus was given a purple robe to wear as they mocked Him (Mark 15:17-18). We see that rich men wore purple (Luke 16:19) and that the kings of Midian wore purple (Judges 8:26). Therefore, the color purple will show Christ’s royalty and kingship.

Scarlet is most noted as the color of blood and is clearly representative of sacrifice. The beautiful part is that it is the scarlet color that cleanses us to become clean: “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool” (Isa 1:18). The author of Hebrews described the act of the cleansing of sins as well: “When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, *scarlet wool* and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. . . In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. . . In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb 9:19-22). Indeed scarlet may be the most important color of all.

Besides colors, fine linen was to be brought. Scripture tells us this represents a righteous man (Luke 23:52), authority and wisdom (Gen 41:38-42), a bride (Pro 31:24), and “the righteous acts of the saints” (Rev 19:8). It is no accident that the priests, the models of the holy man, were the ones who wore fine linen clothing to symbolize the saints that would become the bride of Christ (Rev 19). How do we gain this righteousness and brideship? “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21). Only through the scarlet blood of Christ could we wear white linen. Too often people try to wear this color on their own. Just as often, people don’t even realize they have it to put on and do not claim the joy that God imparts through it. One must claim the robe God has given us and then wear it with pride, “Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 13:14).

The fine linen, goat hair, red ram skins and sea cow hides were all to be used to cover the Tabernacle proper. One layer on top of another (Exo 26). First came the white linen with beautiful cherubim woven into it (Exo 26:1). Every time the cherubim are seen they are near the throne of God, which in this case was overshadowing the ark of the covenant, God’s seat in Old Testament

times. One verse to illustrate this example follows: “I looked, and I saw the likeness of a throne of sapphire above the expanse that was over the heads of the cherubim” (Ezek 10:1).

On top of the linen curtain was a second curtain of goat hair. There were two types of goats mentioned in Scripture: The scapegoat (Lev 16:8), and the sacrificial goat. Both were used for the forgiveness of the people. Once a year a goat was brought to the priests and they would lay their hands on its head to symbolize the sins of the people being put onto the goat. Then the goat was led out into the wilderness to die showing our sins were cast away. Jesus Christ was our scapegoat who took our sins with Him to the grave.

Another aspect of the goat hair was that of repentance. The two great preachers of repentance were Elijah and John the Baptist, and both wore goat hair for clothing (2 Kings 1:8, Matt 3:4). Both these men were forerunners to Christ. Long after the death of Elijah, the last verse of the Old Testament states, “See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes” (Mal 4:5). In a sense the goat’s hair symbolized the coming Messiah.

The third curtain was made of red ram skins to show the sacrificial blood of our sacrifice, Jesus Christ. The ram was the only acceptable sacrifice for the consecration of a priest.

On top of the ram skins came the fourth curtain made from the sea cow to make the structure water proof. Sea cows were also a drab color and from the outside this is all one could see. In order to see the beauty of the gold or the blue, purple and scarlet colors, one had to go into the holy place. As we will discuss further in later chapters we will see that this represents our walk with God. Simply looking in from the outside, it doesn’t seem like there is much to offer by sitting in a church and singing songs. It isn’t until one goes in that he experiences the beauty and joy God gives us in this fellowship with Him. On the outside, Christ had nothing to attract us to Him either: “He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him” (Is 53:2).

Acacia wood was used for the poles and frames of the Tabernacle (Exo 26:15). Wood represents humanity, whereas the gold represented deity. This shows the humanity of Christ as well. The olive oil was used to fill the lampstands. Again, we will go through these things in greater detail later, but for now, just understand that these represent Christ and the Holy Spirit. We know that Jesus is the light of the world and “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor 4:6). Therefore the oil brings forth the light of God, Jesus Christ.

The spices for the fragrant incense represent the saints and their prayers. We read about the 24 elders in Revelation and how, “Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints” (Rev 5:8) Ezekiel also states, “I will accept you as fragrant incense when I bring you out from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will show Myself holy among you in the sight of the nations” (Ezek 20:41).

Precious stones are used to describe the saints of the living God and often times more specifically, the twelve tribes of Israel. This is why the stones were to be put on the breast of the priest who were a model of the holy man redeemed by God. In the New Jerusalem that comes out of heaven in Revelation 21 we see there are twelve foundations each of precious stones that symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel. There is no doubt God chose these items for a heavenly reason. We also see that Jesus Christ is our foundation and now WE build upon Him with our good works (not for salvation, but for glory). We read in Corinthians about the judgment of believers, “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, **which is Jesus Christ**. If any man builds on this foundation using *gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw*, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames” (1 Cor 3:11-15). Note that the costly stones are the works of the believers, but so are the wood hay and straw. One will be burned up because they are no good and the other will make it through the fire. Who or what tests the quality of our works. The fire which is explained in Hebrews, “our God is a consuming fire” (Heb 12:29; see also 1 Peter 1:6-7 and Job 23:10). Any independent work that does not come from God will be burned up and only those dependent acts through God will remain. Either way salvation comes from the foundation and the glory in heaven comes from the stones you build with. A holy man does good works through faith in Christ. As James put it, “faith without works is dead.”

God later tells the priests to take the two onyx stones in the ephod and engrave the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on them (28:9). We later see that these stones were memorial stones: “Fasten them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel” (Exo 28:12). The question is, what were they a memorial of? The only mention of onyx stones before this event is in Genesis 2:12 where we read of the Garden of Eden: “The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there” (Gen 2:12). God obviously wanted the priests to remember the Garden of Eden and its paradise. Knowing that the priests were symbols of the holy man, God was telling them to remember when there was no curse on them or the land. Not only that, but these stones should have reminded the priests that God was going to restore this world to an Eden-like paradise again. In Exodus 16:14 we discussed the connection of the resin and manna, here we see that not only the manna, but the gold and the onyx stones point us to our heavenly home that will be like the Garden of Eden. Precious stones will be used to describe the city of God in Revelation 21:18-21. Why? Because that is what the Garden of Eden had. We see this when God talks about Satan: “You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared” (Ezekiel 28:13). The precious stones within the priests garment were also to point us to this heavenly home, both in the past and future: “O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires. I will make

your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones” (Isa 54:11-12).

The clear message is that God was going to use the Tabernacle as His means of dwelling with man in Old Testament times. Now, however, God uses a different structure to dwell in, the spirit of man. In fact, when we read in Corinthians, the word for temple is actually the Holy of Holies, or the inner area of the Tabernacle where God dwelled: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own” (1 Cor 6:19). We are the stones in this new temple: “In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a *holy temple* in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit” (Eph 2:21-22), and, “you also, like living stones, are being built into a *spiritual house* to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2:5). What is this spiritual house and temple? Revelation answers that question: “I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (Rev 21:22).

Exo 25:8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. 9 According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.

As mentioned in the above passage, the whole reason for being so specific with the free will items was because the Tabernacle needed to be made exactly like the pattern God had shown Moses on Mount Sinai. The reason every detail was important is because the Tabernacle would not only point us to Christ, but also give a better understand of how to get to heaven, what heaven is like, and how to experience joy through God in our wilderness wandering. The author of Hebrews gives great insight into the Tabernacle, “They serve at a sanctuary that is a *copy and shadow of what is in heaven*. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: ‘See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain’” (Heb 8:5, see Acts 7:44 also).

As we get into the descriptions of the Tabernacle furnishings, one wonders how Moses could remember it all. I have read through these sections numerous times and still have a hard time visualizing some things. However we must realize Moses was instructed exactly how to make them.

Exo 25:10 And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 11 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. 12 And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. 13 And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. 14 And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be

borne with them. 15 The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. 16 And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.

The ark was a chest shaped box about 3 ¼ feet long by 2 ¼ feet wide by 2 ¼ feet high. Like the shewbread table, it was made of acacia (shittim) wood covered in pure gold. The wood standing for Christ's humanity and the gold for His eternal and incorruptible Deity.

The poles of the ark were just like the poles used to carry the table of shewbread, however, these were never to be removed. The Ten Commandments, some manna and Aaron's staff were all placed in the ark as a testimony of God's love, providence and commands.

The ark of the covenant was placed in the Most Holy Place, a perfect cube shaped room that was only entered once a year. It was separated from the Holy Place only by a thick curtain. The importance of this room is given in Hebrews, "God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. *We have this hope* as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. *It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain*" (Heb 6:18-19).

The room where the ark sat represents the most intimate and heart felt worship available. The priest could only enter the Most Holy Place alone where he would meet with God one on One. Too often people think Christianity stops at the brazen altar (cross) without realizing there is so much joy and peace that comes from going a few steps further by washing their feet and having a clean walk with God at the basin, having fellowship with Christ (shewbread), walking in His light (lampstand), building a relationship with Him through prayer (table of incense) and then, finally going through the rent veil into the MOST HOLY place to rest with God in our spirits.

As will be discussed in greater detail later, the outer court of the Tabernacle represented our body, the Holy Place symbolized our soul, and the Most Holy Place, our spirit. The outer court was the only visible portion of the Tabernacle. The Holy Place was a place of worship and intercessory prayer whereby our emotions were touched. But the Most Holy Place was abiding with Christ in the most intimate way possible. These three sections of the Tabernacle have been likened to the kitchen (outer court), living room (Holy Place) and bedroom (Most Holy Place). Too often Christians spend too much time in the kitchen and rarely go into the living room. Even more unfortunate, they stay out and sleep on the couch without ever going into the bedroom for that personal spirit touching relationship with God. Sometimes we get so busy feeding ourselves or entertaining others that we neglect our time alone with God. Sometimes getting to Sunday morning worship is so frantic that we only get into the outer court of His Tabernacle. Other times we are so caught up in the worship style that we can't leave the Holy Place. This is why the author of Hebrews wrote, "Let us then approach *the throne of grace* [the ark] with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb 4:16). May our prayer be as the Psalmist prayed, "How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (Psa

84:1-2). Don't just go to church in the body by simply staying in the outer court of the Tabernacle and only believing in Jesus. Go into the Holy Place and allow your soul and emotions to be touched through God's Word, communion and prayer. Then, and only then, will your spirit enter the Most Holy Place of worship with Christ.

Another important thing to realize is that when the Scriptures tell us that "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you" (1 Cor 6:19), the word used for temple is the word for the Most Holy Place. Christ's throne, the ark of the covenant, resides in you. We are His dwelling place. The question becomes where He is allowed to dwell, the kitchen, living room or bedroom?

The difference between the Old Testament Most Holy Place and the New Testament Most Holy Place is clear. If a man who had cheated on his wife went to the brazen altar and had a guilt offering sacrificed the priest may have pronounced his forgiveness. What if in his heartfelt love and thankfulness to God he went charging into the Most Holy Place and threw himself onto the ark in joy? He would have been struck dead. Today, we have the right to come running into that Most Holy Place and throw ourselves on top of the ark without punishment. That is what Christ came to do. To rip the veil or curtain that separated us and kept the saints from accessing the throne of God. Now that the Holy Place is in us we are told, "God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Once more Hebrews takes on new meaning, "Let us then *approach the throne of grace* [the ark] with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb 4:16).

Exo 25:17 And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. 18 And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. 20 And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.

The atonement cover will be discussed in verse 21. Here we will focus on the two cherubim overlooking the ark. Like the lampstands, the cherub were made of pure gold with no wood or any sign of humanity at all. So closely connected to God and His throne, they were to be made of one piece with it. Both cherubim were to face each other with the sole purpose of positioning them to face the ark or the throne of God. This shows that the ark, not the cherub, was the focus of attention.

These cherubim are with God wherever He goes. They are simply the chief angels whom God sits between on His throne as seen from the Psalms: "The LORD reigns, let the nations tremble; He sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake" (Ps 99:1); "You who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth" (Ps 80:1). See also Isa 37:16 and Ezek 9:3; 10:1-3. Even Satan was a cherub, "You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery

stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones” (Ezek 28:14-16). It was a cherub that guarded the Garden of Eden after the fall into sin as well (Gen 3:24). Cherub are seen many times in Revelation (5:8-9; 6:1; 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4) and also in other Old Testament references to God’s throne. In Ezekiel we see a lengthy but important description of these creatures:

I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north--an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, and in the fire was what looked like **four living creatures**. In appearance their form was that of a man, but each of them had **four faces and four wings**. Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. Under their wings on their four sides they had the hands of a man. All four of them had faces and wings, and their wings touched one another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved. Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a **man**, and on the right side each had the face of a **lion**, and on the left the face of an **ox**; each also had the face of an **eagle**. Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out upward; each had two wings, one touching the wing of another creature on either side, [just as in the Most Holy Place in the temple] and two wings covering its body. Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went. The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it. The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning. As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like chrysolite, and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel. As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the creatures faced; the wheels did not turn about as the creatures went. Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were **full of eyes** all around. When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. When the creatures moved, they also moved; when the creatures stood still, they also stood still; and when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked like an expanse, sparkling like ice, and awesome. Under the expanse their wings were stretched out one toward the other, and each had two wings covering its body. When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of

rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings. Then there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man (Ezek 1:4-26).

The cherubim had four faces which seem to be a reflection of God's image. First, a man, to show humanity in Jesus Christ. Second, a lion, showing Christ to be our Judge and the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah" (Rev 5:5). Third, an ox, showing Him as a sacrifice (Lev 4:10). Fourth, an eagle, showing omniscience and protection. We saw God's deliverance in the eagle earlier, "You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself" (Exo 19:4).

Isaiah also writes, "I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above Him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: '*Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory.*' At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke" (Isa 6:1-4). Though these are seraphs (same as cherub except with six wings and in a different location) they sing the same song sung by the cherubim in Revelation 4:8. Both are at the throne of God continually and praise His name, one of the great purposes of the Tabernacle. Therefore, the presence of the cherub in the Most Holy Place is a sure sign that the throne of God is near.

Exo 25:21 And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. 22 And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

There are three "arks" mentioned in Scripture: 1) Noah's Ark, 2) The basket Moses was put in, and 3) the ark of the covenant.

God gave these instructions to Noah before building the ark, "So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out" (Gen 6:14). The word translated "pitch" is the same word for "atonement." Literally translated it could read, "atone (*kaphar* – verb) it with atonement (*kophar* – noun) inside and out." Atonement meant, "to cover." The pitch was the "atonement" of the ark to keep the judgment waters out. Likewise, the pitch that covered Moses' "ark" was an atonement or covering for Moses. This is exactly what the blood atonement of all the Old Testament sacrifices did as well. The blood of the animals could not take away our sins, but only cover them. Once a year the high priest would enter the Most Holy Place and pour blood upon the mercy seat, or cover, which rested on top of the ark of the Covenant. That blood foreshadowed the Blood of our High Priest to come as

Hebrews puts it: “But when this Priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God. [and, therefore, rested because His work was done]. Since that time He waits for His enemies to be made His footstool, because by *one* sacrifice He has made perfect *forever* those who are being made holy” (Heb 10:12-14). It is interesting that in any culture of any time, people have been shedding blood to atone for sins. Missionaries will tell you that no tribe in the world has not attempted to appease their gods for wrongs they have done. Atheism is a modern term because you will find no atheists among pagans and savages. Everyone, by nature, knows he is sinful and looks for an atonement, but Christ is the only true atonement that has been made.

The blood that was poured out on the Mercy Seat was our covering before Christ. Inside the ark of the covenant were the Ten Commandments; God’s law. It was through this law that we were condemned: “When the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death” (Rom 7:9-10). Something or Someone needed to cover this law for us. This ark of the covenant pointed to that Someone; Christ Jesus, our Lord. In 1 Samuel 6:19 the ark of the Lord was being returned by the Philistines who had captured it in war. Some Israelites looked in the ark, probably innocently, to see if the Philistines had put anything in or had taken anything out. However, God struck them dead! For just a moment they peered in on the law of God *without the blood* to cover it, and judgment fell upon them. If we remove the blood from God’s throne, His Mercy Seat, it becomes a throne of judgment. That is why the saints wash their robes in the Blood of the Lamb. That is how we “overcome” the evil’s of this world. Paul tells us about Christ: “God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood” (Rom 3:25). The word for atonement here is *hilasterion*, and is literally translated “Mercy Seat” in some translations. This word only appears one other time in Hebrews where it says, “Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the *atonement cover*” (Heb 9:5). It is through Christ’s Blood that He becomes our Mercy Seat.

As mentioned in our discussion on verse 16, this was the place God met with us. Our Lord desires to meet with us in our Spirits all alone. It is at His feet, the throne of grace, that we will fall down before Him and worship in the Spirit (Rev 19:4). To understand this sort of “Most Holy Place” worship today, I believe it is important to understand first how Christ lives IN us. The following section was taken out of my book on Revelation and is fitting for this topic here as well. Understanding your sainthood helps one realize the magnitude of Christ’s love and the purpose of the ark of the covenant.

SAINTS OR SINNERS?

This brings us to one of the most important and most misunderstood points in God’s Holy Word. Are you a saint, a sinner, a perhaps both? Scripture makes is very clear that you are a saint, NOT a sinner. Before you let your mind run free, this does not mean you do not sin, rather you are a saint that sometimes sin or a sheep that sometimes acts like a goat. The difference is that you are not a sinner as a noun, rather a sinner when used as a verb. You cannot be both. As an illustration, if you have a sliver in you, are you a block of wood? NO!

Likewise, just because we have sin in us, it doesn't mean we are sinners. Paul even says, "And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer **I myself** who do it, but it is **sin living in me**" (Rom 7:16-17). Note Paul is not the sinner, he is the saint that has sin in him. Note also that his identity is not bound up in the sin, but that he "himself" is different than his "body." We are a trinity of body, soul and spirit. It is our body that we often look at as our identity, but the fact is that our body is merely a tent or house for who we really are. It just so happens we live in a dirty house with sin in it. Paul again states, "Now we know that if the earthly **tent** we **live in** is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked" (2 Cor 5:1-3). If our tent blew down, our heavenly body would remain standing, therefore, I am not what you can see physically, my identity is what you can't see, my soul and spirit. You can only see my house, not what is inside. Now let's look at what is inside these tents of ours. Jesus states, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains **in Me** and **I in him**, he will bear much fruit; **apart from Me** you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain **in Me**, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers" (John 15:5-6). Note that we are **IN** Christ. For every verse that states that Christ is in us there are ten that say we are in Him. I know it doesn't FEEL like you are in Christ, but what does the Bible say? It doesn't matter how you feel, it matters what you ARE. If we are in Christ and He is in heaven, we are in heaven! That is also what Scripture says, "Since, then, **you have been raised with Christ**, set your hearts on things above, **where Christ is seated** at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For **you died**, and **your life is now hidden with Christ** in God. When **Christ, who is your life**, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Put **to death**, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature" (Col 3:1-5). Christ IS YOUR LIFE. Christ cannot have any sin in Himself. Your body is not in Christ, but YOU are. Note also that you died! Romans tells us, "For we know that our old self was **crucified** with Him so that the body of sin might be **done away with**, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—" (Rom 6:6). Your old self was killed and, therefore, cannot be resurrected. One might say God didn't change you, He exchanged you. You died with Christ so that you could be made new: "to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the **new self, created** to be like God in true *righteousness and holiness*" (Eph 4:23-24). You are not a sinner, but a righteous and holy being in Christ. Some people are uncomfortable saying they are a saint because they know their sins. The difference is Christ has forgiven those sins, nailing them to the cross: "He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that *was against* [past tense] us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross" (Col 2:13-14). True, we were born sinful. Being born was our ticket to hell. However, through Christ we can be born again and made new in Him. God does not operate or judge on a performance based system, even though we unrightfully do so ourselves. God looks at us and He sees a saint, even when we sin. We look at ourselves and see the sin and not the saint because that's what the devil wants. He wants you to go by what you feel, not what God says. God's definition of a hypocrite is someone who pretends to be

what they are not. Satan's definition is someone who acts contrary to the way they *feel*. Satan wants us to act on feelings in order to be blinded by truth. We want to keep pretending we are sinners (noun) because we feel like sinners, even though God tells us we are saints. Paul always writes his letters to the "saints" not the "sinners" of Ephesus or Corinth, etc. (Rom 15:31,2 Cor 8:4, 9:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:26; Jude 1:3). Even in the Old Testament before the law was given (Rom 5:13), Job saw himself as blameless, upright and righteous: "let God weigh me in honest scales and He will know that I am blameless—(Job 31:6; see also 9:21). His friends kept telling him, "No, you are a sinner. Repent and be healed." Who did God say was right? "After the LORD had said these things to Job, He said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has'" (Job 42:7). Job knew he was a blameless saint even though he sinned because those sins were not counted against him and they certainly didn't change his identity if they were forgiven. God fixed it so that your old self died. If when you were born again the old self was still there, you would be like Siamese twins with one good and one bad. As the Bible puts it, "a house divided against itself." But as Jesus said, "If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand [remember our bodies are our house]" (Mark 3:25). Ephesians tells us of Christ, "For He chose us **in** him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight" (Eph 1:4). Just as this single page would be pierced if I nailed this book to a wall, we were **IN** Christ before Creation, we were **IN** Him as we walked the road to Calvary, we were **IN** Him as he hung and died on the cross, and we were **IN** Him when He rose from the dead. We don't resurrect our old self, we leave it on the cross. As Romans so beautifully puts it, "We *were* therefore buried **with** Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ *was* raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, **we too** may live a **new** life. If we *have been* united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection. For we know that our old self *was* crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—" (Rom 6:4-6). Note the italicized verb tenses in the above Romans passage. They are all past tense. We are not called to crucify our old self because Christ already did it. We are His workmanship "created" in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:10). I once read an analogy of an electric tool. We are like these tools. Without being plugged into the energy source (God) we become nothing but paperweights. Our identity is tied up in the energy source. Without the juice the tools lose their individuality. It is Christ's life in us that gives us our identity.

Some people think that we are to emulate the life of Christ. You can't! God doesn't even want you to try. God doesn't want to simply "help" YOU lead a better life, He wants to do it ALL for you. Likewise, God didn't "help" you get saved, He did it ALL for you. As Habakkuk said we would be: "guilty men, whose own strength is their god" (Hab 1:11). Most everyone knows the poem "footprints" which illustrates this "independent" attitude. As you recall the poem goes through life showing how there were two sets of footprints in the sand until the times were tough and then there were only one. When asked why God left him alone God said, "Oh, that where I carried you." Though a beautiful poem, it isn't quite theologically accurate. It implies that I can be independent

and only need Christ to carry me when things get too tough for ME to handle. NO! Christ carries us through our entire life.

Romans states, "For if, when we were God's enemies, we were *reconciled to Him through the death of His Son*, **how much more**, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life" (Rom 5:10)! So often we focus so much on the death of Christ in this verse, but that is a mistake. Don't get me wrong, that is important, but let us look closer. We are already saved or reconciled from HELL by His death, but there is "much more." We are also saved by His LIFE. Saved from what? His life through you saves you from bearing the burdens here on earth. Christ's death saved you from hell and His life saves you from Hell on earth. Sometimes we make Jesus the focal point of our life, failing to make Him our LIFE. If God removed His life from this earth, we would all vanish. Somehow we think our flesh is our identity and we try to work independent from Jesus at times. We can't. No matter how hard WE try, WE can't stop sinning and become a "better" Christian. I used to look at my life and think, "when I stop saying bad words, then I will be a good Christian." Then it was, "when I stop losing my temper, then I will be a good Christian." I kept trying to work my way up the ladder. It wasn't until I realized I was a saint and let God work through me that the Gospel of salvation began to change my heart, which in turn changed my actions. Before I was trying to change my actions so that my heart would be changed. It didn't work that way. "You, however, are *controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit*." (Rom 8:9). Again, we are not sinners saved by grace, but saints who have the capability to sin, but long to overcome it.

Bill Gillham, in his book *Lifetime Guarantee*, talks about the minds "green highway" in which our thoughts become entrenched into our brain. Once you think about something, a line is formed in the brain. The more the same thought pattern is used the more the line becomes a trench. Eventually it turns into a path, a road, and finally a green (color of garbage) highway. If the road is not traveled the grass and weeds will begin to cover it up again. For example, the more one practices a foreign language the easier it becomes to recall information. However, if the road isn't traveled on, the information gets harder and harder to pull up. Eventually, if you don't use your foreign language for many years, those thought patterns almost disappear. The point of all this is, that as a saint that sins, one cannot expect to be good all the time because the power of sin still resides in our flesh, but that doesn't change who you are. Just because our flesh is there does not mean one isn't capable of sinning less and less as we become closer to God and refuse to use those old green highways. James says, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). We do have the capability to resist the evil thoughts Satan puts in our mind because Christ is in us and we are in Him. Once a thought enters the brain we have a choice to respond or ignore. Using Christ's strength we can ignore. The more and more we resist these temptations, the more they dissipate. On the flip side, when things of God are put in our thoughts, those good highways become well traveled and lead to a joy filled life. This is why Paul wrote, "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). Every thought should be taken captive

and analyzed to be sure it is in line with Christ-like obedience. If not, resist and ignore it. Again, we can't do this perfectly, however, as Scripture states, "Physical **training** is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, **holding promise** for both the **present life** and the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance (and for this **we labor and strive**), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men" (1 Tim 4:8-10). This type of training gives joy for this present life, but it is something we work at and can only obtain by using Christ's strength in us. However, to use it, one needs to recognize it is there. God wants more than our salvation. He wants us to reap the benefits of all the blessings He has to offer us on this side of heaven. Eternal life is yours already. You are already seated with Christ in heaven, so act like it! We are what we think we are. You believe you are a sinner, you will act like it. Believe you are a saint and you will act like a saint. Think about it, does the law ever motivate you to do good. NO! I don't steal because I am afraid of getting caught. I don't steal because I love Jesus and I don't want to do anything that would displease Him: "*For Christ's love compels us*, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died" (2 Cor 5:14). Likewise, thinking you are a sinner and you NEED to change won't motivate or get you the strength to become better. Paul shows us that the law KILLS, it doesn't build you up and give LIFE: "He has made us competent as *ministers of a New Covenant--not of the letter but of the Spirit*, for the *letter kills*, but the *Spirit gives life*" (2 Cor 3:6). Realizing you are a saint under the New Covenant, and your response to that tremendous gift will be your Gospel motivation and power to change. Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man **remains in Me and I in him**, he **will** bear much fruit; **apart from Me** you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Branches can never PRODUCE fruit, they can only BEAR fruit that is produced by the life of the VINE through them. That is also why we, as saints, are not under the law. Consider the following:

- 1 Tim 1:9 "We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious."
- 1 Cor 9:20 "To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though **I myself am not under the law**), so as to win those under the law."
- Rom 7:6 "But now, by **dying** to what **once bound** us, we **have been released from the law** so that we serve in the **new way of the Spirit**, and not in the old way of the written code."
- Rom 6:14 "For sin shall not be your master, because **you are not under law**, but under grace."
- Gal 5:18 "But if you are led by the Spirit, **you are not under law.**"
- Gal 3:12 "The **law is not based on faith**; on the contrary, The man who does these things will live by them."

- Rom 8:2-3 “Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.”

This is the heart of the Gospel message. Not until we stray from Christ does the law need to be in the life of a saint. But thinking as sinners, we love to beat ourselves with the law saying, “This is the third time I have done this,” or “This sin is too big to be forgiven,” and “I must change before the forgiveness becomes effective.” How many times do we ask Christ to forgive us and then go away feeling guilty because we still FEEL that we are bad. That is like saying to Christ, “Thanks for the forgiveness, but I must do more in order to be forgiven. What You did wasn’t good enough.” Can you see the performance based grade report we give ourselves under the law? Can you see how we lessen the joy available to us in forgiveness? If I am good I FEEL like a saint and if I am bad I FEEL like a sinner, no matter what the Bible says. Again, feelings lie, the Bible does not. One of Satan’s biggest tools is our feelings. If we operated all of our lives using feelings as our guide where would we be? In contrast, think how joy filled we would be using Truth as our guide. The truth is – you a saint! Think about Lot. No matter how hard I try to find “saint-like” qualities in him, I can’t, but 2 Peter 2:7 says he was righteous. I try to make him a saint based upon his performance and how I feel about him, but God declared him righteous based on truth (note this was before the law was given, which is the same as after the law was taken away in the New Covenant). We want to live under Moses, but if we do we will die: “For the law was given through Moses; grace and *truth* came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). Only God’s grace can change a person to be obedient to God’s law. You see we are under the “law of love, written in our hearts” (Hebrews 10:16). Law, motivated by love, is Gospel.

Have you ever wondered why we have both the body and blood of Christ in communion? It was in Christ’s body that we were crucified and then reborn according to Romans: “So, my brothers, you also died to the law **through the body** of Christ, that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God” (Rom 7:4). Through the body of Christ we died to the law and became saints. Hebrews states, “And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb 10:10). We have been made Holy in our Spirit-body (our true identity) through the body of Jesus. What was His blood for? Forgiveness! It is through the necessary shedding of the blood of Christ that we were forgiven, but it was His body that exchanged our identity from sinner to saint: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20).

Remember the testimony of Jesus’ Words about the Temple, “We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another, not made by man’” (Mark 14:58). What was Jesus talking about? His body! After three days God raised up the Temple of God, Jesus Christ. Understanding that we are IN Christ means that His third day resurrection

made us new as well. We are the new Holy of Holies of which Jesus spoke. In the Old Testament the Jews were forgiven when the high priest went behind the veil into the Holy of Holies. If the sinner themselves would have gone behind that veil they would have perished. However, when Christ died that veil was torn in half, allowing free passage into the Holy of Holies. Because of our new identity we are holy and can enter into God's presence. We read in the words of Paul, "What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? **For we are the temple of the living God.** As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people'" (2 Cor 6:16). How can this be? Because we are not only forgiven through Christ's blood, we are also made new through Christ's body.

This is also why at Christ's return it is our bodies that are changed, not our spirit or soul (I Cor 15:51-53). Again, our identity is not the body, but the soul and spirit. When we eject from our body, Satan can no longer give us a hard time because our sin is in our body (our building WE live in).

How does repentance fit into all of this? Repentance is mandatory for regeneration. One must *want* to be changed into a new creation before God will do it. If you love your life, chances are you will not repent because there will be no motivation for change. "The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (John 12:25). As Scofield once said, "Repentance is not an act separate from faith, but saving faith implies that change of mind which is called repentance." There are many Scripture passages which show that repentance was a forerunner to faith. John the Baptist was preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven *is near*" (Mat 3:2). John knew Jesus was coming and, therefore, he was sent to be a "voice calling in the wilderness" to "prepare the way" for Christ (Mark 1:3). As Jesus began His earthly ministry Matthew states, "From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near'" (Mat 4:17). Jesus knew that, "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death" (2 Cor 7:10). Peter, as well, preached to the Jews saying, "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord" (Acts 3:19; see also Acts 17:30). Repentance is a big step because often times it means swallowing pride, and worse yet, admitting you are not lord of your ring. The first step in a joy filled life with Christ is to abandon YOUR life and cling to Jesus as LIFE. We read in Colossians, "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, *who is your life*, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory" (Col 3:1-4). The key is to surrender your life for His: "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me will save it" (Luke 9:24).

Maybe some of you are still thinking, "if we don't have the law what is to keep people from going crazy with sin under the Gospel?" Scripture answers that one as well: "What then? *Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? **May it never be!*** [Why?] But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, *you became obedient* from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having *been freed from sin*, you became

slaves of righteousness [note slaves are controlled by their master] (Rom 6:15,17-18 NAS). Galatians also asks an important question, “I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard” (Gal 3:2)? What is your answer? By believing right? You received the Spirit by faith alone. Verse three then goes on, “Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort” (Gal 3:3)? Do we now then try to add to our faith, good works through the law? Never. We are not under the law. You cannot try to live out your sainthood by yourself, you must simply believe what Christ says and act like it is true.

This would not be complete with out looking at what sin is. We so often think of sin as being a verb, however, Scripture most frequently calls it a “power” and uses it as a NOUN. In light of what we discussed about the law it is interesting to take note of Paul’s words, “The sting of death is sin, and the *power of sin is the law*” (1 Cor 15:56). For many, this may sound like I am going off the deep end, but please hang in there and most importantly, take a moment to pray right now that God would give you an open mind to openly and honestly examine what He says, not what we feel. To find the meaning of anything we go to its origin. For example, if I wanted to know what gay meant, I could look it up in a dictionary and find out that that word originally meant happy. Today, because of sin, it now means homosexual. Sin first appears in Genesis when God warns Cain about sin: “If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; *it* desires to have you, *but you must master it*” (Gen 4:7). The literal translation of the Hebrew says, “you must master HIM.” Did you catch that? God has shown us Satan’s secret. Sin is a noun with personality and thought. Sin is a power that can give Cain thoughts and suggestions, even making Cain think that these thoughts originated with himself (Satan’s biggest trick). You see, God indwells in your spirit (1 Cor 6:17), but sin dwells within your body (Rom 7:23). When we talk about sin it is important to differentiate between sin as a noun (*hamartia*), and sin as a verb (*hamartano*). I am not supporting the false idea that one can say “the devil made me do it,” however, I am saying that we have the power to say “NO” to sin with consistency, though never perfection. To blame sin on the “old man” within me promotes denial and flies in the face of what Romans 6 clearly tells us. To say the “sinful nature” in me causes me to sin suggests that it is normal for a Christian to sin several times a day, sometimes even overtly. This lie comes from the devil, the father of lies, and his secret is exposed when we examine the Scriptures further. We will see that sin is a power as Genesis showed us.

As I have been pointing out, our “old self” was crucified, killed, done away with, and never to be raised up again (Rom 6:6). Satan can’t raise him up and God won’t. What I am about to say is going to shock some of you, but please read on and I will show you that Scripture says it, not me. *Christians* have only one nature, a divine one, not a sinful one. “Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may *participate in the divine nature* and **escape** the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (2 Pet 1:4). I know we feel like we have a sinful nature, but that is Satan’s so far successful secret. Through the power of the Spirit I pray that

secret will be exposed in the following paragraphs. Many of you may be thinking of Romans 7:18 which reads, “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.” The Hebrew word used for “sinful nature” is *sarx*. The NIV translation of the Bible took the liberty of translating that word as “sinful nature” 23 of the 151 times. Only the NIV did this. Others translate it as flesh or body. The point is, “sinful nature” just isn’t there. People often use Romans 7 to show that man has two natures, however, look closely and you will see man only has one, a good one. Is PAUL happy about failing with his good intentions? Does part of him find delight in his screw up? NO! Paul longs to do good and hates the sin (noun) within him. There are two characters represented in Romans, Paul, and sin. That is why he says, “As it is, it is no longer **I myself** who do it, but it is **sin** living in me” (Rom 7:17). He goes on in the next verse to tell us that the power of sin lives in his flesh, though sin is not Paul’s identity. Satan loves to get you to think YOU are the one who comes up with these *sinful* ideas and YOU are responsible for the memory traces within your brain. The fact is, however, SIN is crouching at the door and desires to have you FEEL that YOU screwed up and, if possible, FEEL guilty and unforgiven. In Romans chapters 5-8 the word sin appears 41 times and only in one case is it translated as a verb (*hamartano*) in 6:14: “For *sin* (noun) *shall not be your master*, because you are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we *sin* (verb) because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! (Rom 6:14-15). To understand our victory in Christ, one needs to understand sin as a power and as a noun. Therefore, SIN offers thoughts to your flesh for you to consider. SIN then deceives you by making you think these are YOUR thoughts. Only when you act upon those thoughts do you become accountable. That is Satan’s greatest tool against the saints. Go back and read through Romans 5-8 (in other than NIV) and try and find a place that shows the old man is still alive. It isn’t there.

If the sinful nature is non-existent in a Christian’s life, who is our battle with? Paul writes, “I see another law at work in the members of my **body**, waging war against the law of my **mind** and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members” (Rom 7:23). Here we see our enemy is identified as the “law” or power of sin. Also, this enemy is not living in my **mind** where thoughts are generated, but in my **body**. Therefore, our mind is at war *against* this evil power that God identified back in Genesis 4. Why is your mind *against* this power? Because God has written His law in our mind: “I will put My laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds” (Heb 10:16). You see, your **mind** *wants* to obey God and, therefore, the evil power in your **body** *wars against the law of God* in your **mind** (Rom 7:23). “For who has known the mind of the Lord that He may instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16). Our mind is the good guy and there is not a battle of a good you and a bad you going on, rather a battle of the good you and the evil power of sin (noun) within your body. One might say you have a bad roommate that you can’t get rid of. Does this mean the roommate can MAKE you do things you do not *want* to do? NO!

How can we apply this knowledge to our lives? When the power of sin presents a thought to your mind, the trick is to take that thought captive and

reject those that are not in line with Godly things: “We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor 10:5). You see, you are not dead to sinning, you are only dead to the power of sin over you. That is why Paul said, “sin (noun) shall not be your master” (Rom 6:14). Sin can’t control you because you have the mind of Christ.

Thinking like a saint does not come naturally, one must train themselves to think that way. This is the first step in godly living. Hebrews states, “But solid food is for the mature, who *by constant use* **have trained themselves** to distinguish good from evil” (Heb 5:14). Solid food is for the mature who because of practice, have trained themselves to discern good and evil. You simply need to understand and begin acting and practicing living like a saint, Christ will overcome the power of sin through you for you. Simply put, we cannot make promises ourselves because we do not have the strength to do so. We need to promise by saying, “Lord, by Your grace alone, I know You can keep my promise through me.” But by being trained to think and act like HE is working through us, the power of sin is subdued. Satan is the accuser. He gives you thoughts and then accuses you of originating them. Those thoughts are not yours unless you take them. The more we practice and train ourselves to see Christ in us as saints, the easier it becomes and the more joy-filled our life will be: “Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me-- *put it into practice*. And the God of peace will be with you” (Phil 4:9).

