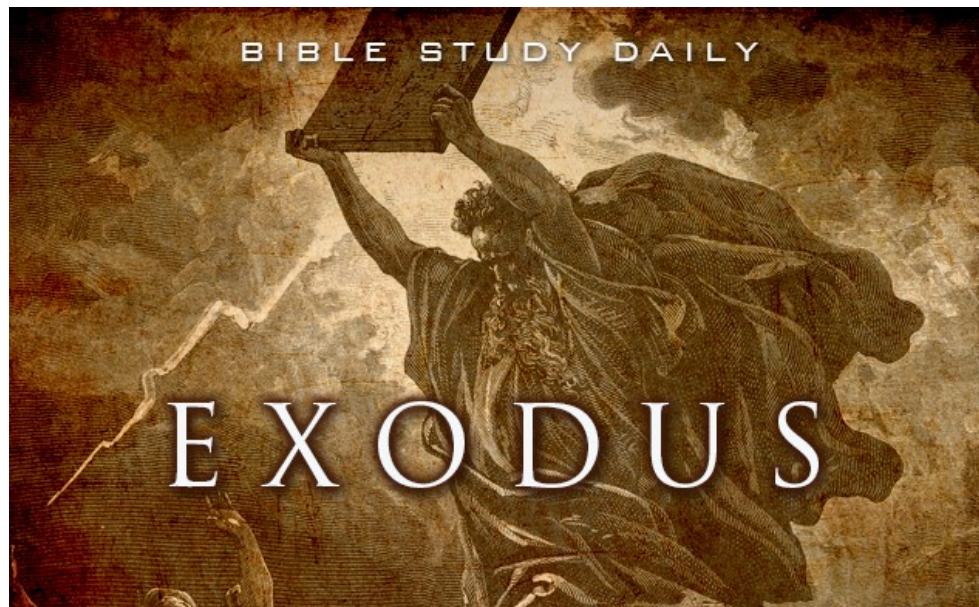




BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of Exodus as well as my study notes for the book.

Name

The English title “Exodus” is derived from the transliterated name in the Septuagint which means “a going out.” The title from the Hebrew Bible is *we’ēlleh šemôt* (“these are the names”), an apt description of the first portion of the book.

Author

The book of Exodus does not explicitly say that Moses is the author. However, scholars have traditionally held that Moses is the author. There are several references to Moses making a record of events (17:14, 24:4, 24:7, and 34:27-28).

Genre

Primarily Narrative History with some Law

Literary Form

Historical Narrative

Time Frame

The Exodus story continues the history from Genesis. It covers a period of approximately 430 years from the death of Joseph to Israelite’s first year in the wilderness.

Emphasis

The book of Exodus emphasizes 5 major themes about God and the relationship between God and the people of Israel:

- Yahweh
- The Ten Plagues
- The Passover
- The Ten Commandments
- The Presence of God

Outline

- Oppression of God’s people in Egypt (1:1-11:10)
- Deliverance of God’s people from Egypt (12:1-14:31)
- Education of God’s people in the wilderness (15:1-18:27)
- Consecration of God’s people at Sinai (19:1-34:35)
- Worship of God’s people in the Tabernacle (35:1-40:38)

What I Noticed Today (Exodus 1-4)

Exodus 1-11

Even though Exodus tells the story of the Israelites leaving Egypt, the first eleven chapters detail the oppression of the people while still in Egypt.

Exodus 1

Chapter 1 summarizes Genesis 37-50, the oppression of the Israelites, and the birth of Moses.

In verses 1-7 a summary of Genesis 37-50 listing the sons of Jacob who came to Egypt.

- A total of 70 of Jacob's descendants came to Egypt; Joseph and his family was already there.
- Joseph died, but the people multiplied and filled the land.

In verses 8-22 a new pharaoh comes to power in Egypt who oppresses the Israelites:

- A new king (pharaoh) came to power who did not know Joseph. He was concerned that the Israelites had multiplied and would take over because they had become powerful. He decided to deal shrewdly with them.

Note: This is the first time the Israelites are referred to as a "people."

- So the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites by making them into forced laborers. They were forced to build the store cities of Pithom and Ramses.
- But the more the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites the more they multiplied and become even more of a concern to the Egyptians.
- So the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites even more. They worked them even harder, forcing them to make bricks, and do all kinds of field work.
- The pharaoh ordered the Hebrew midwives (Shiphrah and Puah) to kill the boys when they were born, but let the girls live.

