

CONCERNING THE WAY

July 23, 2008

LESSON 25: EXODUS: THE LAW OF MOSES



Introduction

This lesson will cover Exodus chapter 20 through 40, which covers the rest of the book, and mainly focuses on the giving of the Mosaic Law. This will conclude our studies on Exodus.

- Dusty Rhodes

Chapter 20 - The Revelation of the Mosaic Law

Introduction - notes about the Law of Moses

- There are not Ten Commandments, but 613.
- The Mosaic Law was given by means of angels. It doesn't say this in the Old Testament, but Jewish tradition says God used angels to give the Law to Moses, and it is confirmed in Acts 7:53, Galatians 3:19, and Hebrews 2:2.
- Purpose of the Law - it was never a means of salvation, but:
 - To reveal the Holiness of God - the Law showed the standard of righteousness which God required. Once someone reads the Law it becomes obvious pretty quickly that you can never be saved by your works, because you can't obey it perfectly.
 - Provided a rule of conduct of life for the Old Testament believer (Romans 3:20,28). If an Old Testament person was truly a believer (by faith), the way he showed his faith was by obeying the Law.
 - To reveal sin (Romans 3:19-20, 5:20) - no man could ever say he was sinless after he read the law. The law made us all guilty before God, we are condemned by it.
 - To make one sin more (Romans 4:15, 7:8-13) - the sin nature uses the Law as a base of operations. Paul does not say that there is no sin without the law, but no violation of specific laws. If there were no commands, there would be no transgressions. Of course, we are still sinful by nature. As soon as the Law says Thou Shalt Not, the sin nature says Oh Yes I Will. The problem is not with the Law, but with us and our sinful natures (1 Corinthians 15:56)
 - To lead us to faith (Galatians 3:24) - faith in Christ - we can do nothing of ourselves, but have to place our faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross.
- The Mosaic Law has come to an end - not partial, but a total end. (Romans 10:4)
- It is a unit, you cannot divide it, though people often do, into ceremonial, moral, and civil categories. If you break any one of these laws, you are guilty of breaking the entire law. There is nothing in the Bible that would tell you that only the moral section of the law is still valid. It is a single unit. It is completely obeyed or not.
- Romans 3:20 says you cannot be saved by the law, Hebrews 7:11-14, 18-19 says even living by the law will bring no sanctification, no perfection. We cannot even live our Christian lives by the Mosaic Law.
- Galatians 3:19 says the Mosaic Law was something God added temporarily until the Seed (Messiah) came. Realize that God's standards will never change, but the Mosaic Law is ended
- The Mosaic Covenant was temporary and conditional. The Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New Covenants are unconditional and unending. They are all distinctly for the Jews, and

promise material and spiritual blessings.

- Another purpose of the law was to provide a wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles. As long as it was in effect, the Gentiles could not enjoy the spiritual blessings. Now Gentiles have been made partakers of the spiritual blessings of the Jewish covenants. (Ephesians 2:11-16, 3:5-6)
- 2 Corinthians 3:3-11, speaking specifically of the ten commandments, says they have been done away with. The ten commandments were written on stone tablets, the rest on scrolls.
- Church age believers have a different set of commandments to follow, some being similar, some being different. We follow the Law of Christ, the New Testament commands applicable to the New Testament believer.

Exodus 20:1 *God spoke all these words:*

Not the LORD, not Jehovah, which is usually associated with God dealing with Israel. But here we come back to the Triune God. Is this an accident? No. And then in verse 2 we see the normal approach to the Nation of Israel from God and it is LORD God or Jehovah. So why do you suppose it is God, rather than LORD God or Jehovah? Well, we must go to Romans Chapter 3. Keep in mind that Jehovah was the name that was particularly associated God with His people Israel.

The term God, transcends Israel and goes over to everyone. The Triune God is that which every nation of the world must deal with.

Romans 3:19 *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 may be held accountable to God.*

This goes beyond the Nation of Israel, and to the whole human race. So then, does the law condemn just the Jews, or also Gentiles? Everyone. And notice "the whole world might be made fit for heaven?" That's not what it says, although most think that way. How many people of your own friends and neighbors have gotten the idea in their heads, that if they can just keep the Ten Commandments to the best of their ability, it will take them to heaven? Many, many people think this way. But that is not what this verse says. It says "the whole world may be held accountable to God." So the law was given to make everyone guilty. In verse 20 Paul goes on:

Romans 3:20 *For no one is declared righteous before him by the works of the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.*

The law was Holy, it was perfect, it was righteous, from God's point of view. But to mankind it was weak and fleshly. Why? Because law had no inside power to help the person doing it to keep it. All the law could do was condemn; it could never take the person and say, "I say do not steal, and I will help you from stealing." The law can't do that. The law has no power to help a person keep the law. And for some people it is quite the opposite, you tell a little kid, don't go through that door. But when you turn your back he is going to try to see what is on the other side of that door. Now are we any different? No. But the law has absolutely no way of helping a person keep the law. But when you come under Grace, just as soon as you believe in what God has done for us, the Holy Spirit indwells us, and now we have power.

Power to do what? Keep the Law? Absolutely not, this is what Paul was correcting the Galatians about. We do not try to keep the law as a rule of life, it is not helpful in our sanctification any more than it is in our salvation. The **power is to walk in the Spirit, to be filled continually with the Spirit, and in this way you will fulfill the Law of Christ, not the Law of Moses.**

In a future lesson we will take the time to go over this in much more detail. So many people and so many church denominations are confused on this issue. The Bible is so clear we are not under the Law for salvation or sanctification! If you don't want to wait until we study this in Romans, just ask me about, I have some excellent articles on the believer's rule of life that I can send you.

I want to say I do not teach from traditions of any church denomination. This teaching is strictly nondenominational. I just simply want to teach the Word, and see what it says, as well as what it doesn't say. And, I do not make this stuff up. I, in myself, have no special gift of understanding of the scriptures. Most of what I present in my lessons I have learned from great Bible teachers, who exegete the Bible accurately and literally, and do not play games with the text. I stand on the shoulders of giants who came before me, who have the education and experience I do not.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The law still has control over the whole human race. If you just stop and think about it, whether they are pagans or absolute atheists, or whatever, any society on earth must have some sort of a fabric as the Ten Commandments laid out for the human race. In fact, we have seen in our studies of Genesis and Exodus that these moral laws were already accepted as foundational from the very beginning of history. Here, for the first time, God ratifies His laws in a covenant with the Nation of Israel. Verses 1-7 are sometimes called "The Decalogue" - meaning the Ten Words. The order is not always agreed on in Judaism and Christianity.

