

# Exodus

## *A Suggested Outline of Exodus*

- I. Redemption—God's Power (1–17)
  - A. The slavery of sin (1–4)
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## *Introductory Notes to Exodus*

### **I. Name**

In the Greek language, *exodus* means “the way out.” (See Heb. 11:22, “departing.”) This book describes Israel's bondage in Egypt and the wonderful deliverance (or “way out”) that God gave them. One of the key words in Exodus is redemption, since “to redeem” means “to set free.” The book presents many pictures of our salvation through Christ. The word *exodus* is used in two places in the NT: Luke 9:31 (“decease”), where Christ's redeeming work on the cross is the theme; and 2 Peter 1:15, where “decease” means a believer's “death.” In other words, there are three exodus experiences in the Bible—Israel's deliverance from Egypt; Christ's deliverance of the sinner through the cross; and the believer's deliverance from the bondage of this world at death.

### **II. Author**

There is no reason to doubt that Moses wrote this book. The unity of the book (see outline) suggests that there was one author, and the eyewitness accounts indicate that the author was present at those events. Christ affirmed the Mosaic authorship of the book (John 7:19: 5:46–47).

### **III. Purpose**

Genesis is the book of beginnings; Exodus is the book of redemption. It records the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and presents the basic historical facts about the origins of the Hebrew nation and its religious ceremonies. These accounts are also pictures of Christ and the redemption He purchased at the cross. There are many types and symbols of Christ and the believer in Exodus, especially in the tabernacle furnishings and ceremonies. Exodus also records the giving of the Law. It would be impossible to understand much NT doctrine apart from an understanding of the events and symbols in Exodus.

### **IV. Types**

There are several basic types in Exodus: (1) Egypt is a type of the world system, opposing God's people and trying to keep them in bondage. (2) Pharaoh is a type of Satan, "the god of this world," who demands worship, defies God, and thinks to enslave God's people. (3) Israel is a type of the church—delivered from the bondage of the world, led on a pilgrim journey, and protected by God. (4) Moses is a type of Christ, God's Prophet. (5) The crossing of the Red Sea is a picture of the resurrection, which delivers the believer from this present evil world. (6) The manna pictures Christ the Bread of Life (John 6). (7) The smitten rock is a type of the smitten Christ, through whose death the Holy Spirit is given. (8) Amalek is a picture of the flesh, opposing the believer in the pilgrim journey. The key type in Exodus is Passover, picturing the death of Christ, the application of His blood for our safety, and the appropriation of His life (feeding on the lamb) for our daily strength.

### **V. Moses and Christ**

Here we could list many comparisons and one major contrast between the two, since Moses is a wonderful picture of Jesus Christ. In his offices, Moses was a prophet (Acts 3:22); a priest (Ps. 99:6, Heb. 7:24); a servant (Ps. 105:26, Matt. 12:18); a shepherd (Ex. 3:1, John 10:11–14); a mediator (Ex. 33:8–9, 1 Tim. 2:5); and a deliverer (Acts 7:35, 1 Thes. 1:10). In his character, he was meek (Num. 12:3, Matt. 11:29), faithful (Heb. 3:5), obedient, and mighty in word and deed (Acts 7:22, Mark 6:2). In his history, Moses was a son in Egypt and was in danger of being killed (Matt. 2:14ff), but was providentially cared for by God. He chose to suffer with the Jews rather than reign in Egypt (Heb. 11:24–26, Phil. 2:1–11). Moses was rejected by his brothers the first time, but received the second time; and, while rejected, he gained a Gentile bride (picturing Christ and the church). Moses condemned Egypt, and Christ condemned the world. Moses delivered God's people through the blood, as did Christ on the cross (Luke 9:31). Moses led the people, fed the people, and carried their burdens. The contrast, of course, is that Moses did not take Israel into the Promised Land; Joshua had to do that. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

# Exodus 1–2

## I. The Persecution of God's People (1)

### A. A new generation (vv. 1–7).

The bondage of Israel in Egypt had been predicted in Gen. 15:13–16. The fourth generation would be equal to 400 years, since Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. Of course, a generation would be fewer years today. God also fulfilled the promise of multiplying the people (Gen. 46:3), and Jacob's original seventy became over a million! They increased in spite of persecution and suffering. See Acts 7:15–19.

### B. A new king (vv. 8–14).

Acts 7:18 says this was “another king of a different kind” (literal Gk.). That is, the new king was from a different people. History tells us that about this time the “Hyksos” invaders took over in Egypt. They were Semites, probably from Assyria (Isa. 52:4). The new king warned his own people (not the Egyptians) that the presence of so many Jews was a threat to their own rule; so they decided to deal vigorously with the Children of Israel. Since Joseph had been the savior of Egypt, it is unlikely that an Egyptian king would not know him, but this new king was an outsider. Of course, the bondage in Egypt is but a picture of the sinner's spiritual bondage to this world. The Jews went down to Egypt and lived in the best of the land (Gen. 47:6), but this luxury later turned into trial and suffering. How like the path of the lost sinner today; sin promises pleasure and freedom, but it brings sorrow and bondage.

### C. A new strategy (vv. 15–22).

The king's plan to kill all the male babies would have met with great success except for the intervention of God. He used the midwives to confound the king, just as later He used a baby's cry to reach the heart of Pharaoh's daughter. God uses the weak things of this world to defeat the mighty. Of course, the king's strategy was born of Satan, the murderer. This was but another attempt on Satan's part to destroy the Jews and keep the Messiah from being born. Later, Satan would use King Herod to try to slay the baby Jesus. Was it right for the women to defy the orders of the king? Yes, for “we ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). When the laws of the land are definitely contrary to the commandments of God, then the believer has the right and duty to put God first. While God did not approve of the excuses the midwives gave Pharaoh (although their words may have been true), He did bless them for their faith. Keep in mind that this same ruler who wanted to drown God's people saw his own army drowned in the Red Sea (Ex. 15:4–5). We reap what we sow, even though the harvest may be slow in coming (Ecc. 8:11).

We also see in this chapter Satan's attempt to bring the people of God into bondage. Verse 1 calls the Jews “the Children of Israel” and Israel means “a prince with God” (Gen. 32:28)—the prince of the world (Satan) defying the prince with God! But God's people are not of this world and will be delivered from Satan's bondage!

## II. The Preparation of God's Prophet (2)

It seemed as though God was doing nothing. The Jews prayed and cried out for help (2:23–25) and wondered where God's deliverance was. Had they only remembered the Word in Gen. 15, they would have known that 400 years had to elapse. During these years, God was preparing his people, but He was also waiting in mercy and giving the wicked nations of Canaan time to repent (Gen.

15:16). God is never in a hurry; He had His leader chosen for the Hebrews and was preparing him for his mighty task. Note the means God used to prepare Moses:

*A. A godly home (vv. 1–10).*

Read Acts 7:20–28 and Heb. 11:23. In Ex. 6:20, we learn that the godly parents of Moses were Amram and Jochebed. That they should wed during such difficult times was an act of great faith and love, and God rewarded them for this. Since they acted by faith (Heb. 11:23), they must have had a communication from God concerning the birth of their son, Moses. He was a “goodly child” (beautiful in the sight of God), and so they gave him to God by faith. Parents never know what God sees in each child that is born, and it is important that parents raise their children in the fear of God. It took real faith to put the child in the river, the very place where the young boys were being destroyed! Note how God used a child’s tears to touch the princess, and how He arranged for the child’s own mother to raise him. Read Job 5:13.

*B. A special education (Acts 7:22).*

Raised in the palace as the adopted son of the princess, Moses was trained in the great Egyptian schools. Even today, scholars marvel at the learning of the Egyptians, and no doubt Moses stood at the head of his class. There is nothing wrong with education. Certainly Moses made use of his training. But it was no substitute for the wisdom of God that came through suffering and trial and his personal walk with God.

*C. A great failure (vv. 11–15; Heb. 11:24–26).*

Moses was forty years old when he made his great decision to leave the palace and become the deliverer of Israel. We admire him for his love for his people and for his courage, but we must confess that he ran ahead of the Lord in the way he acted. Verse 12 indicates that he was walking by sight, not by faith, for “he looked this way and that” before he killed the Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew. Like Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane, Moses depended on the sword in his hand and the energy in his arm. Later he was to exchange that sword for a rod, and the power would be from God’s hand, not his own (see 6:1). He buried the body, but this was no proof that the deed went unseen. The next day he found two Jews fighting and tried to help them, only to discover that friends and enemies alike knew he had killed a man. (Note: The text in Acts 7:24 may indicate that Moses killed the man in self-defense, but even if he did, he was still a criminal in the eyes of the Egyptians.) His only recourse was to flee from the land.

While we may justly criticize Moses for his misdeeds, we must admire his courage and convictions. As Dr. Vance Havner has said (commenting on Heb. 11:24–26): “Moses saw the invisible, chose the imperishable, and did the impossible!” Faith has its refusals, and these refusals lead to rewards. Unfortunately, Moses was too hasty in his actions, and God had to set him aside for further training. The weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but spiritual (2 Cor. 10:3–6).

*D. A long delay (vv. 16–25).*

Moses’ life is divided into three equal periods: forty years as a prince in Egypt; forty years as a shepherd in Midian; and forty years as leader of Israel. Beginning this second period, Moses assisted the women as they tried to water their flocks, and this kindness led to his meeting Jethro and marrying Jethro’s daughter Zipporah. Note that the girls identified Moses as “an Egyptian.” This suggests that he was more like the Egyptians than he was like the Jews. Moses spent forty years as a faithful servant in Midian, and here God prepared him for the difficult tasks that lay ahead. Rejected by his nation, he took a Gentile bride, and is thus a picture of Christ who is today getting a

bride for Himself from the nations. "Gershom" means "a stranger" and suggests that Moses knew his real place was with the people of Israel back in Egypt.

It seemed that God was doing nothing, yet He heard the groans of His people and was waiting for the right time to act. Whenever God works, He chooses the right worker, uses the right plan, and acts at the right time. Moses was taking care of a few sheep; soon he would be shepherding a whole nation. The shepherd's crook would be exchanged for the rod of power, and he would be used of God to help create a mighty nation. Because he was faithful to do the humble job of shepherding, God used him to accomplish greater tasks as liberator, lawgiver, and leader.

## Exodus 3–4

A new day dawned and everything had to change for Moses. When he went out with his sheep that morning, he had no idea that he would meet God. It pays to be ready, for we never know what God has planned for us.

### I. God Appears to Moses (3:1–6)

The burning bush had a threefold significance. It was a picture of God (Deut. 33:16), for it revealed His glory and power, yet it was not consumed. Moses needed to be reminded of the glory and power of God, for he was about to undertake an impossible task. Second, the bush symbolized Israel going through the fire of affliction, but not consumed. How often nations have tried to exterminate the Jews, yet have failed! Finally, the bush illustrated Moses—a humble shepherd, who with God's help would become a fire that could not be put out! Note that Moses was brought to the place where he bowed before God and adored Him in wonder, for this is the true beginning of Christian service. Servants who know how to take off their shoes in humility can be used of God to walk in power. Later we see that before God called Isaiah, He revealed His glory (Isa. 6). The memory of the burning bush must have encouraged Moses during many a trying mile in the wilderness.

### II. God Appoints Moses (3:7–10)

"I have seen ... I have heard their cry ... I know ... I have come down!" What a message of grace! Moses often had wondered about the condition of his beloved people, and now he was shown that God had been watching over them all the time. We might easily apply these verses to the situation when Christ was born: it was a time of bondage, trial, and sorrow, yet God came down in the Person of His Son, to deliver men from sin. God had a definite plan, to bring them out and then to bring them into the Promised Land. What He starts, He finishes.

Moses rejoiced to hear that God was about to deliver Israel, but then he heard the news that he was the deliverer! "I will send you!" God uses human instruments to accomplish His work on earth. There had been eighty years of preparation for Moses; now it was time to act. Unfortunately, Moses did not reply, "Here am I; send me" (Isa. 6:8).

### III. God Answers Moses (3:11–4:17)

Moses did not immediately agree with God's plan to send him. Was he not a failure? Did he not have a family? Was he not too old? Perhaps these and other arguments went through his mind, but he voiced at least four objections that day as he argued with God about God's will for his life.