CAUTION! If you think that now you will keep an eye out for these lies of Satan, “take heed, lest ye fall.” Satan wants you to do that. This is putting the cart before the horse. The Bible clearly tells us “The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace” (Rom 8:6). If we set our mind to be tuned into sin filled ideas of sin, Satan has you already defeated. Instead, if you set your mind of things above, sin (noun) is faced with the challenge of getting through those thoughts to deliver his. The more we are trained to think in godly ways and put Christ into every part of our life, music, entertainment, work, family, etc., the more Satan’s thoughts will stick out like a sore thumb. Then, you can take that thought captive, reject it, and stay on track with Christ.

Again, to say we have a sinful nature gives us an excuse to sin, but the Bible does not support that. Paul put it beautifully when he said, “In the same way, count yourselves **dead to sin** but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore *do not let sin reign in your mortal* body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death **to life**; and offer the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace” (Rom 6:11-14). Now put this Scripture to practice. All true knowledge is the outgrowth of obedience. Everything else is just information if not acted upon.

As long as we are on a role of challenging your normal thought process, why don’t we ask you the question of where the New Testament begins? Do you realize that Jesus ministry took place under the LAW, not grace. Jesus came to bring a New Covenant of grace, but His ministry only led up to it, it wasn’t under it. Therefore, the four Gospels are technically under law or Old Covenant times. Pentecost will usher in the New Testament era in Acts 2. This is

vital in properly understanding many portions of Scripture as recorded in the Gospels.

I do believe the Bible is inspired in its entirety. However, we must also remember that things like chapter breaks and verse numberings are not. Likewise, the Old/New Testament break is also man made. Luke records Jesus' words, "In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the New Covenant in My blood, which is *poured out* for you'" (Luke 22:20). The word "covenant" and "testament" are the same Hebrew word and, therefore, Jesus tells us when the New Covenant would begin -- with the pouring out of His blood. The New Covenant could not have stood under the law any more than Moses basket could have stayed afloat under the law. When Jesus began His ministry He said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Mat 4:17). Note that He said it was "near" not "here." God's Holy Spirit, which gives faith, had not yet been poured out upon the earth. Many people would give almost anything to have the chance to go back and walk with Christ as the disciples did. Let me tell you, this is nothing to wish for because you would have been just as blind as they were without the outpouring of the Spirit. We now live in an era much greater than the disciples and I believe that Scripture will also show this.

To illustrate that Jesus ministry was under the law I would like to point out only a small portion of many examples. You can read the Gospels and find the rest yourself, however, do not take me as saying that the Gospels are not important. They are just as important as the rest of the Law and Prophets that testify of Christ, and they also have Grace mixed with their law. However, once the Gospels are over, the New Covenant is ushered in and Grace abounds. Let us compare Matthew who recorded Jesus Words, "For **if** you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But **if you do not** forgive men their sins, your Father will *not* forgive your sins" (Mat 6:14-15). Do you see how Christ's ministry was under law? Does this sound like the Gospel you learned about: If you forgive, Christ's death is effective, if not, it isn't either? Now look what happens after the New Covenant is ushered in, "**When** you were *dead in your sins* and in the uncircumcision of your sinful [flesh, *sarx*], God *made you alive with Christ*. He *forgave us all our sins*, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that **was against us** and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross" (Col 2:13-14). Now we are forgiven by faith, not by our performance. The Bible isn't contradicting itself here, it simply is recording history under two types of covenants. Jesus' entire ministry was trying to bring people to repent and leave them no place to look but the cross. He was showing them over and over that the law was death for them and there was no way out except the cross. Look at Matthew 15 when Jesus talked to the Gentile woman and refused to give her Gospel (at first): "He replied, 'It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs'" (Mat 15:26). Would any of us say that to someone who was willing to receive Christ today? During Old Covenant times, the Gospel was for the Jews only. That is why Christ came, to open the doors for all believers, but that time had not yet come here in Matthew. In Matthew 5 we read, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Mat 5:6). To be righteous means to be perfect. Once we go past Pentecost we then read, "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that

in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21). In the very next verse of Matthew we read, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy” (Mat 5:7). Again, if I don’t show mercy to someone, I myself will not be given mercy. I sure hope that I have shown enough to receive enough! But what happens after Pentecost: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great *mercy* He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet 1:3). Praise God that He gave us mercy without any merit of our own. Matthew continues, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God” (Mat 5:9). But Galatians shows we are already sons of God, “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:26). Finally, Matthew culminates the point of his message by saying, “For I tell you that unless your righteousness *surpasses* that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell” (Mat 5:20-22). Note the present tense form of those verbs. Now who could stand under that? Jesus was simply leading them up to the point where He could show the people their utter despair and need for Him. Later Jesus would throw them a life-raft in the words, “It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption” (1 Cor 1:30). This sermon was not for us today, it was for those people under the Old Covenant. That is why Jesus said, “Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny” (Mat 5:25-26). People, Jesus wasn’t talking about civil court matters here, that Judge was Christ. Jesus clearly showed them that the only way to heaven under their current system was to, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mat 5:48). They must have walked away from that sermon wondering if there was any hope. To be perfect meant to be blameless. God provided that hope on the cross and then stated, “We proclaim *Him*, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may *present everyone perfect in Christ*” (Col 1:28).

This does not mean the law is bad and has no purpose today for unbelievers and those that stray. As Timothy states, “We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels” (1 Tim 1:8-9). Hebrews tells us the law is written in our minds (Heb 10:16). But what is that for us as Christians? Romans tell us, “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman *has fulfilled the law*. The commandments, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not covet,’ and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’. Love does no harm to its neighbor. *Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law*” (Rom 13:8-10). Jesus said there were two main laws: 1) Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and

2) Love your neighbor as yourself. Then He said, “All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Mat 22:40). Today, we are under the law of love.

I believe this whole topic is more clear when we also look at the twelve apostles. Which twelve? THE twelve! When Judas hung himself (before Pentecost), Peter decided to replace him so they cast lots and the lot fell on Matthias. Isn't it interesting that this is the only time we ever hear the name Matthias. We know nothing about him, his family or his ministry. Not another word was said and he is never mentioned by anyone again. Why? Well one thing we know about Peter is that he was always running ahead of the game and doing things his way. I tend to believe it was Peter's idea to replace Judas then, not Gods. Matthias was man's choice. They narrowed the choices down and then cast lots before the Holy Spirit had been given. But I think God's choice was Paul. Look what God even said, “But the Lord said to Ananias, ‘Go! This man is **My chosen instrument** to carry My name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel” (Acts 9:15). After all, Paul is afterward called an apostle over 17 times, yet we never hear of Matthias again. And what a choice God made. Isn't it interesting that we know for certain that Paul wrote at least 13 of the 23 New Testament books (after John). When we examine the life of Paul, I believe there is a good reason for this.

In 2 Corinthians 12 Paul wrote, “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know--God knows. And I know that this man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows--was caught up to *paradise*. He heard *inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell*” (2 Cor 12:2-4). Later we see that this man is Paul and he, perhaps out of humility, used third person language to describe himself. Have you ever wondered what Lazarus experienced after being brought back from the dead? I have! Well, perhaps Paul could tell you. It is interesting that if we go back 14 years to when Paul said this happened, guess where Paul is? Lystra! It is very possible that Paul was dead and brought back to life and during that period experienced what he mentioned in Corinthians. In Lystra this happened to Paul: “Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, *thinking he was dead*. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The *next day* he and Barnabas left for Derbe” (Acts 14:19-20). Let me tell you, these Jews were not throwing pebbles at Paul, but baseball size and larger stones. These Jews weren't just a little upset either, they were indignant. They even drug him out of the city after he was supposed dead. The disciples gathered or “stood” around him and according to the text, did nothing. I don't know if you have ever been hurt or banged up before, but one thing I can tell you, you aren't going anywhere fast (if at all) the next day. Paul then “got up” or “rose” before going back to his killers. Can you imagine what the stoners must have thought? Paul then went 30 miles to Derbe the very next day. Again, I can't say for sure, but I think Paul was raised from the dead like Eutychus was (Acts 20:9). After all, Paul was God's chosen servant.

We also see that Paul was the only disciple personally tutored by Christ after the cross, and even this was “one on one” out in the Arabian desert.

Fourteen years later Paul was called to preach the “true faith” (1 Tim 2:7) to the Gentiles. Paul even admits that his knowledge (that he received from the ASCENDED Lord) did not come from the other apostles. In fact Paul even says, “those men added nothing to my message” (Gal 2:6). Paul had a unique experience that none of the other apostles had: he had been taught openly (not in parables) by the ascended Christ. Add to this as well, that Paul was listening and seeing with open eyes and ears. When the disciples were with Jesus they were continually asking Him to repeat and explain, and even then they still did not understand. After the Holy Spirit came, however, their eyes were opened and they were for the most part (not completely) left to recall what Christ had said. Paul had the Holy Spirit and was taught not by the disciples, but by Christ. In fact, three years went by before he even met the disciples in Jerusalem, and even then he did not see them all. When Paul had his revelation where he was “caught up” to paradise he heard words that were not allowed to be shared yet. Bill Gillham has written a fantastic book called, *What God Wishes Christians knew about Christianity*. Much of what we have been talking about in this “saint or sinner” section has come from his book. He writes, “Could it be that God commanded Paul to share the secret revelation to the churches before his martyrdom? I’m speculating that this may be the case because Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians have much to say about the glorious truths of our identity in Christ. The first four chapters of Ephesians, as well as many verses in Galatians, Philippians, and Colossians, address this. On the other hand, this topic is treated much more lightly, if at all, in Paul’s earlier writings (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans). The fact that no other New Testament scribes record the truths of our new identity in Christ this extensively makes me suspect that they were revealed more completely to Paul. . . . Sometimes it can get lonely at the top. This is especially true when you feel like you’re the only one who is saying or doing something a particular way and you are encountering opposition from those who are ostensibly reading from the same page as you. Did Paul begin to have some doubts about whether his message needed some tweaking? Perhaps so. Human reinforcement is encouraging. God designed the body of Christ this way. The Scriptures say, ‘Then after an interval of fourteen years I [Paul] went up again to Jerusalem. . . . And it was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain (Gal 2:1-2)’” (pp. 166-167). Paul wrote, “But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the Old Covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away” (2 Cor 3:14). Perhaps Paul was “better versed” in the deeper truths of Scripture because he was trained when that veil was completely removed. The other 11 disciples had been trained by Christ during His ministry under the law. So when we review Paul’s life we see he was converted, spent three years with Jesus in the desert, went and saw Peter and James, then 14 years later went to the Gentiles. But during these times Paul was able to say that the apostles contributed nothing to his message (Gal 2:6). This, plus his “revelation” may have meant that God had given Paul a message that unveiled the Gospel not only to the Gentiles, but to the whole world.

Even the other disciples took note of Paul's message saying, "He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain *some things that are hard to understand*, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction" (2 Pet 3:16). Peter shows us that Paul's teachings were hard to understand, but more importantly, if one does not take note of them or distorts them, it is to our own demise. We become unstable and ignorant in all of Scripture because Paul's truth is foundational for your Christian identity as a saint.

Exo 25:23 Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 24 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. 25 And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. 26 And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. 27 Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. 28 And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. 29 And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. 30 And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me always.

This table is called the table of shewbread . It is the first time the word table (*shulchan*) is mentioned and the very word means "meal." The table was made out of shittim or acacia wood, but was overlaid with pure gold. Likewise the poles that were used to carry it were made in exactly the same manner. All the plates, dishes, pitchers and bowls were solid gold. Once finished, the table was set and the bread of the Presence was put on it so that it was ready. But ready for what?

When we examine other uses of the word "table" in Scripture we see a common unifying theme running throughout. In 1 Corinthians we read, "And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor 11:24). These words were spoken when Christ and His disciples were eating the Last Supper at the table in an upper room. The purpose. . .to remember Jesus and to have communion with God. This theme is further evidenced in 1 Corinthians 10: "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons" (1 Cor 10:21). Here we see that eating at the Lord's table, or that of demons, showed acceptance and fellowship with the owner of the table. In John 12:1-3 we see a meal was prepared to honor Jesus. In Luke 22:26-30 we see that there is a meal prepared for the saints, "For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by Me in My trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as My Father conferred one on Me, so that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:27-30). Perhaps the most significant is recorded by John: "Then the angel said to me,

‘Write: “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!”’ And he added, ‘These are the true words of God’” (Rev 19:9). All these references show one’s acceptance and fellowship just as today, we invite to our table only those whom we accept. Likewise the table of shewbread represented our acceptance and communion with God, the Bread of life.

The table is first made of shittim wood, representing humanity, and the gold which covers the wood represents the deity. Both man and God meet to have fellowship together at this table. The incorruptible gold would protect the once corruptible wood. Being covered in gold removes all oxygen and any other sources of deterioration from the wood and it could be said is now eternal. Being covered in Christ, God has given us the gift of eternal life.

Around the table was a rim to keep any bread from falling off. It is interesting to see that the measurements were a “handbreadth” wide almost personifying the rim into a pair of hands holding the bread on the table. This should bring to mind Jesus’ words, “My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all ; no one can snatch them out of My Father’s hand” (John 10:27-29).

The bread that was to be put on this table was to remain there continually. Leviticus gives us additional details about this bread: “Take fine flour and bake twelve loaves of bread, using two-tenths of an ephah for each loaf. Set them in *two rows, six in each row*, on the table of pure gold before the LORD. *Along each row put some pure incense* as a memorial portion to represent the bread and to be an offering made to the LORD by fire. This bread is to be set out before the LORD *regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath*, on behalf of the Israelites, as a lasting covenant. It belongs to Aaron and his sons, who are to eat it in a holy place, because it is a most holy part of their regular share of the offerings made to the LORD by fire” (Lev 24:5-9). A few things to note. There were 12 loaves of bread, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel, which represent all of God’s chosen people, even the Gentiles of today (Rom 11). The bread was replaced with fresh loaves every Sabbath when the old ones were eaten by the priests, the model of the holy, redeemed man. The bread was a memorial of an EVERLASTING covenant of communion with God through the grace of Jesus Christ. The bread had no yeast or corruption because it symbolizes Jesus Christ: “Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life’” (John 6:35). The bread was made from 2/10 of an ephah, which is about four quarts of grain. Back in chapter 16:36 we saw that the Israelites gathered 1/10 of an ephah of manna daily. This manna was Christ (John 6) and as the Psalmist tells us, “The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance (Psa 16:5). The real portion wasn’t just bread, but the Lord was the portion. Paul wrote, “Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf” (1 Cor 10:17). With the shewbread having 2/10 of an ephah we, therefore, see that it was a double portion offered to the *firstborn*. It is no accident that Jesus is called just that, “For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the *firstborn* among many brothers” (Rom 8:29). In fact, the manna was to show the children of Israel the “glory of God” (Exo 16:7). Here we are seeing a double portion of that glory and we

(represented by the priests) have access to that bread of life only after passing through the brazen altar of sacrifice, or as it represented, Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The priests ate the bread on the Sabbath or seventh day, just as we, too, will eat in a new way, the bread of life at the glorious banquet of our wedding with the Lamb (Rev 19) on our seventh day of rest (Heb 4, see Revelation: All of God's Word Revealed for a further explanation on our seventh day rest). However, only those made perfect could eat this bread: "No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any defect is to come near to present the offerings made to the LORD by fire. If he has a defect; he must not come near to offer the food of his God" (Lev 21:21). This is also why only those cleansed by the blood of Christ are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb. Hebrews tells us, "Because by one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (Heb 10:14). Only a perfect priest could make us perfect and that priest was also Jesus Christ, "For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever" (Heb 7:28).

There was incense offered alongside the bread as well. Paul wrote, "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him" (2 Cor 2:14). Did you catch that? We are the fragrance of Christ! When we come into contact with people, do you leave them with the pleasing aroma of Christ? God shares His beauty and majesty through us, His fragrant incense. But when we leave a room with the stench of materialism, pride, anger, or self indulgence, are we Christ's fragrant aroma? Something to think about.

Exo 25:31 And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. 32 And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: 33 Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. 34 And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. 35 And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. 36 Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold.

Although the size of the lampstand or candlestick is not given, Josephus records that it stood five feet tall and had its branches sticking out 2 feet on either side. The term "candlestick" is not accurate as they were not candles, but rather oil was what was burned. This great lampstand was made of one talent (about 75 pounds) of pure hammered gold. With today's standards that would cost about \$30,000 and it wasn't even an antique.

This lampstand stood in the Holy place, opposite the table of shewbread and lighted this section of the Tabernacle. Once more, one could not

see or walk in this light until first passing through the outer court with a sacrifice at the brazen altar . Likewise, we cannot see, nor can we walk in Christ's light until we first go through the cross and accept the gift of forgiveness shed on that tree. Only then do we receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts to light the way of our daily lives and have access to Holy Communion with Jesus (Table of shewbread), and bring acceptable prayers to the Father (altar of incense). Indeed without the lampstand , none of the other glorious parts of Christ would be seen.

The meaning of this lampstand is clear as it is given to us in Revelation. Keep in mind everything in the Tabernacle was a model of what was in heaven. John tells us, "There before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. . . Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. *These are the seven spirits of God*" (Rev 4:2-5). At first glance one may wonder why seven spirits of God when there is only one Holy Spirit. The Bible gives us the answer. The Holy Spirit is one, but has seven characteristics. When Jesus was baptized the Holy Spirit came upon Him in the form of a dove. Isaiah foretold of this event in these words: "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from His roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD [1] will rest on Him-- the Spirit of wisdom [2] and of understanding,[3] the Spirit of counsel [4] and of power [5], the Spirit of knowledge [6] and of the fear of the LORD [7]" (Isa 11:1-2). Here we see a seven attributes given to the one Holy Spirit, a perfect number showing the completeness of the Spirit. Now we have a beautiful picture of the Spirit in the lampstand. The main stump of the lampstand was Jesus Christ who is one with the "Spirit of the Lord" while three other attributes of the Spirit are given on either side of the main stem. This is why verse 36 said the buds and branches were of one piece with the lampstand.

Still not convinced Jesus is the main branch of the lampstand , being one with the Holy Spirit? Look at these four verses:

- Jer 23:5 "'The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will raise up to David a righteous *Branch*, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.'"
- Jer 33:15 "In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; He will do what is just and right in the land."
- Zec 3:8 "Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring My servant, the Branch."
- Isa 4:2 "In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel."
- John 15:1-5 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the gardener. . . Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a

man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.”

In Numbers 17 we see that Aaron’s staff budded into an almond tree and here the lampstand has almond buds on it as well. God used the almond branch to identify or choose His servant. Here we have Divine acceptance of Jesus Christ just as the Father said when that “stump of Jesse” began His ministry: “And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased’” (Mat 3:17). These almond buds also give testimony to the fruit produced by the tree. The lampstand as the Holy Spirit produces fruit, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal 5:22-23). Also, as John 15 showed us we, too, are seen in this lampstand as the branches that bear fruit through the vine. John the Baptist warned us to “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance” (Luke 3:8). Matthew said, “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit” (Mat 12:33). As was Aaron, God’s chosen servants are blessed by the fruit they bear.

Exo 25:37 And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. 38 And the tongs thereof, and the snuffdishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. 39 Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. 40 And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.

The lampstands used wick trimmers and were therefore fueled by oil. While candles burn out, oil lamps burn continuously. Leviticus 24:2 tells us that the lampstands were never to go out but were to be ever lighting the way. Once more we see the picture that the Holy Spirit burns through Jesus Christ to give light to the world. “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you *forever*--the Spirit of truth. *The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him.* But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17). Note that as the light of the lampstands burned continuously, the Holy Spirit will be within us forever. As one could not see the shewbread or altar of incense without first going past the brazen altar, the world cannot see the Holy Spirit or even know Him without first knowing Jesus Christ. Matthew 5:14 tells us that we are “the light of the world.” How can this be? Only by knowing and seeing Jesus Christ, who then shines through us, that others in the world may see Him as well. Because we are one in Christ (Gal 3:28), this lampstand (More specifically, the almond shaped cups that held the oil) also bears witness to all the saints in Christ Jesus as we bear His light through the Holy Spirit who indwells in us forever. For Paul tells us, “be filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18) and in so doing we produce good fruit.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 25

- 1) What was the first offering God asked the Israelites to give?
- 2) What was the Israelites response to God's call for an offering?
- 3) What were the gifts of the Israelites used for?
- 4) What metal is mentioned most in the Bible?
- 5) What does silver represent in Scripture? Give Scripture to support this.
- 6) What does gold represent? Give Scripture to support this.
- 7) What does Bronze represent? Give Scripture to support this.
- 8) What three colors were used for the Tabernacle?
- 9) What does each of these three colors represent? Support with Scripture.
- 10) What does fine linen represent? Give Scripture to support this.
- 11) What four coverings would go over the Tabernacle? What does each one represent?
- 12) What two goats are discussed in Scripture?
- 13) Describe what happened to the Scapegoat.
- 14) What does goat hair represent?
- 15) What does shittim or acacia wood represent?
- 16) What do precious stones represent? Give Scripture to support this.
- 17) What did onyx stones represent? How does this fit with the manna God gave the Israelites? How do onyx stones fit with the Garden of Eden?
- 18) What is the Tabernacle today?
- 19) Describe the ark of the covenant. What were its dimensions? What was inside of it?
- 20) What are cherubim? Where were they in the Tabernacle? Why?
- 21) Where else are cherubim seen in the Bible? What faces did they have?
- 22) What are three "arks" seen in the Bible?
- 23) Read Romans 17:16-17. If this were a play, how many characters would be needed?
- 24) Read Romans 6:6. Who or what died? How does this fit in your life?
- 25) Read Ephesians 4:23-24. What did God make new? How does this fit in your life? How does this fit with Romans 6:6?
- 26) According to Scripture, are you a saint or sinner? (You must give Scripture).
- 27) Read 1 Timothy 4:8-10. Explain how this fits in your life.
- 28) Why is both the body and blood represented in communion?
- 29) If we are not under the law, why not sin?
- 30) What is the power of sin?
- 31) Give two different word forms for "sin." What is the difference?
- 32) Can we blame sin on our "sinful nature?" Why or why not?
- 33) How does the NIV translate "sinful flesh?" Does any other translation do this? What is the difference?
- 34) What is wrong with watching for Satan's thoughts he puts into our minds?
- 35) Where does the New Testament really begin? Why?

- 36) Matthew 5 tells of the beatitudes. Compare 5 sections with post-cross Scripture verses that tell us the same result, but for different reasons.
- 37) Are the beatitudes Gospel or Law orientated?
- 38) Was Jesus' ministry under the Law or the Gospel?
- 39) What is the fulfillment of the law?
- 40) How many books of the New Testament did Paul write? Why do you suppose he wrote so many?
- 41) Who is Matthias? What do we know about him?
- 42) What happened 14 years before the events of Acts 14:19-20?
- 43) What did the disciples say of Paul's teachings?
- 44) What does the word "shewbread" mean?
- 45) What is the theme of "table" in the Scriptures?
- 46) What was built around the table on the table of shewbread ? What did it do?
- 47) How many loaves of bread were on the table of shewbread ? Why? How much grain was used to make each loaf? What does this represent?
- 48) How big did Josephus say the lampstands were?
- 49) What did the lampstand represent? What did each branch represent?

Exodus Chapter 26

Exo 26:1 Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them. 2 The length of one curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and every one of the curtains shall have one measure. 3 The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and other five curtains shall be coupled one to another. 4 And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of another curtain, in the coupling of the second. 5 Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is in the coupling of the second; that the loops may take hold one of another. 6 And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches: and it shall be one tabernacle.

The Tabernacle building itself was made with ten curtains beautifully designed with blue purple and scarlet sewn together. As we discussed in 25:4, blue was the color of the sky and represented God's throne. Red was the color of the blood shed for our sins and purple was the color of royalty. Cherubim were embroidered into the white linen showing these curtains were to be near the ark of the covenant, the symbol of God's heavenly throne.

All ten curtains were to be of the same size, about 42 feet long by 6 feet wide. This showed the perfection and unity of the heavenly kingdom. The sections were connected together in two sets of five by the edge of the curtain, which had fifty loops on each side with gold clasps much like that of a shower curtain. The curtains were fastened together to make a "unit," or one body out of two sections. The two would fit together perfectly as the bride is made for the bridegroom, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready" (Rev 19:7). We see the importance of this in Corinthians, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ Himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! . . . But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with Him in spirit" (1 Cor 6:15-17).

Though these curtains were beautiful, unless one first went past the altar of sacrifice, washed his feet in the basin and had fellowship with God at the altar of incense and the table of shewbread, you would never see it. Anyone standing on the outside would only see a white linen fence surrounding the Tabernacle and the drab badger skin covering (among other coverings that went on top of this linen curtain), which we will discuss further in other sections. Of course, the outsider represents a sinner without Christ. The priest on the inside is the saint made righteous by the sacrifice of Christ (brazen altar), washed in the Word (basin), and walking in Christ (inner area of the Tabernacle called the Most Holy Place). Both the man on the outside and the one on the inside can see Christ, but their view of Him is much different. One only sees the drab

unattractive badger skins of His humanity and the other beholds the beauty of His Divine being. Isaiah wrote of Christ's badger like humanity, "He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him" (Isa 53:2). Paul described this paradox when he wrote, "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things" (1 Cor 2:14-15). How true this has proven in my life. Once Christ came into my heart He gave me new eyes that could see things that were hidden before. Right and wrong have become so clear and I can see God's hand in my daily life. Though now we see as looking through a cloudy glass, once we enter through the Door (Christ) our vision becomes 20/20.

Exo 26:7 And thou shalt make curtains of goats' hair to be a covering upon the tabernacle: eleven curtains shalt thou make. 8 The length of one curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and the eleven curtains shall be all of one measure. 9 And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shalt double the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tabernacle. 10 And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain that is outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second. 11 And thou shalt make fifty taches of brass, and put the taches into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. 12 And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the backside of the tabernacle. 13 And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, it shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it.

The first six verses of this chapter described the linen curtain which was draped over both the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. From the inside it could be seen in all of its beauty. However, verses 7-13 show a curtain of goat hair that was draped over the beautiful linen curtain, obstructing the majesty of God's presence from those on the outside.

There were eleven even sized pieces sewn together for the goat hair curtain. The linen curtain consisted of ten pieces each 28 cubits long by 4 cubits wide. The goat hair curtain was made of eleven pieces, each 30 cubits long by 4 cubits wide. According to verse thirteen, the purpose of a larger curtain was to adequately cover the linen curtain which was not to be seen from the outside.

As discussed in 25:4, the goat hair was symbolic of Christ's righteous sacrifice making Him our scapegoat. There were two goats mentioned in connection with God's people and both of them were used as sacrificial sin offerings. The main offering took place once each year on the Day of Atonement when the priests would lay their hands on the goat to transfer the sins of the people onto that goat. Once that was done, the goat was led out into the wilderness to die, removing the sins from the community and putting the sinful nature to death. What a glorious picture of the transference of our guilt upon the

Lord Jesus. Paul wrote, “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21). Hebrews testifies of this truth as well, “Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him” (Heb 9:28). The glory of the throne can only be seen through being accepted through Christ, our scape-goat.

Exo 26:14 And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering above of badgers' skins. 15 And thou shalt make boards for the tabernacle of shittim wood standing up. 16 Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half shall be the breadth of one board. 17 Two tenons shall there be in one board, set in order one against another: thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle. 18 And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards on the south side southward. 19 And thou shalt make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons. 20 And for the second side of the tabernacle on the north side there shall be twenty boards: 21 And their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. 22 And for the sides of the tabernacle westward thou shalt make six boards. 23 And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides. 24 And they shall be coupled together beneath, and they shall be coupled together above the head of it unto one ring: thus shall it be for them both; they shall be for the two corners. 25 And they shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.

The third covering was that of red ram skins. As also discussed in 25:4, this showed God’s bloody, but redeeming sacrifice, just as the curtain of goat hair did. The ram was used as a picture of Christ even before the Tabernacle came to exist when God substituted the ram in place of Isaac on Mount Moriah. This was a clear picture of Christ as Solomon’s Temple would be built on this very spot hundreds of years later. In fact, Abraham even named the place *Jehovah-jireh*, meaning the Lord will provide a substitute. Therefore, we again see God as a scapegoat or substitute to pay for our sins.

It may be worth the time to go back and look at the first time skins are mentioned in Scripture in Genesis. When Adam and Eve sinned they tried to cover themselves with fig leaves and hid from God. The fig leaves, however, could not do an adequate job of covering their sinfulness so God killed an animal as a blood sacrifice to cover their sins with animal skins. Though the Bible does not say what animal God had killed, it would not surprise me if it wasn’t a ram to foreshadow the sacrifice nearly four thousand years later that covers our sinfulness today. God had killed an animal in place of Adam and that bloodshed brought acceptance, as did the later sacrificial rams in the Tabernacle. But none of them were good enough for eternity, only God’s Son would do: “[Christ] did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on

those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God” (Heb 9:12-14).

On top of the red ram skins were the water proof hides of sea cows. King James says badger skins, but sea cows or porpoise seems to be a better rendering. Either one would have been a drab and dull gray, which was the only visible covering from anyone on the outside. We already discussed how this is a picture of Christ from those on the outside, only after entering through the sacrifice and entering the Most Holy Place can His true beauty be seen (Isa 53:2-3). It was this covering that would receive the intense heat, the occasional rain and the sand blasting wind of the desert. As representative of Christ’s human form, we see that Jesus endured the storms of human envy and jealousy as people spit on Him, beat Him, pulled out His beard, mocked Him, scourged Him, and rejected Him as they nailed His hands and feet to the cross. While gazing on the bloody unattractive, beaten body, no one would have guessed the Divine beauty underneath.

Interestingly, the Israelites would have had no problems getting sea cow leather while they were in Egypt near the Nile and Red Sea. However, now they were in the middle of the desert away from the waters. The only place they could have gotten this valuable leather was from plundering the Egyptians when they left. The skins were valuable because they were used for a very important article of clothing. Though NIV states only leather the NASB translation is more accurate. The Hebrew word here in Exodus is *tachash* and is the same word used in Ezekiel: “I also clothed you with embroidered cloth, and put sandals of *porpoise skin on your feet*; and I wrapped you with fine linen and covered you with silk” (Ezek 16:10 NASB). Shoes would be of utmost importance as you walk through the desert for 40 years. God was asking them to surrender their shoes to Him for a drab curtain. One can imagine a lot of complaints, but none are recorded. Instead, they seemed to have given joyfully and God blessed them in return: “Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years” (Deu 8:4). Why didn’t their feet swell. God never let their shoes wear out, “During the forty years that I led you through the desert, your clothes did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet” (Deu 29:5). As we read in Philippians, “And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:19). Why do we ever doubt?

Verse 15 introduces us to the frames of the Tabernacle. Each frame was to be about 15 feet long by 2 ¼ feet wide. The two projections in verse 16 were two extensions at the end of each board that were used to stick into a 100 pound silver base that kept the board upright. Each board had two projections and two, one hundred pound bases making a very sturdy wall of 15 feet tall. The entire Tabernacle would use 100 silver bases as we see later on in Exodus 38:27. At 100 pounds each, this comes to five tons of silver used simply in the foundation of this building. The gold plated boards that were inserted into the holes of these silver bases were bound to one another by five gold plated bars that ran the length of the wall. The silver foundation seemed to out-proportion the rest of the Tabernacle. This is appropriated when we remember that the

silver speaks of Christ's blood, the very foundation of our Christian faith. In Exodus 30:11-15 we saw the Israelites needed to pay a half shekel (less than 35 cents) as an offering for ATONEMENT. In Exodus 38:25-27 we see that all of this silver used in this foundation came from the ½ shekel of atonement money from each of the Israelites. Every time the Israelites saw this foundation they would have remembered that this was their price of atonement. Each individual should have also understood that it pointed to the Messiah, "For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life" (Lev 17:11). In any case, the silver does indeed represent the blood of our sacrifice, Jesus Christ. Hebrews states, "Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins" (Heb 9:22). We read in Acts, "Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). I point this out because we see that the church belongs to God since He bought it with His blood. Whose blood? God's blood! Jesus, therefore, is God, contrary to what many critics try to say. Peter also tells us that this silver only represented Christ's blood for our atonement, but we needed the real blood, not silver, "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Pet 1:18-19). We know this blood was *precious* not only because of its redeeming qualities, but as we just read in Acts, it was the very blood of GOD. Everything depended upon this blood, which is the foundation of the church today, "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 3:11).

Another interesting point to make lies in the fact that each individual Israelite had to bring his own half shekel of silver. There was no way to have atonement through another's silver. Likewise, Christ is for the individual. One cannot get through the gates of heaven using someone else's faith. Also, God views each man's sin the same. Whether rich or poor, you were to bring one half shekel as the price of atonement. The same price would pay for everyone's sin, no matter how big or how small, the blood of Christ covers it all.

Exo 26:26 And thou shalt make bars of shittim wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, 27 And five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the two sides westward. 28 And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall reach from end to end. 29 And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold. 30 And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount.

The crossbars were used for support of the walls, which we will discuss in chapter 27. The frames were overlaid with gold and put through gold rings, both showing the deity and holiness of God through the gold as shown in chapter 25.

There were no crossbars mentioned on the eastern side because that side was broken up into sections and was the only entrance to the Tabernacle. Again, that entrance or doorway was Jesus, the way into heaven, the entrance of peace, beauty, love and forgiveness. Only through Him can one enter God's presence.

Even these instructions were shown to Moses earlier on Mount Sinai (Heb 8:5; Ex 25:1-9) to be sure that every detail was perfect, because it was a representation of heaven. This Tabernacle would be the most comprehensive revelation of Jesus Christ in physical form throughout the Old Testament. Every detail of the Tabernacle would point to Christ and His Divine, redemptive work. This 75 foot wide and 150 foot long rectangular structure was enclosed by a 7 ½ foot fence on three sides. Only through the eastern side could one enter the 30 foot long gate and go into the outer court of God. There were exactly seven pieces of furniture to speak of Christ's perfection. These pieces of furniture were even laid out in the form of a cross from an aerial view. No detail would be missed in this heavenly blueprint on earth.

Exo 26:31 And thou shalt make a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made: 32 And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver. 33 And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy. 34 And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. 35 And thou shalt set the table without the vail, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side. 36 And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework. 37 And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, and their hooks shall be of gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them.

The first two verses merely repeat what was said at the beginning of this chapter, however, there was the added detail of the four silver bases. Mention is made of the gold hooks, representing Christ's deity and kingship, along with the wood posts, which represent His humanity, and the silver bases, which represent His redeeming qualities. We discussed in 25:4 how silver is often used in Scripture to show redemption (Ex 30:12-15, Zech 11:12-13), and even more specifically, Christ's blood.

This section gives a layout of the Tabernacle in part. The curtain was to be placed in front of the ark of the Testimony to hide it from all but the priest, who represented the redeemed man. Only God's chosen servants who had been blameless and "without sin" could enter His presence. The curtain was also to separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Again, this was to keep anyone from dying, because if they gazed upon God's throne in a sinful state they would be struck dead. Only the blood of Jesus could change this sinful state. Today, we stand before God not as sinners, but as saints. The curtain was

torn at the death of Christ allowing all who desire to know God to enter freely through His blood. Now, God's Most Holy Place is the body of every believer. "For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people'" (2 Cor 6:16). The word used here for "Temple" is the same word used for the Most Holy Place. When people see you, are they seeing into the very eyes of God? Do they see Christ in you through your actions and love, or do they see someone else? When people gaze upon us they are to see the throne of God's grace.

The atonement cover was to be placed on top of the ark. It was here that the priest would once a year (Day of Atonement) enter into the Most Holy Place and sprinkle the blood of the sacrificial animal upon this cover (Lev 16:15). This was the most holy of all pieces in the Most Holy Place, and the cherubim rested above it (Heb 9:5). We read in Leviticus, "[Aaron] is to put the incense on the fire before the LORD, and the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover above the Testimony, so that he will not die" (Lev 16:13). Even for the priest to look upon this cover meant death, because it was the holy presence of God.

The position of the shewbread table and the lampstands is also significant. After going through the brazen altar where the sacrifice was made (representing Jesus Christ), one could enter the Holy Place and see these articles, however, this was not where God's ultimate presence resided. We will discuss the meaning of these two articles in greater detail later, but for now know that the shewbread table represents communion with God and the lampstands represent Jesus' light and the Holy Spirit. One other article not mentioned in this section is the altar of incense which was directly in front of the curtain before entering the Most Holy Place. The altar of incense is representative of prayer. The point of this placement was to show that one cannot share in God's most intimate presence without first walking in the light of the Word, being accepted by, and communing with, the Word and fervent prayer. Though one can be a Christian and be saved, he may not be experiencing the full joy God wants him to have while he remains on earth. That joy can only be obtained by residing in God's presence, or should I say, realizing that we do and then acting on it. These will all be discussed further in later chapters.

The curtain has been discussed earlier so we will not go over that again, however, it is worth noting the difference in the bases. While the Tabernacle is surrounded with silver bases holding up the outer curtain, here at in the Most Holy Place, the bases are bronze. We see that the closer we get to the throne of God the more precious the metals become. Therefore, it should be no surprise to see that in the Most Holy Place everything is gold. Likewise the furnishings are all bronze in the outer court, but either pure gold or overlaid with gold the closer one gets to God's seat. As mentioned in the above paragraph this, too, shows the precious opportunity we have to walk in the presence of the living God. It is no accident that even the streets of the New Jerusalem that comes out of heaven in Revelation are gold. We read, "The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. . . The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass" (Rev 21:18-21).