Jewish Tradition - the Ten Commandments were split into five on each stone tablet

1 st Tablet		2 nd Tablet	
1	Jehovah is God	6	Do not murder
2	Do not worship other gods or images	7	Do not commit adultery
3	Do not take the name of the Lord in vain	8	Do not steal
4	Honor the Sabbath	9	Do not lie
5	Honor your parents	10	Do not covet

1st Christian tradition - usually Protestant

1 st Tablet		2 nd Tablet	
1	Do not worship other gods	6	Do not murder
2	Do not make images to worship them	7	Do not commit adultery
3	Do not take the name of the Lord in vain	8	Do not steal
4	Honor the Sabbath	9	Do not lie
5	Honor your parents	10	Do not covet

2nd Christian tradition - usually Catholic

1 st Tablet		2 nd Tablet	
1	Do not worship other gods or images	4	Honor your parents
2	Don't take name of the Lord in vain	5	Do not murder
3	Honor the Sabbath	6	Do not commit adultery
		7	Do not steal
		8	Do not lie
		9	Do not covet your neighbor's house
		10	Do not covet your neighbor's wife, servants, cattle

Another option is that all ten commandments were written on one tablet, front and back, and the other tablet was a duplicate of the first. We'll use the Jewish tradition to go through these one by one, which makes sense because these laws were given to the Jews.

1st Commandment – TRUE THEOLOGY

Exodus 20:2 *"I, the LORD, am your God, who brought you from the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery.*

In other words, get your theology about Me straight first. Understand who I AM, I am the one who redeemed you out of Egypt. The Jews consider this to be a commandment.

2nd Commandment – TRUE WORSHIP

Exodus 20:3-5 *"You shall have no other gods before me. (4) You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water below. (5) You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, responding to the transgression of fathers by dealing with children to the third and fourth generations of those who reject me,*

God sees this as spiritual adultery, He will be jealous as a husband would be jealous over an unfaithful wife (Israel is the wife of Jehovah). Remember that God is a God of love and a God of judgment, you cannot exclude one from the other.

This is not a law against having pictures of animals and such! The point is not to worship any image, whether it be a picture or a statue of something.

What does this thing about 3rd and 4th generations mean? I think it could be about how certain qualities within a family will carry on down from generation to generation. Abuse is one example. We now know that the greatest percentage of the time, when an abused child becomes a father, he normally will be an abusive father also.

This is the way the human make-up operates until the very power of a Sovereign God comes into that life. And that's why we must realize that society today is in the shape that is in because they have pushed God out of their thinking. We have pushed Him out of our schools, and homes, and then wonder why things are going on like they are. That is all wrong, and so God is warning that these traits will take off down the line for generation after generations. Alcoholism is another good example of generation after generation in the same family. I have also known people whose families were involved in the occult at some point in the past, and that openness to demonic influence seems to follow through the generations of the family.

3rd Commandment – REFERENCE OF SPEECH

Exodus 20:7 *"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold guiltless anyone who takes his name in vain.*

Devout Jews take this so seriously that to this day they will not write or speak the name of God. If they use God's name in writing, it's always G_d. In Hebrew it's YHVH, and some will say Yahweh, but they don't know for sure how it's to be pronounced. The point of this commandment is not to use God's name uselessly.

4th Commandment – REST FROM NORMAL EMPLOYMENT

Exodus 20:8-11 *"Remember the Sabbath day to set it apart as holy. (9) For six days you may labor and do all your work, (10) but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; on it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your cattle, or the resident foreigner who is in your gates. (11) For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.*

In the commands about the Sabbath notice God says for six days you may what? Work. And that is such a dirty word for so many people anymore. Many people don't really want to work. As we said in our last lesson, the Sabbath was always Saturday, the 7th day of the week. It has never been Sunday, and will never be Sunday. More scripture references to the Sabbath are Exodus 16:25-30, 34:21, 35:3, Numbers 15:32-36, Nehemiah 13:15, Jeremiah 17:21-22.

All of the other ten commandments are reiterated in the New Testament as being applicable to us today, this one is not. It is not for the church. For the church age believer, no day is special, each one can observe days as they see fit. We are commanded to gather together, but this can be any day, it doesn't have to be on Sunday. Traditionally believers have met on Sunday because that's what the early church did, and it was called The Lord's Day, because that's the day Jesus rose from the dead.

5th Commandment – FAMILY HONOR

Exodus 20:12 *"Honor your father and your mother, that you may live a long time in the land the LORD your God is giving to you.*

The promise is that the nation would remain in the land a long time, it is not a promise of personal long life. Of course, this is a promise for Israel alone, not for the Gentiles.

Those five are held together then by that phrase "The LORD your God". The last five are much simpler. How long can a society hold together if you absolutely ignore these last five? Well it can't. Even uncivilized tribes in the deepest jungles have a moral code. Where do they get it? In Romans the apostle Paul tells us for those who did not have the written law, where did God put the law? - In their heart. Their God-given conscience acts to accuse or excuse them. Even the uncivilized people of the world, in order to maintain their little tribes, must have some sort of a law that is patterned after what God gave here to Moses.

6th Commandment – SANCTITY OF LIFE

Exodus 20:13 *"You shall not murder.*

This is a good translation, some say kill. It is not against all killing, but premeditated murder, it does not forbid the death penalty (Leviticus 20:10, Numbers 35:19). It also does not forbid war. (Deuteronomy 13:15)

7th Commandment – SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE

Exodus 20:14-17 *"You shall not commit adultery.*

8th Commandment – SANCTITY OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

Exodus 20:15 *"You shall not steal.*

9th Commandment – TRUTH

Exodus 20:16 *"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."*

10th Commandment - DESIRES OF THE HEART

Exodus 20:17 *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that belongs to your neighbor."*

This is an internal commandment. If we keep this one, all the others will be easily kept. Let's look at Romans 7. This is a difficult Chapter, and we are not going to comment fully on it today. But Paul is going through the awful turmoil of what I think all of us experience at one time or other. The things we should do, and the things that we want to do, but we don't do, and the things that we shouldn't do, but we do anyway. So this is his dilemma. He says in verse 7:

Romans 7:7 *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Absolutely not! Certainly, I would not have known sin except through the law. For indeed I would not have known what it means to desire something belonging to someone else if the law had not said, "Do not covet."*

Now, when you really think about it, is it possible to break one of the other nine commandments, without first coveting? If you think about it you know that coveting is at the root of breaking every one of the commandments, and that is why Paul makes reference to it.

I suppose the one most people would wonder about is taking the name of the LORD your God in vain. How can you maintain that a man who curses and swears frequently, using God's name in vain, is coveting? Why do people curse and swear? I'll tell you why, for the same reason the little kid who gets no attention at home acts up in school. What does he want? Attention, validation, acceptance with his peers. That is what it boils down to. He is coveting attention. You may disagree with me on that, but that's what I have found.

Now, with regard to these Ten commandments, I would like to go to Jesus' ministry in Matthew 22. If you noticed as we read those commandments in Exodus, there was one word glaringly absent. Have you ever noticed this? It's Love. That word is not in the ten commandments. Now when you get to Deuteronomy Chapter 6, Moses tells the children of Israel, *"The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!"* And the next verse says *"You must love the LORD your God with your whole mind, your whole being, and all your strength."* But stop again and think. Can any of you force someone else to love you? You can't force someone to love anybody. And God knew He couldn't.