A. *"Who am I?" (3:11–12)*

We admire Moses for his humility, for forty years before he would have told God who he was! He was "learned ... and mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts 7:22). But years of communion and discipline in the desert had humbled Moses. A person acting in the flesh is impulsive and sees no obstacles, but a person humbly walking in the Spirit knows the battles that lie ahead. God's reply was to assure him: "I will be with you!" This promise sustained him for forty years, as it later did Joshua (Josh. 1:5). Who we are is not important; that God is with us is important, for without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5).

B. *"Who is sending me?" (3:13–22)*

This was no evasive question, for the Jews would want assurance that the Lord had sent Moses on his mission. God revealed His name, *Jehovah*—"I AM WHO I AM" or "I was, I am, I always will be!" Our Lord Jesus added to this name in the Gospel of John where we find the seven great I AM statements (6:35; 8:12; 10:9 and 11; 11:25; 14:6; and 15:1–5). If God is "I AM," then He is always the same, and His purposes will be fulfilled. God promised Moses that He would see to it that the work was done, in spite of the opposition of Pharaoh.

C. *"They will not believe me" (4:1–9).*

But God had just said that they would believe him (3:18), so this statement was nothing but open unbelief. God gave Moses two miracles—the rod changed to a serpent and the hand made leprous. These would be his credentials before the people. God takes what we have in our hands and uses it, if we but trust Him. Of itself, the rod was nothing, but in God's hands it became power. Moses' own hand had killed a man, but in the second miracle God showed him that He could heal the weakness of the flesh and use Moses for His glory. His own hand was nothing, but in God's hand, it would do wonders! Then God added a third sign—turning water into blood. These signs did convince God's people (4:29–31), but they were only imitated by the godless Egyptians (7:10–25).

D. *"I am not gifted" (4:10–17).*

God had said "I AM"—and all Moses could say was, "I am not!" He was looking at himself and his failures instead of to God and His power. In this case, Moses argued that he was not a gifted speaker. But the same God who made the mouth could use it. God does not need eloquence or oratory; He needs only a clean vessel that He can fill with His message. "Send anybody, but not me!" is Moses' cry in v. 13. This attitude of unbelief angered God, but He gave Aaron to Moses to be his helper. Unfortunately, more than once, Aaron turned out to be more of a hindrance than a help! He led the nation into idolatry (32:15–28) and murmured against Moses (Num. 12). How tragic that Moses was willing to trust a weak man of flesh instead of the living God of heaven. Verse 14 teaches us that God works "at both ends of the line" when He is moving His people. He brought the two brothers together to serve Him.

**IV. God Assures Moses (4:18–31)**

Moses had God's Word, the miraculous signs, and the assistance of his brother Aaron; yet these verses make it clear that he still was not ready to walk by faith. He did not tell his father-in-law the truth about his trip to Egypt, for God had told him that his brothers were yet alive. We appreciate the fact that Moses took care of his earthly tasks in a faithful manner before leaving, but he was not much of a testimony to Jethro. Note the assurances God gave Moses as he started in his new life of service:

*A. His Word (vv. 19–23).*

The people who wanted to slay Moses were dead, and God wanted Moses to trust Him and not be afraid. How patient God is with His own. How encouraging are His promises.

*B. His discipline (vv. 24–26).*

Circumcision was an important part of the Jewish faith, yet Moses had neglected to bring his own son into the covenant (Gen. 17). God had to discipline Moses (perhaps by sickness) to remind him of his obligation. How could he lead Israel if he was failing to lead his own household in things spiritual? Moses later sent his family back to Midian (see 18:2).

*C. His leading (vv. 27–28).*

God had promised that Aaron was coming (v. 14), and now He fulfilled that promise. While both Moses and Aaron had their weaknesses, and each failed God and each other more than once, it was a great help to Moses to have his brother at his side. They met in “the mount of God” where Moses had seen the burning bush (3:1).

*D. The acceptance of the people (vv. 29–31).*

This too was a fulfillment of God's Word (3:18). Sad to say, these same Jews who received Moses and bowed their heads to God, later hated him and criticized him because of their increased labor (5:19–23). It is wise not to fix our hopes on the reactions of people, for people often fail to live up to their commitments.

## Exodus 5–10

### I. The Command

Seven times in these chapters, God says to Pharaoh, “Let my people go!” (See 5:1; 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3.) This command reveals that Israel was in bondage, but God wanted them to be free that they might serve Him. This is the condition of every lost sinner: enslavement to the world, the flesh and the devil (Eph. 2:1–3).

“Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?” was Pharaoh's response to God's command (5:2). The world has no respect for God's Word; it is “vain words” to them (5:9). Moses and Aaron presented God's command to Pharaoh, and the result was more bondage for Israel! The sinner will either yield to God's Word, or resist it and become hardened (see 3:18–22 and 4:21–23). In one sense, God hardened Pharaoh's heart by presenting His claims, but Pharaoh himself hardened his own heart by resisting God's claims. The same sun that melts the ice also hardens the clay.

Unfortunately, the people of Israel looked to Pharaoh for help rather than to the Lord who had promised to deliver them (5:15–19). No wonder the Jews were unable to agree with Moses (5:20–23) and accused him instead of encouraging him. Believers who are out of fellowship with God bring grief to their leaders instead of help. Moses certainly was discouraged, but he did what is always best—he took his problem to the Lord. God encouraged Moses in chapter 6 by reminding him of His name (6:1–3), His covenant (6:4), His personal concern (6:5), and His faithful promises (6:6–8). God's “I AM” and “I WILL” are enough to overcome the enemy! God's purpose in allowing Pharaoh to oppress Israel was that His own power and glory might be known to the world (6:7; 7:5, 17; 8:10, 22; see Rom. 9:17).

The stage is set: Pharaoh refused God's command, and now God would send His judgments on Egypt. He would fulfill His promise in Gen. 12:3 to judge the nations that persecute the Jews. He would reveal His power (9:16), His wrath (Ps. 78:43–51), and His greatness, showing that the gods of Egypt were false gods, and that Jehovah alone is the true God (12:12; Num. 33:4).

## II. The Conflict

The ten plagues of Egypt accomplished several things: (1) they were signs to Israel, assuring them of God's power and care, 7:3; (2) they were plagues of judgment to Egypt, punishing the people for persecuting Israel and revealing the vanity of their gods, 9:14; and (3) they were prophecies of judgments to come, as revealed in the Book of Revelation. Note the sequence of the plagues. They fall into three groups of three each, with the tenth plague (death of the firstborn) set off last:

1. Water to blood, 7:14–25 (warning given, 7:16)
2. Frogs, 8:1–15 (warning given, 8:1)
3. Lice, 8:16–19 (no warning, and magicians could not duplicate, 8:18–19)
4. Flies, 8:20–24 (warning given, 8:20)
5. Murrain on cattle, 9:1–7 (warning given, 9:1)
6. Boils on the people, 9:8–12 (no warning given, magicians afflicted, 9:11)
7. Hail, fire, 9:13–35 (warning given, 9:13)
8. Locusts, 10:1–20 (warning given, 10:3)
9. Thick darkness, 10:21–23 (no warning, Pharaoh refused to see Moses again, 10:27–29)
10. Death of the firstborn, 11–12 (the final judgment).

The plagues were actually a “declaration of war” against the gods of Egypt (see 12:12). The Nile River was worshiped as a god since it was their source of life (Deut. 11:10–12), and when Moses turned it into blood, God showed His power over the river. The goddess Heqt was pictured as a frog, the Egyptian symbol of resurrection. The plague of frogs certainly turned the people against Heqt! The lice and flies brought defilement to the people—a terrible blow, for Egyptians could not worship their gods unless they were spotlessly clean. The murrain attacked the cattle which were sacred to the Egyptians; Hathor was the “cow-goddess” and Apis was the sacred bull. The gods and goddesses that controlled health and safety were attacked in the plagues of boils, hail, and locusts. The plague of darkness was the most serious, since Egypt worshiped the sun god, Ra, the chief of the gods. When the sun was blotted out for three days, it meant that Jehovah had conquered Ra. The final plague (the death of the firstborn) conquered Meskhemit the goddess of birth, and Hathor, her companion, both of whom were supposed to watch over the firstborn. All of these plagues made it clear that Jehovah was the true God!

We may trace these same plagues in the Book of Revelation, when God describes His final conflict with the god of this world, Satan: water to blood (Rev. 8:8 and 16:4–6); frogs (16:13);



disease and afflictions (16:2); hail and fire (8:7), locusts (9:1ff); and darkness (16:10). The Egyptian magicians were able to imitate some of Moses' miracles—turning the rod into a serpent (7:8–13) and the water into blood (7:19–25), and bringing forth the frogs (8:5–7). But they could not turn the dust into lice (8:16–19). Second Timothy 3:8–9 warns us that in the last days false teachers will oppose God by imitating His miracles. See 2 Thes. 2:9–10. Satan is a counterfeiter who deceives the lost world by imitating what God does (2 Cor. 11:1–4, 13–15).

### III. The Compromises

Pharaoh is a type of Satan: he was the god of Egypt; he had supreme power (except where limited by God); he was a liar; he was a murderer; he kept people in bondage; he hated the Word of God and the people of God. Pharaoh did not want to release the Jews, so he offered four subtle compromises:

#### A. *Worship God in the land (8:25–27).*

God demands complete separation from the world; the friendship of the world is enmity with God (James 4:4). Since the Egyptians worshiped cows, they would be offended if they saw the Jews sacrificing their cattle to Jehovah. The believer must “come out and be separate” (2 Cor. 6:17).

#### B. *Do not go too far away (8:28).*

“Don't be a fanatic!” says the world. “It's fine to have religion, but don't get too serious about it.” Here we have the temptation to be “borderline believers,” trying to stay close to the world and close to the Lord at the same time.

#### C. *Only the men should go (10:7–11).*

This meant leaving the wives and children in the world. Faith involves the whole family, not the men only. It is the privilege of the husband and father to lead the family into the blessings of the Lord.

#### D. *Keep your possessions in Egypt (10:24–26).*

Satan loves to get hold of our material wealth so that we cannot use it for the Lord. All that we have belongs to Christ. And Jesus tells us, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:21). What a tragedy to rob God by leaving our “flocks and herds” for Satan to use (Mal. 3:8–10). Moses refused each of these compromises because he could not compromise with Satan and the world and still please God. We may think that we have won a victory by pacifying the world, but we are mistaken. God demands total obedience, complete separation. This was to be effected by the blood of the lamb and by the crossing of the Red Sea, pictures of Christ's death on the cross and our resurrection with Him, delivering us from “this present evil world” (Gal. 1:4).

## Exodus 11–13

The key to this section is the lamb. The Passover marks the birth of the nation of Israel and its deliverance from bondage. This great event also pictures Christ and His work on the cross (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7–8; 1 Peter 1:18–20).

### I. The Lamb Needed (11)

“One plague more!” God’s patience had run out and His final judgment—death to the firstborn—was about to fall. Note that death was to come to all (11:5–6; 12:12–13), unless they were protected by the blood of the lamb. “All have sinned” (Rom. 3:23) and “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). God specifies that the “firstborn” will die, and this speaks of God’s rejection of our first birth. All people are “firstborn” who have not been “twice-born.” “That which is born of the flesh is flesh ... you must be born again” (John 3:6–7). People cannot save themselves from the penalty of death; they need Christ, the Lamb of God.

For years, the Jews had slaved for the Egyptians without pay, so now God permits them to ask for (not “borrow”) their just wages. See Gen. 15:14 for God’s promise, and Ex. 3:21 and 12:35ff.

From a human point of view, there was no difference between the firstborn of Egypt and the firstborn of Israel. The difference was in the application of the blood (v. 7). All are sinners, but those who have trusted Christ are “under the blood” and saved. This is the most important difference in the world!

### II. The Lamb Chosen (12:1–5)

The Jews have a religious and a civil calendar, and Passover marks the beginning of their religious year. The death of the lamb makes a new beginning, just as the death of Christ makes a new beginning for the believing sinner.