Note: There were likely many more midwives than these two. Since they appeared before Pharaoh it is probable that they were the leaders of the group of midwives.

- The Hebrew midwives feared God and did not kill the boys and when asked they said the Hebrew women gave birth before they arrived.
- So God was good to the midwives and gave them families.

- Pharaoh then commanded his people to throw all the boys into the Nile, but let the girls live.

Note: Pharaoh intended to deal “shrewdly” with the Israelites, but when his initial plans did not succeed he simply escalated the oppression of the Israelites from forced labor to infanticide to be carried out by his own people.

Exodus 2

Chapter 2 describes the birth of Moses and his early years in Midian.

In verses 1-10 the birth of Moses, and his adoption by Pharaoh’s daughter:

- A Levite man married a Levite woman and had a son. She hid him for three months. Then, after three months, when she could no longer hide him she placed him in basket and put him in the Nile river, while the baby’s sister watched from the shore.
- Pharaoh’s daughter spotted the basket among the weeds, had a servant get the basket, and opened it. When she saw the baby she felt sorry for it because she knew it was a Hebrew boy.
- The baby’s sister called out to Pharaoh’s daughter asking if she wanted a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby for her. Pharaoh’s daughter agreed, promised to pay the woman wages to nurse the baby, and named him Moses because she drew him out of the water.

Note: In both Egyptian and Hebrew the name *Moses* bears a similar meaning, “to draw out,” or “bring forth.”

In verses 11-25 Moses grows up, kills a man, and flees to Midian:

- Years later, Moses had grown up, and was out watching his own people being oppressed by an Egyptian.

Note: Moses was 40 years old at this point (Acts 7:23).

- Seeing no one around, he killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand.
- The next day he saw two Hebrews fighting and asked the one in the wrong why he was attacking his neighbor. The man responded asking who made you judge over us? Are you going to kill me as you did the Egyptian?

Note: Apparently the man Moses saved in verses 11-12 told others what Moses had done because by the next day others knew he had killed the Egyptian.

- Fearing Pharaoh would kill him, Moses fled to Midian and sat down by a well.

Note: The Midianites were a nomadic tribe founded by Midian, the son of Abraham with his wife Keturah (Genesis 25:1-6). They lived in what is modern day Saudi Arabia on the east side of the Gulf of Aqaba.

- The priest of Midian had seven daughters who came to the well to draw water for their father's flocks, but other shepherds drove them away. Moses rescued them and watered their flocks.
- The daughters returned to their father, Reuel, and told him an Egyptian had rescued them and watered their flocks.

Note: Reuel is referred to as Jethro in Genesis 3:1, and 18:1.

- Reuel told the daughters to invite the man to dinner, and Moses stayed with them.
- Reuel gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses as his wife, and she bore him a son which he named Gershom, saying he had been a foreigner in a foreign land.

Note: Zipporah means "little bird", and Gershom means "resident alien" referring to the fact that he was born to Moses while Moses was banished in a foreign land.

- After a long time, the pharaoh died.
- The Israelites were suffering under severe oppression and they cried out to God. He heard their cries, and remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Note: Exodus 2: 23-25 represent a turning point in the narrative. The Israelites had been oppressed for many years, but now God was about to deliver them from their oppressors.

Exodus 3-4:17


This section records God's call to Moses on Mount Horeb.

Exodus 3

Chapter 3 details the appearance of God in the form of a burning bush before Moses.

In verses 1-3 the Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses:

- While Moses was shepherding his father-in-law's sheep he led them to Horeb and the Mountain of God.
- Moses saw a burning bush that was not consumed so he went over to look at it.
- A voice called out from the bush, "Moses, Moses."
- The voice told Moses not to come closer and to take off his sandals because he was standing on holy ground.
- The voice said, "I am the God of your father Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.



Note: The burning bush is the first instance of the Lord identifying himself as God (Ex 3:4). God tells Moses what lies ahead, the signs and wonders as well as the opposition.

- Then the Lord said he had seen the misery of the people of Israel and heard their cries. He said He had come to rescue them from the oppression of the Egyptians and take them to a land flowing with milk and honey: the territory of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.
- God then commanded Moses to go to Pharaoh so that he could lead his people out of Egypt.
- But Moses was concerned, asking who am I that I can do this? God reassured him that He would be with them, lead them out of Egypt, and they would worship Him at this mountain.