So I think that is the reason the word love is not in any of the Ten Commandments. But from the very onset of the creation of man, why did God create man in the first place? So that He (God) could have someone, that after He had extended His love, would love Him back. And that is the reason we are here. God had angels, He had enough to populate all the universe as far as that goes, but He did not have someone that had that capability of returning His extended love. Turn to Matthew 22:

Matthew 22:35-40 *And one of them, an expert in religious law, asked him a question to test him: (36) "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" (37) Jesus said to him, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' (38) This is the first and greatest commandment. (39) The second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' (40) All the law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."*

Now, wait a minute; was that verse 39 in the Ten Commandments? What has Jesus done? Well when

He said to love the Lord your God with all your heart, He is referring to the first five. And when we are aware of these first five commandments, of how God is approaching us from His point of view, what is it intrinsic for us to do? To love Him. When we realize that He is the Supreme God, and is the One who will not give in to competition from idols, He is the one who has created everything, and has set up the home, then our response should be to love Him and obey Him. This is the first one, love the Lord your God, and the second concerns our relationship with our fellow man. With our home, family, and neighbors. So what is Jesus really telling this smart Alec? Jesus just simply lumps the two into two great areas of human relationship, Man with his God, and man with his fellow man.

Now, turn to Romans again, where Paul just puts the frosting on the cake. I want to be known to anyone as a teacher who maintains that we are not under Law but under Grace. But I also want you to realize that I'm not throwing the law out the window, as having no use to us. It is basic of course, even in the age of Grace. Everyone of us as a child of God are going to fail, but hopefully by God's Grace, how are we responding to these Ten commandments? They are the very core of our social fabric aren't they? All but one are also in the New Testament. Now, look at what Paul says in Romans 13.

Romans 13:8-9 *Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. (9) For the commandments, "Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet," (and if there is any other commandment) are summed up in this, "Love your neighbor as yourself."*

Now, we had better define the love that Paul is talking about; it is not erotic love, or Hollywood's idea of love. Paul here is talking about a love that seeks the other person's highest good. You might want to write that in the front of your Bible. It is the best definition of love I have ever come across. There is nothing involved in that as far as hugging and kissing and a physical attraction. It is just simply seeking the other person's highest good. If young people, in their courting, would keep that uppermost in their minds, would we be in the moral shape we are in? Of course not. If the young man dating that little girl would have her highest good on his mind, would he try to bring her into an immoral situation? No.

Whether it's a husband and wife, or a neighbor with a neighbor, as long as we are always attempting to do what is the other person's highest good, then Paul says we are fulfilling the whole Law.

Exodus 20:18-22 *All the people were seeing the thundering and the lightning, and heard the sound of the horn, and saw the mountain smoking — and when the people saw it they trembled with fear and kept their distance. (19) They said to Moses, "You speak to us and we will listen, but do not let God speak with us, lest we die." (20) Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you so that you do not sin." (21) The people kept their distance, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was. (22) The LORD said to Moses: "Thus you will tell the Israelites: 'You yourselves have seen that I have spoken with you from heaven.'*

The people are afraid of God's voice, and they ask that Moses be the spokesman, they don't want God to speak directly to them. If you truly fear God, it will keep you from disobeying Him. There has to be that fear there. You can never think that God is like a kindly old grandfather. Like Aslan in the Chronicles of Narnia, God is not a tame lion. He is Good, but He is dangerous.

Read verse 20. This is probably where that phrase “putting the fear of God into you” comes from. But notice God says that He has come to test you. I know that this is speaking specifically of His visible presence, to put fear into the people, but I think we can also take this on a broader scale. God dealt with Israel in the way He did as a test, and an example to the whole world. It would have been wonderful if Israel had passed the test, but they failed miserably. **This is an example to us, showing us that we will fail also if we try to measure up to God’s standards on our own, even if He is standing right in front of us, even if He would do great miracles in our daily lives.**

Chapters 21-23

The next few chapters contain what is called the Ordinances, and they concern the fundamental rights of the Israelites, both civil and social. We’ll touch on these lightly so we can move on, just so you get an idea of what is involved in the whole Law of Moses. Please take the time to read them yourself sometime, they are fascinating. Also, do not ignore Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Although we have only quoted verses from these books here and there, they are very important books, and you will be better for getting to know them on your own. Some laws you will see have no bearing on our lives today, but some are very relevant. For example, God had the Israelites keeping themselves clean long before the rest of the world figured out that might be important to keeping away from sickness and disease. We’ll look at that more next time.

Here is an outline of these three chapters with a few comments along the way. You can read these on your own, but you can see there are other moral laws and some civil laws here. An example of a civil law would be if a bull gets out and tramples down someone else’s crop, there had to be an ordinance for restitution. Then, in order to compensate for the breaking of the moral law, God gave them the rituals, or the system of worship. And that involved of course the priesthood. They will also soon be establishing the Tabernacle so that Israel would know exactly what to do under any set of circumstances.

The Ordinances - 21:1 - 23:33

1. Introduction - 21:1

2. Masters and Servants - 21:2-11

3. Personal Injury - 21:12-32

Note: Verse 15-17 says that anyone who strikes or even curses their parents must be put to death. If that were a law in our country I bet you’d see a whole different attitude among young people!

4. Property Rights - 21:33 - 22:15

5. Evil Practices - 22:16 - 23:9

Note: A Jew cannot loan money to another Jew with interest, but it is OK to charge a Gentile interest.

6. The Festivals - 23:10-19

a. Sabbatical Year - 23:10-11

b. The Sabbath Day - 23:12

c. True Worship - 23:13 - True worship is obedience to God

d. The Pilgrimage Festivals - 23:14-17

- The Feast of Unleavened Bread & Passover - 7 days
- The Feast of Pentecost - also called the Feast of Harvest, Feast of Firstfruits (Numbers 28:26) and Feast of Weeks (Deuteronomy 16:10)
- The Feast of Tabernacles, also called the Feast of Ingathering - at the end of the year (Leviticus 23:34,39)

- Every male was to make a pilgrimage to the tabernacle for each of these three feasts and present himself. Once the tabernacle came to the Promised Land, it was in Shiloh, then in Jerusalem under King David

e. Sacrificial Practices - 23:18-19

Verse 19 says you mustn't cook a lamb in its mother's milk. This sounds strange until you know that this was a Canaanite practice of worship to their gods. The Pharisees by the time of Jesus took this too far, as they did with many laws, and to this day orthodox Jews won't mix meat and dairy products together. Their homes always have two complete sets of dishes, pots, and pans. One set is used for meat, and the other for dairy - they are never mixed.

7. The Possession of the Promised Land - 23:20-33

Before we get to the Tabernacle, I would like for you to stop in Chapter 23. Most of us remember the story of the ten spies, who go into the land of Canaan, to spy out the land. Do you know that was not part of God's plan at all? God intended for them to trust him explicitly. After all, He had already brought them out of Egypt miraculously, He had brought them through the Red Sea. So what were some measly little Canaanites (ok, maybe some were 7-9 feet tall, but what's that to God?). So God's intention was as soon as the Tabernacle is completed, which will be in a year, God wants them to raise it up, so He can take them straight North into the Promise Land, no checking it out first.