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 26

- 1) How many linen curtains were sewn together to make one curtain that covered the Tabernacle?
- 2) Who does the priest represent?
- 3) What did the Tabernacle look like on the outside? What spiritual significance does this show us?

- 4) What was different about the linen curtain and the goat hair curtain?
- 5) What was the order of the four curtains from outside to inside?
- 6) How many silver bases were there? What did each base weigh?
- 7) What did the red ram skin symbolize?
- 8) The curtain of sea cows served what practical purpose? Spiritual purpose?
- 9) Where did the Israelites get sea cows from when they were in the desert?
- 10) Besides the curtain, what did the Israelites normally do with sea cow hide?
- 11) How did God reward the Israelites when they gave up their sea cow hides?
- 12) What shape was made by the layout of the furniture in the Tabernacle?
- 13) What did the curtain inside the Tabernacle do? What was its spiritual significance? What ever happened to it?
- 14) The closer one went to the Most Holy Place, the different the metals became. Explain. How does this relate to us spiritually?

Exodus Chapter 27

Exo 27:1 And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. 2 And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay

it with brass. 3 And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basons, and his fleshhooks, and his firepans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass. 4 And thou shalt make for it a grate of network of brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brasen rings in the four corners thereof. 5 And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. 6 And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with brass. 7 And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it. 8 Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.

Here we see details of the brazen altar . It was made of acacia (shittim) wood and then covered with bronze to protect it. Again, the wood shows the humanity of the Son of God and the bronze represents the Deity of Christ. There can be no question that the altar represents Jesus as we see horns on all four corners, which clearly represent the Gospel. We read in Psalms, “The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold” (Psalm 18:2). In case there are any questions that this horn is Jesus, Luke states, “He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David” (Luke 1:69). Horns are used throughout the Scriptures as a symbol of power. For example, in Lamentations we read, “In fierce anger He has cut off every horn of Israel” (Lam 2:3). Likewise, the Gospel is called a “power.” Paul reminds us, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the *power* of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16). Today we know that it is the power of the Gospel that brings forth salvation. This is precisely why in the Old Testament when one was in need of forgiveness they would run to the altar and grab a hold of the horns for safety. Adonijah did this when Solomon was after him (1 Kings 1:50). When an animal was sacrificed some of the blood was then wiped on these horns showing us it was the blood of Jesus, our sacrifice, that was the power for forgiveness (Lev 4:7). According to Psalm 118:27, we see the horns were also used to tie the sacrificial animal down at times. Likewise, Jesus, our sacrifice, was nailed to the cross or bound there, but willfully so.

There was a grating to allow the ashes to fall through to the bottom much like a barbecue grill today. The “sprinkling bowls” (v. 3) were literally “tossing vessels” of which were filled with blood and then thrown or splattered on the people. The fire pans were used to keep the fire burning while the altar was cleaned or used to light the incense so that this same fire from the altar was used throughout the Tabernacle. One reason for this was that the fire was special in that it came down from heaven (Lev 9:24) and was to be kept burning all the time. Just as Jesus was put on a man-made cross by man, the animals were put on a man-made altar by man. Only God could judge the sacrifices and so this fire could not come from man, but from God alone. This is one reason why Aaron’s sons were killed when they offered “unauthorized fire” (Num 3:4). Also, the four corners all had rings in order to allow poles to be put through them so that this could be carried with them wherever they went. The entire Tabernacle was portable and should remind us that Jesus forgiveness is always

available to us no matter how far we stray or run. Making the altar hollow would keep the weight from becoming uncarriable as this was a rather large article for the temple. Likewise, the burden Jesus has asked us to carry is light. He Himself has taken the weight of the cross for us. According to the cubit, it would have stood about five feet tall and almost nine feet across as well as wide.

The forks were used by the priest to get their share of the meat. They would plunge the fork into a pot and whatever came up with the fork was their portion to eat (1 Sam 2:13). This foreshadowed communion of the New Testament. Hebrews 10:13 says, "We have an altar from which those who minister at the Tabernacle have no right to eat." In context, the author of Hebrews is showing that those who reject Jesus have no right to partake of the sacrifice. However, the blood of Jesus has made us all a "spiritual priesthood," and we all have a right to plunge the fork in and partake of the sacrifice. This is why Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is real food and My blood is real drink. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever" (John 6:53-58).

Furthering the significance of this piece of Tabernacle furniture, God closes this section by reminding Moses that it must be made exactly like the blueprints that were given to him on the mountain when he received the Ten Commandments (Heb 8:5).

Exo 27:9 And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle: for the south side southward there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen of an hundred cubits long for one side: 10 And the twenty pillars thereof and their twenty sockets shall be of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. 11 And likewise for the north side in length there shall be hangings of an hundred cubits long, and his twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver. 12 And for the breadth of the court on the west side shall be hangings of fifty cubits: their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. 13 And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward shall be fifty cubits. 14 The hangings of one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. 15 And on the other side shall be hangings fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. 16 And for the gate of the court shall be an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework: and their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four. 17 All the pillars round about the court shall be filleted with silver; their hooks shall be of silver, and their sockets of brass. 18 The length of the court shall be an hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. 19 All the vessels of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, shall be of brass.

The courtyard was a special place of worship that was about 150 feet long by 75 feet wide. It had only one entrance on the east side just as the Garden of Eden did. Remembering that this entire Tabernacle was a model of what is in heaven, we see there is only one gate into heaven and that is Jesus Christ: "I am the gate; whoever enters through Me will be saved" (John 10:9).

There would have been 20 pillars running lengthwise and 10 on front and back for a total of 60 pillars. Between these pillars a white linen fence was constructed and held up by the silver hooks. Silver is shown to represent the blood of Jesus as it was the "price of atonement." The white linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints according to Revelation 19:8. This is very fitting as we can see that it is only because of the blood of Jesus that we can stand before God. Isaiah 64:6 says that all of our works are like filthy rags, but the works of God through us are precious jewels or "white linen." It is only through the blood of Jesus (silver hooks) that we are able to hang our white linen up. For more information on the silver being the price of atonement see the notes on 26:15.

Exo 27:20 And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always. 21 In the tabernacle of the congregation without the veil, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.

The oil that was to be used in the lampstands was to be from bruised olives. This was how the best oil was obtained. An inferior quality of oil was made by putting the olives under great pressure and heat. With this method there was no heat applied to harvest the oil from the olives. Even more important, however, is that the bruised olives may point to Christ who was bruised in the Garden of Gethsemane, which was an olive press.

The lamps were to burn constantly, never going out just as the fire from the altar of burnt offering. This ordinance or rule was to be "lasting" throughout the generations and still goes on today. However, in understanding this one must remember that these are only shadows of a more perfect tabernacle in heaven. In Revelation 1:20 we see that the lampstands represent the churches of God. Also, in Revelation 11:4, we see two lampstands that are described as the two witnesses that will come upon the earth to preach a message of repentance in the last days. These same two lampstands are also referred to as olive branches (perhaps this is why olive oil was used) in Zechariah 4.

Oil was used in anointing people before God (Zech 4:11-12) and is pictured as the Holy Spirit who strengthens the believer, without which, our light cannot shine in this dark world. Just as the lampstands were to never burn out, we, as ministers of the Gospel, are to never let our light be hidden, but rather shine on the mountain tops (Mat 5:16).

These lights also represent Jesus, who is the "light of the world" (John 8:12). Without the light this room in the Holy Place would have been pitch dark. Likewise, without Jesus in this world, darkness would reside. God gave

the Egyptians a glimpse of this in the plague of darkness (Exo 10:23). Many believe it to be the sun that gives us our light, but in fact, it is the Son. This is why in heaven there is no sun, instead, the Lamb gives off the light. This light in a dark world is the Word of God, Jesus Christ. We read in Psalms, “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Ps 119:105). I do not want to take a single step through this life without using the Word as my guide. Though there are many who believe they can see, they are blind, pitiful, wretched and poor because their light comes only from the sun (Rev 3:17).

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 27

- 1) What was represented by the horns of the altar? Give a Scripture verse that supports this?
- 2) What was the dimension of the altar?
- 3) Where did the fire come from that consumed the sacrifice?
- 4) Where did Adonijah flee to when he was running from Solomon? Why?

- 5) What were the forks used for? What did this represent?
- 6) What kind of oil was used in the lampstand? How does this fit with Jesus?
- 7) How often was the lamp to be lit?
- 8) What are the two lampstands of Zechariah representing? What do the lampstands of Revelation represent?
- 9) What connection can be made with the oil and the Holy Spirit?

Exodus Chapter 28

Exo 28:1 And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. 2 And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother

for glory and for beauty. 3 And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 4 And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 5 And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen.

God now gives great details about the priestly garments. I find it interesting how God is “detailed” and His details in your life displays His glory and beauty. Note that Aaron wore a gold plate on his head stating he was, “Holy to the Lord.” Do you avoid sharing the details of your life with God? That is what a relationship is.

In Numbers 8:24-26 we see the ministers of the Tabernacle started at 25 years old and ended at 50. They had a special appearance (Lev 21:5,10), could not marry someone who was a widow or not a virgin (Lev 21:13-14), and could drink no wine during service (Lev 10:8-10). Why all these rules? God must be holy (Lev 22:31-33). In following these rules, God has made the priests holy (Lev 22:9). They were separate from the world, in it, but not of it. How do we separate ourselves from the world today, or don't we? Numbers 6:1-21 talks of a vow where the believer was to abstain from wine and not cut his hair just like priests were to do. Deuteronomy 29:6 may give indication that they were not to drink wine in order to have a clear mind or “so that we might know God.” Paul took a vow like this in Acts 18:18 which leads to the question: Why is this something the modern day churches have neglected or left out of worship today? John 17:13-21 is the spirit of the Nazarite where Jesus prays for all believers. You would do well to go and read these verses realizing Jesus prayed that for you.

The priestly garments consisted of a robe, an undergarment, a sash to tie around the waist, and a turban for the head. The undergarment was a tight, long sleeved linen garment to cover one's nakedness. If you were the high priest you had four additional pieces. The most distinctive addition was the ephod, which consisted of two pieces (front and back), that were strapped together over the shoulders. This symbolized that the burden of Israel was put upon the shoulders of this man.

The ephod went on top of a white linen robe that symbolized a man's righteousness, because only the purest and the most righteous would be able to enter the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle. The High Priest himself was symbolizing God's holy man, which Christ would not only later be, but would also make a church full of. God tells us that those who accept Christ will receive the same white linen and tells us what this linen stands for: “Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)” (Rev 19:8). Attached at the bottom of the robe by the feet were small bells along with pomegranates. According to Josephus, a historian from the time of Christ, it was made of one piece of cloth. With the Tabernacle being a pattern of heaven (Heb 8) and the priest symbolizing the Holy man, we see another important aspect of the fine linen. Part of the curse back in Genesis was

that man would work by the sweat of his brow. Here, in a model of heaven, the curse is removed and there can be no sweat. This is why we read of the priests in Ezekiel, “They are to wear linen turbans on their heads and linen undergarments around their waists. They must not wear anything that makes them perspire” (Ezek 44:18). This is also why the undergarments were worn to cover ones nakedness and remove the curse from the fall. The curse in Genesis brought sweat and there should be none of that curse remaining in what is a model of heaven. John wrote, “Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed” (Rev 16:15). Today, we have put on Christ (Eph 6:13) and the curse has been covered by His blood which makes us righteous and gives us the right to our white linen (Rev 19:8).

Next came the breast plate that held twelve stones laid out in four rows of three. Each stone stood for the twelve tribes of Israel and all believers. These stones went on top of the ephod directly over the heart of the priest. This breastplate also housed the Urim and Thummin of which we know little about. The Hebrew means “lights” and “perfections” and seems to indicate God’s Word as the Light and Truth for this world because the priest would communicate with God through these stones somehow.

The Hebrew word for the headdress, or mitre, means to “wrap around,” and may indicate it was a type of turban. It symbolized kingship, authority, and holiness. This is why it was inscribed on a gold plate attached to the mitre, “Holy to the Lord.” Once again we see the priest was a symbol of the holy man and would stand as such until Christ would come and make Himself holy (Heb 7:26). The fact that it was on the head and over the mind is significant in that our authority comes from the Word of God in our heads. I find it interesting that God is the author of the arts and sciences, yet man is proud and thinks that he is the author of them. The truth is we only examine God’s works and find them out. If we would only humble ourselves, I believe we would not only be much further scientifically, but we would also see God much more clearly through His creation as well. This is why Paul wrote, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse” (Rom 1:20). I believe this is also why God states in verse three that only the skilled men who were “given wisdom in such matters” were told to make the garments. When we realize our wisdom is not from our own studies, but a gift from God, the work we do is much more highly skilled. There is an old joke that told of a contest between God and man. The question was who could create a human being most perfectly. Man boasted of his cloning techniques and achievements while God just stood back and listened. When it came time to begin God watched man begin to make life as he picked up a bucket of dirt. God then stepped in and said, “Wait a minute, I created the dirt. You have to make your own dirt.” Indeed, man could do nothing apart from Christ.

Jesus is the ultimate High Priest for us. Hebrews states, “We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true Tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man. Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and

so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. If He were on earth, He would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the Tabernacle: 'See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.' But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which He is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises" (Heb 8:1-6). Note that Jesus is still serving as this High Priest today for us in heaven and is still our Mediator. One reason for this is that His first coming was a part fulfillment of the Passover feast as described in chapter six. Now, however, we look forward to the fulfillment of Yom Kippor, or the Day of Atonement, which will see its final fulfillment when Christ returns once again as our High Priest. Passover was a personal festival where the blood of the lamb was put on you and your household. This is why Jesus was the Passover lamb and died on that very day and not on the Day of Atonement. Yom Kippor, foreshadows Christ's second coming and is a festival for the whole community of Israel and believers. When Jesus returns He will continue to serve as our High Priest and will judge between those who have accepted their Passover Lamb and those who have not. I will not go into this feast in detail here, but if interested, there are plenty of materials out there that will tell you of the feasts of Israel and their meanings.

The colors for all the priestly garments were to be gold (deity), blue (sky), purple (kingship) and scarlet (blood), all pointing to our heavenly home and the Creator of it. All four colors were used throughout the Tabernacle and are extremely significant. When one went inside the Most Holy Place, it was a perfect cube just as the New Jerusalem is in Revelation. It represented God's throne room and it was surrounded by the color of blue. In every case the throne of God is seen by Moses, Ezekiel, John or anyone else, blue is described. One example back in chapter 24 said, "Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under His feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself" (Ex 24:9-10). You can look back at this section for other verses.

Exo 28:6 And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work. 7 It shall have the two shoulderpieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and so it shall be joined together. 8 And the curious girdle of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. 9 And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: 10 Six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth. 11 With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. 12 And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial. 13 And thou shalt make ouches of gold; 14 And two chains of pure gold at

the ends; of wreathen work shalt thou make them, and fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches.

Without these proper garments, a priest could not come before God. This is why such specific details were given, because each stitch had meaning, and it had to be perfect since it was a model of a perfect heaven and the perfect man.

We described the ephod in the first five verses, but here we see that there were two onyx stones that were to be engraved, each having the names of six different tribes of Israel in the specific order of birth. According to Josephus, the six older sons of Israel were on the right shoulder stone and the six youngest sons were on the left shoulder stone. These stones may have also been used to connect the front and back of the ephod together. In any case, this was certainly not its main purpose. Being put upon the shoulder may have something to do with the prophecy of Christ in Isaiah which states, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders" (Isa 9:6).

We know that these stones were to be memorial stones according to verse 12. Memorials of what? We have answered this in previous chapters but since it is brought up again I will answer it again because it is so important to the theme of Exodus. The only other time we see onyx stones being used is in Genesis, where we read of the rivers and the surrounding area of the Garden of Eden: "The name of the first [river] is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there)" (Gen 2:11-12). Note that there are three articles found here: gold, resin and onyx. First let us address the onyx. Simply put, when the people looked at the priest they were to see a holy man like Adam was in heaven. The onyx was to remind them of the original paradise. God wanted the people to see that He was going to restore them to the Edenic paradise once again.

Second, we deal with the resin or bdellium. Later on we will see that the Israelites receive manna from heaven while in their desert wandering. We read, "The manna was like coriander seed and looked like resin" (Num 11:7). The word for resin is the same Hebrew word (*bedolach*) used in Genesis for resin, and is nowhere else used in Scripture. Earlier in Exodus we were told the color of the manna eaten by the Israelites: "The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seed [same Hebrew word for resin] and tasted like wafers made with honey" (Exo 16:31). Therefore, if the manna was white and it looked like resin, the resin in Genesis must also be white. That makes clear the reference in Revelation: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it" (Rev 2:17). This resin in the Edenic paradise foreshadowed the white stone to come, where we will receive a new name which only comes by being made new in the spirit. It is also worth noting that the references to resin and onyx is being made to the Israelites while they are passing through the area believed to be Havilah, the general location of the Garden of Eden.

Thirdly, the gold was significant. As already noted, gold represents deity and that the Tabernacle foreshadowed heaven: “They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven” (Heb 8:5). That is why the Tabernacle and priestly clothing had so much gold (Ex 25, 1Kings 6). It should be no surprise that so many Old Testament passages use the imagery of precious stones to foreshadow salvation. A few examples follow:

- “Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD” (Isa 60:6).
- “Surely the islands look to me; in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, bringing your sons from afar, with their silver and gold, to the honor of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for He has endowed you with splendor” (Isa 60:9).
- “O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires. I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones” (Isa 54:11-12).

With all these it is no wonder that Revelation describes our paradise in such a way: “The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass” (Rev 21:18-21). Gold was significant, not only in the beginning, and here in the ephod, but also is in the end.

Exo 28:15 And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. 16 Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. 17 And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. 18 And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. 19 And the third row a figure, an agate, and an amethyst. 20 And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings. 21 And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes. 22 And thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains at the ends of wreathen work of pure gold. 23 And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. 24 And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate. 25 And the other two ends of the two wreathen chains thou

shalt fasten in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulderpieces of the ephod before it. 26 And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breastplate in the border thereof, which is in the side of the ephod inward. 27 And two other rings of gold thou shalt make, and shalt put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart thereof, over against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. 28 And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod. 29 And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually. 30 And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually.

The breast piece was used in making decisions. We see it being used many times throughout the Scriptures but never is any detail given as to how this was done. All we know for sure is that the Urim and Thummim (v. 30) were involved. Joshua was taken before the priest and told to “stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the LORD” (Num 27:21). We also see that God would often meet with man to communicate between the cherubim, “There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all My commands for the Israelites” (Ex 25:22). The answers did not seem to be simple yes and no answers according to Judges where we read, “And the Israelites inquired of the LORD. (In those days the ark of the covenant of God was there, with Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, ministering before it.) They asked, ‘Shall we go up again to battle with Benjamin our brother, or not?’ The LORD responded, ‘Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands’” (Judges 20:27-28).

Today, we no longer need to go through a priest to communicate with God because Christ has made us all priests (Rev 1:6) who are holy unto the Lord in His new covenant of His blood. We are now seated WITH Christ in heaven (Eph 2:6). This means we do not just have access to the Most Holy Place, but we live in the presence of God. What a tremendous blessing this is. When we read that our “body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 6:19), the word for temple is the same word used for the Most Holy Place. Christ now lives IN us: “We know that we live in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit” (1 John 4:13-14. See also 1 John 3:24; 4:12 and James 4:5).

The breast piece was to have four rows of three stones in each. Likewise, the foundation of the New Jerusalem in Revelation had these same stones. According to verse 10, the tribes were to be listed in order of age. This being the case, the order would be something like this:

ROW 1 (Sons of Leah)	Ruby	Topaz	Beryl
	Red	Pale Green	Deep Red

	Rueben	Simeon	Levi
ROW 2 (Sons of Leah)	Turquoise Blue/Green Zebulon	Sapphire Sky Blue Issachar	Emerald Bright Green Judah
ROW 3 (Sons of Bilhah Except Gad who was son of Zilpah)	Jacinth Cinnamon Dan	Agate All Hughes Naphtali	Amethyst Purple Gad
ROW 4 (son of Zilpah Except Joseph and Benjamin who were Sons of Rachel)	Chrysolite Yellow/Green Asher	Onyx White Joseph	Jasper Green/Yellow Benjamin

Some of the stones vary from one translation to another and some stones can have more than one color. For now, the important thing is to recognize the message of the holy man pointing us to the New Jerusalem or the restored paradise of God.

The stones representing God's people and the priest representing Christ, shows that we are always close to God's heart and every decision of God has something to do with His people. Every trial, historical event or future event, God is using for the benefit of His beloved bride, the church of God.

Exo 28:31 And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. 32 And there shall be an hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent. 33 And beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: 34 A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about. 35 And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the LORD, and when he cometh out, that he die not. 36 And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. 37 And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. 38 And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD. 39 And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle of needlework. 40 And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty. 41 And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. 42 And thou shalt make them

linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach: 43 And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him.

The High Priest must never go into the presence of God without his royal garb as this covering was a sign of his holiness. Attached to the bottom of his robe were cloth pomegranates alternating with bells. It has been widely circulated that the priests had a rope attached to their feet so that if the priest was unholy, and was killed by God, the bells would be silent and they could simply pull the priest out from the Most Holy Place. This is a myth and the truth is, neither the Scriptures nor the Jewish records show any priest ever dying while serving in the Temple or Tabernacle. Besides, no other priest was allowed even in the outer court of the Tabernacle on the Day of Atonement, the only day the High Priest went into the Most Holy Place. This being the case, the rope would have to go right through the middle of the burning fire of the brazen altar to get from the priest through to the gate on the east side. Fire and rope don't mix well. The Scriptures simply tell us that the sound of the bells kept the priest from dying when he went into the inner chamber of the Tabernacle. It is most likely that the sound of these bells symbolized praise, giving honor to God. We read in the Psalms, "He who sacrifices thank offerings honors Me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God" (Ps 50:23). Some have suggested the people would hear the sound of the bells and know when the incense was being given to God so they could praise the Lord as well. There are two problems with this interpretation: 1) The bells were too small to be heard outside the Tabernacle from this distance and, 2) The bells would be silent unless the priest was moving. This is why verse 35 tells us the bells would ring when the priest "enters" the Holy Place and when he "comes out." The bottom line is we are not sure what the bells did, but they were commanded to be used. Whether it be to offer praise (which is certainly something going on in heaven), or to just respectfully give reverence to God in announcing the priest's coming and going, the bells were important part of the priestly garb. Without them, the priest would die according to the text.

Verses 40-43 shows us that Aaron's son's were only priests and Aaron was the High Priest. The priests had many jobs consisting of offering incense and burnt offerings (symbolized prayers of intercession and sacrifice), determining God's will through the Urim and Thummin, blessing the Israelites, teaching laws and ministering in the sanctuary. Jesus did the same thing. In Mark 10:16 He blessed the people, in Mark 12:35 He taught from the law in the temple, in Luke 2:41-49 He was teaching in the temple, in John 6:38 He does God's will by calling upon Him, in John 17:20 He prays for the people (intercession), and in Hebrews 7:27, as the High Priest, He makes the ultimate sacrifice of Himself. Jesus had to have been a priest to do these responsibilities or else these things were punishable by death. But Christ's priesthood was in line with that of Melchizedek. In Hebrews 5:1-4 we see that only God can ordain a priest. Melchizedek was a priest and a king (Gen 14:17-20). He served

bread and wine (communion) and was priest of God Most High. Note the significance of the bread and wine. Psalm 110:1-4 says Jesus is in the line of Melchizedek forever. Zechariah 6:12-13 states of Jesus: "Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and He will branch out from His place and build the temple of the LORD. It is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on His throne. And He will be a priest on His throne. And there will be harmony between the two.'" Note Jesus is both priest and king. No earthly priest ever filled both positions except Melchizedek and Jesus. In fact, both of them were also prophets as well. The Aaronic priesthood was temporary because something was missing (Heb 7:11). But Jesus' priesthood is different because it is not only eternal, but perfect (Heb 7:24).

This brings us to an interesting point. If Jesus' priesthood was the same as Melchizedek way back at the time of Abraham, then the rules for salvation and Christian living were the same at the time of Abraham that they are now. People often think of the Old Testament as all being "old covenant" and this is not true. From Adam through Abraham the same rules (or lack of) applied as they do today. It was salvation by grace alone, simply by believing in Jesus. The only difference is that Abraham believed in the Jesus to come while we believe in the Jesus that came. This is why Job could say, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God" (Job 19:25-26). This also means that the same rules that Noah and Abraham were under, apply also to us today (See Genesis 9:4 and Acts 15:29). In a sense, one could look at history as being "New Testament" from Creation to Moses and then "Old Testament" from Moses to Jesus death and resurrection in Acts, and then "New Testament" again from Acts through Revelation." Keep in mind Jesus is in the same priesthood as was Melchizedek in Genesis. Also keep in mind that Jesus' ministry was under the old covenant rules and mosaic laws. It isn't until He sheds His blood that the new covenant begins. This is why at the Last Supper, or Passover, Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20-21).

We have making a distinction between the High Priest and the normal priests. Why was there a difference? As discussed thoroughly, the High Priest was foreshadowing Jesus, the only one who could go into the Most Holy Place to make atonement for sins. This is why when Jesus died on the cross the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place was torn in two. It allowed us to enter the Most Holy Place, or God's throne, to be with Jesus in the New Covenant. However, the priests are a model of the New Testament believers. 1 Peter 2:1-10 shows us to be a royal "priesthood" and we will fill the position of priests in the order of Melchizedek. He has also made us a kingdom (Rev 1:5-6). Just as Aaron's sons were the sons of the High Priest (Christ) we, too, are sons of God, the true High Priest (Rom 8:13-17). We call Him Abba, Father.

Because we have a father/son relationship with Christ, we have to expect life to have challenges. We read in Hebrews, "Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you

are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it" (Heb 12:7-11). Verse ten shows that because we are sons, we are disciplined as a result of having God's love. What does that mean if you are not disciplined? It means you are not a son and, therefore, do not receive the inheritance promised. The Tabernacle shows us the means by which God made us all children and priests of God through His Son, Jesus Christ. The Israelites had many hardships throughout their 40 year desert wandering just as we do today. However, God was always with them as the Tabernacle was mobile. Likewise, God does not promise us a bed of roses in this life, but He does promise that He will never leave us, indeed, He now "Tabernacles" IN us. The trials of life are meant to discipline us because God wants the best for us when we "grow up" spiritually. This is all for us to receive a greater reward in heaven and receive more of His holiness. What father would not want that for his son? Therefore, we face trials with our eyes focused on the goal, and as Paul reminds us, "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize" (1 Cor 9:25-27).

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 28

- 1) How old did you have to be to start ministering in the Tabernacle?
- 2) How old were you at retirement if you worked in the Tabernacle?
- 3) Why did the priests have so many rules to follow?
- 4) What article of clothing was strapped over the shoulders? What did this represent?
- 5) What was at the bottom of the robe?
- 6) Why were the priests not to sweat? What does this symbolize?
- 7) How many stones were in the breast piece?
- 8) What did the words Urim and Thummim mean?
- 9) What were the Urim and Thummim used for?
- 10) What did the priest's headdress symbolize?
- 11) What were the colors of the priests clothing?

- 12) What were the memorial stones and where were they placed? What were they a memorial of?
- 13) What is the Hebrew word for “resin?”
- 14) What did the manna look like?
- 15) How does resin and manna fit into Genesis?
- 16) What are the gates of the new city in Jerusalem made out of?
- 17) What order were the tribes to be listed in?
- 18) What do stones represent?
- 19) Why were the bells on the priests garment? Where were they located?
- 20) What did Melchizedek serve Abraham? What did this represent?
- 21) Who was Melchizedek? What were the rules of his priesthood?
- 22) List everything you know of Melchizedek. (You may want to read Hebrews 7).
- 23) What priesthood was Jesus in? What does this tell us about the rules during the time of Abraham compared to today’s rules?
- 24) What was the difference between the priests and the high priests?

Exodus Chapter 29

Exo 29:1 And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish, 2 And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of wheaten flour shalt thou make them. 3 And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams. 4 And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. 5 And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: 6 And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy

crown upon the mitre. 7 Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. 8 And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. 9 And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.

There were three types of “anointings” in Scripture. Priests went through a consecration or “ordination.” Prophets were simply anointed and kings went through a coronation with their anointing. Without the Holy Spirit one was not qualified to serve, lead or prophesy. We would do well to recognize this today as we choose those among us to take upon these responsibilities. As mentioned earlier, Jesus went through all three as our Prophet, Priest and King. In fact, Jesus is the Mashiah, or Messiah, which means, “anointed one.” This gave Him the right to be the Christ since He was the only one ever anointed with all three outside of Melchizedek (who was Christ in the Old Testament). Aaron, who is a symbol of Christ, is about to be anointed. This is also significant because Christ is the “Anointed One.” Also, where Aaron will be consecrated with the sacrifice of rams, Christ will be consecrated by the sacrifice of Himself.

Consecration was serious business as it set you apart for something special and different from the rest of the world. The very word means to “fill ones hand” implying God was going to give the wisdom and necessary qualities for the job. Consecration was God’s choosing, not mans, which is why God picked Aaron and his sons. We read in Hebrews, “No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was” (Heb 5:4).

If you were not consecrated, you could not serve as a priest. Their clothing, discussed in chapter 28, made them holy only if their sinful nature was dealt with first through this consecration. In all, the priests must be washed (cleansed from sin), dressed (made holy), and anointed with oil (empowered by the Holy Spirit). One can read about this procedure further in Leviticus 8 where we see this being carried out after the Tabernacle is consecrated.

The washing is still very significant for us today as Paul reminds us, “Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God” (2 Cor 7:1). Isaiah also wrote, “Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of My sight” (Isa 1:16)!

Note that verse four tells us the washing was to be done at the door to the entrance of the Tabernacle. As we discussed in chapter 27 the door represents Christ, the gate into heaven, and the only Person who can truly wash us clean. Jesus said, “I am the gate; whoever enters through Me will be saved” (John 10:9). Therefore, Jesus does the washing just as Jesus washed the feet of His disciples in John 13:10. This is important because we see that in John Jesus only washed the feet because, “he who has had a bath only needs to wash his feet, then his whole body is clean.” Jesus was implying that our walk with God, or our actions, is what makes us clean. We cannot say we are Christians and continue to live in sin. As James said, “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:17). According to chapter 30:19, only the hands and feet of the priests were washed, again implying Jesus was giving them the necessary means to serve.

There were three types of unleavened (without yeast) bread offered to God as well. Unleavened bread is a symbol of Christ. Yeast is referred to as sin and corruption (Luke 12:1, 1 Cor 5:6-8) and, therefore, unleavened bread is bread without corruption. Only Jesus, the Bread of Life, could fit this description.

In Psalms we see that brotherly love is likened to the oil used in anointing here: “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard” (Ps 133:1-2). Likewise, one cannot truly serve Christ without love. These priests were going to need the Holy Spirit to love the people when they grumbled and complained. These priests were also going to need to intercede for the people and ask God to forgive them of their sins. How many times have we struggled with forgiving our enemies or praying that God would forgive our Sadoms, Bin Ladins, and other tyrants, murderers or terrorists? We, too, need Christ’s anointing to love and forgive our enemies, because the power to do so cannot come from ourselves. Thankfully, the oil represented the Holy Spirit, which we now have living in us, and therefore, that power is there, we just have to call upon Jesus to use it. We have already been consecrated as priests (1 Peter 2:5). Paul warns, “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing” (1 Cor 13:1-3).

Exo 29:10 And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. 11 And thou shalt kill the bullock before the LORD, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 12 And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar. 13 And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul that is above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar. 14 But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it is a sin offering. 15 Thou shalt also take one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. 16 And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. 17 And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces, and wash the inwards of him, and his legs, and put them unto his pieces, and unto his head. 18 And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt offering unto the LORD: it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 19 And thou shalt take the other ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. 20 Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. 21 And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the

anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him. 22 Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right shoulder; for it is a ram of consecration: 23 And one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the LORD: 24 And thou shalt put all in the hands of Aaron, and in the hands of his sons; and shalt wave them for a wave offering before the LORD. 25 And thou shalt receive them of their hands, and burn them upon the altar for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour before the LORD: it is an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 26 And thou shalt take the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecration, and wave it for a wave offering before the LORD: and it shall be thy part. 27 And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave offering, and the shoulder of the heave offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of the consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons: 28 And it shall be Aaron's and his sons' by a statute for ever from the children of Israel: for it is an heave offering: and it shall be an heave offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace offerings, even their heave offering unto the LORD.

Throughout this chapter we see a progression from first giving Aaron his holy garments, then consecrating him with oil and next making a sacrifice. This shows that man was not only covered from his shameful nakedness of the flesh and given white linen (righteous acts), but was also consecrated with the oil (Holy Spirit) to give him the strength to do what no man could do on his own. Furthermore, he made sacrifices to not only give praise to God, but to walk in a state of forgiveness that could only occur through the blood of the sacrifice (Jesus).

Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the bullock (virgin bull) and confessed their sins, acknowledging that they deserved to die, because as Hebrews tells us they had to first be cleansed from their own sin before they could serve the Most Holy God. Jesus did not need to do this, which is why He was a better High Priest, “Unlike the other high priests, He does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people” (Heb 7:27).

After this bullock was made as a sin offering, then a ram was used as a burnt offering and then another ram as a peace offering. This order was important because one could not serve before God without first having his sins atoned for. Once atonement was made, one could offer himself to God in praise, thankfulness and sacrifice while sacrificing the first ram; a sacrifice for the glory of God. After this sacrifice was made, one could then have communion with God in the peace offering of the second ram, a sacrifice for the comfort of the priest.

In verse 16 we see the blood of the ram was to have its blood sprinkled against the altar. The Hebrew word for “sprinkle” really means “toss.” This is why there were “sprinkling bowls” back in 27:3. When the priest would cut the

artery of the ram another priest would be catching the flowing blood in this bowl to be either poured out at the base of the altar (burnt offering of the first ram in these verses), or to be tossed against all four sides of the altar of burnt offering as well as put onto himself (peace offering of the 2nd ram in verses 19-26). Part of this second ram was to be waved before the Lord, then “lifted up” and offered on the altar as a burnt offering while the other part was to be eaten at the door of the Tabernacle as a type of communion with God.

Another interesting aspect pointing to the cross is seen with the wave offering. The priest took this second ram of the peace offering and first waved it back and forth from left to right. Then he took it and lifted it up and down before the altar. Both these actions made the sign of the cross, pointing us to Jesus, who was also “lifted up” to bring us near to him; the exact thing this peace offering was doing for the priests. We read of Jesus’ Words in John, “But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself. He said this to show the kind of death He was going to die” (John 12:32-33). When we see the cross we can be reminded of Aaron and this wave offering that was lifted up before God to bring man closer to his Creator and Savior.

The ancient Romans used to consecrate their high priests by killing a bull over a grate. Meanwhile the high priest would go under ground and cover himself with the dripping blood. When he emerged from underground, the crowd would praise him as the great high priest, and from there on, he was greatly adorned. It is most likely that these types of rituals were taken from the Hebrew Scriptures and practices. Even though these rituals have been abused throughout the centuries (because Satan wants us to lose the true meaning), God’s sacrifice still holds true today. Often these bloody rituals are viewed as grotesque and strange, but the Bible tells us they were of the utmost importance because without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22).

Some of the blood of the second ram was to be put on the right ear, thumb and toe of the priests. This was a symbol of hearing God’s Word, serving God with the hands and following Him with their feet. In a sense, the whole of ones body was then covered with the blood of the sacrifice.

Aaron, a symbol of Christ, was sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice just as Jesus was sprinkled with His own blood in the garden and on the cross with the crown of thorns. This was not a grotesque act, but a necessary cleansing and foreshadowing of forgiveness that only Jesus, our High Priest, could offer. We read of the saints in Revelation, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev 7:14). The blood of Jesus does not dirty us, but it is the only thing that can make us truly clean.

In verse 24 we see that Aaron’s hands were to be filled. We already saw that the anointing of Aaron was a “filling.” Likewise it was significant to show that their hand were to be filled before the Lord. The breast and the right leg were wave offerings to the Lord that Aaron and the priests were allowed to eat for themselves in the Tabernacle. Anything left over for the next day was to be burned, much like the manna in the wilderness was to be eaten the same day. Again, we see the foreshadowing of Christ and His body. This meal was a type of communion with God and a “filling” for the priests. With both God and man

receiving a portion, this communion is true fellowship as they feast together. (Leviticus 8 goes into further detail than what we have listed here in this chapter).

Exo 29:29 And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them. 30 And that son that is priest in his stead shall put them on seven days, when he cometh into the tabernacle of the congregation to minister in the holy place. 31 And thou shalt take the ram of the consecration, and seethe his flesh in the holy place. 32 And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 33 And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy. 34 And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it is holy.

Aaron's priestly garments would be passed on to his sons and no new garments were made. They would easily last as the high priest would wear all of the garments only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

The new priest coming into service would wear the garments for seven days and they were not to consider the consecration finished until that time was up. During this time of consecration they would have one Sabbath day to rest. This, too, is a pattern of the life of a saint. Though Christ has forgiven the believer, He continues to sanctify us through our daily walk with Him. As the Jews have always believed, and as Scripture seems to suggest as well, there will only be about six thousand years of time before the Lord's second return and then there will be a Sabbath rest for all of God's people (Hebrews 4). At the end of our six thousand years of earth, everything will be complete and our full consecration will be done as we are given our white robes of righteousness, our crown of glory and our new bodies to dwell with the Lord in His Most Holy Place forever.