Note: The Hebrew word for worship, *abad*□, is the same word as “to be a slave.” The Hebrews had been slaves in Egypt to Pharaoh and were now being called to serve the Lord.

- Then Moses asked when I go to the Israelites, and they ask who sent me, who should I tell them sent me.
- God answered, “I AM WHO I AM.” Say “I AM” sent me. Say “YAHWEH the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob sent me.” This is My name forever.
- God then told Moses to go and gather the elders of Israel and tell them He had heard their cries and would bring them up out of Egypt as He had promised, and take them to a land flowing with milk and honey.
- Moses was then take the elders of Israel and go to Pharaoh and tell him that Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, had met with them and told them to go into the wilderness to make sacrifices to God.
- However, said God, I know Pharaoh will not let you go until I strike Egypt with miracles. After that he will let you go.
- I will give you favor with the Egyptians so you will not leave empty handed. You will plunder the Egyptians.

Note: Plundering the Egyptians fulfills Genesis 15:14.

Exodus 4

Chapter 4 describes the three miraculous signs God gave to Moses, Moses’s return to Egypt, and Moses reunion with Aaron.

In verses 1-17 God gives a reluctant Moses three miraculous signs to help him convince the Israelites:

- Moses still didn’t believe that the people would believe the Lord had sent him.

- Sign 1. The Lord told Moses to take his staff and throw it on the ground and it became a snake. Moses grabbed the snake by its tail and it became a staff again.
- Sign 2. The Lord told Moses to put his hand in his coat and pull it out, and it was diseased, white as snow (leprosy). Then he put his hand back in his coat and pulled it out and it was healed.
- Sign 3. God said if they don't believe these signs take some water from the Nile, pour it on the ground, and it will turn to blood.
- Moses was still reluctant, saying he was not an eloquent speaker. God told him, I made your mouth, I will help you speak and teach you what to say.
- Moses, still reluctant, asked God to send someone else.
- The Lord's anger burned against Moses. God said He would guide Moses in what to say to his brother Aaron, and I will teach both you and Aaron what to do. Aaron will be your spokesman to the people.

In verses 18-23 Moses returns to Egypt:


- Moses asked Jethro, his father-in-law for permission to return to Egypt to see his relatives, and Jethro gave him permission.
- The Lord comforted Moses again saying all the men who wanted to kill you are dead.
- So Moses took his wife and children and God's staff, and returned to Egypt.
- God told Moses to do all the miracles before Pharaoh he had given him, but God would harden Pharaoh's heart and he would not let the people go.

Note: The reference to God hardening Pharaoh's heart causes some confusion. It appears God is over-riding Pharaoh's free will, causing him to sin against God, but this is not the case. Three Hebrew words are used for hardening in these passages. In this case the word is a prediction of what Pharaoh would do; Pharaoh stubbornly refused.

- Then, said God, you are to tell Pharaoh Israel is My first born, let them go so they may worship Me, but you refused so now I will kill your first-born son.

In verses 24-26 Moses' sons are circumcised:

- During the trip to Egypt while they were camped overnight God determined to put Moses to death because he had not circumcised his sons (one or both) as required by God's command (Genesis 17:10). Zipporah, his wife, circumcised the boys and God healed Moses.
- Zipporah threw the foreskin at Moses' feet and said you are a bridegroom of blood to me!



Note: Scholars are not in agreement as to the meaning of the phrase, “you are a bridegroom of blood to me.” Some suggest this is a derogatory way to show she did not approve of circumcision, but did it to save Moses. Others suggest she saw it as an act of redemption, restoring Moses to God and to her. In any case, Moses sent Zipporah and the boys back home (Genesis 18:2-3).

In verses 27-31 Moses and Aaron are reunited:

- The Lord told Aaron to go meet Moses in the wilderness so Aaron went out to meet Moses at the Mountain of God (Horeb)
- Moses told Aaron everything God had told him to say and do.
- Moses and Aaron assembled all the elders. Aaron performed all the signs God had given them and repeated all that God had told Moses.
- The people believed that God had heard their cries, had seen their misery, and bowed down and worshipped Him.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *How often do we sin in private and think we will not be found out? How often do we beg God to call us and use us but then when God does call we are reluctant to answer the call? As with Moses when God call us for His service. He will always be with us, protect us, and equip us for whatever work lies before us.*

What I Noticed Today

(Exodus 5-7)

Exodus 5:1-12:36

The eight chapters from 5-12 describe the confrontations between Moses and Pharaoh as he attempts to get Pharaoh to release the people of Israel. Moses demanded Pharaoh release the people of Israel twice (Exodus 5:1-5, and 7:10-13), and each time Pharaoh refused.