Exodus 23:20 *"I am going to send an angel before you to protect you as you journey and to bring you into the place that I have prepared.*

Who is the Angel in this case? It is Jehovah Himself. The Angel of God, The Angel of the LORD, is always God the Son. We pick that up in Genesis 46, where Jacob referred to Him as the Redeeming Angel. There is only one Redeemer in Scripture and that is God the Son. Jehovah in the Old Testament and Christ in the New Testament. So this is Jehovah that is speaking to the children of Israel and He is going to lead them.

Exodus 23:23-26 *For my angel will go before you and bring you to the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and I will destroy them completely. (24) You must not bow down to their gods; you must not serve them or do according to their practices. Instead you must completely overthrow them and smash their standing stones to pieces. (25) You must serve the LORD your God, and he will bless your bread and your water, and I will remove sickness from your midst. (26) No woman will miscarry her young or be barren in your land. I will fulfill the number of your days.*

There are five rewards promised to Israel for obedience here.

1. God will bless you with food
2. God will remove all sicknesses from you
3. There will be no miscarriages
4. There will be no barrenness
5. You will have long life

Exodus 23:27-33 *"I will send my terror before you, and I will destroy all the people whom you encounter; I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. (28) I will send hornets before you that will drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite before you. (29) I will not drive them out before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild animals multiply against you. (30) Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you become fruitful and inherit the land.*

(31) I will set your boundaries from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert to the River, for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you. (32) "You must make no covenant with them or with their gods. (33) They must not live in your land, lest they make you sin against me, for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."

Now turn to the Book of Deuteronomy Chapter 1. The Book of Deuteronomy contains a synopsis of much of what happens in Exodus, plus some other events not mentioned in Exodus. Moses is going back to where they had departed from Mount Sinai, and are ready to go into the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 1:19-21 *Then we left Horeb and passed through all that immense, forbidding wilderness that you saw on the way to the Amorite hill country as the LORD our God had commanded us to do, finally arriving at Kadesh Barnea. (20) Then I said to you, "You have come to the Amorite hill country which the LORD our God is about to give us. (21) Look, he has placed the land in front of you! Go up, take possession of it, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, said to do. Do not be afraid or discouraged!"*

Does He tell them to send in spies? No. Then who's idea was it? The Israelites. They were the ones that backed off and were weak in faith, and forgetting all the power that their God had manifested. They say, "Hey, we can't go in until we see what we are up against." And when this happened, God condescended. It was because of their report that Israel got weak and afraid, and said "Oh we can't do it."

The amazing thing is in Hebrews the 4th Chapter the author is referring to those 40 years that they wasted in the wilderness. And he says "You could have gone in, and had the land of promise, but you did not because of your unbelief." Not their immorality, though they had been guilty of that, and it wasn't because of any other thing, but only their unbelief. And that is so appropriate for us today. What is the matter with Christianity today? Unbelief. People just cannot break down and say "Yes I believe what God says." We have the intellectual world with all of their education, putting down the Scripture, and man says, "Well, really, how can I believe this?" That is unbelief. **This is what gets to the very heart of God.**

Now, back to Exodus 24. In verses 1-3 the people agree with the covenant, they agree to obey God and put themselves under His Law. In verses 9-11 the people see the Shekinah glory of God. This time the glory is used to seal the covenant, just as the glory was present to seal the Abrahamic covenant. In verses 12-18 Moses climbs Mt. Sinai again to receive the stone tablets from God, and he stays on the mountain for 40 days and nights.

So, God is preparing the Nation of Israel. They are several million strong, they are gathered around Mt. Sinai. They have now been given the Ten Commandments, and He has already begun to give them a certain amount of the Civil law in the intervening chapters. And now He is getting ready to set up the Ecclesiastical, or that part of the law that establishes their Temple worship. Chapters 25 through 31 focus on God's instructions to Moses on building a sort of mobile temple, or **tabernacle**.

The purpose of this tabernacle is so God can have a more permanent and visible residence with the people of Israel. The Shekinah glory will remain in the Holy of Holies part of the tabernacle. There are different names for the tabernacle in the Bible:

1. Sanctuary (Exodus 25:8) - emphasis on the holiness of the place

2. Tabernacle (Exodus 25:9) - emphasis on a dwelling place
3. Tent (Exodus 26:36) - emphasis on it's temporary character

It is also called the Tent of Meeting (Exodus 29:42), and the Tabernacle of Testimony (Exodus 38:21). When you live in a tent, you aren't living in something substantial and permanent, but in something you can pick up and move. Now **the apostle Paul also refers to our body as a tabernacle. It's not here forever. It is temporary.** Now, let's look at Chapter 25. Moses is up on top of the mountain, and God begins giving him instructions on building the tabernacle.

Exodus 25:1-5 *The LORD spoke to Moses: (2) "Tell the Israelites to take an offering for me; from every person motivated by a willing heart you are to receive my offering. (3) This is the offering you are to accept from them: gold, silver, bronze, (4) blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, goat's hair, (5) ram skins dyed red, fine leather, acacia wood, (6) oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for fragrant incense, (7) onyx stones, and other gems to be set in the ephod and in the breastpiece.*

Where are they going to get all of this material? Where did it come from? Remember when they came out of Egypt, they looted Egypt. The Egyptians just gave everything to these Israelites. God had all this in mind. Egypt was in complete shambles, economically, socially, militarily, and everything, by the time the Israelites had left. Well, here is the reason. Israel just simply took Egypt's wealth, not because they took by deceit, but by a Sovereign God.

Now, we will start on the Tabernacle building. I like to point something out here. As God is now giving instructions for this Tabernacle an amazing thing comes up. I think very few people have caught it, although they may have been reading their Bible all their life. And that is that the Tabernacle floor plan that God gave to Moses was a copy of one not on this earth but in heaven. Let's look at verse 8:

Exodus 25:8-9 *Let them make for me a sanctuary, so that I may live among them. (9) According to all that I am showing you — the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings — you must make it exactly so.*

In other words, God isn't dreaming this up from nothing. God said to Moses "I'm going to give you the instructions to build this tabernacle on earth, patterned after one that is in heaven." Alright, let's show that from Scripture. For that ,we must go to the Book of Hebrews Chapter 9.

Hebrew 9:11 *But now Christ has come as the high priest of the good things to come. He passed through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands, that is, not of this creation,*

Paul is referring to a tent not made with men's hands, and is not on this earth or this creation, so it has to be in heaven. And evidently God has set this up in heaven. But when that High Priest went in and sprinkled the blood on the Mercy Seat, as the High Priest of Israel, what did Christ do for us? He did the same thing, only instead of going into the Tabernacle of Israel, He went into the Tabernacle in heaven. Now let's read on.