Only the priests and Moses were allowed to eat the wave offering because only they had been purified and made holy. Today, all believers are Holy because of Jesus, the better sacrifice. Still, however, only followers of Christ take part in this communion meal. As Paul writes, "A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 11:28-31). Let us not become weak without properly recognizing our Lord and His communion with us.

Just as the Passover Lamb was not to be eaten the next day, here we see the peace offering was also not to be eaten the next day. This would give time for decay to set in and as a foreshadowing of Christ, no decay could occur. We see this great prophecy recorded in Acts where it states, "Therefore My heart is glad and My tongue rejoices; My body also will live in hope, because You will not abandon Me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay" (Acts 2:26-27).

Exo 29:35 And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to all things which I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them. 36 And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it. 37 Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy. 38 Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. 39 The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: 40 And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering. 41 And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 42 This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. 43 And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. 44 And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. 45 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. 46 And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.

Why was the altar consecrated to be atoned for when an altar does not sin? As Jesus said in Matthew, “You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it” (Matt 23:19-20). Here Jesus showed that the altar needed to be made holy in order that the gifts that were to be offered on it would be holy. Jesus is our altar and He, too, sanctified Himself in order that we might be clean. We see this admission by Jesus Himself when He prayed for all believers, “For them I sanctify Myself, that they too may be truly sanctified” (John 17:19).

Verse 38 shows the imperfection of this sacrificial system because it had to be done over and over. Christ came to be a better sacrifice, once for all, which is why we read in Hebrews, “The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming-not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when Christ came into the world. . . we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb 10:1-5, 10). This is also why verse 37 tells us it was to be done seven days in order to foreshadow the perfect sacrifice to come in Jesus Christ.

In verse 40 we see the drink offering quickly mentioned. We see that this was well known at this time which is probably why not a lot of detail was given. It was first seen in Genesis 35:14 when Jacob set up a stone in Bethel to offer thanks and praise to the Lord. One must wonder if this was a pre-Levitical law or ceremony. Was it a practice among the priesthood of Melchizedek? (See Hebrews 7).

The daily morning and evening sacrifices show God's continual forgiveness and the people's dedication to the Lord. We should daily bring our sacrifice to God in prayer, praise, study and worship. How do we daily offer sacrifices? We read in Romans, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom 12:1-2). Clearly, not conforming to the world and having the Spirit renew our minds can only come about by the sacrifice of our bodies. Don't get me wrong, we are not to literally throw ourselves into the fire, but we are to be "living" sacrifices. This may mean we need to give of our precious time, money, and selfish desires to help others. Many will say to Jesus one day, "When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'" (Matt 25:39-40). Putting ones faith into action by serving others is offering your body as a living sacrifice.

There are other significances to the evening and morning sacrifices that would continue on for centuries. These sacrifices symbolized all the sins of the people throughout the night being taken care of in the morning and all the sins of the day being fixed in the evening. Christ, as we have mentioned, was a better sacrifice in taking away all of our sins with His one sacrifice of Himself. Paul wrote of this sacrifice, "He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross" (Col 2:13-15). Every sin you have committed, or will commit, was nailed to the cross two thousand years ago. Halleluiah! Clearly, it was no accident that Jesus died on the cross at 3:00 PM, the very hour that this evening sacrifice was made day after day.

Verse 44 reveals that if Aaron and his sons were to simply go through the motions this would not sanctify them. God said that He would have to sanctify them. We cannot make ourselves holy by obeying laws. However, when we become obedient to God's commands, He makes us holy today as well.

Verse 45 is one of my favorite reminders of God's presence in my life. For the Israelites, God would dwell AMONG them, but today God dwells IN us. God's promise to dwell among Israel is repeated a number of times in the Scriptures (Lev 26:11, 2 Cor 6:16), but for me it gives me the most hope when I read in Revelation, "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God'" (Rev 21:3). God's promise here was only a foreshadowing of a greater fulfillment to come. Likewise, the Spirit living in us right now is only a foreshadowing of a greater unity to come at the Wedding of the Lamb in Revelation 19. God's promise in

verse 45 shows that first, God promises to be our God and His promises are sure. Secondly, we have already discussed the fact that the Tabernacle is God's dwelling place, but now God lives inside of us as we made clear in the section on "Saints vs. Sinners." God kept His promise and made His Tabernacle in the hearts of His faithful friends. And third, this promise will not be completely fulfilled until the Lord returns someday soon.

It is of utmost importance to understand this promise of God dwelling inside of us and being our Lord. Paul writes, "Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.' So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir" (Gal 4:6-7). This message is the focus of the Gospel message for the believer because "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ" (Rom 8:9). Therefore, if we reject the fact that God now dwells IN us, than we are not sons or heirs of His promise. The priests were becoming one with God, but yet the Spirit would not remain in them as it does with us today. Too often we take this for granted, but the priests here in Exodus could have only hoped for the great gift we have in Christ living in and through us: "To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27). May this truth indeed be glorious riches for you today.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 29

- 1) What was the difference between a prophet and a priest when it came to beginning their ministry?
- 2) What does "Messiah" mean?
- 3) Where were the priests consecrated or washed?
- 4) How does the wave offering fit the cross?
- 5) What did the word "sprinkle" mean? What was done to the blood of the sacrifices?
- 6) Why was the altar consecrated? Give a Scripture verse?
- 7) Why was this priesthood imperfect?
- 8) How does the Holy Spirit differ today than back here in the Old Testament?

Exodus Chapter 30

Exo 30:1 And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it. **2** A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. **3** And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. **4** And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. **5** And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. **6** And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. **7** And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. **8** And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. **9** Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. **10** And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.

The altar of incense was made of acacia (shittim) wood and then covered with pure gold. Because of this it is sometimes called the golden altar in

contrast to the brazen altar which was outside in the outer court. It stood about three feet tall and was about one and a half feet square with four horns on its upper corners. Later in this chapter we will see that there was a special recipe for a certain type of incense or perfume that was to be burned upon this altar. This incense was not to be used by anyone else or for anything else.

Once more we see that wood represents God's humanity shown in Jesus and the gold shows God's deity also in Jesus. We read in Colossians: "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority" (Col 2:9-10).

This altar is a symbol of prayer as our heavenly glimpse in Revelation clearly tells us, "Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints" (Rev 5:8). Also in Psalms, "May my prayer be set before You like incense" (Ps 141:2). As the incense was burned the smoke rose up as if it were carrying the prayers with it to heaven.

Seeing Aaron as a type of Jesus, we can understand why Aaron had to burn the incense, because only Jesus can be our mediator for God in prayer. We read, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all men-the testimony given in its proper time" (1 Tim 2:5-6). This is why we are not to pray to the dead, to saints, or to anyone else, but only to God.

The location of this altar was directly in front of the curtain that lead into the Most Holy Place. It seems to give this article of furniture a more intimate relationship with God. The fact that the altar of incense is brought up, not only in Psalms, but also twice in Revelation, seems to show its priority as well. Prayer is an intimate communication with our Lord and I believe the most important of three relationships alluded to in the Holy Place. Even Jesus never once did a single independent action without first consulting the Father. Jesus never said He could call angels down from heaven to help, but that He could call on the Father who could (Mat 26:53). In John 14:31, Jesus said He did only what the Father commanded Him to do. In the garden Jesus prayed that the Father's will would be done (Mat 26:42). Jesus was always in prayer, constantly communicating with the Father and setting an example for us to put the altar of incense as a priority in our lives.

The fact that this is called an altar also implies that it is extremely important. Altars are places we make sacrifices. They are the places we stop at first before moving on to anything else. In Matthew 23:20 we see that the altar is most holy and makes everything on it holy. In Ezekiel 41:22, a description of a heavenly temple is given and the altar of incense there is double the size of what is given here. We see this altar referred to in Revelation seven times showing that it will be there in heaven as well. Perhaps this is why the author of Hebrews placed this article within the Most Holy Place (Heb 9:4) when Exodus clearly states it was only in the Holy Place. In Hebrews 13:10 the author then makes note that our "altar" is different" and better than what we read about in Exodus. There can be no doubt that this was the focal point in the Most Holy Place and, therefore, what it stands for should be the focal point in our life today as well. After all, who truly loves Jesus and doesn't want to talk with Him. How many marriages would work if we only visited for two minutes every day

and ten seconds before every meal. True friends and good relationships are marked by good and abundant communication.

Understanding that the altar was symbolic of prayer we see why nothing else was to be burned upon it. We are to pray to no one or anything; only God. Later in Israel's history they abused this gift and burned incense (prayed) to false gods. We read in Jeremiah, "We will burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and will pour out drink offerings to her" (Jer 44:17). This was one thing God judged Israel severely for.

The incense was to burn continually with the priest adding incense every morning. Likewise Paul tells us to, "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess 5:16-18). As the smoke rose to heaven, so the prayers of the people went to God. Luke clearly tells us that while the priests were offering the incense, the people outside were all praying (Luke 1:10).

Horns are often viewed as power. Here, just as they were on the brazen altar, they are the "power of the Gospel" in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:18, Rom 1:16) and a symbol of Jesus Himself. "My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation" (2 Sam 22:3, see Ps 18:2). We see this specifically identified as Jesus later in Luke, "He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David" (Luke 1:69).

The horns of the altar were also sprinkled with blood to make atonement for the altar (Lev 16:18). This is important because our prayers are not acceptable to God unless we are first made clean by the blood of Jesus (Is 1:13).

Exo 30:11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12 When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. 13 This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs;) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD. 14 Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. 15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls. 16 And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.

Every male Israelite that was 20 years or older had to pay a half shekel of silver as a price of atonement. This is going to be extremely significant in the construction of the Tabernacle because there will be a little over 5 tons of silver collected. It took 5 tons of silver to make the 100 silver sockets that weighed about 100 pounds each and became the foundation of the Tabernacle proper. The little left over was used to make the supports on top of the capitals that would hold the curtains, and thus showing that the entire foundation or support

of the Tabernacle rests on atonement. Jesus' blood was the price of atonement for us and, therefore, this silver foreshadows the blood of Jesus, the foundation of the church today.

There were 603,350 men of army age that paid this ransom. If you take this number of half shekels and divide by 6000 (number of half shekels in a talent) you get 100 talents and 1775 shekels left over; exactly as Exodus 38:25 tells us. This shows that indeed every man paid the price and not one was left out. The extra silver was then used to cover the poles that would go on top of the pillars that supported the Tabernacle curtains.

The silver collected was to be a memorial for Israel. Every time they walked by the Tabernacle and saw the silver foundation they should have been reminded that the silver was the money they paid for atonement. Peter compares this silver to the blood of Jesus when he said, "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:18-19). Every time I see silver today I am reminded of the blood Jesus shed for me. This price of atonement continued to be paid throughout the centuries even into the time of Christ, who also paid the half shekel of silver in Matthew 17:27 so as not to give offense. Little did they know that He would give so much more. When Jesus paid His half shekel He asked Peter, "What do you think, Simon? . . . From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own sons or from others?" "From others," Peter answered" (Matt 17:25-26). How noteworthy is Peter's answer. It was believed that once your sinful nature had been atoned for, you became a servant of the law and had been glorified into sonship of Israel. Therefore, you did not have to pay the price anymore. Though the Jews did not realize it, this also pointed to the fulfillment of the Gospel. Romans states, "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by Him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Rom 8:15-17). Scripture is clear that Jesus has made us "sons" of God and belonging to Israel (Rom 11) and, therefore, we are now exempt from the tax. Jesus has paid the price for His sons with His own blood and now we are free. Glory, honor and praise be to God, our Father.

Other "fees" and offerings were based upon what one could afford. However, the price for atonement was the same for both rich and poor alike. This shows that God is no respecter of persons and that the sins of all are equal just as the price for them is the same. Peter said, "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right" (Acts 10:34-36).

Exo 30:17 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 18 Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. 19 For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: 20 When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when

they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: 21 So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.

The bronze basin was made from the mirrors of the women (Exo 38:8). Earlier God asked them to give of their money, now He was asking them to give up their vanity. All of the desires of the flesh must be surrendered to the Lord.

There are no specific details given as to the size of the basin because the main focus is on what the basin is to be used for and what it represents. The priests were to wash only their hands and their feet before ministering in God's temple. We see that the Psalms state, "Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart" (Ps 24:3-4). Note that the hands being dirty don't have anything to do with dirt, but with actions and motives. A good example is seen when Jesus was about to wash Peter's feet. Peter said "No" to the Lord. However, Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean" (John 13:8-10). Jesus was telling Peter that if our walk (feet) and our service (hands) to God was clean, then we were all clean. It isn't the dirt, but our heart and actions that make us unclean. Jesus also said, "The things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean'" (Matt 15:18-20). Likewise, the priests must have their hands and feet washed to serve the Lord with a clean heart. If their heart was clean, the service to God would show it. It is also important to show that man cannot be "clean" by himself. The water does it and this water represents the Word of God. Therefore, only by going to Jesus and letting the Holy Spirit work in your life can your heart be changed. If you struggle with some sort of sin, do not try to take it upon yourself to "clean up your act." Call upon Jesus, confess your sin and let His Word restore and cleanse you. No doubt we all struggle with something as James states, "We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check" (James 3:2). James later tells us how to keep this body in check: "Come near to God and He will come near to you. *Wash your hands*, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. . . Humble yourselves before the Lord, and *He will lift you up*" (James 4:8-10). Hebrews also states of Jesus, "Since we have a great Priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb 10:21-23). There can be little doubt that the waters of baptism are implied by the washing of our bodies because it is through baptism that the believer has his old nature buried in the grave. Once buried we are raised up clean and perfect, able to not only minister before God, but also to have the Holy Spirit live inside of our now perfect spirits: "Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were

therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Rom 6:3-4).

The location of this bronze basin was between the bronze altar and the entrance to the Holy Place. Once one entered the Tabernacle through the gate (which represents Jesus) he accepted the sacrifice on the bronze altar (which represents Jesus). Once Jesus is in your life, then the washing of the Word can begin to make your daily life more holy and obedient (represented by the bronze basin). Unfortunately, too many people are satisfied being saved and never experience the pure joy of our salvation. Until they have been washed and their walk with God has been cleansed they will never be able to be free from the depression and hopelessness that torments so many believers on earth. God wants us to be happy and content, but too often the dirt in our lives keeps us from having this peace. What comfort it is to be saved and what joy it is to walk in obedience to Christ. This is our true response to salvation. Then, and only then, will the believer be at emotional and spiritual contentment no matter what situation in life they may be in.

Exo 30:22 Moreover the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 23 Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, 24 And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: 25 And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil. 26 And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, 27 And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense, 28 And the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot. 29 And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy. 30 And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. 31 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations. 32 Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you. 33 Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people.

This special anointing perfume used 500 shekels of myrrh, which is about twelve and a half pounds today. These spices were mixed with about one and a half gallons of oil. Myrrh is gathered by making a cut into an oriental tree. Cassia was another spice from Arabia while the other ingredients were a little more common.

Olive oil is said to be one of the best preservers of aromas. Olive oil was often used plain as a type of anointing oil and, therefore, symbolized a type of preservation as well. In the New Testament God makes it clear that this oil foreshadowed the Holy Spirit. Paul tells us we are “preserved,” or perhaps

“reserved” for Christ because of our “anointing.” “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Cor 1:21-22). We also read, “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. . . As for you, the anointing you received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in Him” (1 John 2:20,27). Acts 10:38 also tells us that Jesus was also anointed with the Holy Spirit. Jesus is called the Mashiah, or Messiah, which means “anointed one.” Clearly, even His name indicates that the anointing was a focal point of His coming. Therefore, the Holy Spirit was also the long awaited for gift.

As high priest, Aaron was to have this oil poured over his head (29:7). Likewise, when the Holy Spirit was given to us in Acts 2 the flames of fire rested upon their heads. There can be no doubt that the oil represents the Holy Spirit.

To misuse this oil meant one was to be cut off from God’s people. Likewise, the Holy Spirit cannot be bought or misused. Only God can give the Spirit and man can do nothing to manipulate or use this Spirit for his own selfish ambitions. Simon the sorcerer tried to buy the Holy Spirit for his own advantages and Peter said, “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God” (Acts 8:20-22). In Aaron’s day, the only people who had been made “right” with God were the priests who had made sacrifices, wore holy garments, and were chosen by God. Today, we are that “royal priesthood” and God has “chosen” us to be His “people” anointed by His Spirit (1 Peter 2:9).

In verse 29 we see that all the Tabernacle furnishings were anointed and made holy so that anything that touched them was holy. Remembering that these articles all represented Jesus we can understand how they would make one holy or sanctified. The lampstand was the Word of God and coming into contact with it today does make one more and more holy. Likewise the table of shewbread represented communion with God and doing so today sanctifies us. The table of incense stood for prayer that makes our walk with God more holy as well. The Wash Basin cleanses us from unholiness and the brazen altar shows us the sacrifice of Jesus that forgives us of our sins so that we can become holy, not just forgiven.

Exo 30:34 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight: 35 And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: 36 And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. 37 And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the LORD. 38 Whosoever

shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.

Different commentators have different opinions as to the actual ingredients of this recipe, but for the most part, are similar in interpretation. However, the ingredients were certainly specific and expensive. The gum resin comes from the bark of a *Boswellia carteri* tree, which grows in southern Arabia. Onycha came from powdering the external crust of a mollusk shell called the purpura and is still used today for certain perfumes. Galbunum is a bitter resin that is used to enhance the other ingredients and is also used for medicinal purposes. It comes from the African ferula which grows to be about 8-10 feet tall. When any of the plant is broken a milky substance comes out similar to that of a milk weed. It is this substance that is gathered. Frankincense is another type of gum resin that is taken from trees in Arabia. The only place they could have gotten such items is the same place that they got the gold and silver; from plundering the Egyptians in the Exodus.

As with the anointing oil, one was not to even benefit from the aroma of the incense. Only God's people (represented by the priests here in the Old Testament) could benefit from the incense just as today only believer can benefit from the Holy Spirit.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 30

- 1) What was the altar of incense made of?
- 2) Where was the altar of incense located?
- 3) What was significant about the location of the altar of incense?
- 4) What does 1 Timothy 2:5 have to do with the altar of incense?
- 5) Why were the horns of the incense altar sprinkled with blood?
- 6) What does the incense altar represent? Give Scripture to support this.
- 7) What was done with the leftover silver from the atonement money?
- 8) What was the bronze basin made from? What was God asking them to really give up?
- 9) Why were the priests to wash their hands and feet? How does this apply to Peter not wanting Jesus to wash his feet?
- 10) Read James 4:8-10. What does this have to do with the Wash Basin?
- 11) Where was the bronze basin located? Why is this location significant for the spiritual walk of a Christian?
- 12) How does the oil used for anointing connect with the tongues of fire in Acts 2?
- 13) Give a New Testament example of misusing the Spirit.
- 14) Where did the Israelites get the materials to make the special perfume?

Exodus Chapter 31

Exo 31:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: 3 And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, 4 To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, 5 And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. 6 And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee; 7 The tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the

testimony, and the mercy seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle, 8 And the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture, and the altar of incense, 9 And the altar of burnt offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot, 10 And the cloths of service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office, 11 And the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do.

The name of Bezalel is significant because it means, "in or under the shadow of God." He was the grandson of Hur, who, according to Jewish tradition, was the husband of Miriam and probably the one who held up the hands of Moses (Exodus 17:10). Oholiab's name means "the Father is my Tabernacle." It appears that these men were chosen for this job even before birth. Today we often hear that people are "born with" a talent. We would do well to realize that nobody has a single talent that the Lord has not given. When one decides to use these talents for the Lord, He blesses them all the more. Even the ancient pagans believed that their false gods gave them their talents. Sadly, today we think that we make our own. A talent spent on anything other than God's kingdom is a God given talent wasted. Perhaps if we recognized the source of our abilities we would use them more for Him. In any case, this is one reason Christians who walk in the Word daily make the best employees and doctors.

Having God choose the person to do the work for the Tabernacle would have eliminated any possibility of jealousy. The church has also been instructed in the present that God chooses to give gifts to those whom He wants. Therefore, we should not argue among ourselves with different styles of preaching, or who gets to do what etc. Paul wrote, "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines" (1 Cor 12:7-11).

Nothing but the best would do for God's Tabernacle because nothing but the best awaits us in heaven. One can only imagine what a wonderful mansion He has waiting for us (John 14:2).

Exo 31:12 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. 14 Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. 15 Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD:

whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. 16 Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. 17 It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. 18 And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

This section is yet another reminder of a “lasting” covenant that seems to have expired for most Christians today. We have discussed a little of this in 23:12 so we will not repeat all of it here again. However, I do want to stress the importance of observing this today. We are no longer “required” to observe the Sabbath, but those that do are blessed more than those that do not; of this I can assure you. “Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ” (Col 2:16-17). Paul tells us that we are not to look down on those that do not observe the Sabbath because these things foreshadowed Christ. Now that Christ has come, we no longer benefit from them. Right? ABSOLUTELY NOT! Yes, the reality is found in Christ, but Christ is still coming back a second time, and the Sabbath foreshadows that second coming (Heb 4). Likewise, the feasts of Scripture foreshadow the second coming of the Lord (see Exodus 6:1-8 commentary). Because we are not under the law anymore we no longer are obligated to do such things but we do learn more of Jesus by studying the feasts today. When it comes to the Sabbath, God said the Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27). This clearly means that there is some benefit for man by observing it. We often hear that Jews never did any work on the Sabbath. Though this is true, it really isn’t the lack of work that was the benefit, it was what replaced the work that mattered. Today, Messianic Jews still do not do their normal work on the Sabbath in order that they may spend time in the Scriptures and/or helping other people. As Jesus tells us, it is truly more blessed to give than to receive. How can man not benefit from spending time in the Word? Unfortunately, people don’t make the time to be in the Word, but the Sabbath was made to give man that rest. How many times do we make time for vacations? I know that when I have gone on a vacation I haven’t come back “rested”. In fact, I am usually tired and dread going back to work. The only thing that truly refreshes me and gives me emotional and spiritual rest is time in the Scriptures. Nothing can renew a man like spending time with Jesus. Ever since I have began observing the Sabbath (out of love, not law) I have been blessed in ways I never thought of before. I used to simply not work at my normal job and instead would play games, take naps or watch television. That wasn’t rest. Now I may take a nap from time to time, but I make sure that I spend time in the Bible, not just reading, but studying with commentaries etc, praying, and sometimes fasting. All I can say is WOW, thank you Jesus. My prayer now is that you may also decide to do the same and receive the extra blessings the Lord would like to give you by being in His Word. This is why way back in Genesis 2 God blessed the Sabbath and made it holy, long before

the law was given. Even Adam and Noah made the Sabbath holy in their observance of it, even though they were not bound by any law to do so. The fourth commandment tells us to honor the Sabbath and keep it holy. Isn't it funny how when we say "Thou shalt not steal," or "Thou shalt not murder," people say "that's right and good." Why do we think it is good to obey all the commandments except this one? Let us now obey because of our love for Jesus. We see that in verse 18 we are told that the tablets of the Ten Commandments containing this Sabbath law were written on stone by the very finger of God. Before the Spirit was given the hearts of men were hard as stone. It wasn't until Christ came that our hearts were softened. Today, Paul tells us, "You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts" (2 Cor 3:2-3). Jeremiah also records that it isn't that the law is now null and void, it is just that the motivation to follow it has changed. No longer do we have to keep the Sabbath, now we should want to: "'This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,' declares the LORD. 'I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people'" (Jer 31:33).

Verse 14 tells us that people were to be put to death for not observing the Sabbath under the law. We see that once a man was caught collecting wood on this day, and according to Numbers 15:32-36, he was put to death according to God's command.

It is noteworthy that this command of keeping the Sabbath holy was given back in 16:23 and 23:12, even before the Ten Commandments were given. This seems to set this commandment aside as special.

Verse 13 tells us that the Sabbath was to be a sign between God and His people by sanctifying them with this day. This let them know that they were special and belonged to Him. God did not have to let them know about His special holy day, but because He considered them special, He revealed His holiness to them. Therefore, when we observe this day it is a sign that God has sanctified us and made us holy. Isaiah wrote, "Blessed is the man who does this, the man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil" (Isa 56:2). Verse 14 also tells us that it is holy for us, signifying that it not only honors God, but is of benefit to man. Again, this is why Jesus said the Sabbath was made for man. Because God worked six days and rested on the Sabbath so we too shall do the same until we finally will rest on our spiritual Sabbath when the Lord returns.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 31

- 1) What does Bezalel mean?
- 2) What does Oholiab mean?
- 3) What do the two above names indicate about God's planning for this Tabernacle? Do you think names have significance today? Why or why not?
- 4) What benefits are there in the feasts today?
- 5) What was the true goal of the Sabbath?
- 6) With what did God write the Ten Commandments?
- 7) On what were the Ten Commandments written?
- 8) On what are the Commandments written today? Give Scripture to support this.

- 9) Should we honor the Sabbath today? Why or why not? Use Scripture to give your defense.

Exodus Chapter 32

Exo 32:1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. **2** And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. **3** And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. **4**

And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 5 And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. 6 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

Many people have questioned the intent of the Israelites and have actually suggested that they wanted to truly worship God, but only wanted an icon of their God. I do not believe this is the case, as Aaron clearly seems to indicate that they were bent on evil (v. 22). In addition to this, the entire reason a calf was made was to imitate the god Apis, the bull worshipped by the Egyptians. The culture of Egypt had infected the Israelites much like our culture today has infected the churches with liberalism. Ezekiel wrote, "But they rebelled against Me and would not listen to Me; they did not get rid of the vile images they had set their eyes on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt" (Ezek 20:8). Luke tells us in Acts, "But our fathers refused to obey Him. Instead, they rejected Him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt" (Acts 7:39-40). This leaves little question as to what God saw as the intent of the Israelites.

Verse five tells us that Aaron even tried to make the Lord the center of their worship. Apparently this god had "brought them up out of Egypt." There can be no question that the Israelites were not intending to worship Apis the Egyptian god. However, they were adding Egyptian theology to appease their flesh and senses. However, God was not pleased (See 1 Kings 12:28). Likewise, today many try to claim that God has many names and one may worship Him through any of these names. Allah, Buddha, Krishna, Jesus, and God are all the same according to modern liberal theology. Scripture tells us something quite different, however: "God also said to Moses, 'Say to the Israelites, The LORD, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation" (Ex 3:15; see also 20:3, 23,24, Lev 19:12). One of the most well known phrases among the Jews came from Deuteronomy, which states, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deut 6:4). Our God is a jealous God and the same truth holds today as Paul said, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

When Moses had met with God on the mountain before going back to Egypt he was to tell the Israelites that "I AM WHO I AM" had sent him. Notice God did not say that His name was "I AM WHOEVER YOU WANT ME TO BE." The Israelites tried to redefine God into what they wanted, not what He was. Today we have this same problem when we try to fashion God into a god that fits our society. I hear people saying God won't throw good people into hell or God will understand if I do this or that, after all it's just a small sin. Hebrews tells us, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8). No matter how much society changes God's rules, His judgments will never change. When people think that God won't judge good people who don't believe in Jesus, but have broken the commands of God, I ask them a simple

question. What do you think would happen in the civil courts if a criminal would say to the judge, "I'm a good person, I just screwed up." "I also know that you are a good person and because of that I think you should let me go."? The judge would look at the criminal and tell him, "Yes, your right I am a good man and its because of my goodness that I cannot let crime go unpunished or else our society would be in chaos." You see, it's the very thing that people accuse God of being (good) that will send people to hell. It's because of God's goodness that He cannot let murderers, thieves and adulterers into heaven. The Ten Commandments show people that according to God's standards they have failed miserably and they will certainly be judged. Only through the blood of Jesus can one be made clean and have Christ, who took our judgment upon Himself for us. Making God to shape your own sinful pleasures may work while your on earth, but come judgment day, you will answer to the same God that gave man the Ten Commandments. If you aren't covered in the blood of Jesus through faith in Him, you won't have any excuse because the commandments silence the mouth of man so that we have no excuse for our actions. Likewise, it's our faith in Jesus that covers our sinfulness so that we should not die, but have eternal life. This is why Romans states, "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God" (Rom 3:19-20).

Perhaps the Israelites assumed Moses had died in the fire on the mountain. We are not told exactly how long Moses had been gone. We know that he would spend 40 days and nights on the mountain just as Jesus spent 40 days in the desert. Because Aaron had time to collect, mold and begin celebrating, it could have been at least a week before Moses returned when the people approached Moses.

It also seems possible that the Israelites considered Moses as their "god." God said that many of the Egyptians would view him as a god (7:1). Perhaps when Moses did not return, they needed a different god to "lead" them. On the other hand, they seemed to treat Moses rather disrespectfully for viewing him as a god. They even glibly state, "As for this fellow Moses." This hardly seems an appropriate way to talk about one you respect. Unfortunately, many churches view their leaders as "god-like" and simply take their word for things rather than going to God's Word to find truth. Anytime our eyes are taken off the true Lord we open ourselves up for disaster. It still seems strange that the Israelites so quickly forgot the great deeds God had done, but without Moses, who would be their mediator between them and God. They obviously knew God's presence was there as they could clearly see the smoke upon the mountain summit. But like the weak-faithed children today, they needed something to appeal to their senses. Often people do not believe in God because they want to see, feel and hear Him with their bodily senses, not realizing that it is with the Spirit that we worship and serve Him. Then and only then can our bodies benefit. John tells us, "God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

It is interesting to see that the people were willing to give up some of their vanity (jewelry) for a false god. How much more should we give up our self-centeredness for a true and living God. Too many Christians spend large

amounts of money on hair, clothing and jewelry, all because one's focus is on themselves. This is not to say one shouldn't take care to look presentable, but one should be careful not to always be looking at the flesh. Timothy says, "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful" (1 Peter 3:3-5).

Looking at Moses as a type of Christ we see a pattern of our own day. As the Lord's people wait for His return, many get impatient and call out to other gods or even deny God altogether. Peter writes, "First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, 'Where is this 'coming' He promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.' But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3:3-7). Let us not get weary, but keep our lamps lit, as we patiently wait for the bridegroom to return (see Romans 8:25).

Exo 32:7 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: 8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 9 And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: 10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. 11 And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? 12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. 14 And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people. 15 And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. 16 And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. 17 And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp.

Moses was placed in an interesting position. No doubt God would have destroyed the Israelites without a mediator stepping in. However, God knew what Moses would say. We read in the Psalms: “So He said He would destroy them--had not Moses, His chosen one, stood in the breach before Him to keep His wrath from destroying them” (Ps 106:23). God chose Moses for a reason and I believe one reason was to typify the coming of Jesus, our Mediator. It is interesting that if Moses would only abandon his calling, he would be given his own land and become a new and great nation. Instead, Moses willingly gave up the promised land to be with his people. Likewise, Jesus was offered a great kingdom by Satan when He was tempted in the wilderness. Jesus also left His heavenly home to stick it out with us and to be our Mediator to spare us from certain destruction. Moses was now placed as the judge of God’s people and their future was in his hands. Likewise, Jesus clearly is our Judge: “It is God who justifies. Who is He that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us” (Rom 8:33-35). It has been said that God doesn’t send anyone to hell, sin does. This is true, however, it is Christ who will condemn people whose sin is not covered by His blood.

Verse 10 tells us that God asked Moses to leave Him alone. Moses would not leave Him alone and, instead, “wrestled” with God much like Jacob did in Genesis 32:24 until he received God’s blessing.

God calls the Israelites the people of Moses. What a responsibility Moses had on his shoulders. But as a type of Christ, the people could belong to no one else. Moses did indeed act in a Christ-like manner and the people did learn to trust him for the most part, however, when the rough times came they were always quick to blame their leader. Isn’t it interesting how we also blame God for many trials in life? In fact, one of the most common complaints from so called “atheists” is that God could not be a loving God with the death and disease that exists. Rather than trust Him, they blame Him, and never receive the cure for the death and disease. God called the Israelites a stiff necked people and would continue to do so (Exo 33:3,5; 34:9; Duet 9:6). One need not witness long before we realize that our churches are also filled with stiff necked Christians that refuse to not only trust the Lord, but to worship Him only. We add the “Egyptian” culture into our own and follow the broad road of popular opinion. We compromise on the Word of God to keep from rocking the boat. We departmentalize Christ, leaving Him out of our entertainment and work time. We build our golden calves in the shape of boats, homes, money, and social friends.

Though God calls the Israelites the people of Moses, Moses turns it around and points out that they are truly His people. This was a humble act of a worthy leader, not taking credit for any of the great deliverance out of Egypt. Moses knew it was God’s strength that delivered the Israelites, and if this was a test, Moses passed once again. Moses appealed to God on the basis of three things: 1) God’s reputation as seen by the Egyptians, 2) God’s promises to the forefathers, and 3) God’s love for His people. God could have worked through all of these problems and still have destroyed the Israelites, however, that was not God’s plan. Moses, however, was concerned more for God’s glory than the

Israelites, or even himself. Jeremiah wrote, “For the sake of Your Name do not despise us; do not dishonor Your glorious throne” (Jer 14:21).

Verse 17 seems to imply that Joshua did not know what the Lord had told Moses. When Joshua heard the noise he assumed it was the sound of war, not realizing yet that a great celebration had been going on. Likewise, God could have told Moses what the people were planning to do right away when the collection of gold was taken, but He doesn’t tell Moses until the act had been done. God knows the secrets of men’s hearts and though we may think no one is watching, God always sees. Not only does God see our actions but He sees our hearts as well. This is why God calls them stiff necked. We read of Jesus in Revelation, “Then all the churches will know that I am He who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds” (Rev 2:23; see also Rom 8:27).

The tablets were written on both sides and by the very fingers of God. Even the tablets were made by God. This was God’s word and His command. Nothing of this could come from man because it was too holy. Romans speaks of this law, “Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good” (Rom 7:9-12). Later these commandments would be put into the holy ark of the covenant in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle. These tablets were a symbol of one part of the Trinity as well. Inside the ark was the gold jar of manna (Jesus), Aaron’s budding staff (Holy Spirit) and the Ten Commandments (Father). Right now the commandments were the precursor to the greater Word to come in Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life who would later send the Holy Spirit. Often times, as Christians, we tend to focus so much on the death and resurrection of Christ that we forget about His ascension. However, without the ascension an important aspect of the Trinity (and Christianity) is left out. Jesus Himself said, “But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. When He comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in Me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see Me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned” (John 16:7-11). The law was indeed holy, but it only was mandatory until the Holy Spirit would come. However, for those that do not have Jesus as their personal Savior the law still is in effect for them. This is why Timothy says, “We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious” (1 Tim 1:8-9). How sad to think that the fear ridden stone tablets are still a way of life for so many when the warm love and forgiveness of Jesus could be theirs. Go back and reread the section on “saints or sinners” to fully understand the freedom that comes from Christ and our death to the law through the body of Christ (Rom 7:4).

Exo 32:18 And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. 19 And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. 20 And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. 21 And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? 22 And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. 23 For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 24 And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.

It is very striking that Moses already knew what the Israelites were doing before he came down the mountain; however, seeing the actual act of sin spawned so much anger that he threw the tablets God had written down on the ground. Though nothing is mentioned of this act being sinful, many have commented that it was wrong for Moses to treat this holy word in such a way. However, God was not concerned as much for the tablets as He was for the heart of man and Moses was righteously angry much in the same way Jesus chased the money changers out of the temple when they had made it a den of thieves (Mark 11:17). Sin is so much more grievous when it is seen than when it is simply heard of. In much the same way, the pain and suffering of starving children is not as heart wrenching on television as it is in person. God would have our hearts be moved without having seen, just as faith should exist apart from seeing. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

The breaking of the commandments did show that this "law" was a temporary and imperfect covenant foreshadowing a greater covenant to come. Indeed, the Gospel promise cannot be broken to whom it belongs, it can only be rejected by those whom refuse to rid the golden calves of their lives. The broken tablets also symbolized the act of the Israelites breaking one of these very commandments: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." There could be no greater commandment broken and Moses knew it. No wonder he was so angry. Jesus had to come in order that this breakable law could become unbreakable. "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that He appeared so that He might take away our sins. And in Him is no sin. No one who lives in Him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen Him or known Him" (1 John 3:4-6). This was accomplished by Jesus fulfilling the law in our stead and as Romans puts it, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so He condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements

of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit” (Rom 8:1-4). Thanks be to God!

The calf was symbolically burned in fire as if the fires of hell were consuming it. The gold was melted down, hammered into fine layers and crushed into powder. When the gold was thrown into the water it should have floated in this form, leaving a mutilated god imaged in the water. Not only was their sin now exposed, but the consequence of sin was also very vivid.

Some have tried to sympathize with Aaron and suggest he had no choice but to make this calf because the people would have killed him. Scripture clearly points out that Aaron was not in the least bit correct as God was going to kill him for his disobedience: “I feared the anger and wrath of the LORD, for He was angry enough with you to destroy you. But again the LORD listened to me. And the LORD was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him, but at that time I prayed for Aaron too” (Deut 9:19-21). There are no imaginable circumstances that would merit one to abandon Christ. Many a saint have gone before that faced death rather than reject Jesus, and in so doing, gained life. We read in Revelation of such saints to come, “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death” (Rev 12:11).