#### A. *Chosen before it is slain.*

Selected on the tenth day, and slain “between the evenings” of the fourteenth and fifteenth days, the lamb was set aside for death. So Christ was the Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20).

#### B. *Spotless.*

The lamb was to be a male without blemish, a picture of the perfect Lamb of God in whom there was no spot or stain (1 Peter 1:19).

#### C. *Tested.*

From the tenth to the fourteenth days, the people watched the lambs to make sure they were satisfactory; similarly, Christ was tested and watched during His earthly ministry, especially during the last week before He was crucified. Note the progress: “a lamb” (v. 3), “the lamb” (v. 4), “your lamb” (v. 5). This parallels “a Savior” (Luke 2:11), “the Savior” (John 4:42), and “my Savior” (Luke 1:47). It is not enough to call Christ “a Savior” (one among many), or “the Savior” (for somebody else). Each of us must be able to say, “He is my Savior!”

### III. The Lamb Slain (12:6–7)

A living lamb was a lovely thing, but it could not save! We are not saved by Christ's example or His life; we are saved by His death. Read Heb. 9:22 and Lev. 17:11 to see the importance of the shed blood of Christ. Of course, killing a lamb seemed like foolishness to the wise Egyptians, but it was God's way of salvation (1 Cor. 1:18–23).

The blood of the lamb had to be applied to the door of the house (12:21–28). The word "basin" in 12:22 can mean "threshold," so that the blood of the lamb was caught in the hollow place at the threshold. The blood was then applied to the lintel over the door and the posts at the sides of the door. Anybody who went out of the house walked on the blood (see Heb. 10:29). Christ was slain on the fourteenth day of the month, just at the time when the Passover lambs were being offered. Note that God speaks of Israel killing it (the lamb), not them (lambs); for to God, there is but one Lamb—Jesus Christ. Isaac asked, "Where is the lamb?" (Gen. 22:7), and John the Baptist answered in John 1:29, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" All of heaven says, "Worthy is the Lamb!" (Rev. 5:12)

#### **IV. The Lamb Eaten (12:8–20, 43–51)**

We often neglect this important part of the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Leaven (yeast) in the Bible is a picture of sin: it works silently; it corrupts and puffs up; and it can only be removed with fire. The Jews had to put all leaven out of their homes at Passover season, and they were not allowed to eat leavened bread for seven days. Paul applies this to Christians in 1 Cor. 5; read the chapter carefully.

The blood of the lamb was sufficient to save from death, but the people had to feed on the lamb to get strength for their pilgrim journey. Salvation is just the beginning. We must feed on Christ if we are to have the strength to follow Him. Christians are a pilgrim people (v. 11), always ready for their Lord's orders to move on. The lamb was to be roasted with fire, which speaks of the sufferings of Christ on the cross. Nothing was to remain to be eaten later; no "leftovers" can satisfy the believer, for we need a whole Christ. We need a completed work on the cross. Furthermore, leftovers would become corrupt, and this would ruin the type; for Christ did not see corruption (Ps. 16:10). Alas, too many people receive the Lamb as their salvation from death, but they do not feed on the Lamb daily.

Verses 43–51 give further instructions concerning the feast. No stranger could participate, nor could a hired servant or one who was uncircumcised. These regulations remind us that salvation is a birth into God's family—no strangers are there. It is by grace—no one can earn it. And it is through the cross—for circumcision points to our true spiritual circumcision in Christ (Col. 2:11–12). The feast was not to be eaten outside the house (v. 46), for the feast cannot be separated from the shed blood. Modernists who want to "feed on Christ" apart from His shed blood are fooling themselves.

#### **V. The Lamb Trusted (12:21–42)**

It took faith to be delivered that night! The Egyptians thought all these things were foolishness, but God's Word had spoken and that was enough for Moses and his people. Please keep in mind that the people were saved by the blood and assured by the Word (v. 12). No doubt many of the Jews were safe under the blood who did not "feel safe," just as we have saints today who doubt God's Word and worry about losing their salvation. God did exactly what He said He would do. And the Egyptians urged the Jews to leave the land, just as God said they would (11:1–3). God was not one day late. He kept His Word.

#### **VI. The Lamb Honored (13)**

The lamb had died for the firstborn; now the firstborn would belong to God. The Jews were a "purchased people" just as we are God's purchased people (1 Cor. 6:18–20). The nation would

forever honor the Lamb by giving their firstborn—their best—to the Lord. The hands, eyes, and mouth would be given to Him for His service (v. 9).

God led His people, not on the nearest way, but on the way that was best for them (vv. 17–18), just as He does today. The pillar was a cloud by day and a fire by night. God always makes His will clear to those who are willing to follow (John 7:17). He saves us, feeds us, guides us, and protects us—and yet we do so little for Him!

Joseph knew what he believed and where he belonged. His tomb in Egypt was a reminder to the Jews that one day God would deliver them. On Joseph's bones, see Gen. 50:24–26, Joshua 24:32, and Heb. 11:22.

## Exodus 14–15

The Passover illustrates the Christian's salvation through the blood of the Lamb, but there is more to the Christian life than being saved from judgment. Israel's experiences in their journey from Egypt to Canaan are pictures of the battles and blessings of the Christian life. God wanted Israel in Canaan, and Canaan is a picture of the victorious Christian life—the life of claiming our inheritance in Christ (Eph. 1:3). Alas, too many Christians (like the Jews of old) are delivered from Egypt, but they get lost in the wilderness of unbelief! Yes, they are saved by the blood, but they fail to claim their rich spiritual inheritance by faith (Heb. 3–5). We see in these two chapters four different experiences of God's people on their pilgrim journey.

### I. Israel Crying Out in Fear (14:1–12)

God specifically directed Israel to their place of encampment by the Red Sea, and He told Moses that the Egyptians would pursue them. Similarly, God has explained the Christian life to us in His Word so that we know what to expect. Satan is not pleased when sinners are set free from his grasp, and he pursues the Christian to try to get him back into bondage. New Christians in particular must be warned that their adversary is coming!

Sad to say, the Jews were walking by sight, not by faith; for when they saw the Egyptian army coming, they gave up in despair and cried out in fear. Fear and faith cannot dwell in the same heart; if we trust God, we need not be afraid. As is often the case, the Children of Israel criticized their spiritual leader instead of praying and seeking to encourage one another. They were actually complaining to God, for Moses had led them to the very place God had appointed. Instead of looking up to God in faith, they looked back to Egypt and said, "We were better off in bondage to Pharaoh!" What poor memories they had! God had smitten Egypt with His judgments and delivered Israel with great power, yet they did not believe that He could see them through. Undoubtedly, the "mixed multitude" that went with them (12:38) led in this chorus of complaint, just as they were to lead in later years (Num. 11:4). The "mixed multitude" represents unconverted and worldly people among the children of God.

### II. Israel Walking in Faith (14:13–31)

Moses knew that the way of victory was through trusting the Lord (Heb. 11:29). Note his three commands: "Fear not" for God is on your side; "stand still," for you cannot win this battle in your own strength; "see the salvation of the Lord," for He will fight for you. It is important that we stand still before we "go forward" (v. 15), for unless we are standing by faith, we can never walk by faith. Moses lifted his rod, and God began to work.

God protected His people by coming between Israel and the Egyptian armies (vv. 19–20). The workings of the Lord are darkness to the world, but light to God's people. God kept the army at a distance that whole night. Then, God opened the way forward by sending a strong wind. No doubt the Jews were fearful as they heard the wind blow, but the very wind that frightened them was the means of their salvation. The entire nation walked through the Red Sea on dry land! Yet the same sea that was salvation to Israel was condemnation to Egypt, for God used the waters to drown the Egyptians and to separate Israel from Egypt permanently. Pharaoh reaped what he had sown, for he had drowned the Jewish infant boys, and now his own army was drowned.

We must grasp the spiritual meaning of this event (1 Cor. 10:1–2). The crossing of the Red Sea is a type of the believer's union with Christ in death to the old life and resurrection to a whole new life. Israel was "baptized unto Moses" (identified with Moses) in going through the waters, and we are identified with Christ and therefore separated from the world (Egypt). The Egyptians could not pass through the sea because they had never been sheltered by the blood.

Passover illustrates Christ's death for us, while the crossing of the Red Sea pictures His resurrection. The blood has delivered us from the penalty of sin and the resurrection, from the power of sin. The first experience is substitution, for the lamb died in the place of the firstborn. This is Romans 4–5. The second experience is identification, for we are identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection; and this is explained in Romans 6–8. The crossing of Israel through Jordan into Canaan in Josh. 3–4 is a type of believer entering into his spiritual inheritance by faith and claiming it for his own. In each case, it is by faith that the Christian claims the victory.

### **III. Israel Praising in Triumph (15:1–21)**

This is the first recorded song in the Bible, significantly coming after redemption from bondage. Only the Christian has a right to sing songs of redemption (Ps. 40:1–3). Exodus began with sighing (2:23), but because of redemption, we now see the nation singing. Note that this song exalts God, for the Lord is referred to at least forty-five times in these eighteen verses. Too many songs exalt men instead of the Person and holy character of God, and His wonderful works of power.

Note the key refrain in v. 2. It is repeated in Ps. 118:14, at the time the Jews returned from captivity and rebuilt the temple under Ezra, as well as in Isa. 12:2, referring to that day in the future when God will restore the nation to their land. See Isa. 11:15–16. Israel sang this song when delivered from Egypt, led by Moses the prophet and when delivered from Babylon, led by Ezra, a priest. They will yet sing it when delivered from the Gentile nations, when they turn to Christ, their king.

We will not linger over the details of this song. Note that they praised God for His redemption (vv. 1–10), guidance (vv. 11–13), and victory (vv. 14–17). And the song ends on a note of glory, looking ahead to His eternal reign (v. 18). Miriam led the women (see 1 Cor. 14:34, 1 Tim. 2:11–12) in a separate choir, for certainly women have reason to praise the Lord for the redemption He has given them in Christ.

### **IV. Israel Complaining in Unbelief (15:22–27)**

It would be wonderful to linger at the seaside and praise the Lord, but the believer is a pilgrim and must follow God's leading. How strange that God should lead them to a place without water. Yet God must discipline His children so that they may discover their own hearts. When the Jews did see water, they discovered that it was bitter, and immediately they complained to Moses and to God. How wicked the human heart is! We praise God one day for His glorious salvation and then complain to Him the first time we find bitter waters. This experience taught the people of Israel some valuable lessons:

*A. About life.*

Life is a combination of the bitter and the sweet, triumphs and trials. If we are following God, however, we never need fear what comes our way. And after the trial there is often a spiritual "Elim" (v. 27) where God refreshes us. We must accept the bitter waters with the sweet, knowing that God knows what is best for us.

*B. About themselves.*

Life is a great laboratory, and each experience x-rays our hearts to reveal what we really are. The waters of Marah revealed that the Jews were worldly, thinking only of bodily satisfaction; they were walking by sight, expecting to be satisfied by the world; they were ungrateful, complaining to God when trials came their way.

*C. About the Lord.*

God knows the need because He plans the way. He used the tree (suggesting the cross, 1 Peter 2:24) to make the bitter waters sweet. He is Jehovah-Rapha, "The Lord Who Heals."

## Exodus 16

This chapter should be read in connection with John 6, for the manna from heaven is a type of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life. It also illustrates the written Word of God on which God's pilgrim people feed from day to day (Matt. 4:4).

### I. The Manna Explains Who Jesus Is

The Hebrew word *manna* means "What is it?" (v. 15), the statement of the Jews when they could not explain this new food that God had sent. "Great is the mystery of godliness," writes Paul in 1 Tim. 3:16. "God was manifest in the flesh." Consider how the manna pictures Jesus Christ:

*A. His humility.*

It was small (v. 14), which speaks of His humility; for He became a baby, and even a servant.

*B. His eternal nature.*

It was round (v. 14), which reminds us of the circle, symbol of His eternity; for Jesus Christ is eternal God (John 8:53–59).

*C. His holiness.*

It was white (v. 31), a reminder of His purity and sinlessness; He is the holy Son of God.