Hebrews 9:12 *and he entered once for all into the most holy place not by the blood of goats and calves but by his own blood, and so he himself secured eternal redemption.*

The little room behind the veil was called the Holy of Holies, or most Holy Place, and Christ went into the one in heaven as our High Priest. He brought His own divine shed blood at the crucifixion. Do you see why a study of the Tabernacle is so appropriate?

The Ark of the Covenant

Now, back in Exodus 25, you will notice that the first thing in verse 10 that God gives instructions for is this piece of furniture called the Ark of the Covenant, with the mercy seat, where the High Priest would come in once a year and sprinkle with blood.

Exodus 25:10-22 *"They are to make an ark of acacia wood — its length is to be three feet nine inches, its width two feet three inches, and its height two feet three inches. (11) You are to overlay it with pure gold — both inside and outside you must overlay it, and you are to make a surrounding border of gold over it. (12) You are to cast four gold rings for it and put them on its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other side. (13) You are to make poles of acacia wood, overlay them with gold, (14) and put the poles into the rings at the sides of the ark in order to carry the ark with them. (15) The poles must remain in the rings of the ark; they must not be removed from it. (16) You are to put into the ark the testimony that I will give to you. (17) "You are to make an atonement lid of pure gold; its length is to be three feet nine inches, and its width is to be two feet three inches. (18) You are to make two cherubim of gold; you are to make them of hammered metal on the two ends of the atonement lid. (19) Make one cherub on one end and one cherub on the other end; from the atonement lid you are to make the cherubim on the two ends. (20) The cherubim are to be spreading their wings upward, overshadowing the atonement lid with their wings, and the cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the atonement lid. (21) You are to put the atonement lid on top of the ark, and in the ark you are to put the testimony I am giving you. (22) I will meet with you there, and from above the atonement lid, from between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will command you for the Israelites.*

You can see the size of the Ark here, it was the actual place of God's presence. John gives the Christological significance here:

John 1:14 *Now the Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We saw his glory — the glory of the one and only, full of grace and truth, who came from the Father.*

"Residence" in this verse is a special Greek word derived from the Hebrew and means Tabernacle. The Ark of the Covenant is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

In Exodus 25:17 you see the description of the "Mercy Seat", or atonement lid, the lid of the Ark. This is the place of propitiation, which means satisfying God's wrath against sin. On the Day of Atonement, the blood of a lamb was sprinkled here. (Leviticus 16:14) The Christological significance of this is mentioned in Romans 3:25, Hebrews 9:5, 1 John 2:1-2, 1 John 4:10

The Cherubim on the mercy seat described in Exodus 25:19-20 are significant, too. The order of angels spoken of in the Bible, from lowest to highest are:

1. Angels - Michael is the chief or archangel, the Bible never speaks of this type having wings

2. Seraphs or Seraphim - have six wings
3. Cherubs or Cherubim - two wings, the highest order of angel
 - The Shekinah glory is always associated with only the Cherubim
 - Cherubim symbolize God's throne - 1 Samuel 4:4, Psalm 80:1-3, Hebrews 4:16

Exodus 25:23 *"You are to make a table of acacia wood; its length is to be three feet, its width one foot six inches, and its height two feet three inches.*

Now, this was a little tree or shrub that grew in the Sinai desert. This just shows us also the craftsmanship of these Israelites. If you read, they took this little tree and we read that some of the boards are 18 inches wide. And those little trees were not that big. So they had to glue and particle it. Then we come to the golden candle stick, and God gives instructions on how to build that, and it will be out of beaten gold.

Chapter 26 describes the construction of the curtains and coverings of the tabernacle. In verses 31-33 you have a special curtain, called the veil, that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and only once a year. The other priests were allowed to go into the Holy Place. At this point, access to God was very limited. When Christ died, this veil in the temple was split in two (Matthew 27:51). God was making the point that access to Him was not given to all men through Jesus (Hebrews 9:12, 10:19-22). The veil itself was a symbol of Christ, also, as Christ had to be rent for us.

Chapter 27 describes the altar of sacrifice, where animal sacrifices were made daily, access to God was by means of blood (Leviticus 17:11, Hebrews 9:15, 9:22, 1 Timothy 2:5-6). Christ is the once and for all sacrifice (Hebrews 9:1 - 10:18). Christ is also pictured as the altar itself in Hebrews 13:10-15.

The outer court wall was a partition between the Jews and Gentiles, no Gentiles were allowed beyond it. Christ eliminated that wall (1 Corinthians 5:16-21)

Chapter 28 concerns the priesthood and their clothing. Aaron and his family are selected as priests in verses 1-5. Their garments were for holiness, glory, and beauty, and the purpose was to sanctify (set apart) the family of priests.

Chapter 29 contains instructions for the priests and in verse 38 lists their responsibilities:

1. To burn incense - Exodus 30:7-8
2. To burn the sacrificial offerings - Exodus 29:38-42, Leviticus 6:13
3. To inspect the animals for blemishes and imperfections- Leviticus 27:11-12
4. To keep the lamps burning so they wouldn't go out - Leviticus 24:1-4
5. To teach Israel - there weren't copies of scripture freely available like there are today, people had to be taught - Deuteronomy 17:8-13, 19:15-20, 21:5

In Chapter 30 we see a description of the altar of incense. The significance of the burning incense is that it symbolizes the prayers of the saints - Psalm 141:2, Revelation 5:8, 8:3-4

In Chapter 31 the builders of the tabernacle are appointed, and the Sabbath is discussed again.

Exodus 31:16-18 *The Israelites must keep the Sabbath by observing the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. (17) It is a sign between me and the Israelites forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.' " (18) He gave Moses two tablets of testimony when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, tablets of stone written by the finger of God.*

So the Sabbath is the sign of the Mosaic Covenant. Remember the signs from the previous covenants? The rainbow is the sign of the Noahic covenant, and circumcision is the sign of the Abrahamic covenant.

Notice He says it will be a sign between Him and the Israelites FOREVER. God doesn't make mistakes, and He doesn't go back on what He says. Forever is forever. This means that Israelites will always observe the Sabbath, even in the Millennial reign of Christ, and the Eternal State. This will be as a commemoration, like our Lord's Supper, not to fulfill the Mosaic Law.

Chapter 32 – The Golden Calf Incident

While Moses is up on Mount Sinai receiving all these instructions from God, what happens? Israel gets impatient, because he was gone 40 days; and coming out of Egypt, they were just saturated with idolatry. So with Moses gone they asked for a god. It is hard for us to comprehend, and we easily condemn the Jews. But human nature is no different today than it was then. I think that if Christ were to come on the scene today as He did then, the human race would do the same thing. They would reject him.