Note that Aaron seems principally responsible because he was their leader. God will judge leaders harshly for leading the flock astray. This is also why I have seen so many times in my life, schools, churches or businesses suffer when their leaders are corrupt. I knew a school that had a terrible reputation among all who set foot in the building but no one really understood why. Later, three leaders of the school were found to have been molesting children for years. God will not bless a community whose leaders are ungodly. May this serve as a lesson for us when we elect our politicians because “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD” (Ps 33:12).

Though Aaron was responsible, he was indeed a godly man, and had only succumbed in weakness, as we all do at times. In some cases, we must learn the hard way and Aaron sure did that. We never again see Aaron do such a terrible thing and his faith must have been strengthened a great deal in this trial. We, too, grow through our trials and can be so thankful that when “sin abounds, grace increases all the more” (Rom 5:20).

Exo 32:25 And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) 26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. 27 And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. 28 And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. 29 For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day. 30 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and

now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. 31 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. 32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. 33 And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. 34 Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

Moses was the most humble man that ever lived according to Numbers, yet even this humility would not keep him from just anger over sin. Likewise, we should not think that we should compromise on the word of God in order to keep from rocking the boat. We often hear that we are not to judge one another, when in fact, Scripture makes it our obligation to do so. "What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. Expel the wicked man from among you" (1 Cor 5:12-13). God even commends us for not tolerating evil deeds: "I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false" (Rev 2:2).

Verse 25 in the Hebrew actually tells us that these revelers were naked. It is possible it means that they were exposed shamefully in a spiritual way much like Jesus refers to the ungodly churches, "Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed" (Rev 16:15). It is also possible that they were actually dancing around without any clothes as many pagan rituals were done. However, it seems most plausible that these people had shamefully exposed their sinfulness.

In verse 28 we see a strong contrast between the law of God and the Spirit of God. It is believed that the Ten Commandments were given to Moses on the Jewish feast of Shavuot. This feast was called Pentecost by the Greeks. As we have discussed earlier, all the feasts of the Lord have specific and spiritual fulfillments. Passover shows us the crucifixion of Christ, Firstfruits show us His resurrection, and then on Shavuot, He sent the Holy Spirit. On this day 3000 men were saved (Acts 2). Here in Exodus we don't have the Holy Spirit being given, but the law. Instead of men being saved, 3000 died because they had broken the commandments of God and worshipped images of false Gods. The law had done its work and silenced the mouth of the guilty. There was nothing they could say that would excuse their actions. The law was broken and there would be consequences of death without repentance and intercession. Likewise, without Jesus to intercede and take upon our consequences for us, we would also die because we have broken the commands of God. You may think that the sins you have committed are small because you haven't murdered anyone. Oh yes you have. Jesus said if you hate your brother you are guilty of murder (Mat 5:21). He also says that if you lust after a woman you even commit adultery (Mat 5:27). How will you measure up against the Ten

Commandments? You won't measure up unless when the Father looks at you He sees Jesus. Likewise, Moses was a figure of Christ here. Moses would intercede for the people and make sure sin had been atoned for. The Father looked at Moses who was willing to give his own life for the Israelites and saw a mediator, not the sins of the repentant people. Just as 3000 died even with Moses' intercession, today many will go to hell even with Jesus having died and rose. Why? These people never experienced sorrow for their actions and, therefore, never looked to Moses for intercession. Likewise, millions today have not come to repentance over their sins. They only see them as "small" or insignificant violations of the law. Sin has not become utterly sinful to them and though they know who Christ is, Christ has not become their intercessor. Romans reads, "But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful" (Rom 7:13). Without these "little sins" becoming utterly sinful people don't feel the need to run into the open arms of their high priest, Jesus Christ. There is a day coming soon when Jesus will tell His followers to take the sword, go through the camp, and kill all who have not repented and followed God. This is why we see the Rider on the white horse with a sword coming out of His mouth as He goes to destroy the ungodly in Revelation (Rev 19).

Verse 27 is a sobering reminder that our loved ones who do not obey the Lord will also perish. If anyone does not love the Lord more than his own father or mother, he is not worthy of Jesus (Mat 10:37). On judgment day, there will be many friends and relatives that will not get to go to heaven with you. This is a good reminder for us and it should help motivate us to be bold in our witness to our family, even if it means embarrassment or shame. It is better to lose a friend now on earth than to lose them for an eternity.

It is noteworthy that even after many had repented, and others had been killed because of this grave sin, God did not see the Israelites as guiltless. Atonement had to be made. The same is true today. No matter how much one is sorry for his sins and no matter how much you may beat yourself up over your sins, hell awaits. Only with the atonement from Jesus can we continue to move on towards our promised land. Moses, as a type of Christ had to make this atonement for the Israelites.

Verse 32 shows that Moses would rather die and be blotted out of the Book of Life than to go to the promised land without his people. Ironically, Jesus did die because he preferred to do so, rather than to enter heaven without His people. Likewise, Paul stated, "For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel" (Rom 9:3-4). Do we have this kind of love for the lost? I regret to say that I don't believe most Christians do. What would you think of a man who just sat and watched on shore as a boat was sinking a mile out at sea? Because he didn't know the people and he was reading a good book he didn't even get up to call the coastguard. All Christians today have people on sinking ships (unbelievers) all around them. Though these people are sure to die and spend an eternity in hell we would rather keep our eyes on the "Good Book" than get off our butts and actually obey what the Good Book says to do. Jesus told us, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the

name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19-20). Sometimes we are so busy worshipping God that we don’t obey Him. Pray that God would give you a zeal for the lost and a love for those that persecute you. If I gave you \$500 for every person you witnessed to tomorrow, how many people would you tell about Jesus? Probably every person you saw. In fact, I bet you would run great distances out of your way to see people. Why is it we are more zealous for money than we are for God? Moses would have rather been on that sinking ship than sit around in paradise by himself. How about you?

Having ones name blotted out in verse 33 indicates that all names are in the Lamb’s Book of Life to begin with. This supports the Biblical doctrine that all men are predestined to go to heaven. However, because of man’s sin, we have been separated from God. Unless through repentance and faith in Jesus, your sins are covered by the blood of Christ, you too, will be blotted out from this great book. Why are all names in the book to begin with? Jesus says, “He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). God doesn’t want to blot out your name, but He will because He is a good, loving and just God (like the civil court judge described in 32:1 commentary).

This Book of Life is not just a Revelation thing. Paul wrote, “Loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life” (Phil 4:3). Also in the Old Testament it was well understood that this book only contained the names of the righteous: “May they be blotted out of the Book of Life and not be listed with the righteous” (Ps 69:28).

Though Moses was willing to give his life for the Israelites, God was not willing to take his life in place of theirs. That right was reserved for Jesus. The soul that sins, he shall die. Each man will be held accountable to himself on the day of Judgment. Unless they can claim Christ, they will have nothing to say on their behalf. Many have told me that God will look kindly on them because they have done so many good things themselves. But Isaiah warns, “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags” (Isa 64:6). Note it isn’t the bad things that are like filthy rags, but it’s your “righteous acts” that are so dirty and unacceptable. Only those deeds done by Christ through you will be acceptable, and only those who believe have Christ in them. Romans puts it clearly: “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness” (Rom 8:9-10).

Just because we are forgiven doesn’t mean the consequences of sin will be taken away. Israel would be punished for this sin, even though their souls had been spared. Today, so called Christians often use God’s grace as a license to sin. As a result, they never experience the true peace of God. Consequences of sin follow them all the days of their life. Peter wrote, “Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor

the King” (1 Peter 2:16-17). Obedience to God brings forth a bounty of earthly blessings and leaves many consequences and heart-aches behind.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 32

- 1) What was the golden calf meant to imitate in the eyes of the Israelites?
- 2) What indicates that the golden calf was suppose to be an icon for the Lord? How might this fit with worship in churches today?
- 3) What did God mean by I AM WHO I AM?
- 4) How and why should we use the Ten Commandments in evangelizing?
- 5) Why might the Israelites have viewed Moses as a god?
- 6) What is the law suppose to do for the mouth?
- 7) With what part of our being are we to worship with?
- 8) How does Moses being gone so long fit with Jesus?
- 9) How does Moses leaving Egypt when he was 40 fit with Jesus?
- 10) What did Joshua think the noise was when he was coming down the mountain?
- 11) How was the Trinity seen in the ark of the covenant?

- 12) Was it wrong for Moses to break the Ten Commandments? Why or why not?
- 13) What did burning the golden calf symbolize?
- 14) What lesson can we learn from Aaron's mistake and electing politicians today?
- 15) Are Christians supposed to judge other people? Explain with Scripture.
- 16) What feast seems to mark the giving of the Ten Commandments?
- 17) What connection with the Ten Commandments does the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost have?
- 18) Have you ever murdered anyone? Use Scripture to support this?

Exodus Chapter 33

Exo 33:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swore unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: 2 And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: 3 Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way. 4 And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments. 5 For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may

know what to do unto thee. 6 And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb.

It is sad to see the consequence of the Israelite's sin. Since the Exodus from Egypt God had been among the Israelites surrounding and protecting them. Now, God would only go ahead of them. If God would stay among them in all His holiness, they would surely be wiped off the face of the earth because unholiness of any kind cannot be in the presence of pure holiness. Likewise, still suffering from the consequences of our sins (though forgiven), Jesus Christ has gone ahead of us into the land He has promised to us. Jesus even said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going" (John 14:1-4). Jesus told the disciples ahead of time not to be troubled, likewise, the Israelites in verse four were distressed at this news even though it was for their own good. The life-giving Spirit would not come unless Jesus first went away to His place. Jesus encouraged the disciples by letting them know: "But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. When He comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:7-8).

Some have wondered who this angel is. Was it really God? We get some clue back in chapter 23 where God said, "See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. Pay attention to Him and listen to what He says. Do not rebel against Him; He will not forgive your rebellion, since My Name is in Him" (Ex 23:20-21). There have been plenty of other Old Testament examples where God has been called an Angel of the Lord. It is most commonly understood that this "Angel of the Lord" was Jesus in a pre-birth form. We know that Jesus was at Creation and, therefore, His birth from Mary didn't bring Him into existence, it only brought Him into the human flesh so that God's will could be accomplished. Some think that because God says He will not go with the Israelites that this cannot be Jesus. However, if Jesus was this angel, He went *ahead* of them, which still means He was not *with* them. Even this distance from God caused the people to mourn. Today, we can rejoice that God has not left us alone as Jesus went to prepare a place for us. He has sent His Spirit who still lives in and among us. How often is this great Godly presence and precious gift overlooked or taken for granted among believers today?

The Israelites stripped themselves of all ornaments and jewelry as a sign of repentance and sorrow over the news of God's departure from the camp. We see other Old Testament examples of sorrow being expressed in such a way: "Because of this I will weep and wail; I will go about barefoot and naked. I will howl like a jackal and moan like an owl" (Mic 1:8).

Because of what appears to be genuine repentance, God will later tell Moses that His presence will go up with the Israelites (v.14). This does not mean God changes His mind. God never changes His mind. In Samuel we read, "He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change His mind; for He is not a

man, that He should change His mind” (1 Sam 15:29). I like to look at it this way: God always follows the rules. The rules of the game say the unrepentant sinner must die. At times in Scripture people are condemned by those rules. However, once they repent, the rules of the game change and God spares them. It isn’t because God has changed His mind, it is because the people have changed their heart. Likewise, the rules of the game do not change, different rules simply apply to different circumstances.

Exo 33:7 And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp. 8 And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle. 9 And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses. 10 And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. 11 And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

The tent is called a *haa-ohel* in Hebrew, which is a different word than is normally used for the tabernacle (*mishkan*). Some translations actually say Tabernacle here, but it doesn’t seem to be what the text is saying. This “tent of meeting” was a separate tent from the one among the community. In setting up this tent outside the camp the cloud of God’s presence moved away from the Tabernacle and went to this tent. This was a very visible sign of God’s departure from among them. According to the Talmud, this tent was 2000 cubits away. That is over 13,000 yards away, which would be a considerable distance.

Another example of Moses as a type of Christ is seen here in verse 8. Just as the disciples stood and watched as Jesus ascended to His holy place in heaven, the people stood and watched as Moses walked to the holy tent of meeting.

Verse 11 tells us that Moses spoke with God face to face. Some have questioned how this could be because the Bible says God cannot be seen by men. Speaking of God, Timothy said He was the, “King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see” (1 Tim 6:15-16). In 1 John we also read, “No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us” (1 John 4:12 See also John 1:18). If this is true, which there can be no question about it, how did Moses speak with God face to face? In Numbers we see how God describes to Miriam and Aaron, His relationship with Moses, “When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal Myself to him in visions,

I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?" (Num 12:6-8). God says that though they were standing face to face, Moses was only allowed to see the form of God and not the details of His glory. Indeed, even dimmed as it was, the glory of God's presence was so bright it made the face of Moses glow as we will see in later verses. It seems that this cloud covered God so that only His form could be seen and that His "unapproachable light" and glory would not kill Moses.

It is interesting that Joshua is called a "young" aide (v. 11). In referencing Joshua 24:20, we see that he must have been 50 years old now. It is possible that the Hebrew word here means unmarried, however, it seems doubtful. On the other hand, Moses may have been referring to him as young in comparison or as having been an aide for such a short time.

Exo 33:12 And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. 13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. 14 And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. 15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. 16 For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. 17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

There are two problems that Moses tries to fix with God and the people. First, God's wrath had been on the people and Moses took care of that in 32:14. The second problem was that God's presence was not going with them anymore. This just wouldn't do. Moses would rather die now than to attempt to lead these people without Divine intervention. Likewise, Moses knew these people would die without Divine intervention.

We see Moses as a type of Christ once again in the two problems that Moses intercedes to solve. First, Christ turned God's wrath away from us by interceding for us. Secondly, Christ gave us the added blessing of God's presence in us. Christ now lives in us, not far off, where we cannot benefit from Him. "We know that we live in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit" (1 John 4:13-14).

Moses hits the nail right on the head when he refers to God's earlier promises of His presence going with them. God has never let one of His promises fail. The only reason God has taken it this far is to allow Moses to intercede and to foreshadow Christ's future role. If God's presence was not with the Israelites there would be nothing to distinguish them from the rest of the world. Isn't that true even for us today? Without Christ's presence in us we are no different than the ungodly. It is His power and presence that lives through us

allowing us to live and act as children of the light. We see a good example of this in Acts where it states, “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13). Here we are ordinary and unschooled men ourselves. When we speak with the authority of God’s Word and the courage of the Spirit, people do take note of us. My prayer is always that when they wonder where my courage comes from that they will take note that I walk with Jesus. Courage is a tremendous witness that many Christians do not take advantage of. It is a huge part of what separates us from the world.

Moses requests God’s ear because he is known by God by name, emphasizing the personal relationship they have. It is the same today, only those who have a personal relationship with Christ get an appointment with Him. Secondly, Moses reminds God that He has found favor in Moses in the past and if this be true, he had a personal request to make. Moses wanted to know God in a deeper way. This is amazing when one considers how much Moses had already seen of God on Mount Sinai. Once one experiences God first hand, he desires to have more and more of a relationship with Him. What a great model prayer for us today. We may pray, in essence, as Moses said, “Lord, because you know me by name and have promised me all good things in You, please show me Your presence and glory that I may know Your grace resides with me and that I may know You even more.”

God concludes by telling Moses He will answer his prayers because God knows Moses by name. Jesus puts it this way: “Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!” (Matt 7:9-12). Now that we are God’s children through faith in Christ, (Gal 3:26) we can boldly approach God with our requests knowing He will answer us.

Exo 33:18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. 19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. 20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. 21 And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: 22 And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: 23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

Moses asks to see God’s glory. Just as Jacob wrestled with God and refused to let go until God blessed him, Moses would not leave until first he had received a special blessing. This seems strange when Moses has already seen God so up-close and personal to ask to see God’s glory. Didn’t he already see God’s glory? No! Moses had not yet seen God in all His glory and Moses knew it. What a bold request made by Moses. What an example of how those who

follow Christ, and are favored by God (anyone in Christ is), may boldly approach the Creator of the universe.

Verse 19 shows us that God will only answer Moses' request in part. He will allow Moses to see His goodness, but not all of His glory. Isn't it amazing that even God's goodness is greater than all the things Moses experienced on Mount Sinai? God's goodness even exceeds talking with God face to face (Exo 24:16).

We also see the goodness of God is proclaimed in the announcement of His name. As earlier discussed, the Jews have always believed this name was too holy to be pronounced by human lips. There is even great debate today as to how to pronounce the name because it is too holy to mispronounce. Moses heard God's name by the mouth of God Himself. This may seem small but I believe this may have made more of an impression on Moses than anything else. In Revelation we see God has a name that no one knows, "His eyes are like blazing fire, and on His head are many crowns. He has a name written on Him that no one knows but He Himself" (Rev 19:12-13). I like the fact that God's name is so holy that no mouth has been able to curse it or use it in vain.

Moses, in the flesh, could not see God's full glory and live. As it is, Moses will literally glow from the radiance of God's back side. His face would be brighter than looking directly at the sun and would destroy all living cells. Some still argue that Moses saw God and didn't die, however, as we discussed before, Moses only saw the form of God (Num 12:8), not His face. It must have been like seeing headlights some distance away through thick fog as God's glory appeared in clouds and smoke. Now however, there seems to be no fog, only the back of God. I so look forward to the day when I will see God as He truly is and not through a dim glass. "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2-3).

Moses may have seen God's glory a little different than how we see it today, however, there is no question that we do have opportunity to see and live in the presence of the Lord. In Corinthians it states, "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18). Unfortunately, too many Christians do not realize they have this relationship with the Lord, usually because they are not communing with Him through His Word and spending quality prayer time. Life gets so busy, the little time we do have with the Lord is spent with wandering minds and worldly cares. Because of this, few people realize that Christ has made it possible for us to see God face to face.

The only thing that allowed Moses to be in the presence of God's full glory was a rock. In 1 Corinthians 10:4 we see that the rock that accompanied the Israelites was Christ. Could this rock that shielded Moses' have been Christ? The disciples were able to see God through Christ. "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority" (Col 2:9-10). God's complete glory was in Jesus, but the flesh only allowed the form of God to appear, yet the disciples had the ability to talk with God face to face. Likewise, it is only through Christ that we can approach God. Without that Rock, we too

would die in God's glory, but instead, we now have the fullness of the Deity through that Rock, Jesus Christ.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 33

- 1) Where did God say He was going to go after the golden calf incident? Why was this a bad thing?
- 2) Does God ever change His mind? Why or why not?
- 3) How could Moses speak with God face to face?
- 4) What were two issues Moses mediated for between God and the Israelites?
- 5) What distinguished the Israelites from the other nations around them?
- 6) What is the significance of God calling Moses by name?
- 7) What is different about a name Jesus will be called in the end times?
- 8) What allowed Moses to be in the presence of God's glory? How does this represent our relationship with God today?

Exodus Chapter 34

Exo 34:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. 2 And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount. 3 And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount. 4 And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.

Moses is instructed to hewn out two stones just like the first ones that God had used for the Ten Commandments. Moses broke it, Moses fixes it. However, only God could give the original law and write the words upon the stone. It is interesting that God uses reference to the heart as being stone (Ezek

11:19, 36:26). The law of God has now been written upon our hearts, “They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts. . .” (Rom 2:15). Though our hearts were once as stone, through Christ, we now have hearts of flesh (Ezek 11:19). Perhaps these two stones represent the two types of hearts given to man. God orders the stones to be renewed just as the heart of man has been renewed when God wrote upon our hearts a second time, the same message, but under a new covenant. Only man can take hold of God’s grace and make the heart of stone become one of sensitive flesh through humility and repentance that leads to faith. Only God can work that faith in us and only God could write it upon our hearts to desire such a thing. Perhaps this is also why the stones are in the first incident called singular tablets of stone, (24:12), and now Moses is to hewn them from stones (plural). In the first case the stone was singular in that it was merely the letter of the law that killed. Now, that same law has dual meaning. Jesus did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. Now the law is seen written on a different tablet, it has been fulfilled, yet it still remains with a different function. Though it remains, it doesn’t kill. We now obey, not out of fear, but out of love. God alone made the first stone, but now man’s love for God has made the stone a desired part of himself. Christ has relieved us from the curse of the law, but not the command of it. Earlier I said, Moses broke the stone so Moses fixes it. Remember Moses is a type of Christ figure. Christ came and did away with the curse of the law (broke the first stone) and made another stone with the same message viewed in a different light.

Just as in the earlier incident (19:12), no man or animal was allowed to set foot near the mountain. Only Moses was to approach God for he had the Spirit of God. We read in Corinthians, “He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant-not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor 3:6).

People often view these tablets of stone as being rather large, however, they were small enough to fit in Moses hands and also small enough to fit into the ark of the covenant, which was only about 3 ½ feet by 2 feet in size.

Exo 34:5 And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. 8 And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. 9 And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance. 10 And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee.

Verse five shows us that God humbled Himself and “stooped down” to our level as He descended into the cloud. To the humble, God will humble Himself. This is why Jesus is not received by the proud because He doesn’t reveal Himself to the proud heart. The biggest obstacle for an unbeliever is pride. Until he gives up all control and human intellect, true wisdom and knowledge will never be had.

Verses six and seven were called the “sermon on the Lord’s Name” by Luther. Packed in these few lines are carefully chosen descriptive Words of Christ. So many of them reflect the fact that God is love. Earlier in 3:14 we saw God’s name as the great I AM, which denoted His majesty and self existence. Here, however, the qualities of God seem to be expressed as the great I AM relates to humanity. The quality of compassion shows that God hurts with us and this is one reason why He wants the best for us. A father guides his children and sometimes says “No” because that is what guidance is. Likewise, the Lord never ignores our prayers, He just sometimes say’s “No.”

Grace shows us His unmerited love and mercy. Patience shows how though we mess up time and time again, the Lord continues to hold out His hand to us, even when we don’t want to grab hold of His hand.

Love is impossible to sum up in a line but 1 Corinthians tells us love is a commitment and an action more than an emotion: “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres” (1 Cor 13:4-7). One can replace the word “it” in every sentence with “Lord” to have a better understanding of who Jesus is. In fact, John wrote, “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love” (1 John 4:8).

Faithfulness shows God’s commitment to us. Never is a promise broken that He has made. The Psalmist said, “Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them” (Ps 119:140).

Unconditional love shows us that the Lord’s love does not depend upon our actions to merit it. The Israelites certainly didn’t deserve God’s presence and love but they received it anyway. The same is true for you and I.

Forgiveness is perhaps one of the greatest of all these qualities. Though each one is based on love, and so many are interconnected, this is the one attribute that stands out. ONLY God can forgive sins. This is why the Pharisees were so upset with Jesus when He forgave the sins of people; He was claiming to be God. It is only because of forgiveness that we are going to be able to stand before this Holy God in heaven. Love, mercy, patience and all the other qualities could not get us into heaven. This is precisely why Jesus had to die. Jesus couldn’t love us into heaven, He had to die so that we may be forgiven and then be able to enter heaven because of His loving invite. God is a just God. Not everyone is going to be allowed into heaven as we see in the latter part of verse seven. God cannot let sin go unpunished because of His love. Many today think, “Oh, God is a god of love so He won’t send me to Hell.” Try that in a civil court. “Oh, judge, I know you are a good man who loves humanity and because of this I know you won’t punish me or send me to jail.” The judge would look at you and say, “Your right about one thing, I am a good

man and it's because of this goodness that I must punish crimes." You see, the very thing people accuse God of (Love) is what is going to keep them out of heaven. What would you think of a judge that allowed criminals to go free? He certainly wouldn't be a good judge would he? This is why Jesus is so important. Jesus took our jail sentence, but so many people won't let Him. They want to pay for their own mistakes and sins. I've got news. Sin is so utterly sinful that the only payment outside of Jesus is eternal damnation. This is why forgiveness is the ultimate quality of God.

In describing Himself, God was letting the Israelites know that His forgiveness of their sin with the golden calf had nothing to do with any of their own merits, but upon His loving qualities. His forgiveness was not just for thousands of people but for the whole world. In fact, the Chaldee version of this portion of Scripture reads, "for a thousand generations" God offers forgiveness.

At the end of verse seven we see what type of sins are forgiven by God. Wickedness, rebellion and sin are not three ways of stating the same thing, but are three different types of offenses. Wickedness is not as much of an action as it is a state of the heart. It implies an attitude that makes one go astray. Rebellion is actually the word for "transgression." Transgression is a violation of the law due to ignorance. Though every sin is a transgression, not all transgression is sin. We read in Romans, "Because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression" (Rom 4:15). Finally, sin is the disobedience to the law and anything done apart from faith (Rom 14:23).

With all these qualities of God now described it may have been best viewed that God simply passed before Moses and proclaimed, "Yahweh" the name of God. All these qualities are simply Yahweh. This is why God promised earlier, "I will cause all My goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim My name, the LORD, in your presence" (Ex 33:19). God didn't lie, He simply proclaimed His name, in which all the above characteristics take form. It would not surprise me if Moses actually had been overcome with the actual experience of each of these qualities when God pronounced His name. Imagine having the feeling of total love and forgiveness in an instant of almost total separation from the flesh. Perhaps this is why Moses responds simply by falling down in worship.

It is in verse 8 that we see Moses quickly prostrated himself. It seems that when he asked to see God's glory, hearing of His qualities was yet already more glory than the flesh could stand. Moses was no doubt also bowing in reverence and respect as well as submission to the Holy Lord. But no doubt these qualities God possessed were glorious. We have a hard enough time trying to describe words like grace, mercy and love. Imagine being in the presence of these things wholly manifested.

Moses takes it upon himself to call upon these qualities in His prayer as he asks for God's mercy, love, forgiveness and compassion or favor upon them. God had already promised these things to Moses, however, Moses here ratifies those promises. I, too, would want to pour out my heart in God's presence to show my great desire to remain in His presence when I left. Once one experiences the qualities of God first hand, never do you want to be away from them. Once again, experiencing God is no intellectual routine.

Ray Comfort, an open-air preacher, used to tell the story of a boy whose father warned him not to touch the heater because it was hot. The boy now had an intellectual knowledge that the heater was hot. This is the way many people are today within the churches. They have an intellectual knowledge of God. One day the boy decided to test out if what his father was saying was true and he touched the heater. As the hot iron seared the boy's flesh his intellectual knowledge of the heaters heat became a personal experience. Now imagine that the electricians came to check out the heater and saw the boys wounded hand. Upon asking him what happened he explained that the heater had burned him. As the electrician began to look at the heater he noticed it wasn't plugged in, in fact, the plug had been torn off. The electrician tells the boy the heater couldn't have burned him because it would be impossible without electricity. Will the boy believe him? No way. The boy has experienced the heaters heat and no longer has a simple intellectual knowledge of it. No matter what anybody says they will not be able to change the mind of this boy. Likewise, until people experience the heat of God's love they will only have an intellectual knowledge of it. When scientists begin questioning God's existence and His creating power these intellectuals are swayed because they haven't experienced God. Once they have this experience, however, nothing can shake the foundation on which they stand. In fact, what others don't seem to understand becomes very clear, even intellectually, to the one who experiences God.

In verse ten Moses is not asking God to bring the people into their inheritance of land. The Hebrew indicates that the people themselves are to be the inheritance, and thus, Israel is to belong to the Lord. Deuteronomy says, "But as for you, the LORD took you and brought you out of the iron-smelting furnace, out of Egypt, to be the people of His inheritance, as you now are" (Deut 4:20).

As always, these verses speak to us today. We, too, are a stiff-necked people that God has chosen to make His inheritance because a mediator (Jesus) stepped in for us. It is because of this that God does not grudgingly go with us, but in love and mercy leads us every step of the way on our journey to our heavenly promised land. Too often people have the attitude that God loves us only because He has to and not because He wants to. It is important for us to realize that God forgave us of our sins 2000 years ago. When we mess up we think that we have disappointed and shocked God. No! God knew centuries before you were born that you would make that mistake. Even knowing ALL your mistakes that you have made, and will make, Jesus forgave them when you became a faith filled believer in Christ. We read in Colossians, "He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross" (Col 2:13-14). Notice that ALL our sins were nailed to the cross when Jesus died (even the ones you haven't committed yet). Don't let the devil take away the joy of knowing the fullness of God's glory, mercy, love and forgiveness. The sooner we realize this great truth the sooner peace will come into the Christian life: The man who has been forgiven little will love little and the man who has been forgiven much will love much.

Exo 34:11 Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 12 Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: 13 But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: 14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: 15 Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; 16 And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods. 17 Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.

Verse 11 shows us that God has not only forgiven the Israelites, but now they are once again highly favored. In reality, that is what forgiveness really is. To say we have forgiven someone, and yet still hold a grudge, simply means we really haven't forgiven them. When God forgives, He throws your sin as far away as the east is from the west (Ps 103:12).

We must also remember that God is not bringing the Israelites into the promised land because they have been so righteous. "It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the LORD your God will drive them out before you" (Deut 9:5). This was D-day for the other nations because of their wickedness. Likewise, when Judgment Day comes, it won't be because of our righteousness, but because of the evil sins of the nations. This is why it is called Judgment Day. If the world wasn't evil, it would already be heaven on earth.

Therefore, if God is against the nations in the land Israel is about to inherit, what a grave sin it would be for Israel to make peace with them. God warns them not to do what He knew they would do: Do not intermarry with them. Once one marries into a family, that family becomes a part of him. Many Israelites began worshipping false gods because their wives led them into these vial ways. Even Solomon was no exception: "He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been" (1 Kings 11:3-4).

God's name is Jealous. This emphasizes the utter importance of the Israelites to remain faithful. As Proverbs says, "For jealousy arouses a husband's fury, and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge" (Prov 6:34). All throughout the Scriptures we see that God refers to the Israelites and the church as His bride. That makes God our husband. If we are unfaithful and prostitute ourselves to others He will take revenge and show no mercy. Remember, God's very name is the embodiment of mercy yet He will show none. In essence, He will leave them alone without any of His loving qualities by saying, "Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt 25:41-42).

Verse 17 tells us the second command was not to make any idols. This was the sin they just had fallen into with the golden calf. To be sure, they were to destroy all idols (v. 13), so that they would not be tempted to worship them throughout time. Keeping idols in the vicinity is like keeping a bottle of whiskey in the closet when you're an alcoholic. They would always be there beckoning your attention.

The pagan cultures mentioned, sadly but surely, had roots from Noah. The Amorites can be traced to Samu or Sumu, which is the Biblical Shem. Their capital seemed to be at Babylon and at one time they had a ruler named Khammu-rabi, who is the Amraphel of Gen 14:1.

According to Genesis 10:6 Canaan was a son of Ham. The Canaanites are often used to refer to almost the whole of Palestine. Their culture was built upon many gods, but ironically, they had abandoned the true God.

The Hittites are referred to 48 times in the Old Testament. In 21 cases there is a connection with the Syrian and Canaanite races which stem from Chaldean and Babylonian roots. Technically, all these pagan cultures have some connection to Babylon. This is historically and archaeologically supported, which ultimately supports the truth of Scripture because the Tower of Babel in Babylon was the main capital of the world before the confusion of the tongues caused people to disperse. This is why Revelation says, "BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev 17:5). It is also interesting to go back to Genesis and see that Esau was corrupted by marrying Hittite women (Gen 26:34, 36:2).

The Perizites are mentioned way back in the time of Shechem in Genesis 34:30. The very word implies "villager" or "village" which may indicate they lived in small villages or unwalled cities.

Again, Genesis 10:17 shows us the Hivites and the Jebusites came from Canaan. The Jebusites are most commonly known for inhabiting Jerusalem. In fact, they would occupy that city until the time of David, who finally overtook them years after Joshua entered the promised land. In all these cultures, the most common theme is their ungodliness, the very reason that God was going to destroy them. The United States could learn a valuable lesson here. We often think that the U.S.A. is safe because, after all, we are more Godly than Afghanistan. Do not be misled, Israel viewed themselves more Godly than Babylon, but God used pagan countries to humble His people in order to bring them to repentance. God will not allow the Christians in this country to continue worshipping Him with their lips on Sunday, but keeping their hearts away from Him throughout the rest of the week. It seems the greater the amount of grace God pours out on His people the more He expects from them. Our nation has removed God's name from schools and the public in general. Many are even offended by His name being on our money. God has blessed us and in turn we have rejected Him. God is going to once again destroy a country and culture that ignores Him. I believe God has been sounding the trumpet to warn us to repent but we are ignoring His voice. Judgment will begin in the house of God (Amos 3:13 ff.) Is your church preaching the truth of God's Word without compromise or worry of offense? If not, you most likely are in a church that

stands near God's judgment. God has called us to speak the truth, not to become numb to it.

Exo 34:18 The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. 19 All that openeth the matrix is mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male. 20 But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty.

This section begins by repeating earlier commands from chapter 13 to continue the Passover celebration. As we discussed earlier in this book, the Passover is a lasting ordinance that is still symbolic of things to come. This is why Jesus said at the last Passover meal, "I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:16). The fourth cup of the Passover meal will take place at the wedding banquet of the lamb. This is discussed in the section on Exodus 6:6 in greater detail.

The Passover was to be celebrated yearly in the month of Abib, at the appointed time, in order that Jesus would fulfill the Passover requirements by dying on that very day that the lamb was normally sacrificed.

In verse 20 we see the firstborn animal was to have its neck broken if it was not redeemed. The Bible tells us why back in chapter 13 where we read, "Redeem with a lamb every firstborn donkey, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem every firstborn among your sons. In days to come, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'With a mighty hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed every firstborn in Egypt, both man and animal. This is why I sacrifice to the LORD the first male offspring of every womb and redeem each of my firstborn sons.' And it will be like a sign on your hand and a symbol on your forehead that the LORD brought us out of Egypt with His mighty hand" (Ex 13:13-16). When God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, the blood of the lamb upon the doorframe was a symbol of redemption. Anyone who did not have the blood on their door frame lost the firstborn among them. It would be interesting to see if perhaps those that were killed by the angel of death in Egypt had broken necks. We will never know, but because of this symbolism, I wouldn't put it past God. For further discussion on this go back and look at the section on Exodus 13:13.

The donkey was not a sacrificial lamb and, therefore, needed to be redeemed with a lamb. Here it only tells them to redeem their firstborn sons, but in Numbers 3:47 and 18:16 we see with what they were to redeem them. Each male was to be redeemed by 5 shekels of silver. Silver represents blood and it was upon this that man's true redemption has come. The silver that was collected by the Israelites was used as the silver in the foundation of the Tabernacle. Knowing that the Tabernacle is all a symbol of Jesus we can see that the blood of Jesus is the foundation for the church today. This is why Peter wrote, "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or

gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:18-20).

Exo 34:21 Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest. 22 And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. 23 Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. 24 For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year. 25 Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning. 26 The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk. 27 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

Once again we have earlier commands being repeated. Repetition usually means it is something important enough to be reminded of. We have already discussed how the seven day week is a pattern of history and the Sabbath day rest of the future (Heb 4). Here we see that God clearly states He created the world in six days because He wanted us to imitate and follow this example. There is no question that it is good for our bodies to rest one out of seven days, but I don't believe God was thinking as much about our physical well being as He was our spiritual well being. If everyone would take one day out of the week and rest from their work so that they could spend that time with God and make that day "holy," can you imagine how much closer to people would be to God? Imagine how much one could learn of God's Word by simply spending a day a week with Him. This still remains one of the Ten Commandments, but it is one that most Christians ignore. Yes, we are not bound to the Ten Commandments. However, that only means that these commandments are not necessary for our salvation. Just because we are not legally bound to them, does not mean we are not morally bound to them. Now we don't have to obey them, but we still should. God didn't do away with the law, Jesus only fulfilled it. The law is still there for us to follow out of love for Christ. Isn't it strange that Jesus gave His own life for us and we can't even give Him a day? Even during plowing season, the busiest time of the year, one is to stop and give God his heart. Luther used to say that he would pray extra hours when he had a busy day ahead of him. Doesn't that make sense? It is when we are the busiest that we need God's help the most. Things always seem to get done, with or without the day of rest, but at least with the day of rest we will get them done more joyfully and draw nearer to God at the same time. I have known many farmers and business men who have taken off the Sabbath and not a one have suffered for it. In fact, I see outward signs of many blessings in their life. As they say, the proof is in the pudding, and the proof is there.

The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), the Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles), and Passover were the three required annual feasts in which you were to go to

Jerusalem and celebrate. This seems to put the spotlight on these feasts as some special occasion and meaning. We know as fact that Passover was when Christ died and then rose as the First Fruit offering after three days. The Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost. What about the Feast of Tabernacles? There is no dispute among theologians today that this is the seventh day eternal rest discussed in Hebrews 4. In John 1:1 we see that the “Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” The word, “dwelt” literally is “tabernacled.” Because of this, it is universally believed among Messianic Jews (those that believe in Jesus as their Savior) that Jesus was born on this feast. This fits nicely with Jesus being conceived 9 months earlier right when the Feast of Lights, or Hanukkah, is celebrated. Jesus, the light of the world was most likely conceived on the Feast of Lights. As we have earlier discussed, no one believes Jesus was born at Christmas time. The only reason we celebrate this holiday is because Constantine tried to get the support of the pagan and religious people by melding Christianity with the pagan celebration of Christmas. The church simply tried to overtake the holiday much like they are trying to do with Halloween. The point is, the feasts were not in the spotlight for no reason, but modern Christians seem to be ignoring them today because they think the spotlight has been turned off. Some try to say that they are fulfilled already. No! As a matter of fact, the Feast of Tabernacles is said to be celebrated after the Lord’s second coming (Zech 14:1-18). There are seven Jewish feasts with the spring feasts pointing to the conception of Jesus, His birth, death and resurrection. The fall feasts represent Christ’s second return, judgment day and His heavenly reign. I recommend going to your Christian book store and getting a book on the Jewish feasts and see how from a Christian perspective they are not null and void, but very applicable for our lives today. Ignorance is not bliss when it comes to God’s Word.