*D. His sweetness.*

It was sweet (v. 31). "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 34:8). Note in Num. 11:4–8 that the "mixed multitude" that went with the Jews did not appreciate the taste of the manna but asked for the "leeks, onions, and garlic" of Egypt. They were not satisfied with simple manna. They "ground it,

beat it, and baked it," but then it tasted like "oil" and not like honey. There is a spiritual lesson here for us; we cannot improve upon the simple Word of God (Ps. 119:103).

*E. His nourishment of us.*

It was satisfying and strengthening, for the nation lived on manna for nearly forty years. All that we need for spiritual nourishment is Jesus Christ, God's heaven-sent Bread. We are to feast on the Bread that will never leave us hungering.

## **II. The Manna Illustrates How Jesus Came**

*A. It came from heaven.*

It was not imported from Egypt, or manufactured in the wilderness; it was given from heaven, the gift of God's grace. Jesus Christ came down from heaven (John 6:33) as the Father's gift to hungry sinners. To say that Christ is "just another man" is to deny the teaching of the whole Bible that He is God's Son sent from heaven.

*B. It came at night.*

The people gathered the manna early each morning, for the manna fell at night. This suggests the darkness of sin in this world when Jesus came. It was night when Jesus was born, for He came to be the Light of the World (John 8:12). And it is still night in the hearts of all who have rejected Him (2 Cor. 4:1–4).

*C. It came on the dew (vv. 13–14).*

The dew kept the manna from being defiled by the earth (see Num. 11:9). This is a type of the Holy Spirit for when Jesus came to earth, it was through the miracle ministry of the Spirit (Luke 1:34–35). Had Jesus not been born of the virgin, He could never be called "that Holy One."

*D. It fell in the wilderness.*

This world is not a paradise. To the unsaved person, it is a wonderful place, but to the Christian on his pilgrimage to glory the world is but a wilderness. Yet Christ came to this world in love to give men life. What grace!

*E. It came to a rebellious people (vv. 1–3).*

What poor memories Israel had! They had been away from the bondage of Egypt only six weeks and had already forgotten God's many mercies. They murmured against Moses and against God (see 15:22–27), and they longed for the fleshly diet of the old life; yet God in His grace and mercy supplied them with bread. Verse 4 could well have read, "I will rain fire and brimstone upon those ungrateful sinners!" But, no, God proved His love toward them by raining bread upon them. See Rom. 5:6–8. Someone has calculated that to supply six pints (an omer) of manna each for two million people daily would have required four freight trains of sixty cars each. How generous God is to us!

*F. It fell right where they were.*

How easily accessible the manna was to the Jews! They did not have to climb a mountain or cross a deep river; the manna came where they were (see Rom. 10:6–8). Jesus Christ is not far away from sinners. They can come to Him at any time.

### **III. The Manna Shows What We Must Do with Jesus Christ**

*A. We must feel the need.*

There is a spiritual hunger within that can be satisfied only by Christ (John 6:35). It was when the Prodigal Son said, "I perish with hunger" that he decided to go back to the father and seek forgiveness (Luke 15:17–18). Much of the unrest and sin in the world today is the result of unsatisfied spiritual hunger. People are living on substitutes and rejecting the nourishment that God freely provides (Isa. 55:1–3).

*B. We must stoop.*

The manna did not fall on the tables or on the trees but on the ground, and the people had to stoop to pick it up. Many sinners will not humble themselves. They will not bend! They will not repent and turn to the Savior!

*C. We must take for ourselves.*

The hungry Jews were not fed by looking at the manna, admiring it, or watching others eat it; they had to pick it up and eat it themselves. Christ must be received inwardly by faith if the sinner is to be saved. This is what Christ meant in John 6:51–58 by "eating His flesh and drinking His blood." John 6:63 makes it clear that Christ was not speaking about literal flesh and blood, and John 6:68 tells us that it was His Word that He was referring to. When we receive the Word inwardly, we are feeding on Christ, the Living Word.

*D. We must do it early (v. 21).*

"Seek the Lord while He may be found!" is the warning of Isa. 55:6 (nkjv). The manna disappeared when the sun became hot, and this suggests that the day of judgment will arrive when it will be too late to turn to Christ (Mal. 4). It also suggests that, as believers, we must get our spiritual nourishment from the Word early in the day as we meditate on it and pray.

*E. We must continue to feed on Him.*

Once we receive Christ as Savior, we are saved eternally (John 10:27–29). It is important, however, that we feed on Christ to have the strength for our pilgrim journey, just as the Jews fed on the Passover lamb (Ex. 12:11ff). How do believers feed on Christ? By reading, studying, and meditating on His Word. God invites each of us to get up early in the day and gather from the Word the precious manna to nourish our souls. We cannot hoard God's truth for another day (vv. 16–21); we must gather fresh food for each new day. Too many Christians mark their Bibles and fill their notebooks with outlines, yet never really feed on Christ.

Note that the spiritual manna (Christ) accomplishes more than did the physical manna that God sent to the Jews. The OT manna sustained physical life, but Christ gives spiritual life to all who receive Him. The OT manna was for the Jews only, but Christ offers Himself to the whole world (John 6:51). It did not cost Moses anything to secure the manna for Israel, but to make Himself



available to the world, Christ had to die on the cross. How sad it is that most of the people in the world walk on Christ as if he were unused manna on the ground, rather than stooping to receive Him that they might live.

The daily gathering of the manna was God's test of Israel's obedience (v. 4), and it is still God's test for His people. Those Christians that begin their day with the Bible, gathering spiritual food, are the ones God can trust and use. Alas, many Christians still hunger for the carnal diet of the world! (v. 3) And many expect the pastor or the Sunday School teacher to gather the manna for them and "spoon-feed" them. The test of our spiritual walk is this: do I think enough of Christ and His Word to start my day gathering manna?

Joshua 5:10–12 tells us that the manna ceased when the Jews entered Canaan at Gilgal, and that they ate the "old corn of the land." The manna came down from heaven, speaking of Christ in His incarnation and crucifixion. The corn grew up out of a place of burial and death, and speaks of Christ in His resurrection and heavenly ministry. To enter Canaan means to enter into our heavenly inheritance in Christ (Eph. 1:3), and this means laying hold of the blessing we have in His resurrection, ascension, and heavenly priesthood. Too many saints "know Christ according to the flesh" (2 Cor. 5:16, nkjv) in His earthly life and ministry and have never graduated into His heavenly priestly ministry. When they do take that step, they are "eating the old corn of the land"—feeding on His resurrection power.

## Exodus 17–18

As Israel followed the leading of the Lord, they experienced tests and trials which helped them understand themselves better and see more fully the power and grace of God. There are three such experiences in these chapters.

### I. Water from the Rock (17:1–7)

The congregation had thirsted before (15:22) and God had met their needs, but, like people today, they forgot God's mercy. After all, if they were in the place of God's leading, it was His responsibility to take care of them. The people criticized Moses and murmured against God, a sin about which we are warned in 1 Cor. 10:1–12. They were actually "tempting the Lord" by their attitude, for they were saying that God did not care and that He would not help them. They were trying His patience by their repeated complaints.

Moses illustrates what the trusting Christian does in the hour of trial: he turned to the Lord and asked for guidance (James 1:5). The Lord instructed him to take his rod and to smite the rock and water would come out. This rock is Christ (1 Cor. 10:4), and the smiting of the rock speaks of Christ's death on the cross, where He felt the rod of the curse of the law. (It was this same rod, you will recall, that turned into a serpent, Ex. 4:2–3, and that helped to bring the plagues on Egypt.) The order here is wonderful: in chap. 16 we have the manna, illustrating Christ's coming to earth; in chapter 17 we see the smiting of the rock, which pictures His death on the cross. The water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, who was given after Christ had been glorified (John 7:37–39).

Read Num. 20:1–13 for a second experience with the rock. God commanded Moses to speak to the rock, but in his self-will, Moses smote the rock. Then, because of this sin, he was not permitted to enter Canaan. By once again striking the rock, Moses spoiled the type—Christ can die only once. See Rom. 6:9–10 and Heb. 9:26–28. The Spirit was given once, but the believer may receive added fillings by asking God.

First Corinthians 10:4 says that Israel "drank of that spiritual rock that followed them." Some have interpreted this to mean that the smitten rock traveled with the Jews through the wilderness,

but this explanation is unlikely. The word “them” is not in the original Greek text; the sentence says that they drank of the water from the rock, and that this event followed the giving of the manna (cf. 1 Cor. 10:3 with Ex. 16).

## II. Warfare with the Enemy (17:8–16)

The new Christian sometimes is amazed that the Christian life is one of battles as well as blessings. Up to this point, Israel had not had to fight; the Lord had fought for them (13:17). But now, the Lord chose to fight through them to overcome the enemy. The Amalekites were descendants of Esau (Gen. 36:12, 16) and can illustrate the opposition of the flesh (Gen. 25:29–34). Israel was delivered from the world (Egypt) once and for all by crossing the Red Sea, but God's people will always battle the flesh until Christ returns.

Note that the Amalekites did not appear until after the water was given; for when the Holy Spirit comes in to dwell, then the flesh begins to oppose Him (Gal. 5:17ff). Deuteronomy 25:17–19 tells us that the Amalekites pulled a “sneak attack” and came up from the rear. As Christians we must always “watch and pray.”

How did Israel overcome the enemy? They had an intercessor on the mountain and a commander in the valley! Moses' role on the mountain illustrates the intercessory work of Christ, and Joshua with his sword illustrates the Spirit of God using the Word of God against the enemy (Heb. 4:12 and Eph. 6:17–18). Of course, Moses is an imperfect picture of Christ and His intercessory work, since our Lord never wearies and needs no assistance (Heb. 4:16; 9:24). Paul says that believers can “help together by prayer” (2 Cor. 1:11), which is what Aaron and Hur did. Moses had the rod of God in his hand, which speaks of God's almighty power. Moses had defeated every enemy in Egypt, just as Christ has overcome the world in mighty victory.

It is important that God's people cooperate with God in gaining victory over the flesh. Romans 6 tells us to reckon and to yield, and by faith to put to death the deeds of the body. Moses alone on the mount could not win the battle, nor could Joshua alone on the battlefield: victory required both of them. How wonderful that we have the interceding Son of God who is for us (Rom. 8:34), and the indwelling Spirit of God who is for us (Rom. 8:26), plus the inspired Word of God in our hearts!

Note that Joshua did not completely destroy the Amalekites; he “discomfited” them (v. 13). The flesh will never be destroyed or “eradicated” in this life; Christ will give us new bodies when He returns (Phil. 3:21). In 1 Sam. 15 we will see that Saul's sin was in refusing to deal completely with the Amalekites; and 2 Sam. 1:6–10 informs us that it was one of the Amalekites Saul spared that killed him! “Make no provision for the flesh” (Rom. 13:14, nkjv).

Jehovah-Nissi means “The Lord our banner.” We have our victory not through our own efforts but through Christ alone (John 16:33; 1 John 2:13–14; 5:4–5).

## III. Wisdom from the World (18)

Bible students disagree as to the interpretation of this chapter, whether Jethro's advice to Moses was of the Lord or of the flesh. Some point to Num. 11 where God took of His Spirit and distributed the power among the seventy officers, suggesting that Moses already had all the power he needed to get the job done. God had told Moses back in chapters 3–4 that He alone would supply the needed grace to do the job. In v. 11, Jethro called Jehovah “greater than all gods,” but this is a far cry from a definite confession of faith in the true God. Furthermore, in v. 27, we see Jethro refusing to stay with Israel, but going back to his own people.

Certainly our God is a God of order, and there is nothing wrong with organization. In the NT the apostles added the deacons to assist them when the burdens of ministry became too great (Acts 6). God's people can learn even from outsiders (Luke 16:8), but we must test everything by the Word of God (Isa. 8:20). We wonder if this “worldly wisdom” from Jethro was pleasing to God, for Jethro himself was not sure (see v. 23). He was willing to rejoice in all that the Lord had done (vv. 9–10),

but he was not willing to believe that God could help Moses with the everyday burdens of life. Moses adopted Jethro's scheme, and the people agreed to it (Deut. 1:9–18), but we have no assurance that God approved the new arrangement. In fact, God's attitude in Num. 11 suggests otherwise.