Exodus 32:1 *When the people saw that Moses delayed in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said to him, "Get up, make us gods that will go before us. As for this fellow Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him!"*

God has done some very miraculous things while bringing them from Egypt to Mount Sinai. And don't lose sight of the fact that cloud and pillar of fire is still over them. Everyday, there He is. They could not escape His presence. But now just as soon as Moses is gone, they come to Aaron and say "Make us gods" and Aaron doesn't even argue. This is the thing that amazes me. You would have thought that a mature individual like Aaron would say "No, wait a minute, people, Moses is coming back down." But what does Aaron say? "Well, take off your jewelry, and bring me all your gold, and we will make you a god." Israel has not learned the lesson of the plagues of Egypt - the uselessness of idolatry.

Exodus 32:2-5 *So Aaron said to them, "Break off the gold earrings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." (3) So all the people broke off the gold earrings that were on their ears and brought them to Aaron. (4) He accepted the gold from them, fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molten calf. Then they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." (5) When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it, and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow will be a feast to the LORD."*

Can you imagine a man like Aaron saying something like that? Was that a feast to Jehovah? No, it was a pagan feast. And it was copied right after one of the gods of Egypt. And all that they are doing now is not a worship to Jehovah, but to this adulterous, pagan god. However, I believe they

thought they were worshipping Jehovah in this way. They were corrupting the worship of the true God. This will be a continual problem throughout Israel's history.

Exodus 32:6 *So they got up early on the next day and offered up burnt offerings and brought peace offerings, and the people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.*

Some scholars will say that "rose up to play" as meaning they participated in drunken orgies. Now it's possible that's the meaning of the phrase here, but the Hebrew word for "play" does not always have a sexual connotation. The fact that they were festive and playing before an idol is bad enough.

Exodus 32:7-14 *The LORD spoke to Moses: "Go quickly, descend, because your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have acted corruptly. (8) They have quickly turned aside from the way that I commanded them — they have made for themselves a molten calf and have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt.' " (9) Then the LORD said to Moses: "I have seen this people. Look what a stiff-necked people they are! (10) So now, leave me alone so that my anger can burn against them and I can destroy them, and I will make from you a great nation." (11) But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God and said, "O LORD, why does your anger burn against your people, whom you have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? (12) Why should the Egyptians say, 'For evil he led them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your burning anger, and relent of this evil against your people. (13) Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel your servants, to whom you swore by yourself and told them, 'I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken about I will give to your descendants, and they will inherit it forever.' " (14) Then the LORD relented over the evil that he had said he would do to his people.*

Notice God says "your people", not "my people". By giving the people to Moses in this way, God is saying that they have no longer any right to claim him as their God, since they have shared his honor with another.

"Stiff-necked" - the image is that of the people walking before God, and when he called to them the directions, they would not bend their neck to listen; they were refusing to submit, and resisting in pride.

Verse 10 is a directive for Moses not to intercede for the people. He vows the severest punishment but then suddenly conditions it on Moses' agreement. He allows himself to be persuaded. God could have slammed the door. Also, by mentioning the promise to Abraham, God gave Moses the strongest reason to intercede.

Verses 11-13 we have Moses' appeal to God to convince Him not to destroy the Israelites. He uses the following three arguments:

1. God's grace and love for Israel - verse 11
2. God's character and sanctification of His own name - verse 12
3. God's promises - the Abrahamic covenant - verse 13

Verse 14 says God relented, the word here means He changed His mind. Is this a contradiction? Other scriptures say that God never changes His mind. I believe this is a distinction between the divine viewpoint and the human viewpoint. Of course, from His viewpoint, God never intended to

wipe out Israel. He is a covenant-keeper, He could never violate His promises. However, from the human viewpoint, it appears as if He changed His mind.

Exodus 32:15-16 *Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hands. The tablets were written on both sides — they were written on the front and on the back. (16) Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.*

Notice that it says the commandments were written on both sides of the tablets, and that God Himself carved these tablets.

Evidently, Joshua accompanied Moses up part way on the mountain, as I think Moses was alone with God at the top and gave the instructions to build the Tabernacle, and gave him the law. But now Moses and Joshua join up as they come down the mountain.

Exodus 32:17-20 *When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "It is the sound of war in the camp!" (18) Moses said, "It is not the sound of those who shout for victory, nor is it the sound of those who cry because they are overcome, but the sound of singing I hear." (19) When he approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses became extremely angry. He threw the tablets from his hands and broke them to pieces at the bottom of the mountain. (20) He took the calf they had made and burned it in the fire, ground it to powder, poured it out on the water, and made the Israelites drink it.*

Moses breaking the tablets signifies that the Mosaic Covenant, agreed upon by Israel 40 days earlier in Chapter 24, has been broken.

Now, here is another amazing thing, that the Bible never contradicts true science. For years the scoffers would say, "Whoever heard of such a thing, as putting gold into a liquid solution." But years back, one of the prime cures for arthritis was gold shots. They would actually put gold into a liquid solution and gold shots were given to relieve the pain of arthritis. So you see that this wasn't something impossible that the Bible speaks of.

Exodus 32:22-24 *Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you, that you have brought on them so great a sin?" (22) Aaron said, "Do not let your anger burn hot, my lord; you know these people, that they tend to evil. (23) They said to me, 'Make us gods that will go before us, for as for this fellow Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him.' (24) So I said to them, 'Whoever has gold, break it off.' so they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and this calf came out."*

Now, isn't that amazing? This is a grown man, but to me it sounds like a little four-year-old boy making up excuses for something he knew he did wrong. But here we have this mature man Aaron trying to fool Moses, but more than that, who does he think he is fooling? God! As if God didn't know that he was the one who fashioned it. He was the one who went up to the altar to worship it.

One time I heard a preacher make a statement in a sermon I heard on the radio. He said "When I was a little boy growing up in the tall pine trees of the Carolina's, I always noticed that the trees that die, started dying at the top first." What was he saying? He was castigating his own denomination for the departure from the truth that was taking place, already in the higher echelon

of the denomination. They are not alone, every denomination takes that track. Their leadership is what begins the slide. We see this over and over in Christendom, and it is nothing new. Here is this man Aaron; he should have been the man that stood in the gap, while Moses was on the mountain. Instead he gives in to the demands of the people.

Exodus 32:25-26 *Moses saw that the people were running wild, for Aaron had let them get completely out of control, causing derision from their enemies. (26) So Moses stood at the entrance of the camp and said, "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me." All the Levites gathered around him,*

Or, as the King James puts it, "Who is on the Lord's side?" Which of you are going to mean business with our God? Now, God moves in and He brings judgment, because of their gross immorality. Keep in mind that God has not changed one bit from Genesis 1 till today. He has not and will not change. What God hated back here, He hates today. We are all being programmed. The filth in the music lyrics, TV, movies, and the internet we and our kids are being subjected to is frightening. And these people are just literally scoffing at everything that God has ever instructed for the human race. Immorality is something that is taken for granted. After all, everyone is doing it. But God hated it then, and He has hated it ever since.