Jesus did celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. In fact, on the last and greatest day of the feast the rabbis would pour out water from a pitcher to ask God’s blessings to be upon the next year with rain and a good harvest. On this very day Jesus stood up and proclaimed Himself to be the Living Water in John 7:37-38. In essence, what Jesus was saying is that I am what gives you life. In John we read, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:13-14). One reason they would live in booths this week was to also symbolize their heavenly home where God would protect them. Jesus also said, “In My Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am” (John 14:2-3). This house Jesus is preparing is in some ways our tabernacle. Jesus tells us in Revelation about the New Jerusalem, “I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (Rev 21:22-23). The temple and the tabernacle were pretty much the same thing. Just as Jesus “tabernacled” among us on earth (John 1:1-4), He is coming again as that tabernacle. What a joyous celebration that will be. Perhaps this is why the Feast of Tabernacles is a week long celebration for the Messianic Jew today. In Hosea 6 we read, “Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to

acknowledge Him. As surely as the sun rises, He will appear; He will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth” (Hos 6:3). Jesus is here called the winter and the spring rains. The Jews have long made the point that the spring feasts are used to celebrate the spring rains and the fall feasts are used to celebrate the winter rains. Perhaps Hosea was saying Jesus will come in the spring (as He did at Passover 2000 years ago) and He will return again in the fall (at the Feast of Tabernacles). Only time will tell, but when one studies these feasts, there can be no question that they do speak of the Christ’s second coming.

Part of the feasts required faith and trust in the Lord that He would not allow foreign countries to come in and take over the land while they were gone. Common sense would say not to leave your land empty, but God wants us to depend upon Him fully.

You may go back to this commentary on 12:10 for further information to see why some of these things were done at Passover. For now, some life application is important. God said that no blood sacrifice was to be offered with yeast or leaven. The leaven represents the flesh and sin. Christ, the ultimate blood sacrifice, was without sin or blemish. But Amos shows us how this also applies to our hearts when giving sacrifice to God. Amos wrote the inspired words, “‘Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three years. Burn leavened bread as a thank offering and brag about your freewill offerings—boast about them, you Israelites, for this is what you love to do,’ declares the Sovereign LORD” (Amos 4:4-5). Why would God tell the Israelites to burn leavened bread in a sacrifice? In context, Amos is showing how Israel has rejected God. Though they continued going to church and offering sacrifices, they were doing it with selfish interests. They were luke-warm Christians who went to church but lived sin-filled lives. This is why God said, “I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies” (Amos 5:21). As a result of this flesh or leaven filled worship, God warned that He would take away His protection from the people. Here in Exodus we see that as long as God’s people obeyed Him and went to worship Him on these three required feasts of the year, He would offer them protection. However, once the leaven came into their worship Amos writes of God’s warning, “On the day I punish Israel for her sins, I will destroy the altars of Bethel; the horns of the altar will be cut off and fall to the ground” (Amos 3:14). Back in 27:2 we showed how the horns of God’s altar represented the Gospel and safety. When one had been in trouble he could go grab on to the horns of the altar and be safe. God told the Israelites in Amos that because they had added leaven to their worship, the horns of God’s safety and protection would be cut off. Today, most churches have added leaven to their worship. No longer is the true Word of God the focus. Many pastors compromise on the convicting Word so as not to offend or lose members who are financial contributors. Music and soft pews have replaced messages of repentance and moral absolutes. Don’t get me wrong, I am not against music in the churches. I am only against music being the draw to churches when the Word is watered down. When God destroyed Israel they were packing the churches every Sabbath just as our churches are full each Sunday. The problem is, people are filling the churches, not because the law has shown them such a great need for a Savior, but because they are looking for happiness, social

relationships, a free conscience, fire insurance, or simply it's what they grew up with. People are going to church feeling as if they are pretty good on their own, but realizing that they have sinned a little bit and, therefore, Jesus has taken away their \$5 debt. Because the law is no longer given and repentance is no longer preached, people do not realize that we haven't been forgiven a \$5 debt but a \$5,000,000,000,000 debt. As Romans tells us, "But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful" (Rom 7:13). Today sin is just kind of bad or dirty, not utterly despicable. This is why Satan has worked so hard to remove the Ten Commandments from our schools, churches and lives. He knows that people will justify themselves and see Jesus as an option, not a necessity. When we read Amos closely and carefully, we see that he speaks to our own country who offers leavened sacrifices to God. In 3:8 Amos calls the Lord a lion because He is about to pounce upon His prey. In verse ten God says His people are "not doing what is right." In fact, they "store up violence and robbery in their palaces." Sound like the U.S.A.? The palaces were the rich people and their corporations. Today, Enron and other huge companies have been robbing the common people blind through violence and dishonesty while they themselves store up piles of money. In 3:11 Amos tells us that God would spoil there palaces by allowing adversaries from other countries to oppress them and ruin the palaces. America is now in economic hardship because of the adversary of terrorism. In Amos 4:9 God tells them He gave them mildew and disease among their plants and trees. Right now in America, the Japanese beetles and other botanical diseases are threatening our crops and forests. Verse ten tells of God taking away their horses (used for battle) and our countries armed forces are at the lowest ever. In 4:7 God withholds the rain and yet right now America is in a drought. In 8:11 it says that God' Word is also in a drought season, and in America, truth is no longer upheld because God's Word is no longer believed. In 4:10 the Lord reveals that He is calling them to repentance just as He did to the Egyptians with their plagues, yet nobody is alarmed. Is God calling our country to repentance and yet nobody is alarmed? Please go back and read Amos slowly and read it as if he were speaking to us. God is telling us to get rid of the leaven in our lives.

The Feast of Weeks is called Pentecost in the Greek, but the Jews call it Shavuot. It marked the end of the barley harvest and the beginning of the wheat harvest. Spiritually it was important because this was the day God put the law into the hearts of men through the Holy Spirit. In Jeremiah we read, "'This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,' declares the LORD. 'I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people'" (Jer 31:33). Before His resurrection Jesus told the disciples to wait for an important day in Jerusalem. Pentecost was that day of which Jesus said, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:4-5). The absolute divine symbolism and purpose of this feast, however, is seen in Acts 2 when that day arrived and 3,000 people were saved. This is in stark contrast to when the law was given on Mount Sinai and 3,000 people were killed (Exo 32:28). The Jews believe that the law was given on the Feast of Shavuot

and, therefore, the Ten Commandments are read as part of this feast. For the Messianic Jew, however, they realize that the law was put on the heart through the Holy Spirit. As the Scriptures say, “The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor 3:6). Therefore, this feast marks the giving of the law, once on stone, and once on hearts of flesh. The first time it killed and the second time it saved. Hallelujah.

Verse 26 warned the Israelites to bring nothing but the best for the firstfruits when offering them to God. This made Israel completely dependent upon the Lord. The best portion of the crop was usually kept to use again for next year’s seed. This wasn’t as vital as it was with cattle, but God did require the first and best of the cattle for sacrifice as well. If you get rid of your best bull, next years calves wouldn’t be as strong and healthy, at least that is what worldly logic tells us. However, God seemed to intervene so that when the Israelites gave their best, God returned to them even more that was even better.

Most commentators explain that cooking a young goat in its mother’s milk was a pagan practice and, therefore, God was telling them to not practice the evil traditions and false worship of the cultures around them. Apparently, some would boil the goat in its mother’s milk and then take the milk and sprinkle it over their trees and crops so that it would be more fruitful. Clearly, God was the one who blessed the crops, not some old wives tale or pagan practice. In contrast, the orthodox Jew has taken this to mean that they are never to eat milk products with meat products. This is why when you go to Israel or any Kosher Jewish home you will never have any kind of milk or cream for coffee if they are serving any type of meat to eat. Likewise, the orthodox Jew has separate cooking dishes for things with any type of dairy product. There will be one pot for macaroni and cheese that is stored in a separate cupboard from the pot that cooks the roast. In fact, these pots even need to be washed in separate sinks. In an orthodox Jewish home there is one sink for milk pots and silverware used for this meal, and another for meat pots and silverware that can touch meat.

According to verse 27 these words were to be written down because of their vital importance and everyone could have access to them. For it was upon the guidelines of the above chapters that God’s covenant stood. If Israel didn’t abide by these rules, God’s covenant was not valid either. Aren’t you thankful that God has brought about a New Covenant with the blood of Jesus. Hebrews explains, “The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, *because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them*, declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. *I will put My laws in their minds and write them on their hearts*. I will be their God, and they will be My people” (Heb 8:8-10). Note, however, that the new covenant did not get rid of the old covenant laws, it merely wrote them upon our hearts and took away the consequences of our failures to keep them. Now these laws are to be upon our hearts and minds so that we would desire and strive to keep them, but at the same time, knowing that we won’t be able to. The only reason the consequences have been removed is because Jesus fulfilled the law in our stead (Mat 5:17).

Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them" (Matt 5:17).

It is interesting that God personalizes this covenant not only with Israel, but also with "you" according to verse 27. This isn't just a community commitment, it is an individual one. Often times we like to put moral responsibility upon the body of the church rather than take responsibility ourselves. We think other people can teach Sunday school rather than having the love of Christ in our own hearts to do it ourselves. We hope the pastor will confront someone living in sin as a representative of the body rather than doing it ourselves. Remember that God made this covenant for "you."

Exo 34:28 And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. 29 And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. 30 And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. 31 And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. 32 And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai. 33 And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face. 34 But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. 35 And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

As a Christ-figure we see Moses fasting for 40 days and nights just as Jesus did after His baptism. Both of them were on a mountain and both of them were communing with the Father. During this time Moses wrote down the Ten Commandments. It surely must not have taken this long to write it down, but he also must have spent many hours talking with God.

After 40 days of being in God's bright presence Moses' face radiated the light back to the Israelites. The Hebrew word for radiated is an interesting one with the root word from "horn." Because of this many statues of Moses show him with horns on his head. I'm sure this isn't what was intended but that explains why the pictures of Moses are often shown this way. Most likely there were many light rays that came from his face and this is why is "shined."

This radiance that will be veiled shows the obscure truth that was hidden, but yet visible in the Old Testament. This is important because the radiance gave hope for Israel's future. As we just discussed, the letter or law kills. What Moses just finished writing down on these stones was a death sentence for Israel. However, it was the glory of God that the face of Moses would show. It was a light among darkness, hope among hopelessness, and pardon among conviction. Romans states, "When the commandment came, sin

sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death” (Rom 7:9-12). Clearly, the Ten Commandments meant death because no man can keep them. In Corinthians the Scriptures interpret this death and life paradox, “Now if the ministry that brought *death*, which was engraved *in letters on stone*, came with *glory*, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading *though it was*, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious” (2 Cor 3:7-9)? What Paul is telling us is that the letter of the law was not a perfect covenant, but it came with saving grace in the light of God’s glory on Moses’ face. This light faded because it came with the law. However, when Jesus, the better Moses came, He brought with Him the Spirit of God which does not fade away. Paul continues, “If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! *For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory*. And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts” (2 Cor 3:9-11)! What seemed to be glorious on Moses’ face was nothing compared to what we now have in the surpassing glory of Jesus Christ, our mediator. The reason Moses’ face would fade was to symbolize that the law itself would eventually fade away. The law would fade because it was temporary, only to be used to bring people to repentance and then to disappear and be replaced by an everlasting brightness of glory. For in heaven there will be no darkness, yet there will be no sun because we will walk in the light of the everlasting glory of God (Rev 21:24). Paul even goes further to explain, “Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away” (2 Cor 3:12-14). Just as the Israelites were given some hope in this radiance we, too, live in hope because of the glory given to us. We should not be like Moses today and cover this glory up, instead, we should let people gaze upon the hope we have in Christ. For this glory that people can see in us is a testimony that we live in God’s presence and reveals an everlasting covenant of hope to a world that is without hope. Have you veiled this glory to those around you or can others see that you are a Christian without you saying a word?

With this said, it is important to note that we should not veil this glory to other Christians, however, to the unbeliever, this glory is to remain veiled. The Gospel is not for the unbeliever just like the law is not for the righteous. Jesus said, “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs” (Mat 7:6). This is exactly why Moses veiled his face in front of the rebellious Israelites, yet when he went into the presence of God, the veil was removed. Today, when we enter God’s presence, the glory shines, but we must be careful not to radiate the pearls to the swine around us. They must first be convicted of their sinfulness before the light of God’s glory can be properly understood. This is certainly not what modern day evangelism teaches, however, it is what Scripture tells us to do.

2 Corinthians 3 goes into great depth about this radiance Moses possesses because it shows one of the greatest truths of history and of the spiritual life today. To get the main point of the subject we must read even

further, “But their minds were *made dull*, for to this day the *same veil* remains when the *old covenant* is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. *But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away*. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor 3:14-17). Today, when we bring the law with us, the glory of God is fading. We have given many passages throughout this book showing that we (only as believers and followers of Christ) are not under the law any more, so I will only give one here for now. “We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly” (1 Tim 1:9). This is why Paul said that “only in Christ is [the veil] taken away.” When we come to Christ, the Ten Commandments no longer rule our life and God no longer sees us based upon our performance. In Christ, God sees us through the performance of Jesus and His glorious resurrection. Paul is very clear that “even today” many have minds that are “dull” because they live in a works righteous religion that says you must first be good and then you can be saved. This veil can only be removed in Christ, and until faith in the Christ comes, you will walk in darkness and you cannot see God’s true glory. As a non-christian drives by your church there is nothing to attract them to go inside because they walk in darkness. We read, “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor 4:4-6). The law leads us to Christ but we only can see Him in fading glory, not until one comes to repentance (which the law brings you to) can he receive the forgiveness of sins in Jesus. Then, and only then, Christ takes off the veil from your eyes and WOW, you can see the glory. There are many who go to church that still have not seen this glory because they have not gone through repentance of their utterly sinful sins (Rom 7:13). This is why some cannot see the point of Christianity. They walk in the darkness of ignorance because the light is veiled to them. Paul tells us, “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:14). This is why it is so important that Christians show the unbeliever the law. They must first come through Sinai before they will understand Calvary.

Ray comfort has an excellent series called, “Hells Best Kept Secret” that I highly recommend getting to excite you about evangelism. One great truth he gleans from Scripture has to do with this very point we have been discussing. Today, we keep telling people “Jesus loves you.” Ray Comfort, uses the Living Waters Ministry to help people understand this as they go out to witness to unbelievers. He usually begins by asking the person if they have ever told a lie. Obviously, everyone has, maybe just a little white lie, but nonetheless it is a lie. The law tells us not to lie (Lev 19:11). The next question is whether or not they have ever stolen anything. Again, most people have. It may have only been a piece of gum or perhaps a paperclip from the office, but nonetheless, it is stealing. The law says not to steal (Deut 5:19). Next Ray asks if they have ever

committed adultery. Many believe they haven't until he points out Jesus' words in Matthew that if you lust after someone you commit adultery (Mat 5:28). How about murder? Yes, we have all murdered because if we hate someone we have committed murder (Mat 5:43). Ray continues telling them that they are a lying, thieving, murderous, adulterer at heart and if God judges them using the Ten Commandments on judgment day he wants to know if they will be found innocent or guilty. He uses the law to show them their sins and their inability to keep the requirements needed to get to heaven. Can you see how he keeps the radiance of God veiled until they can understand it.

Most people feel that they are pretty good over all and that Jesus is nice but not necessary. Too many people are coming to church because they are looking for a social get together or a place where they can go to feel good about themselves. The reason we need to go to church isn't to keep getting something from God but to give Him our worship. We come to Christ, not to make life better or fill this "God shaped hole," but because without Him we will perish in Hell. Jesus didn't die to make our journey on life more comfortable (which is why many go to church), He died to save us from Hell.

As a result of this "Jesus loves you" evangelism our churches are filled with "stony ground" hearers of the Word. In the Parable of the Sower we see that, "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop-a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear" (Matt 13:3-9). Jesus later explains that the seed is the Word of God. Note that all these people received the Word. Some, however, receive it on unplowed or unprepared ground where the seed cannot grow. When the seed falls on ground that is rocky it springs up quickly, just as many converts do today by some quick "decision." However, when the sun comes up and the trials and temptations of life arise, they wither because there is no soil or foundation. The foundation is a repentant heart and knowledge of sin. As I said, how much love will one have for Jesus when they think they are pretty good over all and, therefore, Jesus has just forgiven them of a few sins. The man who has been forgiven much, loves much and the man who has been forgiven little, loves little. Today we try to convict people with the law and give them the Gospel all in five minutes. It doesn't work that way. People need time to think about their utter sinfulness and have the soil of their heart prepared for the Gospel seed to take root.

Matthew 5 is a perfect example of how Jesus practiced exactly what we are discussing. We often hear the beatitudes are a great Gospel sermon when, in fact, Jesus left them hanging with the law and gave them no comfort at all. He says, you have heard that the Ten Commandments tell you not to murder? Well, I tell you if you hate you have murdered. You think you haven't committed adultery? Well, I tell you if you have lust you have. One sin at a time he goes through most of the commandments and shows that there wasn't a single person on that hillside that had salvation because the law kills. He leaves them by saying unless you are perfect, just as your heavenly Father is, you can't get to

heaven. Those people had to have left depressed. He let that law set in their hearts for awhile and those people were later looking for a life-boat. After His resurrection, Jesus gave them that lifeboat and on Pentecost 3000 were saved. This is so important to understand. Please go back and read the section again on “Saints or Sinners” in this book to illustrate this point further.

It is because we don't realize that we have been forgiven much that we don't love the Lord much. It is because we don't love the Lord much that we don't evangelize much. Today, most Christians have more of a love for themselves and material possessions than they do for the lost. Ray Comfort uses the Titanic as an illustration. The people that were saved in the lifeboats weren't happy, but they did have joy unspeakable because they were saved. Today, Christians are spending more time wiping the noses of those who are already in the life-boat rather than reaching into the waters to bring others in. Earlier I asked how many people you would witness to tomorrow if you received \$500 for each person you told about Christ and the law. Again I ask, why are we more zealous for money than we are for God? I believe the answer is because many people in the churches don't understand the great treasure He has given us, and therefore, most people don't love Jesus enough to do what He says. This may sound harsh but the truth offends sometimes.

In our text here we see that the Israelites were afraid to come near Moses when his face was radiant. Many unbelievers are afraid of Christianity as well because they don't understand the glory of God. It wasn't until Moses called to them that they came to him. Go and call out to those who are perishing that they may come and hear the words God has spoken to us. Note that Moses did not give them a Gospel message here either. Once he called the Israelites to him, the words Moses spoke were the Ten Commandments. The law led the Israelites to a keen knowledge that they weren't following God because they wanted a more plush or easy life. They were beginning to understand God's holiness and that they needed Him to keep them from Hell. In fact, as we have discussed, the glory of God (Gospel) was what made the face of Moses radiant. Why did Moses cover his face with the veil? Surely the people could have gotten used to a glowing face. The reason his face was veiled was because the Gospel was not yet theirs. Likewise, in our witnessing today, there are times that we need to keep the veil on and give only the law. As we examined in great detail at the beginning of this section, even today the veil remains when the law is read. It isn't until one has faith that the Gospel can be claimed as theirs. This is why Paul said, “But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away” (2 Cor 3:16-17).

Moses did not know that his face was shining when he came down the mountain. Likewise, there are many today who radiate God's love but are unaware that others can see this light. In fact, many a Christian have felt as if they were not full of the grace of God and a poor example of a Christian, yet others could see the light. On one hand this may be true humility, yet on the other hand, it sometimes can be the devil taking away God's peace, love, joy and forgiveness. At any rate, in Moses' case, I believe it was because of his great humility.

When Moses went into God's presence the veil came off. No longer was there a place for the law. Likewise, today true Christians are in God's

presence through Jesus Christ and we are to take that veil of the law off. As we discussed in the “Saint or Sinner” section, you have now been made a saint and we only bring out the veil in the presence of unbelievers for their sake, not ours. “May He strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the *presence* of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all His holy ones” (1 Thess 3:13). And remember, that as Christians, “We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Cor 3:18). Are you still under the letter that kills or have you received the Spirit that gives life?

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 34

- 1) Why were the stones of the commandments referred to in the singular first, and then later in the plural when Moses brings them down a second time?
- 2) How does Moses breaking the first tablets make him a Christ-figure?
- 3) More than an emotion, what is love?
- 4) Why were the Pharisees upset with Jesus in the New Testament when He forgave someone of their sins?
- 5) How have you touched the “heart of God’s love?”
- 6) Can you shock God with your sins? Why or why not?
- 7) Why was God allowing the Israelites to go into the promised land? Why does God allow us to go into heaven?

- 8) What does the word “dwelt” mean when the Bible says God dwelt among us?
- 9) What two feasts are celebrated even after the second coming?
- 10) What do the fall feasts represent?
- 11) What may Hosea 6:3 be saying about the feasts?
- 12) Why does God say He hates the gathering of the Israelites in worship in Amos 5:21?
- 13) Give five comparisons to the judgments of Amos and the United States.
- 14) What feast is celebrated at the end of the barley harvest?
- 15) Give five descriptions of Moses as a Christ-figure.
- 16) When Moses came down the mountain his face was radiating. What did this radiance symbolize? What did the veil symbolize? What were the people afraid of when Moses came down the mountain? How does this fit with people today?
- 17) How does the veiled face of Moses fit with evangelism today?
- 18) What is wrong with the “Jesus loves you” style of evangelism?
- 19) How does the Titanic illustrate the sinking condition of the churches?
- 20) Why did Moses take off his veil in the presence of God? How does this fit with our worship of God today?

Exodus Chapter 35

Exo 35:1 And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These are the words which the LORD hath commanded, that ye should do them. 2 Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. 3 Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.

As we discussed in chapter 16, 20 and 34, is important to follow the seven day week with rest on the last day. As many times as this appears it must

be important. We won't take the time to go over this too much here again as you can look back in these other chapters, however, I want to stress the fact that when Christ came He did not abolish the law (Mat 5:17). Christ merely took away the consequences of our failures to the law and fulfilled the law for us. Fulfilling the law doesn't mean do it once and your done. If this were the case, since Christ did not murder His brother that command would be fulfilled and you could go kill your brother tomorrow. This seems to be the logic of many a Christian when it comes to Jesus fulfilling the law. No, in Jesus being perfect, He took away the punishment of eternal death that the law brought with it and now, when we fail in one point of the law, Christ looks at us and says, "you're forgiven and the punishment has been taken for you." Therefore, if the law commanded us to rest on the Sabbath, we should, we just don't have to in order to get to heaven. But just because we don't have to doesn't mean God does not still want us to obey the law. Just because we don't have to doesn't mean we shouldn't want to either. Please, follow the Sabbath and give God this day by making it holy and spending time in the Word. You will experience blessings you never dreamt were available. However, please do not put yourself under that yolk of slavery again either. Because the devil is sly, we must be careful that we don't make the law a means of salvation or favor with God. Don't put guilt upon yourself when you fail and don't look down on others when they fail either. Read Romans 14 to see that this is an attitude of the heart, not a command from a taskmaster who takes away our freedom.

As for not lighting a fire on the Sabbath, most commentators explain this as not allowing any work of any kind to be done on this day. Lighting a fire could be used for working with tools etc. Though I believe this is true, I don't think this is the main intent of God commanding this. I believe God saying "no work" meant "no work" and many overlook the spiritual significance to the fire. We know that the Sabbath was a model to foreshadow our heavenly rest with God (Heb 4). Therefore, why no fire in our heavenly rest? Fire was usually used for light. In Revelation we read, "The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it" (Rev 21:23-24). Also, "There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever" (Rev 22:5). Clearly, on our Sabbath we will not need fire to give us light. In fact, there will be no need of fire for any reason when we reach our Sabbath rest. Therefore, it is most probable that this spiritual significance is why no fire was to be lit on the Sabbath.

Exo 35:4 And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD commanded, saying, 5 Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass, 6 And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, 7 And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, 8 And oil for the light, and spices for anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, 9 And onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate.

Though Moses tells the people what to do, God is the one who commands it. It is interesting that this “command” is actually a voluntary act of obedience. The Lord wanted the hearts of the Israelites just as He wants ours today. All the articles of furniture mentioned here have been described earlier in connection with their purpose to be used in the Tabernacle. Gold was used for Tabernacle furnishings, silver for the foundation, bronze also for the foundation as well as certain furnishings. Blue, purple and scarlet yarn, as well as the linen, was used to make the gate, garments and the inside curtain. Goat hair, ram skins and sea cows were all used for the other curtains that covered the Tabernacle. Acacia wood was used for some of the furnishings that were then covered with gold or bronze. The oil was to burn in the menorah and the spices were for the incense on the altar of prayers and for anointing. Onyx stones and other gems were for the priestly garment to minister before God. All this was to be willingly given to the Lord for the Tabernacle, which is a representation of our Lord.

The onyx stones in the ephod are extremely important because they point us to the paradise both past and future. We read of the rivers and the surrounding area of the Garden of Eden: “The name of the first [river] is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there)” (Gen 2:11-12). Note that there are three articles found here: gold, resin and onyx. First let us address the onyx. In Exodus 25:7 and 28:9-12 we see that the High Priest was to wear two onyx stones with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel on them. The purpose of these stones was explained, “Fasten them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as **memorial stones** for the sons of Israel. Aaron is to bear the names on his shoulders as a memorial before the LORD” (Exo 28:12). A memorial of what? The only time we see this stone prior to this is in the Genesis account of Eden. When the people looked at the priest they were to see a holy man like Adam in heaven. God wanted the people to see that He was going to restore them to the Edenic paradise once again.

Though not in this section of Exodus it is important to finish our view of this Genesis 2 passage where the resin or bdellium was mentioned in Eden. Later on we see that the Israelites received manna from heaven while in their desert wandering. We read, “The manna was like coriander seed and looked like resin” (Num 11:7). The word for resin is the same Hebrew word (*bedolach*) used in Genesis for resin and is nowhere else used in Scripture. In Exodus we are told the color of the manna eaten by the Israelites: “The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seed [same Hebrew word for resin] and tasted like wafers made with honey” (Exo 16:31). Therefore, if the manna was white and it looked like resin, the resin in Genesis must also be white. That makes clear the reference in Revelation: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden **manna**. I will also give him a **white** stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it” (Rev 2:17). This resin in the Edenic paradise foreshadowed the white stone to come, where we will receive a new name that only comes by being made new in the spirit. It is also worth noting that the references to resin and onyx were made to the Israelites

while they passed through the area believed to be Havilah, the general location of the Garden of Eden.

The gold was also significant. We know that the Temple foreshadowed heaven: “They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven” (Heb 8:5). That is why the Temple was covered in gold (Exo 25, 1Kings 6). The clothing of the High Priest was also layered with gold (Exo 28). It should be no surprise then, that so many Old Testament passages use the imagery of precious stones to foreshadow salvation. A few examples follow:

- “Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD” (Isa 60:6).
- “Surely the islands look to me; in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, bringing your sons from afar, with their silver and gold, to the honor of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for He has endowed you with splendor” (Isa 60:9).
- “O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires. I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones” (Isa 54:11-12).

It should be no surprise that Revelation describes our paradise in such a way: “The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass” (Rev 21:18-21). Gold was significant not only in the beginning, but also is in the end, which is why Exodus makes such a point of it here.

As we have discussed, the High Priest foreshadowed the redeemed man. The priest was to wear white linen (Exo 28) just as in heaven we too receive white linen to wear: “Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints)” (Rev 19:8). Further, we see that part of the curse was sweat, “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return” (Gen 3:19). That may be why no clothing was to be worn that made the holy man sweat, “They are to wear linen turbans on their heads and linen undergarments around their waists. They must not wear anything that makes them perspire” (Ezek 44:18). In heaven the curse is wiped away, and as a model of the redeemed man, no curse should be found. Also on the priest’s chest was a gold plate engraved with the words, “Holy to the Lord” (Ex 28:36), showing the symbolic removal of the curse upon the priest. We already discussed how his breastplate was covered with gold and precious stones symbolizing the deeds of God’s people.

The Garden of Eden was also abundant in vegetation, another symbol of prosperity. In more places than we have room to mention, trees are used in

reference to Godly men (Gen 18:4-8; 30:37; Jud 3:13; 4:5; 1 Kings 19:5; John 1:48 etc.). We see that every blessed man is seen as having his own vine or tree for protection and comfort. We read of these blessings, “During Solomon’s lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, each man under his **own vine** and fig tree” (1 Ki 4:25). Likewise our heavenly home is described with such blessing: “In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths.’ The law will go out from Zion, the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. **Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid**, for the LORD Almighty has spoken” (Mic 4:1-4). We also read in Zechariah, “In that day each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under **his vine and fig tree**, declares the LORD Almighty” (Zec 3:10). It is for the purpose of showing blessings that planting and flourishing is almost always used in reference to God’s work throughout Scripture. Psalms states, “He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers” (Psa 1:3). In Jeremiah we read, “But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit” (Jer 17:7). Isaiah writes, “In days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit” (Isa 27:6). Even the lampstand in the Temple was described as a tree with branches and yet pure gold (Exo 37:17). The Cedar walls within the temple [a model of heaven] were carved with flowers, palm trees and vines (1 Kings 6:15-36), all showing God’s abundant blessings through Edenic symbolism. In celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles, or the Feast of Booths, the Israelites were to make booths of foliage and palm branches to symbolize God’s protection. During this time they were to leave the security of their homes and walled cities to live out in the open in unprotected booths. God promised that He would protect and watch over them, they didn’t need to trust in walls or other means of security: “Three times a year all your men are to appear before the Sovereign LORD, the God of Israel. I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your territory, and no one will covet your land when you go up three times each year to appear before the LORD your God” (Exo 34:23). This feast should have reminded them of the paradise of Eden and the paradise to come. During this time they were told to sacrifice 70 bullocks (Num 29:12ff) to symbolize the original 70 nations of the earth in Genesis 10. Therefore, they were celebrating the gathering of the nations into God’s eternal Kingdom when atonement would be made for them. Interestingly enough, the Israelites forgot about this feast and did not practice it until their return from Babylon (Neh 8:13-18). It would be through Israel that Christ would come (Rom 9:5) to redeem and restore His people for a paradise much better than that of Eden, this time it would be

heaven. As Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:2-3).

Exo 35:10 And every wise hearted among you shall come, and make all that the LORD hath commanded; 11 The tabernacle, his tent, and his covering, his taches, and his boards, his bars, his pillars, and his sockets, 12 The ark, and the staves thereof, with the mercy seat, and the vail of the covering, 13 The table, and his staves, and all his vessels, and the shewbread, 14 The candlestick also for the light, and his furniture, and his lamps, with the oil for the light, 15 And the incense altar, and his staves, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the door at the entering in of the tabernacle, 16 The altar of burnt offering, with his brasen grate, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot, 17 The hangings of the court, his pillars, and their sockets, and the hanging for the door of the court, his pins of the tabernacle, and the pins of the court, and their cords, 19 The cloths of service, to do service in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office.

God picked out those whom He had given wisdom and skill in certain areas to do the work of the Tabernacle. God has given each of us certain gifts that we are to use for His kingdom: "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10-11). Often times the church thinks ministry needs to be done in one particular way, but God would have each member of the body do its part. Some think all pastors should preach a certain way or only one type of music is good. Think about how many less people would be in our churches if everyone was the same. We would do well to recognize different gifts among the body of Christ and encourage one another to use those gifts. We read in Romans, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully" (Rom 12:6-8).

Once more a brief overview of the Tabernacle is given. God starts by describing things in the Most Holy Place, moves to the Holy Place and then to the Outer Court. Lastly, He mentions the garments for the priests. If this is any indication of the order that these were made we see that the most Godly and holy of the articles were made first.

In verse 18 we see the tent pegs are mentioned. These were not mentioned earlier in chapter 25 but they were of extreme spiritual significance as well. Josephus says, "Every board of the tabernacle, and to every pillar of the hangings of the court, there were cords attached at the top of the board or pillar, and that the further end of the cords or ropes was fastened to brass nails of a cubit long, which at every pillar were driven deep into the ground, and would

keep the tabernacle from being shaken by the violence of winds” (‘Antiquities,’ b. iii., ch. vi., sec. 2). Isaiah prophesied of Christ, “I will drive Him like a peg into a firm place; He will be a seat of honor for the house of His father” (Isa 22:23). Clearly, the tabernacle pegs were to point us to Christ.

Exo 35:20 And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. 21 And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. 22 And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered an offering of gold unto the LORD. 23 And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. 24 Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the LORD's offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it. 25 And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. 26 And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair. 27 And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate; 28 And spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. 29 The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.

Can you imagine what ministers would give to see their congregations immediately leave church to obey the Word of the Lord? The problem is that most people in churches today are not willing. Though this was a command, it was a Gospel motivated one since people gave from their hearts. I am convinced that most Christians do not truly understand the grace of God and, therefore, have not had their hearts touched unselfishly with God's love. Bill Gillham, in his book, [What God Wishes Christians Knew About Christianity](#) tells a parable. What if heaven was a cold, dreary place? What if it was a place of hard and long labor, was overcrowded, food was rationed and when you came home from work, you had to share a small apartment with eight other people? However, when you worked you got to work side by side with Jesus. You also could visit with Him at night in the apartment and ask Him anything you wanted. On the flip side, what if Hell was great? What if it was the perfect climate and you had access to all the food, drink, social friends, rest and entertainment that you could ever want? Where would you want to go, Heaven or Hell? That's a tough question isn't it? The real question behind the question is, are you in love with heaven or the object of heaven? I believe most Christians are in love with the idea of heaven more than they are with Jesus. Think about it. If your spouse was diagnosed with a disease that the doctor said they would have to move to the middle of the Sahara desert what would you do?

Would you tell them, go on ahead, I will stay here and take care of the house? I will call you three times a day on a cell phone and once a week fly in to see you and sit on a hard park bench with you for one hour. Of course not! If you love your spouse you would go anywhere with them, even if it meant to the desert. Too often, however, Christians go and meet Jesus once a week on a hard pew and call Him up in prayer three times a day before meals. What kind of relationship is that to have with the God that created, loved and saved you? It wouldn't work in a marriage and it certainly doesn't work with our relationship with Jesus either. If this is something you struggle with just begin praying daily that you would fall in love with Jesus. Communicate with Him through His Word and praise.

Even the leaders brought some of the most precious of gifts to the Tabernacle. This shows that all are equal in God's eyes. Rich and poor alike have the same opportunity to walk with Jesus. However, sometimes God may expect more from a leader. If God has blessed you with gifts, why not use them for His purposes rather than your own? It is your choice. It's a free will offering of your heart to God. He won't take it from you, you have to give it to Him. Timothy said, "Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim 2:22). Also in Ephesians we are told to, "Like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free" (Eph 6:6-8).

Whether rich or poor, all could give something. If you were rich, you could give gold and precious jewels. If you were poor, you could give a ram or goat skin and hair. It wasn't how much your gift was worth that counted, it was how much you loved the Lord that mattered. Christ would have them adorn His Tabernacle before adorning themselves with Jewelry. Even today, Christ would have us look to Him first. It would be interesting to see how much money we spend on ourselves compared to how much we give back to God. We read in Timothy, "I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God" (1 Tim 2:9-10). Peter also said, "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful" (1 Peter 3:3-5). These verses are precisely why in Proverbs we see that the teachings of the Lord are our ornaments, "Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck" (Prov 1:8-9). True beauty will come from obedience to the Word of God.

Exo 35:30 And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; 31 And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; 32

And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, 33 And in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. 34 And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. 35 Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.

Isn't it comforting that God chooses us and calls us by name? Often people attribute their skills to their own hard work and practice, however, it is the Spirit of God that fills us with ability and knowledge. Creativity is a gift from God and what a blessing it can be when you use it for God's glory.

Oholiab was even given the talent of teaching his skill to others. We discussed the meaning of the names of these skilled men in 31:5 so we need not go over that again.

Have you ever wondered why God didn't just create the Tabernacle Himself? Why did He employ His people to do it? God wants His people to serve Him because this is how we get to know Him better. Paul said, "The Lord Jesus Himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35). When we serve the Lord, we are blessed as we act in faith. Even Jesus said that He did not come to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45). It is through our service that we experience the love of God and gain Christ-esteem as we feel a sense of accomplishment. I believe one reason so many people have low self-esteem today is because one can never feel success when we are always trying to serve ourselves. Helping others always gives a sense of worth, and thus, Christ-esteem.

It is also interesting that the embroiderer and the weaver were men while the spinners and dyers were women (Ex 35:25).

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 35

- 1) Why were the Israelites not to burn any fire on the Sabbath? What spiritual significance does this hold?
- 2) What might be the reason we receive a white stone at the second coming of Christ?
- 3) What are the walls made of in heaven? What does this represent?
- 4) Why did the priests have “Holy to the Lord” written on their foreheads?
- 5) What did the vine represent in the Old Testament? Give two Scripture verses that indicate this.
- 6) What did the Pegs of the Tabernacle represent? Give a Scripture verse to support this.
- 7) Why didn't God just make the Tabernacle?
- 8) Who did the embroidery work for the curtains?