Believers face open and obvious attacks of the flesh, as with Amalek (17:8–16); but also subtle ideas of the flesh, as with Jethro. Certainly Moses could have done whatever work God called him to do, for "God's commandments are His enablements." How easy it is for us to pity ourselves, to feel that nobody else cares and that God has given us too great a burden! Read Isa. 40:31 for God's solution to this problem.

## Exodus 19–20

### I. Introductory Notes: The Law's Importance

No topic has been more misunderstood among Christians than the Law of Moses and its application to the NT believer today. To confuse the covenants of God is to misinterpret the mind of God and miss the blessings of God, so the believer is wise to examine the Word to determine the place and purpose of the whole Mosaic system.

### II. Name

Beginning with Ex. 19 and continuing to the cross of Christ (Col. 2:14), the people were under the Mosaic system. This is called "the Law of Moses," "the Law," and sometimes "the Law of God." For the sake of convenience, we often speak of "the Moral Law" (referring to the Ten Commandments), "the Ceremonial Law" (relating to the types and symbols found in the sacrificial system), and "the Civil Law" (meaning the everyday laws that governed the lives of the people). Actually, the Bible seems to make no distinction between the "moral" and "ceremonial" laws, since the one was definitely a part of the other. For example, the fourth commandment about the Sabbath Day is found in the Moral Law yet is certainly a part of the ceremonial system of Jewish holy days as well.

### III. Purposes

To understand the Law, we must remember that God had already made an everlasting covenant with the Jews through their father Abraham (Gen. 15). He promised them His blessing and gave them the ownership of the land of Canaan. The Mosaic Law was "added" to the Abrahamic Covenant later, but it did not disannul it (Gal. 3:13–18). The law "entered in alongside" God's previous covenant (Rom. 5:20) and was but a temporary measure (Gal. 3:19) on His part. It was given only to Israel to mark them as God's chosen people and His holy nation (Ex. 19:4–6; Ps. 147:19–20). God did not give the Law to save anybody, because it is impossible to be saved by the keeping of the Law (Gal. 3:11; Rom. 3:20). He gave the Law to Israel for the following reasons:

A. *To reveal His glory and holiness (Deut. 5:22–28).*

B. *To reveal man's sinfulness (Rom. 7:7, 13; 1 Tim. 1:9ff; James 1:22–25).*

C. *To mark Israel as His chosen people, and to separate them from the other nations (Ps. 147:19–20; Eph. 2:11–17; Acts 15).*

*D. To give Israel a standard for godly living so that they might inherit the land and enjoy its blessings (Deut. 4:1ff; 5:29ff; Judges 2:19–21).*

*E. To prepare Israel for the coming of Christ (Gal. 3:24).*

The “schoolmaster” was a trained slave whose task it was to prepare the child for adult living. When the child matured and entered adulthood, he received his inheritance and no longer needed the schoolmaster. Israel was in her “spiritual childhood” under the Law, but this prepared her for the coming of Christ (Gal. 3:23–4:7).

*F. To illustrate in type and ceremony the Person and work of Christ (Heb. 8–10).*

The Law is compared to a mirror, because it reveals our sins (James 1:22–25); a yoke, because it brings bondage (Acts 15:10; Gal. 5:1; Rom. 8:3); a child-trainer, because it prepared Israel for the coming of Christ (Gal. 3:23–4:7); letters written on stones (2 Cor. 3) in contrast to the law of love written on our hearts by the Spirit; and a shadow in contrast to the reality and fulfillment we have in Christ (Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:14–17).

#### **IV. Weakness**

It is important to note what the Law cannot do. It cannot accomplish these things: (1) make anything perfect, Heb. 7:11–19, 10:1–2; (2) justify from sin, Acts 13:38–39 and Rom. 3:20–28; (3) give righteousness, Gal. 2:21; (4) give peace to the heart, Heb. 9:9; and (5) give life, Gal. 3:21.

#### **V. Christ and the Law**

“The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). There is obviously a contrast between the legalistic system of Moses for Israel and the gracious position the Christian has in the body of Christ. Christ was made under the Law (Gal. 4:4–6) and fulfilled the Law in every respect (Matt. 5:17). His Person and work are seen in the Law (Luke 24:44–47). He is the end of the Law for righteousness to the believer (Rom. 10:1–13). He paid the penalty of the Law and bore the curse of the Law on the cross (Gal. 3:10–14, Col. 2:13–14). The Law no longer separates Jew and Gentile, for in Christ we are one in the church (Eph. 2:11–14).

#### **VI. The Christian and the Law**

The NT makes it very clear that the Christian is not under the Law (Rom. 6:14 and Gal. 5:18) but lives in the sphere of grace. In Christ, we died to the Law (Rom. 7:1–4) and have been delivered from the Law (Rom. 7:5–6). We must not become entangled again in the bondage of the Law (Gal. 5:1–4), which means falling out of the sphere of grace and living like a servant, not a son.

Does this mean that the Christian is supposed to be lawless and ignore the holy demands of God? Of course not! This is the accusation Paul's enemies threw at him because he emphasized the believer's glorious position in Christ (Rom. 6:1). Second Corinthians 3 makes it clear that the glory of the Gospel of God's grace far surpasses the temporary glory of the OT Law, and that we Christians go “from glory to glory” (3:18) as we grow in grace. Actually, the NT Christian is under a more demanding way of life than was the OT believer; for the OT Law dealt with outward acts, while the NT law of love deals with inward attitudes. Being free from the Law does not mean being free to sin—liberty is not license. We have been called to liberty, and we must use that liberty for the good of others and the glory of God (read Gal. 5:13–26). We are under the higher law of love, the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2). We do not try to obey God in the energy of the flesh because this is impossible (Rom. 7:14); the flesh is sinful and weak and cannot submit to the law. But as we reckon ourselves

dead to sin (Rom. 6) and yield to the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8), the Spirit fulfills the law in us and through us (Rom. 8:1–4).

To go back to the Law is to exchange reality for shadows and liberty for bondage. It is to forfeit the high calling we have in grace. Law means that we must do something to please God; grace means that God works in us to fulfill His perfect will.

## **VII. The Ten Commandments Today**

All of the OT Law is but an amplification and application of the Ten Commandments. Nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the NT for believers today:

*A. Have no other gods before Me (Acts 14:15; John 4:21–23;*

*1 Tim. 2:5; James 2:19; 1 Cor. 8:6).*

*B. Make no idols or images (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:22–23; 1 John 5:21; 1 Cor. 10:7, 14).*

*C. Do not take His name in vain (James 5:12; Matt. 5:33–37 and 6:5–9).*

*D. Remember the Sabbath Day.*

This is not repeated anywhere in the NT for the church to obey today. Keeping the Sabbath is mentioned in Matt. 12, Mark 2, Luke 6, and John 5; but these all refer to the people of Israel and not to the church. Colossians 2 and Rom. 14–15 teach that believers should not judge one another with reference to holy days or Sabbaths. To say that a person is lost or unspiritual for not keeping the Sabbath is to go beyond the bounds of Scripture.

*E. Honor father and mother (Eph. 6:1–4).*

*F. Do not murder (1 John 3:15; Matt. 5:21–22).*

*G. Do not commit adultery (Matt. 5:27–28; 1 Cor. 5:1–13, 6:9–20; Heb. 13:4).*

*H. Do not steal (Eph. 4:28; 2 Thes. 3:10–12; James 5:1–4).*

*I. Do not bear false witness (Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:25).*

*J. Do not covet (Eph. 5:3; Luke 12:15–21).*

Note these “summaries of the Law” in the NT; not one of them mentions the Sabbath: Matt. 19:16–20; Mark 10:17–20; Luke 18:18–21; Rom. 13:8–10. Of course, the “New Commandment” of love is the basic motivation for the Christian today (John 13:34–35; Rom. 13:9–10). This love is shed abroad from our hearts by the Spirit (Rom. 5:5), so that we love God and others, and therefore should need no external law to control our lives. The old nature knows no law, and the new nature needs no law. The Sabbath was God’s special day for the Jews under the Old Covenant; the Lord’s Day is God’s special day for the church under the New. The Sabbath symbolizes salvation by works: six days of labor, then rest; the Lord’s Day symbolizes salvation by grace: first rest, and then the works follow. The Sabbath, the sacrifices, the dietary laws, the priesthood, and the tabernacle services were all done away in Christ.

## Exodus 21–23

Having given Israel the Law of God in the Ten Commandments, Moses then explained and applied that Law to various aspects of human life. Wherever there is law, there must be interpretation and application; otherwise the law is impractical and not at all helpful. In the beginning, it was the priests who taught and applied the Law in Israel; but in later years, it was the scribes and rabbis who became the professional teachers of the Law. Unfortunately, their interpretations became as authoritative as the original Law, and it was this error that Jesus exposed through His teachings, especially the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7). See also Mark 7:1–23 for further insight.

### I. Caring for Servants (21:1–11)

The Jews were allowed to buy and sell servants, but they were forbidden to treat them as slaves. Sometimes people had to sell themselves into service because of their poverty (Lev. 25:39; Deut. 15:12), but their service was limited to only six years. Then they had to be freed. If a servant wanted to remain with the master, the servant was marked in the ear and would remain in the household for life. See Deut. 15:17, Ps. 40:6. The Law gave special protection to female servants to make sure their masters did not abuse them and deprive them of their rights.

### II. Compensating Personal Injuries (21:12–36)

These regulations were given to assure fairness in compensating people for injuries. “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth” (v. 24) is not a “law of the jungle” but an expression of fair payment for injuries received, so that the judges would not demand more or less than what was right. It is the basis for law today, although it is not always justly applied. Our Lord’s words in Matt. 5:38–42 have to do with private revenge rather than public disobedience to the Law. There were several capital crimes in Israel, among them: murder (vv. 12–15), kidnapping (v. 16), cursing one’s parents (v. 17), causing the death of a pregnant woman and/or her fetus (vv. 22–23), trafficking in demonism (22:18), and practicing bestiality (22:19). The basis for capital punishment is God’s covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:1–6) and the fact that man is created in the image of God. It is God who gives life and only He has the right to take it away or authorize it to be taken (Rom. 13).

God makes a distinction between deliberate murder and accidental death or manslaughter (vv. 12–13). The cities of refuge were provided for the protection of the person who accidentally killed someone (Num. 35:6ff). There were no police in that day, and a slain person’s family would feel obligated to avenge the death of their loved one. Therefore it was necessary to protect the innocent until the case could be investigated by the elders.

Note that God held the owner of an animal responsible for what it did to others (vv. 28–36), if that owner knew already that the animal was dangerous. The law made sure that nobody could take advantage of such situations and profit from them.

Verses 22–23 are basic to the pro-life position on abortion, for they indicate that the aborting of a fetus was equivalent to the murdering of the child. The guilty party was punished as a murderer (“life for life”) if the mother or the unborn child, or both, died. See also Ps. 139:13–16.

### III. Protecting Personal Property (22:1–15)

Here Moses dealt with several kinds of thievery, and he stated once again that the thief must make compensation to those who are wronged. But note that God holds sacred even the life of a thief who is breaking into a house! If he breaks in at night and is slain, the slayer is not charged. But if his

crime is in the daytime, when the owner could call for help or even recognize the intruder and accuse him later, then the slayer is guilty of homicide.

Moses also deals with property damage caused by animals who eat in a field other than their master's (v. 5) or by uncontrolled fire (v. 6), and with loss of property entrusted to others (vv. 7–15). From these specific instances, the judges could derive principles that would help them decide cases that Moses did not explain in detail.

#### **IV. Respecting Humanity (22:16–31)**

This series of miscellaneous laws reveals God's concern for humanity and His desire that people not be exploited. This includes virgins (vv. 16–17; see Deut. 22:23–24), foreigners in the land (v. 21), widows (vv. 22–24), and the poor (vv. 25–27). God promises to hear the cries of those who are wronged and defend the poor and oppressed.

Witches and wizards were not permitted to live because they were in league with the demonic powers that operated in the godless religions of the nations around Israel. See Lev. 19:31, 20:27 and Deut. 18:9–12. Modern occult practices are an invitation for Satan to go to work and destroy lives.