Exodus 32:27-29 *and he said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Each man fasten his sword on his side, and go back and forth from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and each one kill his brother, his friend, and his neighbor.' " (28) The Levites did what Moses ordered, and that day about three thousand men of the people died. (29) Moses said, "You have been consecrated today for the LORD, for each of you was against his son or against his brother, so he has given a blessing to you today."*

In other words, they went out and put to death all of those they knew were guilty. Now those three thousand men did not count the women, these are just the men, for that is way the Scripture usually counts. Let's go to I Corinthians 10; here is where the scoffers come into the picture, and say "See the Bible just contradicts itself." The real scoffer does not know his Bible. Here Paul is making reference to this golden calf event, and God's anger against the children of Israel:

I Corinthians 10:8 *And let us not be immoral, as some of them were, and twenty-three thousand died in a single day.*

Now, this is where the scoffer jumps on that. They say "In Exodus it reads three thousand and here it's twenty three thousand." Let's go back to Exodus and I will explain that. Moses now intercedes on behalf of the people and in verse 30 we read:

Exodus 32:30-35 *The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a very serious sin, but now I will go up to the LORD — perhaps I can make atonement on behalf of your sin." (31) So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Alas, this people has committed a very serious sin, and they have made for themselves gods of gold. (32) But now, if you will forgive their sin..., but if not, wipe me out from your book that you have written." (33) The LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me — that person I will wipe out of my book. (34) So now go, lead the people to the place I have spoken to you about. See, my angel will go before you. But on the day that I punish, I will indeed punish them for their sin." (35) And the LORD sent a plague on the people because they had made the calf — the one Aaron made.*

Three thousand are listed earlier being killed by Levi swords. And the twenty thousand that is seemingly a contradiction are the people that the Lord plagued. And the apostle Paul fills in the blanks in Corinthians, by saying, "That it was twenty three thousand, rather than just three thousand."

Chapter 33

God now says that, because of Israel's sin, He will no longer dwell with the people (verse 3), because they are so stiff-necked, God would destroy them along the way. The instructions for building the tabernacle are now rescinded. The Shekinah glory, the divine presence, withdraws, and in verses 7-11 Moses pitches his tent outside the camp, to impress upon the people the separation between them and God because of their sin. Anyone seeking God now has to go outside the camp.

In verse 12-16, God once again allows Moses to persuade Him to "change His mind". Because of Moses' close relationship with God, He now says His presence will be with them, and the tabernacle will be built after all.

In verse 23 Moses will see the afterglow of God's full presence in a way He has never seen before. If He were to see God's fullness, it would destroy Him.

Chapter 34 - God proclaims His name, in verse 5-7. He is:

1. Jehovah - His personal name
2. merciful and gracious
3. slow to anger
4. abundant in lovingkindness and truth
5. keeps lovingkindness for thousands
6. forgives sin and transgressions
7. He will not clear the guilty
8. He will visit the sins of the fathers upon their children to the 3rd and 4th generations

In verse 10-28 the covenant is renewed.

Now, let's go to Chapter 35. Moses has now come down with the second set of the tables of law. And the Sabbath day is renewed again, and Israel is reminded of it. Moses then asks the people for an offering for the building of the tabernacle.

Exodus 35:5 *'Take an offering for the LORD. Let everyone who has a willing heart bring an offering to the LORD: gold, silver, bronze,*

Notice Moses says that the offering must be given with a willing heart, not as an obligation.

Exodus 35:22-26 *They came, men and women alike, all who had willing hearts. They brought brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments, all kinds of gold jewelry, and everyone came who waved a wave offering of gold to the LORD. (23) Everyone who had blue, purple, or scarlet yarn, fine linen, goats' hair, ram skins dyed red, or fine leather brought them. (24) Everyone making an offering of*

silver or bronze brought it as an offering to the LORD, and everyone who had acacia wood for any work of the service brought it. (25) Every woman who was skilled spun with her hands and brought what she had spun, blue, purple, or scarlet yarn, or fine linen, (26) and all the women whose heart stirred them to action and who were skilled spun goats' hair.

A lot of people get the idea that God is a little bit partial toward men, especially in the Old Testament. Maybe in some areas he was. But God still used women here and in the New Testament, in the Age of Grace. When the feminist movement first began, they tried to get the Bible out of our universities, they did not want a single copy left, and when they were asked by a reporter why they felt that way, their reply was, because of the Letters of the Apostle Paul. If they could just get Paul out of the Bible they could probably stomach it.

But anybody who has read the last Chapter of the Book of Romans could never accuse Paul of being anti-feminist. You go through that Chapter and he names woman after woman who were important parts of his ministry. The Bible is not anti-feminist. In fact, if you stopped to think about it, do you know what was the greatest feminist movement that ever hit the human race? Christianity. Among most of your pagan people and societies, a woman is still a second class citizen. In most Middle East countries today, a woman just does not have the same rights and privileges like we in the western world have.

Exodus 36:1-6 *So Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person in whom the LORD has put skill and ability to know how to do all the work for the service of the sanctuary are to do the work according to all that the LORD has commanded." (2) Moses summoned Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person in whom the LORD had put skill — everyone whose heart stirred him to volunteer to do the work, (3) and they received from Moses all the offerings the Israelites had brought to do the work for the service of the sanctuary, and they still continued to bring him a freewill offering each morning. (4) So all the skilled people who were doing all the work on the sanctuary came from the work they were doing (5) and told Moses, "The people are bringing much more than is needed for the completion of the work which the LORD commanded us to do!" (6) Moses instructed them to take his message throughout the camp, saying, "Let no man or woman do any more work for the offering for the sanctuary." So the people were restrained from bringing any more.*

I wanted to put these verses here to show that Israel's heart was in the right place. They really wanted to obey God at this point. We see too many areas where they failed, but this is one time they got it right, and it's a good example for us.

You can get a couple of things out of these verses. Whatever you and I are, or ever hope to be, it is because of what God has done in and through each one of us. Every believer, I don't care how untalented you think you are, God has a role for you, He has given you a gift, a skill that you can use to serve Him. Some people think they have no gift, but God gifts everyone to serve Him. This is what happened here. God gifted people to bring about His work.

Where does it have to start? With the heart. We have taught all along that all God is looking for is for us to believe. But how do I know that I have believed enough? Have any of you wondered that? It is a good question, because lots of times people get the idea, "Well, if I just believe then I'm alright." Most people, especially in our nation believe in the historical fact that Christ lived, died, and maybe have a head knowledge that He also rose from the grave. But that is not believing. That is not what we are talking about. Believing doesn't come from the head but from the heart.

When we talk about the heart, we are talking about that very central part of us that is soul and spiritual. It is in that area that God has to begin and finish His work. So when I talk about believing, trusting, having faith in the Gospel, I'm talking about the true heart belief. Not just a head knowledge. Some of you have heard the expression that many people will miss heaven by twelve inches and you say "What do you mean?" They had it in their head, but never got it in the heart. And there is something to that.

We must always be sure that we are believing, not just because we can give a mental assent to something, but because God has literally opened up our ability to believe these things, and trust our whole eternal destiny on it. If I couldn't do that, I couldn't sleep at night. I know enough about this Book to know there is an eternal doom coming for those who do not have that kind of a heart of faith. It is going to be awful for those that are lost, we can't comprehend that. But for those of us who believe, and as it shows here, it begins in the heart.