Exodus Chapter 36

Exo 36:1 Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded. **2** And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it: **3** And they received of Moses all the offering, which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it withal. And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning. **4** And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made; **5** And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make. **6** And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. **7** For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.

Though we have read some of this earlier in chapter one, God repeats Himself again to emphasize the importance of these events. Not only did every detail of the Tabernacle need to be perfect, but the rare example of the Israelite faith is displayed in power here.

Since this Tabernacle is a model of Jesus and our heavenly home (Heb 9:23), bringing their sacrifices every morning is significant. Many times the Bible discusses the importance of our morning prayers and time spent with God. The Psalmist wrote, “In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before You and wait in expectation” (Ps 5:3). Also, “But I will sing of Your strength, in the morning I will sing of Your love; for You are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble” (Ps 59:16), and “Let the morning bring me word of Your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in You. Show me the way I should go, for to You I lift up my soul” (Ps 143:8). See also Psalm 88:13; 90:14; 92:2; and Amos 4:4. When we seek God early in the morning we receive guidance and strength throughout the day. Only experience can do justice to the blessings that come from an hour of two of precious time with the Lord before you start your day.

The people did not abuse the privilege of free-will offerings. Once they had enough, they didn’t hoard the rest to save for themselves, but instead, in good faith went to Moses and let them know they had all they needed. Can you imagine your church receiving all the money they need simply by a love offering from the heart?

Exo 36:8 And every wise hearted man among them that wrought the work of the tabernacle made ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work made he them. 9 The length of one curtain was twenty and eight cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: the curtains were all of one size. 10 And he coupled the five curtains one unto another: and the other five curtains he coupled one unto another. 11 And he made loops of blue on the edge of one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling: likewise he made in the uttermost side of another curtain, in the coupling of the second. 12 Fifty loops made he in one curtain, and fifty loops made he in the edge of the curtain which was in the coupling of the second: the loops held one curtain to another. 13 And he made fifty taches of gold, and coupled the curtains one unto another with the taches: so it became one tabernacle. 14 And he made curtains of goats' hair for the tent over the tabernacle: eleven curtains he made them. 15 The length of one curtain was thirty cubits, and four cubits was the breadth of one curtain: the eleven curtains were of one size. 16 And he coupled five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves. 17 And he made fifty loops upon the uttermost edge of the curtain in the coupling, and fifty loops made he upon the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second. 18 And he made fifty taches of brass to couple the tent together, that it might be one. 19 And he made a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of badgers' skins above that. 20 And he made boards for the tabernacle of shittim wood, standing up. 21 The length of a board was ten cubits, and the breadth of a board one cubit and a half. 22 One board had two tenons, equally distant one from another: thus did he make for all the

boards of the tabernacle. 23 And he made boards for the tabernacle; twenty boards for the south side southward: 24 And forty sockets of silver he made under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons. 25 And for the other side of the tabernacle, which is toward the north corner, he made twenty boards, 26 And their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. 27 And for the sides of the tabernacle westward he made six boards. 28 And two boards made he for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides. 29 And they were coupled beneath, and coupled together at the head thereof, to one ring: thus he did to both of them in both the corners. 30 And there were eight boards; and their sockets were sixteen sockets of silver, under every board two sockets. 31 And he made bars of shittim wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, 32 And five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle for the sides westward. 33 And he made the middle bar to shoot through the boards from the one end to the other. 34 And he overlaid the boards with gold, and made their rings of gold to be places for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold. 35 And he made a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: with cherubims made he it of cunning work. 36 And he made thereunto four pillars of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold: their hooks were of gold; and he cast for them four sockets of silver. 37 And he made an hanging for the tabernacle door of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, of needlework; 38 And the five pillars of it with their hooks: and he overlaid their chapiters and their fillets with gold: but their five sockets were of brass.

These things have previously been discussed in chapter 26 but we will take the time to do a quick overview of the Tabernacle here again in a slightly different way to give you a better view of what is being described without too many details. The Tabernacle was a big rectangle divided into three parts. The only door was on the East side that led into a large open area called the Outer Court. Towards the back end of this large fenced in area was another rectangular tall building that was divided into two parts. There was a curtain behind five pillars that was the only entrance into what was called the Holy Place and then another curtain inside there that took you into the Most Holy Place.

In the center of the Outer Court was a large square bronze altar on which animals were killed. Between this altar and the entrance to the Holy Place was a wash basin for the priests to wash their hands and feet. Inside the Holy Place on the left side was a Menorah lamp, while on the right side was a short rectangular table called the table of shewbread. Just in front of the curtain that went into the Most Holy Place was another table slightly taller than the shewbread table, but this one was square. It was called the altar of incense which symbolized prayer. Going through that curtain led you into the Most Holy Place where only the ark of the covenant (God's Mercy Seat) was. This room was only entered once a year on the Day of Atonement.

The entire building structure was covered with four large coverings. One made from goat hair, one ram's skin that was dyed red, one porpoise skin, and one white linen covering that was beautifully decorated. Significant in the decorations were cherubim that were in the Most Holy Place. Cherubim are around the throne of God and, therefore, since the Tabernacle is a model of heaven, Cherubim had to be on this linen that was around what modeled the throne of God in the Mercy Seat. Each of these curtains not only protected the inside but also had spiritual significance to foreshadow the heavenly home.

The materials became more precious as one went closer to the Most Holy Place. The first article of furniture was the bronze altar that was made of bronze covering wood. Next, the basin was solid bronze. Inside the Holy Place things were made of gold covering wood and then the lampstand was solid gold. The entire foundation of the Tabernacle was laid upon silver that represented the atoning blood of Jesus upon which the church is built today. Even the 50 clasps that held together one of the curtains were silver.

Each of the three sections of the Tabernacle represents our walk with God. The outer court can be viewed as the body, the Holy Place as the soul and the Most Holy Place as the spirit. The closer we get to worshiping in the Most Holy Place the better and more personal, the relationship with Jesus is. People are saved simply by going through the door and accepting the sacrifice Jesus made at the altar. But to have a growing relationship with Jesus you need to go past the basin, which represents obedience, and enter into the Holy Place to partake of communion (showbread), prayer (incense) and reading of the Word (lamp). All three of these cause faith to grow, and through them, one enters into "spirit" worship of Jesus.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 36

- 1) Why might God have wanted the sacrifices to be done in the morning?
- 2) Draw a picture of the Tabernacle.
- 3) Label each part of the Tabernacle and on the side list the four coverings that covered the Holy and Most Holy Place.
- 4) Give the spiritual meaning for each piece and covering.
- 5) Give a Scripture verse to support the spiritual meaning.

Exodus Chapter 37

Exo 37:1 And Bezaleel made the ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half was the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it: 2 And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about. 3 And he cast for it four rings of gold, to be set by the four corners of it; even two rings upon the one side of it, and two rings upon the other side of it. 4 And he made staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold. 5 And he put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, to bear the ark. 6 And he made the mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half was the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof. 7 And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat; 8 One cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the other end on that side: out of the mercy seat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof. 9 And the cherubims spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy seat, with their faces one to another; even to the mercy seatward were the faces of the cherubims.

Chapter 37 begins with an almost word for word description of the Tabernacle from chapter 25. Many have thought this unnecessary and wonder why Moses would do so. However, we need to remember that it was Divine inspiration that caused this to be recorded twice. Typically we see that if something is repeated it is very important. This is one evidence that the message of the details of the Tabernacle must be just that; detailed. Everything had to be just right because in heaven, everything will be perfect. If the Tabernacle is to be a model of heaven than we would do well to study it.

Furthermore, I find it interesting that what is believed to be the “boring” part of Scripture is often repeated the most. As we have seen earlier, the Tabernacle is a model of our faith walk as well. If you recall, once you entered through the gate (Jesus) and accepted the sacrifice at the bronze altar (Jesus’ death and resurrection), you were saved. God could have saved a lot of time and materials and made the Tabernacle end right there, but He didn’t, because there is more to life on earth than being saved. After salvation one draws nearer to God as he washed his hands and feet in the wash basin (obedience through the Word) and then went into the Holy Place. Here were the lampstand (Word and Spirit), table of shewbread (communion) and the altar of incense (prayer). These are things that are being discussed again here in chapter 37. God wants the saved man to search His Word and to “Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts” (1 Cor 14:1). God has made His plan for salvation simple, but to truly know someone, you need to take the time to ask questions and learn their history etc. In these so called “boring” sections of Scripture God has given us information that may not be so plain and simple, but it does reveal His goodness, holiness and love. Only through careful searching can one begin to understand the Lord’s fullness. Paul said it was for our safety that things were repeated, “Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you” (Phil 3:1). When something is important it is worth going over twice. It is good and safe for us to grow stronger in our relationship to Christ so that we do not backslide. What about you? Are you content with just be saved and not understanding the joy of your salvation?

The ark was in the Most Holy Place, which was shaped as a perfect cube. This was a pattern of the New Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven in Revelation 21:16 which is also a perfect cube. More specifically, however, the ark is God’s throne. In most cases of the description of God’s throne we always see Cherubim guarding and facing the one on the throne. The ark was portable by sliding two golden rods through rings on the side of it. Likewise, God’s residing place is portable today. As Christians, we are now the “temple of the Holy Spirit.” The word for temple here means, “Most Holy Place.” God lives in us now and we don’t need to be in church to be in God’s presence. In addition to this, in the heavenly realm we are united with God and literally become one with Him. Ephesians says, “And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit” (Eph 2:22). Also in Peter, “As you come to Him, the living Stone-rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him- you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood” (1 Peter 2:4-5). When the Lord

returns we will live in His presence completely apart from the corrupted flesh as a holy priesthood.

The Ten Commandments rested safely inside the ark. Many people believe the law is taken away in heaven, but clearly the Lord is telling us here that the law remains. Jesus Himself said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the law until everything is accomplished" (Matt 5:17-18). The law was not abolished and gotten rid of, it was merely fulfilled in our stead. Now it remains and we are to abide by the law, not because we have to, but because we want to. In Hebrews we read, "The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First He says: This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put My laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.' Then He adds: 'Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.' And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin" (Heb 10:15-18). The reason we want to obey the law is because God has now put them in our hearts and on our minds. When we do break the law and perform lawless acts, God does not remember them because Christ has taken away the consequences of the law and has left us with the joy of being obedient to them. There is no longer any sacrifice of guilt or judgment for our sins because Christ has taken that upon Himself. Therefore, just as the law remained in the heart of the ark, it remains in the heart and mind of all Christians today. However, for those who have not accepted Christ, the law will be used at the judgment seat of Christ to condemn them to everlasting fire and damnation. This is also the significance of the law being inside the throne of God because He will pull it out on judgment day. One lie, one theft (even a paperclip), one lustful thought after a woman will send the unbeliever to hell. Only in Christ is the law fulfilled in our stead. The above verse in Matthew 5 showed us that not a stroke of the pen would disappear from the law UNTIL everything was accomplished. Once the new heaven and new earth are created AFTER judgment day, then the law will cease as a written record. I personally believe it will remain in our hearts but there will be no more need for it to remain as a written record because its purpose will be complete. That purpose being, the measure God uses to judge man. If you are judged on judgment day according to these standards, will you be considered innocent or guilty? In Romans we read of the law: "I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good" (Rom 7:10-12). The commandments brought death because not one man can keep them. However, they were intended to bring life because the only way we can enter the Most Holy Place is to be pure. Apart from the law, how can we know how to be pure? Christ came and fulfilled the law in our stead and now the purpose of those commandments stands as holy, righteous and good. This is why the law remained in the "good" ark and remains in Christian hearts today.

Exo 37:10 And he made the table of shittim wood: two cubits was the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof: 11 And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made thereunto a crown of gold round about. 12 Also he made thereunto a border of an handbreadth round about; and made a crown of gold for the border thereof round about. 13 And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings upon the four corners that were in the four feet thereof. 14 Over against the border were the rings, the places for the staves to bear the table. 15 And he made the staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold, to bear the table. 16 And he made the vessels which were upon the table, his dishes, and his spoons, and his bowls, and his covers to cover withal, of pure gold.

The table of shewbread represented communion with God. The acacia (shittim) wood again showed the humanity of God in Jesus Christ who was both full man and full God. There was a molding around the top that served as an edge to keep the bread on the table. This molding was to be a handbreadth tall. This showed God's hand holding His people safely. We discussed this in detail in 25:23. Once again the gold rings were to hold poles that were used to carry the ark and make it mobile. God is not a local God but a universal one. The rest of chapter 37 can be discussed in greater detail by going back in this commentary but I would like to use this repetition of these verses to give more life applications.

The point of this table is the personal relationship with Jesus. As I have gone out and preached on the streets I have had young men tell me that they had "tried God" and "it" didn't work. One man told me that he had accepted Jesus when he was a young boy and now he was going to prison so where was God at now? I believe this man was possessed as he was very violent and angry and upon talking with him, I discovered that many of these changes took place upon playing with the wiggie board. Though God was not in this man, He certainly hadn't left him. God was still reaching out to him pleading that he would surrender his life to Jesus. Too many people expect to come to God and then win the lottery. It doesn't work that way. While Christianity is freeing, it is also a disciplined lifestyle. One cannot make poor choices to play with satanic games and expect not to be affected by communing with the devil. Paul said, "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons" (1 Cor 10:21-22). This table of shewbread is only for the dedicated Christian who wants to fellowship exclusively with Jesus.

Have you simply "tried" Jesus? What are you looking for? I believe many Christians think the Holy Place is filled with wine, women and entertainment. One will not draw near to God with those things. Obedience is one thing these kids on the street are missing. They think, "oh I will try God and see if my smelly life becomes rosy." When it doesn't they think God abandoned them, when in fact, they have abandoned God. Jesus said, "Now remain in My love. **If you obey My commands**, you will remain in My love, just as I have obeyed My Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you **and that your joy may be complete**"

(John 15:9-11). One can't just try God out. Jesus gave this example: "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish'" (Luke 14:28-30). Before becoming a Christian one needs to examine His life and consider the cost.

Exo 37:17 And he made the candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work made he the candlestick; his shaft, and his branch, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, were of the same: 18 And six branches going out of the sides thereof; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof: 19 Three bowls made after the fashion of almonds in one branch, a knop and a flower; and three bowls made like almonds in another branch, a knop and a flower: so throughout the six branches going out of the candlestick. 20 And in the candlestick were four bowls made like almonds, his knops, and his flowers: 21 And a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches going out of it. 22 Their knops and their branches were of the same: all of it was one beaten work of pure gold. 23 And he made his seven lamps, and his snuffers, and his snuffdishes, of pure gold. 24 Of a talent of pure gold made he it, and all the vessels thereof.

The lampstand also was representing our personal relationship and communion with God in His Holy Word. The Word that is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. The Word that leads us out of darkness and into light. Once we become a Christian we no longer can be in darkness when the Word so clearly tells us how to live. Many of the kids I witness to on the streets tell me they know Jesus. My response to that is to ask them who Jesus is. Often the answer is a "textbook" answer if not all out wrong or blasphemous. Take a moment and ask yourself right now, who is Jesus? Now stop reading this book and answer that question. Okay, did you describe Jesus using the words "my?" Often those that are walking in the Word will say that Jesus is "my Savior," "my friend," "my Comforter," "my Life" etc. On the other hand, those who do not spend time with Jesus in the light of His Word often answer with "the Savior," "the Son of God," "a great man," "the one who died for our sins" etc. Isn't it interesting that the devil knows the Jesus is "THE Son of God," "THE Lord," even "THE Savior," but certainly not HIS God, Savior and friend? The lampstand shows us how to make this impersonal God our personal best friend. When I continue witnessing to these kids I begin to tell them that Jesus says, "If you love Me you will do what I say" (John 14:15). I begin asking them why they are drinking, swearing, blaspheming etc. because according to the lamp, they do not love Jesus then. True, they know Jesus, but they don't love Him. Paul goes on to tell us that, "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor 2:14). These kids on the street cannot understand the love of Jesus because it is foolishness to them. Unless they willing go into the Holy Place and give Jesus

their heart, they cannot see the Spiritual enlightenment of the lampstand . This is why prayer is a vital part of street evangelism and quoting Scripture is better than any clever trick or tactic you could think of. Scripture is the lamp that may send a photon of light into their darkened minds. More precious than the gold that made these lampstands is the Word of God for a Christian.

Job said, “I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my daily bread” (Job 23:12). That needs to be our motto in life. How many times do you go for days and then realize you are pretty weak, only to realize that you haven’t eaten any food for days? That’s ridiculous. No man “forgets” to eat. We don’t even get too busy to eat. We always seem to have time for food, but we are always too busy to feast upon God’s Word. Ray Comfort would say, “It is always belly before Bible but we need to turn it around and say my Bible before my belly.” Oh that we could say as Job that we esteem the Lord’s Word more than our necessary food. This is why we go months on end and realize we are spiritually dry and our relationship with Jesus isn’t an exciting, joy filled one. Put Bible before belly and you will find that you will not become weak spiritually. As the old saying goes, “Seven days without reading your Bible makes one weak.”

Exo 37:25 And he made the incense altar of shittim wood: the length of it was a cubit, and the breadth of it a cubit; it was foursquare; and two cubits was the height of it; the horns thereof were of the same. 26 And he overlaid it with pure gold, both the top of it, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns of it: also he made unto it a crown of gold round about. 27 And he made two rings of gold for it under the crown thereof, by the two corners of it, upon the two sides thereof, to be places for the staves to bear it withal. 28 And he made the staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold. 29 And he made the holy anointing oil, and the pure incense of sweet spices, according to the work of the apothecary.

Exodus 30 described this altar of incense further as well as the anointing oil and incense to be used. The main application of this altar was to symbolize the prayer that went up before the seat of God. For this reason I like to call this altar the “prayer square.” This is why it was strategically placed just before the curtain that separated one from the ark of the covenant or God’s throne. Interestingly, at this time, Jesus has not yet died and rose and, therefore, He has not yet become our Mediator. In Hebrews this altar is described as being in a different location: “Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant” (Heb 9:3-4). Why does the author of Hebrew put it in the same room as the ark when it wasn’t? I believe because when Hebrews was written, it was. God did some house rearranging after His Son rose from the dead. Timothy tells us, “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all men-the testimony given in its proper time” (1 Tim 2:5-6). In His resurrection Jesus became our mediator who takes our prayers and offers them to the Father on His throne. The fact that the incense represents prayer can be no question according to Revelation 5:8, 8:4 and Psalm 141:2.

As we discussed earlier, the horns around this altar represent the power of the Gospel. Throughout Scripture we have seen horns being a symbol of power. We also know that Jesus, the focal point of this altar, is power. Therefore, the horn of power on this altar is Jesus as Luke tells us, “He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David” (Luke 1:69). We would do well to never forget the great power we have in prayer. I believe it is the most powerful weapon available to us in fighting the good fight. Once while doing some street evangelism, there was a demon possessed man who came up to me and was extremely angry. It appeared as if he wanted to fight. Some other Christian friends who were with me simply got down on their knees and prayed while I kept giving the Word of God. The difference that made in this man’s attitude was amazing. Even more amazing was what seemed to be a divine protective hedge that God had put around me. Though it seemed as if this man would love nothing more than to jump on me, it was as if there was a line he couldn’t cross. Ephesians 6 came alive that night where it says, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand” (Eph 6:12-13). You see, our struggle with other men isn’t with flesh and blood. What good do your human words of wisdom and cunningness do? Nothing! Prayer binds the “spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” If you are having problems with someone, don’t gossip and complain, use the altar of incense and pray because your battle isn’t with flesh and blood.

As with earlier articles or furniture that went into the Tabernacle, the altar of incense was to be made out of pure gold that covered acacia (shittim) wood. As we started at the entrance of the Tabernacle we saw bronze covering wood, then solid bronze showing an increase in preciousness. Once you entered into the Holy Place everything was either solid gold (lampstand), or gold covering acacia wood (altar of incense and table of shewbread). One would think that things would remain solid gold once you reached that stage. However, the acacia wood is a strong symbol of Christ’s humanity. The lampstand was primarily an example of the Holy Spirit, and thus no representation of the humanity of God was needed. Jesus is the Word of God and the Word is the light of the world, but it was the flame that burned upon the lampstand that was the light, not the lampstand itself. In the case of the table of shewbread, Jesus’ body is represented with our communion fellowship with Him. Likewise, with the altar of incense, our prayers are involved with Jesus as our Mediator. In both cases, not only is Jesus’ humanity represented, but so is ours. Jesus has always been the Word, that Word just later became flesh (John 1). However, it wasn’t until that Word became flesh that Christ became our mediator in prayer and our communion fellowship. Likewise, the most holy article of all, the ark of the covenant, was made of wood covered by gold. In the same way, Jesus, in the flesh, was not seated at this throne as He is now before His resurrection in the flesh. Hebrews shows us, “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by

His powerful word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” (Heb 1:3).

We must not forget the significance of acacia wood either. This tree had thorny branches and thick gnarly bark. With this representing the humanity of Christ, we cannot help but to be reminded of His thorny crown and His appearance that left no one attracted to Him just as Isaiah said, “He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him” (Isa 53:2).

The poles show us this was mobile as well. Christ will never leave us or forsake us. He will go wherever we go and He is always available. Only Jesus is omni-present. The perfume that was used was not to be copied or ever used for anything but offering to the Lord. Jesus is also this one and only recipe for, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12). There can be no copies, no Buddhas, Krishnas or Mohammads. In addition, we should use this name for no other purpose than to call upon Him. This is why we “shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” Many try to use Jesus for their own selfish gain but they will be punished. One of my favorite examples of this is in Acts where we read, “Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, ‘In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.’ Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. [One day] the evil spirit answered them, ‘Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?’ Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding” (Acts 19:13-16). Likewise, those who try to imitate this perfect recipe will suffer eternal punishment, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!’” (Matt 7:21-23).

What a privilege it is to serve the one and only true God, Jesus Christ, our Lord, of whom there can be no counterfeit. I lift up incense through Jesus to ask that each of you reading this book may find the great peace and power that comes from prayer.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 37

- 1) What does the Most Holy Place being a perfect cube have to do with heaven?
- 2) The New Testament tells us our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. What specific meaning does the word “temple” have?
- 3) When is the new heaven and new earth going to be created?
- 4) Why did God have poles in the Tabernacle furniture? What spiritual significance does this have?
- 5) In John 15:9-11 what does Jesus say will make our joy be complete?
- 6) Read Job 23:12. What does this mean to you? How might this fit with the Tabernacle? Which part of the Tabernacle does this speak of?
- 7) Where was the altar of incense placed in the Tabernacle? Where does the book of Hebrews place it? Why the difference?
- 8) Describe the acacia tree. How does this point to the humanity of Christ?

Exodus Chapter 38

Exo 38:1 And he made the altar of burnt offering of shittim wood: five cubits was the length thereof, and five cubits the breadth thereof; it was foursquare; and three cubits the height thereof. 2 And he made the horns thereof on the four corners of it; the horns thereof were of the same: and he overlaid it with brass. 3 And he made all the vessels of the altar, the pots, and the shovels, and the basons, and the fleshhooks, and the firepans: all the vessels thereof made he of brass. 4 And he made for the altar a brasen grate of network under the compass thereof beneath unto the midst of it. 5 And he cast four rings for the four ends of the grate of brass, to be places for the staves. 6 And he made the staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with brass. 7 And he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the altar, to bear it withal; he made the altar hollow with boards.

The altar of burnt offering was the first article one came upon when going through the gate of the Tabernacle. Once you entered the gate of Jesus Christ, you accepted His sacrifice on this altar and then you were “in the kingdom of God.”

The altar was square just as the altar of incense, and both had horns on all four corners. Samuel said of the Lord, “The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the *horn of my salvation*” (2 Sam 22:2-3). Just as with the altar of incense the horn represents the power of the Gospel. It showed protection through God’s power. From a practical standpoint, the sacrificial animal was sometimes tied down by using these horns to anchor the rope on. As for the square shape, we know that the New Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven is a perfect cube. Perhaps it was a model of perfection. Everything discussed in these verses had a practical application. The grating would allow ashes to fall down and air to move, the bronze covered the wood and protected it from being burned up, the poles and rings made it portable etc. However, the spiritual truth is the divinity (bronze) kept Jesus body (wood) from seeing decay. Man made the altar just as the cross was man made. Man put the sacrifice on the altar just as they did on the cross, but only God could judge the sacrifice. The fire that was used to burn the sacrifice came from heaven. No matches or the rubbing of sticks together was needed because only God could bring judgment (represented by the fire and the bronze) upon sin and place it upon this sacrifice.

The true picture here is one of necessary divine judgment and sacrifice. The bronze was a symbol of judgment which is why Jesus comes back with feet like burnished bronze in Revelation 1-2 when He is going to judge the world. Jesus was our sacrificial lamb who took the judgment and punishment that was meant for us. Because Jesus has stood the test of the fires of judgment we, too, shall pass the test through faith in Him. Hebrews 10 goes into greater detail as to the process of this daily sacrifice that took place upon this altar. Now, however, we see that Jesus has paid the price once for all and there is no more need for this altar. The cross was this altar, but it has accomplished the purpose for which it was set; to lead us into the Holy of Holies.

Exo 38:8 And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the looking glasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

The bronze basin was used for washing. Only the hands and feet of the priests were washed. As we discussed earlier, hands and feet represent our service to God. The water, which symbolized the Word, is what cleanses us and makes our walk with God clean. Jesus said, “For apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). Isaiah said, “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags” (Isa 64:6). Note it isn’t just our bad acts that are unclean, but our righteous acts are what are unclean. Even our best is not good enough. Apart from the Word, we cannot clean up our act.

Having the women give up their mirrors was asking them to give up their vanity. This is an important step to take in walking with God. One cannot give his all to Christ while he is giving so much to himself. “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other” (Matt 6:24).

This obedience that comes from God is so important for the Christian life. Jesus told us that it was through this obedient walk that our joy would finally become complete, “If you obey My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have obeyed My Father’s commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and *that your joy may be complete*” (John 15:10-11). Surrender your flesh to God and let the mirror of His law bring light and forgiveness to your life.

Exo 38:9 And he made the court: on the south side southward the hangings of the court were of fine twined linen, an hundred cubits: 10 Their pillars were twenty, and their brasen sockets twenty; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver. 11 And for the north side the hangings were an hundred cubits, their pillars were twenty, and their sockets of brass twenty; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver. 12 And for the west side were hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver. 13 And for the east side eastward fifty cubits. 14 The hangings of the one side of the gate were fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. 15 And for the other side of the court gate, on this hand and that hand, were hangings of fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. 16 All the hangings of the court round about were of fine twined linen. 17 And the sockets for the pillars were of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver; and the overlaying of their chapiters of silver; and all the pillars of the court were filleted with silver. 18 And the hanging for the gate of the court was needlework, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: and twenty cubits was the length, and the height in the breadth was five cubits, answerable to the hangings of the court. 19 And their pillars were four, and their sockets of brass four; their hooks of silver, and the overlaying of their chapiters and their fillets of silver. 20 And all the pins of the tabernacle, and of the court round about, were of brass.

The outer court was marked by a fence that kept everyone and everything out unless they went through the gate on the east side. Jesus is the gate and no one enters unless they go through Him. In heaven there will be 12 gates (Rev 21:12), but then heaven will be a cube and three gates will be on all four sides. Once Jesus comes back and throws Satan and all his followers into the second death of hell, there will be no more need to keep the gates closed. Access to heaven has been granted and one is free to roam. We must always remember that this tabernacle foreshadowed heaven, but it wasn't heaven. Indeed, every aspect of the Tabernacle points to Jesus because in heaven there is no temple since the Lamb is the temple (Rev 21:22). However, remember that it seems to foreshadow what heaven was like then, not what heaven will be. Jesus said that He was going to prepare a place for us. This is why after His second coming there is a new heaven and a new Jerusalem. What Christ went to prepare will be finished. The Tabernacle I believe models the “old” or “current” heaven that was also modeled by the Garden of Eden. This may be why much of it doesn't seem to fit the descriptions of Revelation. However, the Tabernacle does fit the description of the Garden of Eden, which also foreshadowed our

heavenly home. Outside of the linen fence stood the land of Eden and inside was the garden or paradise of God.

Perhaps I am losing some of you here in saying that the current heaven isn't what shall come to be. Let me explain a bit. In the Old Testament when people died they all went to a place called Sheol. Abraham went there, but so did Saul and other non-believers. Everyone who died went to this "grave" or "place of the dead." When Jesus came He told us the parable of Lazarus. The question is, was it really a parable? In no other parable does Jesus ever use a personal name. Instead, He always says there once was a king or a servant etc. Why did Jesus say there once was a man named Lazarus? I believe because there really was. This parable can be read in Luke 16 where we find that Lazarus was a poor man that begged at a rich man's gate. Both die, but Lazarus goes to Abraham's bosom while the rich man went to Hades, the Greek equivalent to Sheol. Note that Lazarus didn't go to God's bosom but rather Abraham's. Why? Because the paradise of God wasn't ready without the sacrificial Lamb of God. In Peter we see that Jesus, "was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built" (1 Peter 3:18-20). Where did Jesus descend to? Hades, the place of the dead. According to the story of Lazarus it seems that this place was divided into two sections, one for the Godly people and another for the ungodly. Now when Jesus ascended, He did something else as well: "When He ascended on high, He led captives in His train and gave gifts to men" (Eph 4:8). Who are these "captives" that were led in His train? What gift did He give? I believe Jesus went down to Sheol, preached to those in the lower section and claimed victory, but then, released those in the upper portion and led them away with Himself to the paradise of God. This is where the thief on the cross would have gone as well. This is also why Jesus has gone to prepare a place, or a new heaven, for us. Though the saints of the past now live with Jesus in paradise, they, too, await the Lord's return. It is at this return that the saints may enter the gates of the new city with praise and with new bodies that are received at the seventh and final trumpet call of God (Rev 11, I Thess 4). Therefore, the Tabernacle proper may represent not what will be, but what is now.

Back to the verses at hand. The courtyard was a perfect rectangle with the sides being twice as long as the front and back. Each post had a silver capital on top, silver hooks on both sides, and silver cords to tie to the hooks which then anchored to the ground by a peg. The foundation of each pillar was made of a bronze cube.

The bronze pegs that kept the Tabernacle upright also represent Jesus. Concerning Jesus the prophet, Isaiah recorded God's Word: "I will place on His shoulder the key to the house of David; what He opens no one can shut, and what He shuts no one can open. I will drive Him *like a peg* into a firm place; He will be a seat of honor for the house of His father" (Isa 22:22-23). Christ is our firm foundation and is indeed the foundation that upholds the church (1 Cor 3). One may question why these aren't gold or silver. The outer fence is what kept people out of the Tabernacle. The pegs held up the fence and bronze is a symbol of judgment. It is God's judgment that will keep people out of heaven.

This could also be why Isaiah said “what He shuts no one can open.” If in Christ’s righteous judgment He shuts the doors of heaven to someone, no man can change it.

The capitals, hooks and the foundation for the Holy Place and Most Holy Place were silver. (Only the foundation for the outer posts were bronze). Silver represents the blood of Jesus as we discussed in the section on 26:25 in great detail. Everything that held up the Tabernacle was silver except for the bronze under the pillars as just mentioned. Why not these? Revelation may give us a clue: “Him who overcomes I *will make a pillar* in the temple of My God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from My God; and I will also write on him My new Name” (Rev 3:12-13). We also read in Peter, “As you come to Him, the living Stone-rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him-*you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house* to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:4-5). Though we cannot say for sure, I wonder if the bronze foundation doesn’t represent the church and/or apostles. After all, if we are being made into living stones for a spiritual house, which is Christ, and the Tabernacle is Christ, there could be some merit for this symbolism here. Once again we read, “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the *foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone*” (Eph 2:19-20).

Exo 38:21 This is the sum of the tabernacle, even of the tabernacle of testimony, as it was counted, according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, son to Aaron the priest. 22 And Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD commanded Moses. 23 And with him was Aholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a cunning workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and fine linen. 24 All the gold that was occupied for the work in all the work of the holy place, even the gold of the offering, was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. 25 And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: 26 A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men. 27 And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail; an hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket. 28 And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five shekels he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapters, and filleted them. 29 And the brass of the offering was seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels. 30 And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the brasen altar, and the brasen grate

for it, and all the vessels of the altar, 31 And the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court gate, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about.

The worth of Biblical money can be seen and defined from these verses. A talent can be devised by seeing that 603,550 people all paid the ½ shekel of silver as a price of atonement. That means 301,775 shekels in all (people divided by 2 since they only paid a half shekel). In verse 25 we see that 301,775 shekels equals 100 talents with 1775 left over. This means that one talent would equal 3000 shekels. In Ezekiel 45:12 we see that 60 shekels equaled a mina and 1/20 of a shekel was a gerah.

The silver mentioned only represented the atonement money (Exo 30:13-14). 100 shekels of it was used to make the bases for the boards of the main Tabernacle building and pillars. The left over 1775 shekels were used to cover the poles that held up the curtain, silvering the capitals, and the hooks in the pillars that held up the fence. The bronze weighed in at about 3 tons. The gold was a little over 1 ton and the silver was over 4 tons. Even at \$250 an ounce, with today's standards the gold alone was over \$8,000,000.

The incredible amounts of precious metals in our standards has left some scholars questioning the historical accuracy of this account. However, though it may seem like a lot (and indeed it was), it wasn't as much as one would think when comparing it to other temples of false gods in ancient times. In Babylon, the temple of Belus was said to have several thousand talents of gold (Diod. Sic. 2, 9; Herod. 1, 181, 183). According to Pliny there was over 34,000 pounds of gold and 500,000 talents of silver taken by Cyrus in Asia. Alexander the Great is recorded to have taken 40,000 talents of gold and silver as well as 9,000 talents of pure coined silver from Susa (Diod. Sic. 17, 66). In Numbers 31:50 we see that the Israelites were able to make an offering to the Lord of 16,750 shekels of precious metals, even after they kept what they needed out. No doubt the Tabernacle was impressive, however, with the amount of gold and silver present in the ancient land, it wasn't the same price tag that we would stick on it today with our current value of precious metals.

Ithamar was responsible for computing the total amount of materials. He was Aaron's youngest son. Even this job was needed to be done by a priest, a model of the holy man.

Verse 21 also makes it clear that this is the Tabernacle of the Testimony. Testimony of what? Jesus! John wrote, "Worship God! For the *testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*" (Rev 19:10). The Tabernacle would indeed be prophetic of the future heavenly home. In 1 John we also read, "And *this is the testimony*: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:11-12). Now that Christ has made His dwelling in YOU, that makes you the Tabernacle of Testimony. Paul wrote, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you" (1 Cor 3:16)? What have you been doing to testify about Jesus in your life? With our previous discussion of how we are being "built" into a holy priesthood in mind, what we are doing for Christ may be seen in a different light. In a sense God is recording the materials used to make up your temple. Your precious stones are being

measured and weighed. What might your precious stones be? Paul tells us, “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, *costly stones*, wood, hay or straw, *his work* will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of *each man’s work*. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames” (1 Cor 3:11-15). According to these verses, your costly stones will be measured, and with the foundation of Jesus Christ, they will be found priceless. Also, with the Spiritual temple of Jesus Christ, of which you are a part, the new Temple will be much greater than what this Tabernacle could ever seem. Revelation 22 gives us a glimpse of this great heavenly throne with streets of gold and foundations of precious stones. There would not be enough money in the world that could buy what Jesus has prepared for us. Only Christ’s precious blood could pay for such grandeur and what joy to know that your costly stones will be the decorations.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 33

- 1) What kept the wood from being burned up on the bronze altar? What did the wood represent? What does the bronze represent?
- 2) How is Jesus represented by the outer wall?
- 3) How does the wall represent the Garden of Eden?
- 4) Where did Lazarus go when he died?
- 5) What other parable does Jesus use personal names in?
- 6) Who were the “captives” led in Jesus’ train?
- 7) Why might the parable of Lazarus really not be a parable?
- 8) How much was the gold of the Tabernacle worth in today’s standards?

Exodus Chapter 39

Exo 39:1 And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made cloths of service, to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses. **2** And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. **3** And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires, to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, with cunning work. **4** They made shoulderpieces for it, to couple it together: by the two edges was it coupled together. **5** And the curious girdle of his ephod, that was upon it, was of the same, according to the work thereof; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; as the LORD commanded Moses. **6** And they wrought onyx stones inclosed in ouches of gold, graven, as signets are graven, with the names of the children of Israel. **7** And he put them on the shoulders of the ephod, that they should be stones for a memorial to the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Much of these were discussed in chapter 25 and 28 already, but some further insight and application is needed. These sacred garments of Aaron were

not clothes to dress up in, go to bed in, or play in. These clothes were special clothes of service. Jesus Himself said that He did not come to be served but to serve. Likewise, in heaven we will have woven white garments of service. We read of these garments in Revelation: "Then one of the elders asked me, 'These in *white robes*-who are they, and where did they come from?' I answered, 'Sir, you know.' And he said, 'These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and *serve Him day and night* in His temple'" (Rev 7:13-15). We often think of service as a negative thing, but it is truly more blessed to give than to receive. Any giving person will tell you this. We must remember that these priests are a model of the holy man and as such, represent the saints in heaven. Their clothing must represent the clothing in heaven that is given to us as we serve the Lord.

In verses 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, and 31 we see that Moses is telling us that everything was done as the "Lord commanded." This emphasis shows that every detail of the Tabernacle was important and it is not of human origin or creativity, but from the mind of God and for His purposes.