God also condemned sexual intercourse with animals (see Lev. 20:15–16; Deut. 27:21). Not only were these practices a part of the heathen worship of idols, but they debased human sexuality which is a precious gift from God.

The people were to respect their rulers and refrain from cursing them, even as they would refrain from cursing God. According to Romans 13, the powers that be are ordained of God. If we curse a leader, we are in danger of cursing the God who established the authority of human government.

Verses 29–31 get to the heart of obeying the law: put God first in your life and gladly obey what He says. This is the OT version of Matt. 6:33.

#### **V. Dispensing Justice (23:1–9)**

The judicial system in Israel, like our system of courts today, depended on just laws, honest judges, and faithful witnesses. God's laws were just, but they could be deliberately misinterpreted by an unjust judge, or a lying witness could give false testimony. Judgment was not to be influenced by numbers (v. 2), money (vv. 3, 6, 8), personal feelings (vv. 4–5), or social status (v. 9).

When it comes to applying the law, God does not want the wicked to be justified (v. 7; 2 Chron. 6:23). But when it comes to saving lost sinners, God in His grace justifies the ungodly. (Rom. 4:5) He can do this because the penalty for our sins was borne on the cross by the Son of God.

#### **VI. Celebrating Holy Times (23:10–19)**

The worship of God and the working of the land (which belonged to God) were bound together. Israel's religious festivals were tied to the agricultural year in a series of "sevens." See Lev. 23. The seventh day was the Sabbath and the seventh year was the Sabbatical Year. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was celebrated for seven days after Passover. The seventh month opened with the Feast of Trumpets and included the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths).

The weekly Sabbath not only reminded the Jews that they belonged to God, but it also showed God's care for the health of man and beast and the "health" of the land. The Sabbatical Year gave even more opportunity for rest and restoration. God is concerned about the way we use the natural resources He has graciously given us. If people kept this in mind today, there would be less exploitation of both human and natural resources.

Passover speaks of the death of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God (Ex. 12; John 1:29); the Feast of Firstfruits is a type of His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23); and the Feast of Tabernacles reminds us of His coming again and the future kingdom of joy and fullness (Zech. 14:16–21).

The puzzling statement about the kid and its mother's milk relates to a heathen practice that was a part of an idolatrous fertility rite (see 34:26 and Deut. 14:21). Moses connected this law with the harvest festivals because that is when heathen fertility rites were practiced.

## **VII. Conquering the Promised Land (23:20–33)**

God promised His people victory because His angel would go before them and help them defeat their enemies, if the nation faithfully obeyed God's commandments. Their ownership of the land was purely by God's grace, but their enjoyment of the land depended on their faith and faithfulness.

Once in their land, the people were to beware not to imitate the idolatrous practices of the other nations. God promised His people health, prosperity, and safety if they obeyed Him, for these blessings were a part of His covenant. He has not guaranteed these same blessings to His new covenant people today, but He has promised to supply all our needs and enable us to live in victory over our spiritual enemies. Much of the "prosperity preaching" of our modern day is based on a misinterpretation of the Old Covenant that God made with the Jews.

Israel did conquer the Promised Land and destroy the cities and idols of the godless inhabitants. But gradually, God's people began to make peace with their neighbors and learn to worship their false gods and goddesses. This led to discipline in the land (the Book of Judges) and eventual captivity away from the land. Before we judge Israel too severely for this, however, we need to ask how much God's people today are compromising with the gods of this world, such as money, pleasure, and success.

# **Exodus 24**

Moses is about to receive from God the divine pattern for the tabernacle and the priesthood. Whenever God calls us to do a work, He gives us the plans and expects us to follow His will. Ministry is not accomplished by our trying to invent ways to serve God, but by seeking His will and obeying it (Isa. 8:20).

## **I. Confirming the Covenant (24:1–8)**

Before Moses and the leaders of the nation could ascend the mountain to meet with God, the people had to enter into covenant relationship with God. Moses shared the Word of God with the people, and they agreed to obey it. How little they understood their own hearts! They should have said, "With the Lord's help, we will obey His Law." Within a few weeks, the nation would be worshiping an idol and violating the very Law they agreed to obey.

The covenant was confirmed with sacrifices and the sprinkling of the blood on the Book of the Law and on the people who agreed to obey it. The twelve stones of the altar represented the twelve tribes of Israel, indicating that each tribe was committed to obey the voice of God. The blood on the altar spoke of God's gracious forgiveness of sin, while the blood sprinkled on the people committed them to a life of obedience. Believers today have been sprinkled by the blood of Christ in a spiritual sense and are committed to obey His will (1 Peter 1:2).

## **II. Seeing the Lord (24:9–18)**

Seventy-five men went up the mountain: Moses, Joshua, Aaron and his two sons Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of the people. They beheld the glory of God on the mountain and ate and drank in His presence. You would think v. 11 would read, "They saw God and did fall on their faces in fear." But it says that they saw God and "did eat and drink." Because of the blood on the altar,



they were able to have fellowship with God and with one another. We should eat and drink to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31) and live each day in the presence of God, even though we cannot be on the mountain.

God called Moses to go up higher so that He might give him instructions for building the tabernacle and establishing the priestly ministry. He left Aaron and Hur with the elders and took Joshua with him into the cloud of glory. First mentioned in Ex. 17:9, Joshua eventually became Moses' successor. We do not know who Hur was, but he, with Aaron, assisted Moses in praying for the success of Joshua in the battle against the Amalekites (Ex. 17:8–16). Aaron must have gone down from the mount, because we find him in chapter 32 helping the people make the golden calf. When we abandon our place of ministry, we not only sin ourselves, but we may lead others into sin. See John 21.

In OT days, God often revealed His glory in a cloud (19:9, 16). He led the nation with a pillar of cloud and fire (Ex. 13:21–22). "God is a consuming fire" (Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29). Moses did not dare approach God until God summoned him, but when God called, Moses obeyed.

It is possible to believe in God and be a part of His covenant and yet not be close to God. The nation was at the base of the mountain; the seventy elders with Aaron, Hur, Nadab, and Abihu were farther up the mountain; Moses went higher with his assistant Joshua; and then Moses left Joshua behind as he entered the cloud into the presence of the Lord. Under Law, God determined how near people could be to Him. But under grace, we are the ones who determine our nearness to God. God invites us to fellowship with Him. The elders worshiped God "afar off" (v. 1), but we today are invited to "draw near" (Heb. 10:22; James 4:8). What a privilege it is to fellowship with God, and what a tragedy it is that we too often fail to spend time in His presence.

Nadab and Abihu were given the gracious privilege of seeing the glory of God, and yet later they presumptuously disobeyed God and were slain (Lev. 10:1–5). It is possible to come near to God and still go away and sin. How important it is that our personal worship of the Lord result in a clean heart and a right spirit (Ps. 51:10), for great privileges bring with them even greater responsibilities.

## Exodus 25

In the Book of Genesis, it is recorded that God walked with His people (Gen. 3:8; 5:22, 24; 6:9; 17:1). But in Exodus, God said that He wanted to dwell with His people (Ex. 25:8; 29:46). The tabernacle built by Moses is the first of several dwellings that God blessed with His glorious presence (Ex. 40:34–38). However, when Israel sinned, the glory departed (1 Sam. 4:21–22). The second dwelling place is the temple of Solomon (1 Kings 8:10–11). The prophet Ezekiel saw that glory depart (Ezek. 8:4; 9:3; 10:4, 18; 11:23). The glory of God returned to earth in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ (John 1:14, where "dwelt" means "tabernacled"), and men nailed Him to a cross. God's people today are the temple of God, universally (Eph. 2:20–22), locally (1 Cor. 3:16), and individually (1 Cor. 6:19–20). Ezekiel 40–46 promises a kingdom temple where God's glory will dwell (Ezek. 43:1–5). We also see that the heavenly home will be a place where God's presence is eternally with His people (Rev. 21:22).

### I. Offerings for the Sanctuary (25:1–9)

God gave Moses the pattern for the tabernacle (v. 9), but He asked the people to contribute the materials needed for its construction (vv. 1–9). This was a one-time offering that had to come from willing hearts (see 35:4–29). Fourteen different kinds of material are listed here, from precious stones and gold to various colors of yarn. Paul later used the image of "gold, silver, and precious stones" when he wrote about the building of the local church (1 Cor. 3:10ff.). It is important to note

that the various pieces of furniture were constructed so that they could be carried; for the tabernacle emphasizes that we are a pilgrim people. The design was changed for Solomon's temple, for the temple illustrates the people of God permanently dwelling in God's glorious kingdom. Without going into tedious detail, we will consider the various pieces of furniture of the tabernacle and the spiritual lessons that they convey.

## **II. The Ark of the Covenant (25:10–22)**

God began with the ark because it was the most important piece of furniture in the tent proper. It was the throne of God where His glory rested (v. 22; Pss. 80:1 and 99:1). It speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity (wood) and deity (gold).

Within the ark were three special items: the tables of the Law (v. 16), Aaron's rod that budded (Num. 16–17), and a pot of manna (Ex. 16:32–34). It is interesting that each of these three items is connected with rebellion on the part of God's people: the tables of Law with the making of the golden calf; Aaron's rod with the rebellion led by Korah; and the manna with Israel's complaining in the wilderness.

These three items within the ark could have brought judgment to Israel were it not for the mercy seat upon the ark, the place where the blood was sprinkled each annual Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:14). The shed blood covered the sins of the people so that God saw the blood and not their rebellion. The phrase "mercy seat" also means "propitiation," and Jesus Christ is the propitiation (mercy seat) for us today (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2). We come to God through Him and offer our spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

The phrase "under His wings" sometimes refers to the wings of the cherubim rather than the wings of the mother hen. To be "under His wings" means to dwell in the holy of holies in close communion with God. See Pss. 36:7–8 and 61:4.

## **III. The Table of Showbread (25:23–30)**

The twelve tribes of Israel were represented in the tabernacle in three ways: by their names on the two engraved stones on the high priest's shoulders (Ex. 28:6–14); by their names on the twelve stones on the high priest's breastplate (28:15–25), and by the twelve loaves of bread on the table in the holy place. These loaves were a reminder that the tribes were constantly in the presence of God and that God saw all that they did (see Lev. 24:5–9).

The bread was a reminder too that God fed His people ("give us this day our daily bread"), that His people were to "feed on" God's truth (Matt. 4:4), and that Israel was to "feed" the Gentiles and witness to them. God called Israel to be a blessing to the Gentiles, just as bread is food for humanity; but the people of Israel did not always fulfill their calling.

The loaves were changed each week and only the priests were allowed to eat this holy bread. See Lev. 22. David was allowed to eat the bread because he was God's anointed king, and the bread was no longer on the table. God is more concerned with meeting human needs than protecting sacred rituals (Matt. 12:3–4).

## **IV. The Golden Lampstand (25:31–40)**

The word "candlestick" is misleading, for this was a lampstand whose light was fed with oil (see Lev. 24:2–4; Zech. 4). Local churches are represented by individual golden lampstands (Rev. 1:12–20), giving God's light to the dark world. The lampstand in the holy place speaks of Jesus Christ, the light of the world (John 8:12). The oil for the lamps reminds us of the Holy Spirit, who has anointed us (1 John 2:20). Some students see the golden lampstand as a picture of the Word of God that gives us light as we walk in this world (Ps. 119:105). Israel was to be a light to the Gentiles (Isa.

42:6; 49:6) but failed in their mission. Today, each believer is God's light (Matt. 5:14–16), and each local church is to shine in this dark world (Phil. 2:12–16).

## Exodus 26–27

### I. The Curtains and Coverings (26:1–14)

Within the tabernacle, seen only by the ministering priests, were colorful curtains of linen, hung upon the wooden framework. God built beauty into the walls and ceiling of the tabernacle, not only with the colors used but also with the images of the cherubim on the curtains. The commandment against making graven images did not prohibit the people from engaging in artistic work and making beautiful things, for they did not intend to worship these things they made for God's glory.

Keep in mind that the tabernacle proper was a tent located within a courtyard, with the various coverings placed over a wooden framework. There were four different coverings, the inner two of woven fabric and the outer two of animal skins. The innermost covering was of beautifully-colored linen, covered by fabric of woven goat's hair. Then came two protective coverings for the tent—ram's hide dyed red and leather-like badger's skins. These materials were in common use among the nomadic peoples of that day.