Exodus 5

In verses 1-5 Moses and Aaron confront Pharaoh for the first time:

- Moses and Aaron told Pharaoh the God of Israel (Yahweh), said to let me people go so they may worship Me in the wilderness.

Note: At this point, Moses and Aaron are both in their 80's. Their phrasing of the message from God indicates God is Pharaoh's superior. The Pharaoh was Amenhotep II.

- Pharaoh responds by rejecting God's authority over him. Pharaoh says he does not know this God, and will not let the people go.
- Moses and Aaron told Pharaoh the God of the Hebrews had met with them and told them to go on a three-day trip into the wilderness to worship Him, or He may strike them with a plague or the sword.
- Pharaoh rejected their plea again, saying they needed to get back to work.

Note: Pharaoh's response shows he did not recognize God as having any authority over him, he didn't care what might happen to the people of Israel if they did not obey God, and he was only concerned with their loss of labor should they quit work to worship God.

In verses 6-14 Pharaoh responds by increasing the oppression of the Israelites:

- That same day Pharaoh ordered the foremen to stop supplying straw to the Israelites for making bricks. They must get their own straw, but they must make the same number of bricks. He thought if they made the Israelites work even harder they would not have time to think about worshipping God.
- Pharaoh's slave drivers informed the Israelite foremen they had to get their own straw and still meet their daily quota of bricks.
- The slave drivers beat the foremen when they were unable to meet their daily quota of bricks as before.

In verses 15-19 the Israelite foremen appear before Pharaoh:

- The Israelite foremen appeared before Pharaoh to complain about the way they were being treated.
- Pharaoh accused them of being slackers (lazy), and that is why they wanted to worship the Lord. Pharaoh refused to lighten their workload.

In verses 20-23 The Israelite foremen accuse Moses and Aaron for their trouble:

- The Israelite foremen confronted Moses and Aaron, saying it was their fault Pharaoh was mistreating the people, and they would get them all killed.
- Moses immediately went and asked the Lord why He sent him to confront Pharaoh, because now His people were being mistreated, and You have not delivered Your people.

Exodus 6

Chapter 6 includes God's reassurance of His promise to Moses, and the genealogy of Moses and Aaron.

In verses 1-9 God reassures Moses that He will free the people:

- God responds, now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. He will let the people go because my strong hand against Pharaoh, will cause him to drive the people out of his land.
- Then God reminded Moses, "I am Yahweh." He had appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob but had not revealed His name (Yahweh) to them.

Note: God had appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as "God Almighty" (*El šadday*), which means "the One who sustains or provides." As Yahweh, God is the promise-keeper who will redeem His people out of Egypt.

- God had established a covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan.
- God had heard the pleas of the people and remembered His covenant.
- God told Moses to tell the Israelites His name (Yahweh) and that He would keep His promise to free the people from slavery and redeem them with great acts of judgement against the Egyptians.
- God promised to take the Israelites as His people, and would be their God (a personal relationship). God also promised to take them to the land of Canaan that He promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and give it to them as their possession.
- Moses told the Israelites what God had said, but they did not listen to him because their spirits were broken.

In verses 10-13 God tells Moses to confront Pharaoh again:

- God tells Moses to go and tell Pharaoh to let His people go.
- But Moses responded to God, if the people will not listen to me, why will Pharaoh listen to me?
- Then God spoke to Moses and Aaron telling them both to go to Pharaoh and tell him to let the people go.

In verses 14-27 details the genealogy of Moses and Aaron:

- The sons of Rueben the first-born of Israel (Jacob).
- The sons of Simeon.
- The sons of Levi: Gershom, Kohath, and Merari.
 - The sons of Gershon.
 - The sons of Kohath: Amram, Ishar, Hebron, Uzziel.
 - The sons of Merari.
 - Amram married his father's sister Jochebed, and she bore him Moses and Aaron.
- It was this Moses and this Aaron whom the Lord told to speak to Pharaoh to bring the people out of Egypt.

Note: The genealogy passes quickly over Reuben and Simeon in order to focus on Levi, and his descendants down to Moses and Aaron.