The colors were important because these were the colors of blood, kingship, and sky. It seems that these colors will also be displayed by the great Babylon of end times. Revelation says of this wicked city, "Woe! Woe, O great city, dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, and glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls! In one hour such great wealth has been brought to ruin" (Rev 18:16-17)! This may suggest that the Babylon of end times is religious in nature, or at least, "having a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Tim 3:5). This great city wants to imitate the greatest of cities, the New Jerusalem and heaven as portrayed by the Tabernacle. Kingly colors do not make kings however.

The onyx stones were to be a memorial of the paradise in the Garden of Eden. We discussed this in the first seven verses of chapter 25 so we will not discuss it again here. However, it is important to be reminded that the ephod was attached over the shoulders to cover the heart. This shows that the church is being carried and held by Christ as the government has been put upon His shoulders (Isa 9:6). I say the church because Israel was represented by these stones, and essentially, all believers have been grafted into Israel, therefore, God holds His followers dear and near to His heart. Though the priest is the model of the holy man, he also represents Christ, our High Priest. Essentially, the holy man and Christ are one since God remains in us and we are in God (John 15). (Please don't take this spiritual truth to be new age where they teach everyone is a god. Satan loves to take truth and twist it into lies and deception).

Exo 39:8 And he made the breastplate of cunning work, like the work of the ephod; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. 9 It was foursquare; they made the breastplate double: a span was the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof, being doubled. 10 And they set in it four rows of stones: the first row was a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this was the first row. 11 And the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. 12 And the third row, a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. 13 And the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper: they were

inclosed in ouches of gold in their inclosings. 14 And the stones were according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, every one with his name, according to the twelve tribes. 15 And they made upon the breastplate chains at the ends, of wreathen work of pure gold. 16 And they made two ouches of gold, and two gold rings; and put the two rings in the two ends of the breastplate. 17 And they put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breastplate. 18 And the two ends of the two wreathen chains they fastened in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulderpieces of the ephod, before it. 19 And they made two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, upon the border of it, which was on the side of the ephod inward. 20 And they made two other golden rings, and put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart of it, over against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. 21 And they did bind the breastplate by his rings unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it might be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate might not be loosed from the ephod; as the LORD commanded Moses.

The breast piece was made with the same colors used throughout the Tabernacle, but it also had a stone for each of the tribes of Israel. In Revelation we read of the new city God makes, "The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst" (Rev 21:19-21). In Revelation, the order seems to be different, yet the stones, for the most part, seem to be the same. I am not sure why they are in this order. Some have proposed that because three tribes were assigned to camp on the four cardinal points from the Tabernacle, these stones may have been separated to represent this order. In any case, there was a divine reason that may become clear to us later. One thing is for sure, the stones represent Israel and in Revelation the same stones represent Israel again as the foundation of the city walls. Ephesians recognizes this truth, "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on *the foundation of the apostles and prophets*, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone" (Eph 2:19-20).

Even something as simple as this breast piece had specific instructions that were commanded by God to keep. The ephod and breast piece were attached to keep them from dangling, but this attachment also illustrate their unity with God. The Urim and Thummin, by which God used to speak to the priests, were mounted in the breast piece (Exo 28:30). God's people and His means of communicating with them were tied together just as today God speaks to us through His Son, Jesus Christ. God has made us become one with Him by uniting us with Jesus. Paul wrote, "If we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection" (Rom 6:5). Jesus continues to be that tie that binds for the New Testament believer. In other words, just as the breast piece was not to swing away from the chest, we

are not to stray from God's Word either. Without Christ's "ties of love" (Hosea 11:4) we would stray away in chasing our own fleshly desires. Only Christ can draw us and keep us close to Him. In that sense, obedience is the key to the ephod and breast piece. This was the means by which God told the Israelites what to do. God's Word is that ephod for us today. The message of what to do is clear, but the response is up to you. You can swing away from the message and walk in disobedience or you can hang tight to Christ and walk with His loving cords of kindness. Will you cling to the obedience in Christ?

Exo 39:22 And he made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. 23 And there was an hole in the midst of the robe, as the hole of an habergeon, with a band round about the hole, that it should not rend. 24 And they made upon the hems of the robe pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen. 25 And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates upon the hem of the robe, round about between the pomegranates; 26 A bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, round about the hem of the robe to minister in; as the LORD commanded Moses. 27 And they made coats of fine linen of woven work for Aaron, and for his sons, 28 And a mitre of fine linen, and goodly bonnets of fine linen, and linen breeches of fine twined linen, 29 And a girdle of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, of needlework; as the LORD commanded Moses.

The robe of the ephod was slipped over the head, and the hole through which the head went was reinforced so that it would not fray. This robe was blue with other colors being upon the hem. The gold bells alternated with pomegranates around the entire hem. This would cause a ringing as the priest ministered before the Lord. As mentioned earlier, this was not for those people on the outside to hear if God by chance struck down the priest, but for God's purposes. In chapter 28 we read, "The sound of the bells will be heard when he enters the Holy Place before the LORD and when he comes out, so that he will not die" (Ex 28:35). Note the bells kept you from dying, they didn't warn people you were dead. It is also interesting that bells are mentioned to be on horses during the reign of Christ at the end of the world. We read in Zechariah, "On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the bells of the horses" (Zech 14:20). Just as this was put on the headdress of the priest identifying them as holy and pure, God will take an animal used for war and make them holy to the Lord. Though I'm not sure why all of this is, I believe there must be some connection with the bells and holiness.

In addition to the blue robe were white linen robes for Aaron and the priests used in everyday ministering. The blue robe was worn when the Urim and Thummin was used to request direct responses from questions posed to the Lord. However, as described earlier, these white robes are a symbol of holiness and good works or service to the Lord (Rev 19). As priests of the Most Holy God, we will all receive these white robes in heaven.

Exo 39:30 And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS

TO THE LORD. 31 And they tied unto it a lace of blue, to fasten it on high upon the mitre; as the LORD commanded Moses. 32 Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they. 33 And they brought the tabernacle unto Moses, the tent, and all his furniture, his taches, his boards, his bars, and his pillars, and his sockets, 34 And the covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering of badgers' skins, and the vail of the covering, 35 The ark of the testimony, and the staves thereof, and the mercy seat, 36 The table, and all the vessels thereof, and the shewbread, 37 The pure candlestick, with the lamps thereof, even with the lamps to be set in order, and all the vessels thereof, and the oil for light, 38 And the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the tabernacle door, 39 The brasen altar, and his grate of brass, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot, 40 The hangings of the court, his pillars, and his sockets, and the hanging for the court gate, his cords, and his pins, and all the vessels of the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of the congregation, 41 The cloths of service to do service in the holy place, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and his sons' garments, to minister in the priest's office.

The sacred diadem was worn on the forehead. The inscription “HOLY TO THE LORD” shows the mind belongs to God. Romans states, “The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace” (Rom 8:6). It is nice then to know that, “we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16). This plate was also a sign of a renewed mind that would be sensitive to God’s commands and will. Likewise, we as priests today, wear the same integrity upon our minds. Paul puts it this way, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by *the renewing of your mind*. Then you will be able *to test and approve what God’s will is*-His good, pleasing and perfect will” (Rom 12:2). Having the mark of God on their forehead gave them the ability to test and approve of what God’s will was for the people. Praise be to God that He has given us this gift today. More on this topic can be read back in chapter 28:1-5.

All of the Tabernacle was presented to Moses in pieces. Each piece was to be examined, judged and accounted for. With Moses as a Christ figure we see that every part of creation will be brought before Christ to be judged. Specifically, however, the Tabernacle of our bodies will one day be presented before Jesus to be judged. We read in Romans, “For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. It is written: ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before Me; every tongue will confess to God’ So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God” (Rom 14:10-12).

Exo 39:42 According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work. 43 And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they have done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them.

All the work was done exactly as the Lord had shown Moses. Only Moses could check it out because only Moses was given the blueprint on Mount Sinai. The same hand that made the blueprint was guiding the hands of the workers and everything was exactly as it was suppose to be. This would be amazing in itself if it were not for God's divine guidance. It is this same guidance that God gave the Israelites that He offers us today. It seems that too often we want to go about life our own way. Instead of letting God lead we make up our own minds first and then pray about it. Let me give you an example. When we want to buy a new car we think, "I need a new car." Then we go and look at different makes and models and decide what we need in this new car, how much we think we can afford and what kind of car we like. We narrow it down to one or two and then we pray, "Lord, should we get this car?" or "Lord, show me which car I should get." What we should do is obey and listen to God from the start, and let Him show us if we really need a new car or not. The apostles made the same mistake in Acts 1, when they by human reason, decided Judas needed to be replaced. They made their own requirements, narrowed it down to two people and then prayed before casting lots. I do not believe Matthias was the one the Lord had chosen because we never hear of this man again. I believe Paul was the one the Lord wanted to replace Judas and this is why the Lord said, "this is the man I have chosen" (Acts 9:15). In obeying all of God's commands we must remember that we go to Him first to listen to what those commands are. If we go ahead with our planning and then seek God after we have done as much as we can on our own, we may have already had a bad start. What if the Israelites had started the Tabernacle before God had told them to? Do you suppose Moses would have been as pleased with the outcome?

As a result of this obedience and a job well done, Moses blesses the people and prays for them. It is interesting that no salary is mentioned for these workers. Many church workers today complain about their pay because they forget that the benefits are "out of this world."

It seems that this project was completed in about six months. Exodus 19:1 tells us that the Israelites did not reach Sinai until the third month after the Exodus. That leaves nine months of which one needs to subtract the 80 days Moses was on the mountain with God (Ex24:18; 34:28), leaving us with about six months time. This is very fast for such a grand project, but with many hands a heavy job becomes light. What an example for the church today. If we all work together rather than working against one another, just think how the building of God's kingdom could grow.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 34

- 1) Who were the people in white robes described in Revelation?
- 2) What do the white robes represent in Revelation?
- 3) What might the white robes of the priest represent?
- 4) What indicates that the Babylon of end times may be religious?
- 5) What were the bells on the hem of the priest's garments for?
- 6) What were the bells not for?
- 7) How does the Tabernacle being brought before Moses piece by piece represent Christ?
- 8) How long did it take to build the Tabernacle?
- 9) How long after the Exodus was it when the Tabernacle was finished?
- 10) What may indicate that Paul was God's chosen disciple to replace Judas?
- 11) What may indicate the Matthias was not God's chosen instrument to replace Judas?

Exodus Chapter 40

Exo 40:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, **2** On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. **3** And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the vail. **4** And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it; and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof. **5** And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle. **6** And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. **7** And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and shalt put water therein. **8** And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the hanging at the court gate. **9** And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy. **10** And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy. **11** And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it. **12** And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water. **13** And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint

him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 14 And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats: 15 And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations. 16 Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he. 17 And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up.

According to Exodus 19:1 the Israelites reached the desert three months after leaving Egypt. Then Moses spent 40 days on Mount Sinai where he received the Ten Commandments and the blueprints for the Tabernacle (Ex 20:18; 34:28). Here in verse two we see that the Tabernacle was to be set up on the 1st day of the first month. The Israelites left Egypt on the 14th day of the first month and, therefore, this has been almost exactly one year since the Exodus. Once again, this also shows us that the Tabernacle was built in about six months. The first day of the first month was also the first of the year. God is starting their new year on the right foot. We also see that Hezekiah restored the temple after it had been defiled and unused for many years. The purification of the temple began on the 1st day of the 1st month again (2 Chron 29:17). There is no accident that these dates are recorded. I don't understand all the significance, but I know there is meaning behind it. The more we study these dates the more we find patterns and symbols. We would do well to study them.

The order of setting things up goes from the Most Holy Place backwards toward the gate. The first thing to be set up was the ark, but it had to be shielded by the curtain. Already, nobody was to be gazing at what symbolized God's throne. Without Christ's forgiveness, nobody had this right. Today, as believers in Christ, we do have this right because Jesus opened the way for us through His body (Heb 10:20).

After the ark was hidden from site, the articles in the Holy Place were set up. It seems that the most important of all articles was the ark, making it first to be set up. If there is an order of importance followed (which there may not be), then the table of shewbread, representing communion with God, was next in line. The lampstand, representing the Word, was next and the altar of incense, representing prayer, was last. Personally, I don't believe this has anything to do with importance, as much as perhaps the role that each article stood for. Just like a man and a woman have different roles so did each piece of furniture. It doesn't mean one is better than the other though. For example, a horse and a cow; which is better? Neither one. It is a matter of roles. If you want milk, I'd go with the cow, but if you want a ride into town, I'd take the horse. Likewise, each piece of furniture was of equal importance, but brings different gifts and benefits. We know that the closer one went to the Most Holy Place, the more precious and intimate things seem to become. Likewise, communion with God shows fellowship and acceptance. This is more intimate than the Word. Everyone can read the Word, but not everyone can partake of communion. We read in Corinthians, "Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Cor 11:27-28). If an unbeliever reads

the Word and ignores it, he isn't sinning against the Lord, but if an unbeliever defies the table of shewbread, he sins against the Christ.

Continuing this line of thought we see that the altar of incense was the last to be set up in the Holy Place. Prayer is also something that anyone can do, but only the prayer of the believer is heard. The Word will go out and do its work on anybody, prayer may not. Isaiah wrote, "So is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (Isa 55:11). The Word is always effective. When it comes to the unbelievers prayer, however, God says "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" (Isa 59:2). The further we go away from the ark of the covenant, the further we get away from a relationship with Christ. Don't get me wrong, prayer is a needed part of our relationship with the Lord, however, the role of it is different, especially for the unbeliever.

Next came the curtain to keep people on the outside from looking in. As with the ark, these furnishings were meant for the holy man.

The altar of burnt offering represented the sacrifice of Jesus and the power of the Gospel. One couldn't even have access to any of the other furnishings without first stopping here. This is the bare bone basics of Christianity.

As for the wash basin, this represented the washing of the Word for obedience in our walk with God and our service to Him. Obedience is a necessary ingredient for joy in the Christian's life. Obedience certainly doesn't precede the sacrifice of Jesus This is why the courtyard gate was one of the last things to be set up. As we discussed, the gate was Jesus. Faith in Jesus gets you into the Tabernacle, but one needed to have his hands and feet washed before he could go to the altar and experience the power of this Gospel as represented by the horns on the brazen altar.

When all was said and done, the furnishings were laid out in the shape of a cross going in a straight line from the brazen altar, to the basin, to the altar of incense to the ark of the covenant. The side arms for the cross were the lampstand and the table of shewbread. It is no accident that the cross was literally spelled out in the furnishings since this is exactly what the Tabernacle represented.

God told Moses to anoint the priests with oil. This oil was specifically made for this purpose (Exo 30:25). This would have been sprinkled over the garments of both Aaron and his sons (Ex 29:21; Lev 8:30) However, this oil would also be poured over the head of Aaron, but not his sons, because this was a distinction made only for the high priest (Ex 29:7; Lev 8:12; Ps 133:2).

The priests had to be consecrated, as did the furnishings, because this is what made them holy. The anointing of God upon each priest allowed them to have access into the Tabernacle. Likewise, it is our anointing of the Spirit that gives us access into heaven. This anointing can only come through faith in Jesus, the Christ. This is what Paul states in Corinthians, "Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come" (2 Cor 1:21-22).

Moses is said to have done everything that the Lord commanded him to do. This is said seven times in fourteen verses, showing how not only the faithfulness of Moses, but also the reliability of the completed project being exactly as God had wanted.

This section concludes by telling us that the Tabernacle was completely finished on the first day of the first month in the second year. The second year of what? The second year from the Exodus. The Bible often records time this way leading away from big events. The same time reference will be made in building the Temple, “In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the LORD” (1 Kings 6:1). This gives us a very precise time that Solomon reigned. We know that the Exodus took place about 2540 years after Creation and, therefore, 480 years later would put the fourth year of Solomon’s reign at 3020 years after Creation.

IS THE EARTH 6000 YEARS OLD?

There has been much debate as to whether or not the earth is millions of years old or only a few thousand years old. However, it may not be enough just to accept an earth only a “few thousand” years old. Scientifically speaking, I have shown in many of our free newsletters that the earth is indeed young and certainly no more than 15 thousand years old (creationinstruction.org). However, Scripturally speaking, God clearly tells us that the earth is only 6000 years old.

It is easy to follow the Biblical ages all the way up to Jacob’s birth first. To begin we read, “When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth” (Gen 5:3). Then, “When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father of Enosh” (Gen 5:6). From this we can see that the world was 130 years old when Seth was born. 105 years later Seth had Enosh and, therefore, the world was 235 years old. In verse nine we read, “When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kenan.” Therefore, the world is now 325 years old when Kenan is born. This exact same pattern is given all the way up to the Flood. To save space and time I will give a quick summary from Kenan to the Flood without quoting the verses. If you would like to check them out simply follow the same rules as given with Seth, Enosh and Kenan. The world was 395 years old with Mahalalel (5:12); 460 with Jared (5:15); 622 with Enoch (5:18); 687 with Methuselah (5:21); 874 with Lamech (5:25); 1056 with Noah (Gen 5:28); and 1656 when the Flood came (Gen 7:11).

In Genesis 11:10 we see that the Flood will encompass exactly one year. However, because the dates are given, we see that it counts as two years. For example, if your child is a junior during the 1999/2000 school year, only one year has passed, yet it counts as being two numbered years. The Flood starts around the middle of 1656 (after creation) and ends in the middle of 1657. Now we read, “Two years after the flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of Arphaxad” (Gen 11:10). Knowing the Flood ends in 1657,

two years AFTER the Flood means 1658 and 1659 (2 complete years) went by, and then 1660 years after Creation, Arphaxad was born.

Now we continue with the same pattern as we began with. The earth would have been 1695 years old when Shelah was born (Gen 11:12); 1725 with Heber (11:14); 1759 with Peleg (11:16); 1789 with Reu (11:18); 1821 with Serug (11:20); 1851 with Nahor (11:22); 1880 with Terah (11:24); 1950 with Abram (11:26); 2050 with Isaac (21:5); 2110 with Jacob (25:26). So now we know without a doubt that the earth was 2110 years old when Jacob was born. The next step in the process is a little different. In Genesis we see that God predicted that the Israelites would be oppressed in Egypt: "Know of a surety that your descendants will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and will be slaves there, and they will be oppressed for four hundred years" (Gen 15:13 RSV). Typically it is thought that the Israelites were therefore slaves in Egypt for 400 years, however, this does not necessarily have to be the case. Note that it says the Israelites were going to be 1) slaves in a foreign country and 2) oppressed for 400 years. Not necessarily slaves for 400 years, but also a period where they would simply be oppressed.

The next thing we need to look at is who is Israel? Because this is so important to understand, we will look at a number of verses to make this point. In Isaiah we read, "Before she goes into labor, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children" (Isa 66:7-8) The nation of Israel was born in just one day, through just one person, Jacob. Jacob was the father of the Israelites, which is why his name is later turned to Israel.

Next we see that God viewed Jacob as His first-born son, yet all of Israel was called Jacob, "Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is My first-born son, and I told you, Let My son go, so he may worship Me. But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your first-born son'" (Exo 4:22-23). We see that all of Israel is called God's servant (singular): "But you, O Israel, My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham My friend" (Isa 41:8). Finally, we see that when Jacob goes into Egypt the Bible gives us a list of people that went with him. The problem is, some of them had not yet been born: "All those who went to Egypt with Jacob--those who were his direct descendants, not counting his sons' wives--numbered sixty-six persons" (Gen 46:26). (Compare 42:37 and 46:9 to see those that have not yet been born). From all of this we can see that Israel, or the descendants God was referring to when He gave the covenant to Abraham in Genesis 15, could be viewed as Jacob.

With this understanding let us look at the next step. In Exodus we see not 400 years, but 430: "Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 years" (Exo 12:40). Why the seeming contradiction? There is no contradiction, just a common misunderstanding of Bible commentators. We know how old Joseph was when he became the 2nd most powerful man in Egypt, "Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt" (Gen 41:46). Then, according to Pharaoh's dream, there were 7 good years for the crops and 7 poor years of famine. After two years of famine had

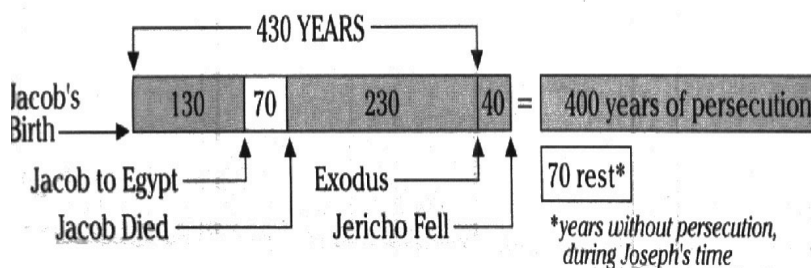
passed Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and Jacob was brought to Egypt DURING the 3rd year of the famine (Gen 45:6). Therefore, Joseph being 30 when he was exalted, plus 7 years of good, plus 2 years of famine, makes him 40 years old during the 3rd year of the famine. This is important because we also know that Joseph died at the age of 110 (Gen 50:26). After Joseph died, the Israelites became slaves (Ex 1:8). That means from Joseph's 40th year, when Jacob came to Egypt, to his 110th year there were a total of 70 years of peace for JACOB in Egypt.

How old was Jacob when he came to Egypt? Jacob told Pharaoh, "The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult" (Gen 47:9). The Hebrew word for difficult is literally "evil." It is almost as if Jacob is saying that so far in his 130 years of life, he has been oppressed, life has been bad. Therefore, from Jacob's birth (beginning of Israel) to being delivered to Joseph for peace was 130 years. Then there were 70 years of peace until Joseph died. After that, slavery began. (Note: Israel clearly was not in slavery the whole time they were in Egypt). $130 + 70 = 200$ years. According to Exodus 12:40 the Israelites were in Egypt 430 years regardless of hardship or peace and, therefore, $430 - 200$ accountable years = 230 years the Israelites must have been slaves.

Because Exodus states that Israel was in Egypt exactly 430 years to the day, that must be true. It is important to realize that historically Egypt captured Canaan the same time Jacob was born. Secondly, and more Biblically defensible, the Septuagint, (Greek translation of the Old Testament quoted by Stephen in Acts 7 and by other Biblical authors in various places) states that Israel was in "Egypt and Canaan" exactly 430 years when they crossed the Red Sea. Therefore, 130 years from Jacob's birth to entering Egypt + 70 years under Joseph in Egypt + 230 years of slavery = exactly 430 years in Egypt.

This may sound strange so far, but it will become more clear. What do we do with the 400 years of oppression God told Abraham about? Well we know Jacob had 130 years of oppression. Then there were 230 years of slavery. Then after that, 40 years of desert wandering during the time of the Exodus.

$130 + 230 + 40 = 400$. There were exactly 400 years of oppression for Israel before they entered the promised land.



Let's get back to the age of the earth. Jacob was born 2110 years after creation. From his birth until he went to Egypt was 130 years, plus 70 years of peace under Joseph, plus 230 years of slavery, plus 40 years of desert wandering

equals 2580 years after Creation that Israel entered the promised land (1461 B.C.).

Next we read, "In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the LORD" (1 Ki 6:1). That means we need to subtract 40 years for the desert wandering because here we are given the date from the Exodus. $2580 - 40 = 2540$. Now $2540 + 480$ until the 4th year of Solomon is 3020 years after Creation that the Temple construction began.

According to Ezekiel 4, Jerusalem would last a total of 430 years. "I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So for 390 days you will bear the sin of the house of Israel. After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the house of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year" (Ezek 4:5-6). $390 + 40 = 430$ years that Jerusalem existed before its destruction.

We stopped at 3020 years after Creation up to the 4th year of Solomon who was reigning in Jerusalem. Because Solomon had already reigned 4 years, and before him, David reigned 33 years in Jerusalem (1 Kings 2:10-11), that leaves 37 years we need to subtract in order to get to the point that Jerusalem was first occupied by Israel. (David captured the city of Jerusalem so it wasn't Israel's before that). So $3020 - 37$ to get us back to the beginning of Jerusalem = 2983 years after Creation. $2983 + 430$ years that Jerusalem was to exist = 3413 years after creation until the first temple was destroyed in 588 B.C by the Babylonians, ending the reign of Jerusalem. This fact is documented by historical and astrological records from the Babylonians. The next temple was destroyed in 70 AD as documented by historical records and, therefore, there were a total of 657 years between 588 B.C. and 70 A.D. $3413 + 657 = 4070$ years after Creation the second temple was destroyed. Therefore, from 70 A.D. to the year 2000 is 6000 years after Creation. For more information on this you can check out the Chronology Institute by Eugene Faulstich. He has much more in regards to dates and patterns of events in the Scriptures. Isn't it wonderful that God recorded all of this for us?

Exo 40:18 And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars. 19 And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the LORD commanded Moses. 20 And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark: 21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the vail of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the LORD commanded Moses. 22 And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the vail. 23 And he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moses. 24 And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward. 25 And he lighted the lamps before the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses. 26 And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the vail: 27 And he burnt sweet incense

thereon; as the LORD commanded Moses. 28 And he set up the hanging at the door of the tabernacle. 29 And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; as the LORD commanded Moses.

The bases that are discussed were the silver ones of the outer court and the bronze bases of the Holy and Most Holy Place. They held two boards with dowel-like sockets at the end that stuck into holes in the base. The crossbars went lengthwise across all the boards to bring stability. The posts seem to be the pillars that were in front of the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. Once all these were in place, the curtains could be draped over them.

Verse 20 then tells us that Moses took the Testimony and put it inside the ark. What is this “Testimony?” The Ten Commandments. These commands are often called as such. One example of many in the Psalms states, “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple” (Ps 19:7). We also read that Josiah was to keep this testimony “And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book” (2 Kings 23:3). Note that Josiah was to keep the commandments and the testimonies. The Testimony cannot just be the commandments then. God is saying that the commandments are a testimony of who God is, what He does, and what He will do. Jesus said, “Even if I testify on My own behalf, My testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going” (John 8:14). Not only does the Christian obey the commandments but we walk in the truth of who God is. We keep his testimonies when we walk in the testimony of God as we testify of Him. In other words, the law (testimony) has been put in our hearts and we now have become a testimony of who Christ is.

The only thing in the ark at this point were the tablets of the Testimony. We often hear that the golden jar of manna is there too. This is true, but Exodus 16:33 tells us that the manna was set before the ark, or in front of it, not in it. However, Hebrews 9:4 tells us that the jar was in the ark. At what point this happened we do not know.

The poles were put in place on the ark to allow it to be moved at a moments notice whenever the glory of God departed. Again, this showed that the ark and its contents were mobile and would go with the Israelites everywhere they went. God’s throne room is the heart of the Christian today. Wherever you go, it goes. This is why Jesus said, “I will never leave you” (Duet 31:8).

The atonement cover was placed on top of the ark to close in the testimony. Indeed, it was the atonement of Jesus that sealed the commandments in our hearts as well. It was the blood of the sacrifice that was poured on top of this cover that also signified the great price that had to be paid for not following these commandments. God would testify against anyone who had broken even one of these laws. This is why Christ is necessary for us today. Without Him, these commandments are a testimony against you and He will send you to hell. This is why we also read, “They rejected His statutes, and His covenant that He

made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He testified against them” (2 Kings 17:15). If we reject the testimony of God in the Ten Commandments today, they testify against us and there is no hope, because only in Jesus can you be saved from the punishment of our sins.

Verse 21 is a repetition of verse 3. Moses is obviously not doing this two times. In verse one of this chapter God tells Moses what to do and now we are seeing Moses do exactly as God had said. The 12 loaves of bread with two rows of six were put upon the table of shewbread and the Holy Place was ready for God’s presence (Lev 24:6-7). Once everything was set up Moses then offered sacrifices to the Lord on the brazen altar as well as incense on the altar of incense.

Exo 40:30 And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash withal. 31 And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat: 32 When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses. 33 And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work.

The wash basin was placed between the Holy Place and the bronze altar. It was filled with water and Moses, Aaron and all the priests would wash in it when they would serve the Lord. As we discussed earlier, this was the act of cleaning the hands and feet for service. In other words, one could not serve God without first having a pure walk. God cannot use someone to minister for Him when that person is leading an ungodly life. This is not to say God doesn’t work despite these leaders, but He won’t use them with His might and power as He does the Godly leaders. How could a divorced pastor counsel a couple with wedding problems? How could a pastor addicted to porn and other vices counsel anyone in any Godly matter? If you want to be mightily used by God you must first let the water of His Word and Spirit cleanse you from the filth in your lives. Once this is done, then you are ready for service.

Exo 40:34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 36 And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: 37 But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. 38 For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

The cloud that filled the Tabernacle is called the Shechinah glory of God. The Word had not yet become flesh so it remained in the cloud until it would take upon the flesh of a man and “tabernacle” among us in a new way (John 1:14). God even said of this Tabernacle to Ezekiel, “Son of man, this is

the place of My throne and the place for the soles of My feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever” (Ezek 43:7). What a blessing God had given His people in the knowledge and visible presence of His glory. After the golden calf incident God almost left them alone, and now they would see that God would not just lead them, but dwell or live with them. As we think of this we may wonder in awe of what that may have been like, but we need not wonder as God has promised us the same: “Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith” (Eph 3:17). This, too, is a visible presence as any Christian who has been washed in the basin will tell you. One has to experience it however, because it only can be seen through the eyes of faith. This is why, “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:14-15).

Many people think that God was in a cloud by day and fire by night. This isn't so. At night the fire was seen in the cloud whereas in the day it wasn't as bright. This is why verse 38 says the “fire was in the cloud.” In Numbers we read, “On the day the tabernacle, the Tent of the Testimony, was set up, the cloud covered it. From evening till morning the cloud above the tabernacle looked like fire. That is how it continued to be; the cloud covered it, and at night it looked like fire. Whenever the cloud lifted from above the Tent, the Israelites set out; wherever the cloud settled, the Israelites encamped” (Num 9:15-18). The cloud at day would have provided the comforting shade from the sun while the light at night provided light to walk by as well. Day or night we receive guidance from the Lord. Are you letting the glory of God within you be your guide? We should never set out on a venture or ministry without first hearing from God.

Also noteworthy is that even though there seemed to be what looked like fire in the Tabernacle from God's glory, nothing was burned. This was similar to the glory of God at the burning bush. God's glory is a consuming fire to the unbeliever, but a bright light to the Christian.

John wrote, “In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was GOD. And the WORD was made flesh, and dwelt among us. Literally, *eskeenoosen en heemin* or “made His TABERNACLE among us.” I hope that you have seen how clearly Christ did come and Tabernacle among us in human form. Just as we saw the glory of God fill the Tabernacle here, Jesus came and was filled with God's glory on earth. Even more, Christ now dwells inside of us with all of His glory. As a believer in Christ, you are now that Tabernacle, precious and holy. Just as the Israelites gazed upon the glory of the Lord in the wilderness we, too, now have seen this same glory as John also put it, “We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Paul also tells us how Christ can live in us. If we aren't perfect and blameless in God's eyes the glory of God cannot rest in us but, “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21). You are now the righteousness of God and don't forget it.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 40

- 1) How long after the Exodus did Israel reach the desert?
- 2) Why was the Tabernacle set up from back to front?
- 3) Give an example of different “roles” to illustrate the different roles of a man and a woman.
- 4) What furniture illustrates the “bare bones” of Christianity?
- 5) What shape was seen in the layout of the furniture?
- 6) What was different in the anointing process of Aaron than that of his sons?
- 7) When did Solomon build the Temple?
- 8) What year was the Flood? How many years after Creation was this?
- 9) What two things did God promise Abraham would happen to the Israelites in 400 years of time?
- 10) How old was Joseph during the 3rd year of the Egyptian famine?
- 11) How many years did Israel experience peace?
- 12) How many years did Israel experience persecution?
- 13) How many years was Israel in the desert?
- 14) How many years does Stephen say the Israelites were in Egypt?
- 15) How does one reconcile the difference between 400 and 430 years of Israel being in Egypt?
- 16) How long did Jerusalem last?

- 17) What year was the Temple destroyed?
- 18) How old is the earth according to the Bible?
- 19) What is the “Testimony?”
- 20) What does the “Testimony” mean or show us about God?
- 21) Why did the priests need to wash before making a sacrifice?
- 22) What was the glory of God in the cloud called?
- 23) Did the cloud of God disappear at night? Explain.
- 24) What was the only thing placed in the ark at first?

SUMMARY OF EXODUS IN OUR LIFE

- 1) In Genesis we see Abraham represented God the Father, Isaac represented Christ, the Son of the Father (Gal 4).
- 2) Israel was born into slavery as we are with our sinful nature (Ps 51:5).
- 3) Satan tried to kill the deliverer as a baby just as he did with Jesus.
- 4) Moses was the Israelite’s deliverer, but the people didn’t want him (2:14), just as we fight against God’s guidance today.
- 5) Just as the Israelite slavery caused the people to recognize a need for a Savior, our sinful flesh consistently lets us know we need a Savior.
- 6) Before our birth, as before Israel’s freedom, Satan desires to have us, but God protects us.
- 7) Moses can also represent the Holy Spirit, our deliverer who was an alien (2:11) in the land and knew he belonged in heaven or the promised land. He became a foreigner for the sake of God’s people.
- 8) The miracles God promised to use in deliverance (3:20) are promised for our deliverance in Christ’s second coming (Rev 11).
- 9) The Israelites came out of slavery with many possessions as we, too, have been brought out of slavery with the gift of righteousness. (Rom 7:25; 6:18. See section on 3:21).
- 10) God called Moses and he didn’t want to go (4:13-14) just as we often don’t want to do what we are called to do.

- 11) As Zipporah was under God's Covenant through her "bridegroom of blood" (4:25) we, too, are under the Covenant because Christ is our "bridegroom of blood" (John 3:29).
- 12) Under slavery the Israelites had unrealistic expectations placed on them. If they didn't obey they would surely die (5:15-20). Likewise, under our bondage of sin, the fulfillment of the law is an unrealistic expectation that leads to death apart from Christ Jesus who fulfilled it in our stead.
- 13) God increased trouble to increase good for the Israelites (5:21) just as He did for us, "The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 5:20-21).
- 14) Moses, as a type of Holy Spirit, was rejected by Pharaoh (10:28). When people reject the presence of the Holy Spirit they, too, pronounce their doom.
- 15) The ultimate delivery from slavery came about through the Passover Lamb which represented Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb (1 Cor 5:7).
- 16) Israel was brought out of slavery into new life through the crossing of the Red Sea, a type of baptism as told in the New Testament (1 Cor 10:1-2).
- 17) The wind that dried up the path to the promised land and that led the way through the sea was the Holy Spirit, who also leads us to belief (1 Cor 12:3).
- 18) The Israelites became impatient waiting for their leader to return (Exo 32) just as many today grow weary of waiting for Jesus (1 Peter 3:3-6).
- 19) Moses was a mediator for the people (Exo 32) as Jesus is our Mediator today. The sin of the golden calf could not be atoned for by only sorrow and death. Only with the atonement brought by Moses, a type of Christ, could people move on towards the promised land.
- 20) Once delivered from slavery, the Israelites were given a glimpse of heaven through the Tabernacle (Heb 8:5). They also received a glimpse of the promised land but they were not allowed to enter in.
- 21) God gave the Israelites manna as a form of communion with Him just as we have today (John 6). He also gave them spiritual water from the rock (1 Cor 10:4).
- 22) God sent Jesus ahead of the Israelites into the promised land to His prepared place (Ex 23:20) just as Jesus went ahead of us to prepare our heavenly home (John 14:2).
- 23) In Exodus 28 the priests were discussed as a model of the holy man. God has made all who accept Christ, priests who have access into the Most Holy Place or the throne room of God (1 Peter 2:5-9). Likewise, the High Priest represented Christ, whom we serve, and whom offered atonement for us (Hebrews 7).
- 24) Virtually every piece of the Tabernacle points us to Christ and heaven. To give a quick review we see the Eastern gate was the only way into the Tabernacle just as Jesus is the only way into heaven. Once you accept Jesus you go to the brazen altar and accept personally what He had done for you in sacrificing Himself and you are now rightfully inside the Tabernacle. However, God doesn't just want you saved on earth, He wants you to be

filled with joy and to have as much glory later on in heaven as possible. So we go next to the wash basin to sanctify our walk with God by washing our hands (service) and feet (walk) (John 13:8-9). Once this is done, we become closer to God as we enter the Holy Place where joy awaits through His Word (lamp), communion (showbread), and prayer (incense). By these three we will grow even closer to God, realizing, understanding and feeling that we ourselves have become the Most Holy Place where God now lives. We will have the great hope of the perfect cube of the New Jerusalem (Most Holy Place) coming down from heaven where we will live with God in the presence of His angels (cherubim) forever.

- 25) In chapter 33 we see God went ahead of the Israelites to prepare their promised land for them, but He wouldn't stay among them. Likewise, John tells us that Jesus went ahead of us to heaven in order to prepare a place for us.
- 26) In chapter 34 we see Moses as a Christ figure going up on a mountain and fasting 40 days and nights, as did Jesus. He came down with the radiant face of God's glory that foreshadowed the glory God would give to His New Testament Saints.
- 27) The costly stones of the Tabernacle were counted and weighed just as our costly stones of our works are measured (1 Cor 3:11-15).
- 28) The priests were given white robes (Ex 39) to serve the Lord just as the saints in heaven are (Rev 9:13).
- 29) The Tabernacle was presented before Moses (a Christ figure Exo 39:30-35) just as our bodies (The temple of Christ) will be presented before Jesus to give an account (Rom 14:10-12).