### II. The Framework (26:15–30)

The combination of wood and its gold covering suggests the humanity and deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. There were many parts to the tabernacle, but it was considered one structure. And what set it apart as truly special was that the glory of God dwelt there.

The silver sockets were necessary to hold the structure level and secure on the desert ground. The silver for these sockets came from the "redemption price" given by each male who was twenty years old or older (Ex. 30:11–16). The tabernacle boards rested on silver sockets, and the curtains hung from silver hooks. The basis for our worship today is the redemption that we have in Christ.

### III. The Veils (26:31–37)

The inner veil hung between the holy place and the holy of holies and was passed only once a year by the high priest on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16). Hebrews 10:19–20 teaches that this veil represents our Lord Jesus Christ's body which was given for us on the cross. When He offered up His spirit, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom, thus allowing anyone to come at any time into God's presence (Matt. 27:50–51).

The outer veil hung across the five pillars that formed the entrance to the tent of meeting, and it was visible to those who came to the brazen altar with their sacrifices. However, this veil prevented anyone on the outside from looking into the holy place.

### IV. The Bronze Altar (27:1–8)

There were two altars associated with the tabernacle—a bronze altar for sacrifices, and a golden altar for the burning of incense (Ex. 30:1–10). The bronze altar stood in the courtyard of the tabernacle, just inside the entrance of the court. There was one entrance and one altar, just as there is only one way of salvation for lost sinners (Acts 4:12).

God lit the fire on the altar when the tabernacle was dedicated, and it was the responsibility of the priests to keep the fire burning (Lev. 6:9–13). Pans and shovels were available for cleaning out the ashes, basins for handling the blood, and fleshhooks for taking the priests' share of the

offerings. This altar speaks of the sacrificial death of our Lord on the cross. He is pictured in all the sacrifices God commanded Israel to bring (Lev. 1–5; Heb. 10:1–14). He went through the fire of judgment for us and gave Himself as the sacrifice for our sins.

## V. The Court of the Tabernacle (27:9–19)

Surrounding the tent of meeting was a linen fence with a beautiful woven “gate,” opening to the place where the brazen altar stood. Looking at the total picture, we see that there were three parts to the tabernacle: the outer court that everybody could see; the holy place, containing the table, the lampstand, and the incense altar; and the holy of holies, containing the ark of the covenant.

This threefold division suggests the tripartite nature of human beings—spirit, soul, and body (1 Thes. 5:23). Just as the holy place and the holy of holies were two parts of one structure, so our soul and spirit comprise our “inner person” (2 Cor. 4:16). Moses could take down the fence of the outer court, and it would not affect the tent. So with our own death, the body may turn to dust, but the soul and spirit go to be with God and are not affected by the change (2 Cor. 5:1–8; James 2:26).

## VI. Oil for the Lampstand (27:20–21)

Zechariah 4:1–6 indicates that oil for the lampstand is a type of the Holy Spirit of God. One of the ministries of the Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, just as the light shone on the beautiful golden lampstand (John 16:14). As the priests ministered in the holy place, they walked in the light that God provided (1 John 1:5–10). The lamp was to “burn always” (27:20; Lev. 24:2). It would appear that only the high priest was permitted to dress the wicks and replenish the oil supply. When the high priest burned the incense each morning and evening, he also tended to the lamps (Ex. 30:7–8).

# Exodus 28

This chapter focuses on the clothing of the priests, while chapter 29 deals primarily with the consecration of the priests. As you study these two chapters, keep in mind that all of God's people are priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9); therefore, the Aaronic priesthood can teach us much about the privileges and obligations we have as God's priests. (Our Lord's priesthood comes from the order of Melchizedek and not the order of Aaron. See Heb. 7–8.) Note that the priests ministered first of all to the Lord, even though they also ministered to the Lord's people. The priests represented the people before God and ministered at the altar, but their first obligation was to serve the Lord (vv. 1, 3, 4, 41). If we would serve the people rightly, we must serve the Lord acceptably. The innermost garment of the priests was a pair of linen breeches (v. 42), which was covered with a fine linen coat (vv. 39–41). Over these the high priest wore the blue robe of the ephod (**vv. 31–35**), and over that the ephod itself and the holy breastplate (vv. 6–30). The high priest also wore a linen turban (mitre) with a golden plate on it that read “holiness to the Lord” (vv. 36–38).

## I. The Ephod (28:6–14)

“Ephod” is a transliteration of the Hebrew word that describes a particular garment—a sleeveless coat made of the same material and colors as the hangings in the tabernacle. It was held together at the shoulders by special clasps, and on each clasp was an onyx stone engraved with the names of six of the tribes of Israel. The high priest carried his people on his shoulders as he served the Lord. The high priest wore a beautiful girdle around the ephod as a reminder that he was a servant.

## II. The Breastplate (28:15–30)

This was a beautiful cloth “pouch” that had twelve precious stones on the outside and the Urim and Thummim in the pocket. It hung over the high priest’s heart, held by golden chains and blue lace. The high priest carried the twelve tribes not only on his shoulders, but also over his heart. Jesus Christ, our high priest in heaven, has His people on His heart and His shoulders as He intercedes for us and equips us to minister in this world.

The names of the tribes on the two shoulder stones were positioned according to their birth order (v. 10), while the order on the breastplate was according to the tribal order established by the Lord (Num. 10). God sees His people as precious jewels—each one is different, but each one is beautiful. *Urim* and *Thummim* mean “lights and perfection” in Hebrew. It is generally thought that these were stones that were used to determine God’s will for His people (Num. 27:21; 1 Sam. 30:7–8). In the East, it was common to use white and black stones in making decisions. If the person drew a white stone out of the bag, it meant “Yes,” while the black stone meant “No.” It is unwise to be dogmatic about this interpretation because we do not have enough information to guide us. Suffice it to say that God provided His Old Covenant people with a way to determine His will, and He has given us today His Word and His Holy Spirit to direct us.

## III. The Robe of the Ephod (28:31–35)

This was a seamless blue garment with a hole for the head and golden bells and fabric pomegranates decorating the hem. The fabric pomegranates kept the bells from hitting each other. As the high priest ministered in the holy place, the bells would jingle and let the outsiders know that their holy representative was still serving them and the Lord. The bells suggest joyfulness as we serve the Lord, and the pomegranates suggest fruitfulness.

Note that the high priest laid aside these glorious robes when he ministered on the annual Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:4). On that day, he wore the simple linen garments of the priest or Levite, a picture of Christ’s humiliation (Phil. 2:1–11).

## IV. The Holy Crown (28:36–39)

The turban (mitre) was a simple white linen cap, perhaps not unlike the cap worn by a modern chef, only not as high. On the turban, held by a lace of blue, was a golden plate that said “holiness to the Lord.” It was called “a holy crown” (29:6; 39:30; Lev. 8:9) and emphasized the fact that God wanted His people to be holy (Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:7). The nation was accepted before God because of the high priest (v. 38), just as God’s people are accepted in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:6). Because of Jesus Christ, God’s people today are a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5) and a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9).

## V. The Garments for the Priests (28:40–43)

Aaron’s sons served as priests and had to wear the assigned garments. The fine linen of all the garments reminds us of the righteousness that ought to characterize our walk and our service. If the priests did not wear the proper garments, they were in danger of death. The priests of the heathen cults sometimes conducted their rituals in a lewd manner, but the Lord’s priests were to cover their nakedness and practice modesty.

## Exodus 29

The consecration of the priests teaches us much about our own relationship to the Lord.

### I. The Ceremony (29:1–9)

Aaron and his sons did not choose the priesthood for themselves but were chosen by God. It was an act of God's grace. No stranger (outsider) was allowed to intrude into the priesthood (Num. 3:10), not even a king (2 Chron. 26:16–23).

The washing speaks of the cleansing we have through faith in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:9–11; Rev. 1:5; Acts 15:9), a once-for-all washing that needed never to be repeated (John 13:1–10). It was necessary for the priests to have daily washing at the laver, which speaks of our daily cleansing as we confess our sins (1 John 1:9).

In Scripture, clothing often symbolizes character and conduct. Our righteousnesses are like filthy rags before God (Isa. 64:6), and we cannot clothe ourselves with good works as Adam and Eve tried to do (Gen. 3:7). When we trust Christ, we are clothed with His righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21; Isa. 61:10). We should put off the "graveclothes" and put on the "grace clothes" (Col. 3:1ff). The distinctive garments of the priests identified them as the holy servants of God, set apart to minister to the Lord. As we noted before, the holy anointing oil is a type of the Spirit of God who alone can empower us for service (30:22–33).

### II. The Sacrifices (29:10–37)

According to OT law, there were three agents for cleansing: water, blood, and fire. It was necessary that the priests be cleansed by the sacrificial blood (Lev. 17:11). A bullock was slain as a sin offering each day for the entire week of consecration (v. 36), and the first ram was given as a burnt offering, a picture of total dedication to God. The blood from the second ram was applied to the right ears, thumbs, and great toes of Aaron and his sons, picturing their consecration to hear God's Word, do God's work, and walk in God's way. This second ram became a wave offering and then a burnt offering.

Part of the second ram was kept back for a special meal that only the priests could eat (Lev. 7:28–38). God ordained that certain parts of some sacrifices belonged to the priests as payment for their ministry to the people.

### III. The Continual Burnt Offering (29:38–46)

Now the Lord began to describe the ministerial duties of the priests, beginning with the burnt offerings that were to be offered morning and evening each day. The first responsibility of the priests each morning was to remove the old ashes from the altar, get the fire burning, and then offer a lamb to the Lord, a symbol of total devotion to God. See Lev. 6:8–13. This is a beautiful picture of what our morning "devotional time" ought to be like. "Stir up the gift of God" (2 Tim. 1:6) literally means "fan into full flame." How easy it is for the fire to get low on the altar of our hearts (Rev. 2:4) so that we become lukewarm (Rev. 3:16) and even cold (Matt. 24:12). The tabernacle was sanctified (set apart) by God's glory (v. 43) when the glory of God moved into the holy of holies (Ex. 40:34). Israel was the only nation to have "the glory" (Rom. 9:4). God's Spirit lives within us and therefore we should be a separated people who bring glory to God (2 Cor. 6:14–7:1).

## Exodus 30

God wanted His people to be “a kingdom of priests” (19:6). Today, all of God’s people are a priesthood (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6), but in OT days, the nation of Israel had a priesthood that represented them before God. What the priests were, the whole nation should have been. What kind of people make up “a kingdom of priests”?

### I. A Praying People (30:1–10, 34–38)

As we have noted, there were two altars involved in the tabernacle services—a bronze altar for the blood sacrifices and a golden altar for the incense. The gold covering the wood speaks of the deity and humanity of the Savior and reminds us that we can pray to the Father only because of the intercessory work of His Son. We bring our requests in the name of Jesus Christ (John 14:12–15).

The burning of the incense pictures the offering up of our prayers (Ps. 141:2; Luke 1:10; Rev. 5:8). The fire that consumes the incense reminds us of the Holy Spirit, for without His aid we cannot truly pray (Rom. 8:26–27; Jude 20). The golden altar stood before the veil, outside the holy of holies, but we are privileged to come boldly into God’s presence and bring our requests to Him (Heb. 4:14–16; 10:19–22). The high priest burned the incense each morning and evening, a reminder that we should open and close the day with prayer and during the day “pray without ceasing” (1 Thes. 5:17). The priest carried the fragrance of the incense with him all the day.

The special composition of the incense is given in vv. 34–38, and this formula was not to be used for common purposes. Likewise, prayer is special, and God dictates what the requirements are for effective praying. “Strange incense” (v. 9) and “strange fire” (Lev. 10:1) were not to be used on God’s altar. No matter how fervent a prayer might be, if it is not according to God’s will, it will not be answered.