Notice in verse 5 and 6 that the people brought so many offerings, they had to tell them to stop, they had too much! Now wouldn't our churches and Christian charities like to have that problem!

Now we are going to start the construction, with the things the people have brought. We will start with the linen curtains. The linen curtains are that which comprise what we would call today, the outer fence. The linen curtains are going to be the outer fence. It will be 150 feet long, and 75 feet wide. It was made high enough that nobody could simply look in. So this outer fence was to keep all of this from view of the casual onlooker.

Another thing I want you to remember is that this Tabernacle was always set with the gate in the outer fence, facing east. To the east, and the tribe that would always lead during their journeys, was Judah. Remember Reuben was the oldest and should have had that position, but Reuben sinned against his father, and was an immoral person. Consequently, God in his Sovereignty, brought Judah to the place that Reuben should have enjoyed. Another reason for Judah's leadership position is that Christ will come out of the tribe of Judah. So on the east, and the nation will always move out in that direction, you have Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. Then on the south were the three tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad. On the west were Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, and on the north were the three tribes of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali. And that's your twelve tribes. Now, of course, Levi is not mentioned, but the tribe of Levi are the priests, and they have the territory that surrounds the tabernacle area. They are not listed as one of the 12 tribes, even as they go into the Nation of Israel.

So the linen fence is all around the outside. The next one is the curtain of goat's hair. The curtain of goat's hair is going to be that first layer that fits over the main frame, which is made of Acacia wood covered with gold. The next layer will be the Ram skins dyed red. That is in verse 19. And then the very top, or outer area, were the seal skins to stand all the extreme weather of the Sinai. But I want to point out that it was not pretty in its appearance. But when we come to the inside frame, they had linen curtains also hung. Hung with gold or silver hooks, it was a combination of blue, purple, and scarlet fine linen; and woven into it were likenesses of cherubim.

Exodus 36:35 *He made the special curtain of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen; he made it with cherubim, the work of an artistic designer.*

This veil separated the Holy of Holies from the main sanctuary. This part was only a third of the size

of the sanctuary. The Sanctuary was 45 feet long and 15 feet wide. So the Holy of Holies was only 15 feet square. Now here is that veil. We are most acquainted with the veil, as it was in the Temple in Jesus' day. And at the moment of His death it was rent from top to bottom. The veil pictured the very Body of Christ. The veil is what kept the presence of God from the priest, as they would practice their daily administrations. Only the High Priest, once a year could come in behind the veil.

Where is the Ark of the Covenant today? Well, we know it has been gone ever since the Babylonian captivity, but there is nothing to indicate that the Babylonians took it with them, so turn back to Revelation Chapter 11. These are the events taking place during the tribulation. Things are getting rough on the earth.

Revelation 11:18,19 *The nations were enraged, but your wrath has come, and the time has come for the dead to be judged, and the time has come to give to your servants, the prophets, their reward, as well as to the saints and to those who revere your name, both small and great, and the time has come to destroy those who destroy the earth." (19) Then the temple of God in heaven was opened and the ark of his covenant was visible within his temple. And there were flashes of lightning, roaring, crashes of thunder, an earthquake, and a great hailstorm.*

So, is this The Ark of the Covenant, or the heavenly version of it, as the earthly temple has a heavenly version? We don't know for sure, the earthly version could be hidden somewhere. Some think that it will be found before Israel rebuilds their temple. There are those who claim they know where the Ark of the Covenant is. I know that Israel is going to frantically look for it when they get their temple rebuilt.

The Ark of the Covenant, as it was experienced back in the early days of Israel, was the very indication of the presence of God. Now when Israel sets up their Temple, I doubt the presence of God is going to sit over it. It will be a man-made religion for the most part. It won't be like it was back here in Exodus. Because Israel is so far from God today, it doesn't seem like God will manifest His presence with them like that.

Coming into the next little room was the altar of incense on which they burned fresh incense every day. That was in the middle. Then on the south side of this sanctuary stood the golden candlesticks. And out between the actual tabernacle tent and the brazen altar, where they burned the sacrifices, was this laver of cleansing. When the priest would come in and begin his sacrifices here at the brazen altar, then he would have to stop at the laver of cleansing, which was filled with water. It was brass made of looking glass. The priest would come to this laver of cleansing, and it was not only a wash basin, but also a mirror. And then he could go on.

Now we'll jump to Exodus 40. Remember we are still in the first 12 month period of time, since they left Egypt. They have been gathered around Sinai. All of these materials used for the Tabernacle had been brought in by the people of Israel. All of this has been put together now by craftsmen. And the Tabernacle is now ready to be erected:

Exodus 40:1-3 *Then the LORD spoke to Moses: (2) "On the first day of the first month you are to set up the tabernacle, the tent of meeting. (3) You are to place the ark of the testimony in it and shield the ark with the special curtain.*

And then he instructs all they should do. They have made everything functional. They have set up the tabernacle and all the furnishings are in it. Now let's come down to verse 33:

Exodus 40:33 *And he set up the courtyard around the tabernacle and the altar, and put the curtain at the gate of the courtyard. So Moses finished the work.*

So the whole tabernacle complex is now complete and it is ready for the institution of their worship:

Exodus 40:34,35 *Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. (35) Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

Now remember this is the same cloud that made it's first appearance way back when the children of Israel were coming out of Goshen, and were encamped on the shores of the Red Sea. That cloud was what protected them from the onslaught of the Egyptians. To the Egyptians it became black darkness. And to the Jews, it became their protection, and at night became the pillar of fire. Now it rests over the Holy of Holies, in which is the Ark of the Covenant. The Shekinah glory will remain here until 1 Kings 9-10, when Solomon builds the temple in Jerusalem. The divine presence will then move to the Holy of Holies in the temple. It will remain there until just before the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. Ezekiel tells us that the Shekinah glory departs from Israel in 586 B.C.

Exodus 40:36 *But when the cloud was lifted up from the tabernacle, the Israelites would set out on all their journeys;*

This tells you that cloud rested there day and night. But when God intended for the Nation of Israel to pick up and move, they would take down the tabernacle (and remember everything in the tabernacle was made so that it could be moved. They had rings in them where staves could be used to lift.). And then they would move until the cloud stopped. And when the cloud stopped, that is where they would set the tabernacle up, and Israel would encamp. Now remember there was intense organization. This wasn't a haphazard deal at all. And as I pointed out before, the twelve tribes are all encamped in order around the perimeter of the tabernacle.

Exodus 40:37,38 *but if the cloud was not lifted up, then they would not journey further until the day it was lifted up. (38) For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, but fire would be on it at night, in plain view of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.*

And that's the end of the book of Exodus. The Tabernacle is set up, the priesthood is set, and the sacrifices have begun. Next lesson we will wrap up our study on the Pentateuch (The five books of Moses) by looking at some important themes in Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.