### II. A Grateful People (30:11–16)

The annual Passover celebration would remind the people that the nation had been redeemed from bondage, and this annual “census tax” would be another reminder of their redemption (see 1 Peter 1:18–19). The silver was originally used for the sockets and hooks for the tabernacle (38:25–28); in later years, it helped to pay for the upkeep of the house of God (Matt. 17:24–27). When David impetuously took a census without receiving the “redemption money,” God sent a plague to the nation (1 Chron. 21:1–17). It is dangerous to use “religious statistics” for the praise of man and not for the glory of God. We should be grateful to God for the redemption we have in Christ, and we should be willing to give to Him for His glory.

### III. A Cleansed People (30:17–21)

This bronze basin stood between the bronze altar and the tent, and the water in it provided ceremonial cleansing for the hands and feet of the priests. With no floor in the tabernacle, their feet would get dirty. In addition, the handling of the sacrifices would defile their hands. It is possible to be defiled even while serving the Lord. The laver was made out of brass mirrors (38:8). Since the mirror is a picture of the Word of God (James 1:23–25), the laver illustrates the cleansing power of God’s Word (John 15:3; Eph. 5:25–27; Ps. 119:9). When we trust Jesus Christ, we are “washed all over” once and for all, but it is necessary to confess our sins and “wash our hands and feet” if we want to enjoy fellowship with the Lord (John 13:1–11; 1 John 1:9).

#### **IV. An Anointed People (30:22–33)**

Like the incense for the golden altar, the anointing oil for the priests was to be a special commodity, not to be duplicated or desecrated by common use. It could only be poured on the priests; the common people could not use this special ointment. How wonderful that all of God's people today have been anointed by the Spirit (1 John 2:20, 27; 2 Cor. 1:21).

## **Exodus 31**

### **I. The Ability to Work (31:1–11)**

Whenever God calls us to do a job for Him, He gives us the enablement we need and the helpers we need. This He did for Bezaleel and Aholiab. Bezaleel means “in God's protection”; his father Hur we have met before (Ex. 17:10–16; 24:14). God gave these men the ability they needed to follow the heavenly pattern and make the things necessary for the tabernacle. Their wisdom and skill came from the Lord, and they used their abilities in obedience to God's command.

Artistic skills can be dedicated to God and used for His glory. Not everybody is called to be a preacher, teacher, or missionary. There is also a need for Christian writers, artists, musicians, architects, doctors, gardeners—in fact, in every legitimate vocation we can serve the Lord (1 Cor. 10:31).

### **II. The Responsibility Not to Work (31:12–18)**

There is a time to labor for the Lord and a time to rest, and both are a part of His plan for His people (Mark 6:31). Bezaleel and Aholiab were constructing the holy tabernacle, but they were instructed to be careful not to violate the Sabbath. The Sabbath was not given to the Gentile nations but only to Israel as a sign of their special relationship to the Lord. As we have noted before, the Sabbath commandment is nowhere given to the church, for the church honors the first day of the week, the Lord's Day, the day of His resurrection from the dead. The Sabbath belonged to the old creation (v. 17), but the Lord's Day belongs to the new creation.

## **Exodus 32–34**

While Moses was having a “mountaintop” experience with the Lord, the people were sinning in the valley below. Spiritual leadership is not all blessing; there are burdens as well.

### **I. Moses the Intercessor (32:1–35)**

#### *A. God's people sinning (vv. 1–6).*

No matter how you look at this sin, it was a great offense against God. The Jews were God's people, chosen by His grace and redeemed from Egypt by His power. He had led them, fed them, protected them from the enemy, and made them a part of His covenant. He had given them His holy laws and the people had agreed to obey (19:8; 24:3–7). Here at Sinai, the people had seen the awesome display of God's glory and had trembled at His power. Yet, in spite of all these marvelous experiences, they impudently disobeyed the Lord and lapsed into idolatry and immorality.



Moses had agreed to God's giving him Aaron as a helper (4:10–17), but now Aaron had become a leader in helping the people sin. When did Aaron come down from the mountain? Why did he not rebuke the people and turn to God for help? To say that Aaron made the calf as a symbol of Jehovah, stooping to the weakness of the people, does not excuse him; for Aaron knew what the Lord had said about idols (20:1–6).

The basic cause of this sin was unbelief: the people became impatient while waiting for Moses, and without true faith they decided they had to have something they could see. Impatience and unbelief led to idolatry, and idolatry led to immorality (see Rom. 1:18–32).

#### *B. God's servant interceding (vv. 7–14).*

Of course the Lord knew what was going on in the camp of Israel. See Heb. 4:13. Note how God seemed to “blame” Moses for what had happened, but Moses was quick to remind the Lord that Israel was His people. It was Jehovah's glory that was at stake and not Moses' reputation, so Moses reminded the Lord of His promises to the patriarchs. When Scripture says that the Lord “repents,” it is using human language to describe a divine response (Num. 23:19; Jer. 18:7–10; Amos 7:1–6). Twice during Moses' lifetime, God offered to destroy Israel and use Moses to found a new nation (v. 10; Num. 14:12), but he refused. The Jews never knew the price Moses paid to be their leader. How much they owed to him, and yet how little they showed their appreciation! God was even going to kill Aaron, but Moses interceded for him (Deut. 9:20).

#### *C. God's wrath judging (vv. 15–35).*

In His grace, God forgave their sins, but in his government, He had to discipline the people. How many tears have been caused by the painful consequences of forgiven sins! Moses had a right to be angry and to humble Aaron and the people. By breaking the two tables of the Law, written by God, Moses dramatically showed the people the greatness of their sin. Instead of confessing his sins, Aaron made excuses. He blamed the people for their depravity (v. 22), Moses for his delay (v. 23), and the furnace for its delivery of a calf! After dealing with the people, Moses returned to the Lord on the mountain and offered to give up his own life that the people might be spared. See Rom. 9:3. When a person dies, his or her name is removed from the book of life (Ps. 69:28; Ezek. 13:9). The book of life (or “the living”) should not be confused with the Lamb's Book of Life, which records the names of the saved (Rev. 21:27; Luke 10:20).

## **II. Moses the Mediator (33:1–17)**

As intercessor, Moses stood between the nation and their past sins. As mediator, he stood between the nation and their future blessings. Moses was not content just to have the nation forgiven; he wanted to be sure that God would go with them as they continued their march to the Promised Land. When the people heard that God would not go with them, they humbled themselves and mourned. It is one thing to mourn because of God's discipline of our sins and quite something else to mourn because of God's distance resulting from our pride. “An afflicted people is an object of grace,” wrote C. H. Macintosh, “but a stiff-necked people must be humbled.”

The tent described in vv. 7–11 is not the tabernacle, for the tabernacle had not yet been constructed. This was the tent where God met with Moses and shared His plans with him (Num. 12:6–8; Deut. 34:10). As a symbolic gesture to show Israel how wicked they had been, Moses moved the tent outside the camp. Some of the people went out to meet with God while others merely watched as Moses went out. Joshua was one who stayed with Moses and kept vigil at the tent of meeting. “Every one of us is as close to God as he has chosen to be,” said J. Oswald Sanders; and this is true.

Moses asked for God's grace to bless the people and God's presence to go with the people, and the Lord granted his request. After all, it was the glorious presence of God that distinguished Israel from all the other nations. Other nations had laws, priests, and sacrifices. Only Israel had the presence of God among them.

### **III. Moses the Worshiper (33:18–34:35)**

#### *A. Seeing the glory (33:18–34:9).*

Moses knew what many in the church today have forgotten—that the most important activity of God's people is the worship of God. Moses had been given a guarantee of God's presence with His people, but that was not enough; he wanted a new vision of the glory of God. God's "goodness" (33:19) means His character and attributes. The word "back" (33:23) carries the idea of "what remains," that is, the afterglow of the glory of God—what was "left over" after God passed by. Since God is spirit, He does not have a body as humans do. These are only human representations of divine truths about God.

Moses returned for another forty days with God on the mountain (34:28; Deut. 9:18, 25), and God gave him new tables of Law. The Lord's proclamation in 34:6–7 became a standard "statement of faith" for the Jews (Num. 14:18; 2 Chron. 30:9; Neh. 9:17; Jonah 4:2). The earlier declaration in Ex. 20:5 states that God sends judgment "unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Children and grandchildren are not condemned for the sins of their ancestors (see Ezek. 18:1–4), but they may suffer because of those sins. Once again, Moses bowed and worshiped as he communed with the Lord.

#### *B. Protecting the glory (34:10–28).*

God reminded Moses that the people of Israel were to be different from the people living in the land of Canaan, and He warned Moses against the sin of idolatry. What is idolatry? It is exchanging the glory of the incorruptible God for an image (Rom. 1:23) and worshiping and serving the creature instead of the Creator (Rom. 1:25). God gave Israel His Law so that they might live godly lives and manifest His glory.

#### *C. Reflecting the glory (34:29–35).*

You will want to read 2 Cor. 3 to get the spiritual lessons for today. The glory of the OT Law was temporary and finally faded away, but the glory of new covenant grace grows brighter and brighter. Moses only reflected God's glory and had to wear a veil so the people could not see the glory disappear, but God's people today radiate God's glory from within as they see Jesus Christ in the Word (the mirror) and become more like Him (2 Cor. 3:18). Ours is to be a constant "transfiguration" experience as we walk with the Lord. ("Transformed" in Rom. 12:2, and "changed" in 2 Cor. 3:18 are both the Gk. word "transfigured" as used in Matt. 17:2.)

## Exodus 35–40

### I. The People Bring Their Gifts (35:1–29)

Moses had already told the people that God wanted their willing gifts so that the tabernacle could be built (25:1–8). What grace that God would accept gifts from a people who had disobeyed Him and grieved His heart. These were to be willing gifts from the heart (vv. 5, 21, 26, 29), for the Lord loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:6–8). Most of this wealth probably came from the people of Egypt (12:35–36)—delayed wages for all the work the Jews had done for the Egyptians. It was “the Lord’s offering” (vv. 22, 24, 29), and therefore, they wanted to give their best. In fact, they gave so generously that Moses had to stop them from bringing more (36:4–7). We wonder if that problem ever exists in the church today!

### II. The Gifted People Give Their Service (35:30–39:43)

The Holy Spirit gave Bezaleel and Aholiab the wisdom to know what to do and the ability to do it. In like manner, God has given gifts to His people today so that the church might be built up (1 Cor. 12–14; Eph. 4:1–17; Rom. 12). Bezaleel and Aholiab did not do all the work themselves but taught others who assisted them.

In the succeeding verses, Moses names the various parts of the tabernacle one by one, as well as the garments of the priests. God is concerned with every detail of our work and does not minimize any aspect of it. The smallest hook for the curtains was as important to Him as the brazen altar. If we are faithful in the small things, God can trust us with the bigger things (Luke 16:10).

Scholars have estimated that in the construction of the tabernacle, the people used nearly a ton of gold, about three and a quarter tons of silver, and two and a quarter tons of bronze. It was not an inexpensive structure!

### III. The Lord Gives His Glory (40:1–38)

Israel had arrived at Sinai three months after their exodus from Egypt (19:1), and it was now the first day of the second year of their pilgrimage (40:2); so nine months transpired from the giving of the Law to the dedicating of the finished tabernacle. Nearly three months of that time, Moses had been with God on the mountain (24:18; 34:28). We see then that the construction of the tabernacle took about six months.

As he was setting up the tabernacle this first time, Moses put up the tent, and then, working outward from the holy of holies, he put the pieces of furniture in place. When that was done, he set up the outer court. With everything in its proper place, Moses then anointed the structure and its contents (vv. 9–11) and set it apart for the Lord. His final act of dedication was the consecration of Aaron and the priests (vv. 13–16), which was followed by their presenting the sacrifices to the Lord (Lev. 8–9).

The climax of the dedication service was the revelation of the glory of God in the fire on the altar (Lev. 9:24) and the cloud in the tent (Ex. 40:34–38; see also 1 Kings 8:10). No matter how expensive the tabernacle was, without the presence of God it was just another tent. The glory not only resided in the tabernacle, but it guided the Israelites on their pilgrim journey. When we speak of the “shekinah glory of God,” we are referring to God’s dwelling in the tabernacle or the temple. The Hebrew word transliterated “shekinah” means “dwelling of God,” from the Hebrew word *shakan* which means “to dwell” (Ex. 29:45–46).