In verses 28-30 The Lord speaks to Moses again:

- The Lord spoke to Moses again saying “I am Yahweh, go tell Pharaoh king of Egypt everything I am telling you.”
- But again Moses was hesitant and told God he was such a poor speaker why will Pharaoh listen to me?

Exodus 7

Chapter 7 God commands Moses to speak to Pharaoh again, and the first plague is sent to Egypt.

In verses 1-13 God commands Moses and Aaron to go speak to Pharaoh again:

- God told Moses he would make him seem like a god to Pharaoh and Aaron will be your prophet. You must say what I command you, and Aaron will speak it to Pharaoh.
- But, says God, I will harden Pharaoh's heart and multiply my signs (miracles) in Egypt.

Note: This phrase “I will harden Pharaoh's heart” is another case of God predicting Pharaoh will be stubborn and not let the people go despite all the plagues that will come.

- Pharaoh will not let you go, but I (God) will bring My people out of Egypt by great acts of judgement. Then the Egyptians will know that I am Yahweh.
- So Moses and Aaron did this. Moses was 83 years old and Aaron was 83 years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.
- The Lord told Moses and Aaron when Pharaoh tells you to perform a miracle throw your staff down and it will become a snake.
- Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh and Aaron threw down his staff and it became a snake. Then Pharaoh called in his magicians and they did the same thing. But Aaron's staff swallowed their staffs. Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he would not listen to them.

Note: God demonstrated His power over the magicians and their secret arts (perhaps Satan) when Aaron's staff ate their staffs.

Exodus 7:14 – 12:36 The Ten Plagues

God poured out 10 judgments upon Egypt. There are three groups of three plagues, with a final tenth plague. The 1st, 4th, and 7th plagues begin with "In the morning."

The First Plague: Water Turned to Blood

In verses 14-25 the first plague is sent to Egypt.

God instructs Moses and Aaron to confront Pharaoh the next morning while he is by the Nile river. Strike the river with the staff and the Nile will turn to blood. The fish in the Nile will die, it will stink, and they will not be able to drink from it. Then have Aaron lift the staff and the water throughout Egypt will turn to blood; all the rivers, tributaries, streams, even their reservoirs.

Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord instructed and the Nile turned to blood, the fish died, and all the water in Egypt turned to blood.

But the magicians of Egypt did the same thing through their occult practices.


Pharaoh's heart was hardened, he would not take this to heart, and returned to his palace.

Egyptians had to dig wells for water because all the water in the Nile was unfit to drink. This lasted for seven days, before the second plague.

Note: Several times in these chapters we see the phrase, "Let my people go that they may serve me." The Hebrew word translated *serve* is 'abad. Some translations translate the word 'abad as worship, so in some translations the verse reads "Let my people go that they may worship me."

Some additional thoughts for consideration:

Moses finally answers God call on his life and experiences some surprising success when the people believe him, but that initial support turns to anger



and bitterness when they face the trials of persecution from Pharaoh.

We often experience similar situations when answering God's call on our life. We see initial success, followed by a period of struggle and trial. We must trust God and remain faithful to Him if we expect to be successful.

What I Noticed Today (Exodus 8-10)

Exodus 8-10

These chapters cover eight of the ten plagues that God brought to Egypt (frogs, gnats, flies, livestock, boils, hail, locusts and darkness). There is an escalation in the severity and consequence in the plagues, but Pharaoh remains unwilling to let the Israelites go.

Exodus 8

The Second Plague: Frogs

In verses 1-15 the second plague is sent to Egypt:

- The Lord told Moses to go tell Pharaoh, God wants Pharaoh to let His people go to worship Him. Otherwise, He will send a plague of frogs throughout the land.
- Then the Lord told Moses to tell Aaron to stretch out his hand with his staff and frogs came up out of the Nile covering the land.
- The magicians also brought frogs up onto the land.
- Pharaoh summoned Moses and told him to ask God to remove the frogs and then he would let the people go to worship God.
- Moses allowed Pharaoh to pick the time when the frogs would leave, and Pharaoh chose the next day.
- Moses cried out to God for help, and the next day all the frogs died. They piled the frogs up in heaps.
- But Pharaoh's heart was hard and he refused to let the people go.

Note: Frogs lived in the Nile and would normally appear in December when waters receded, but this was August so this was clearly from God. The frogs would normally stay near the river, but in this case they invaded all the land, even into the houses. Egyptians considered the frogs as having divine power, yet they became a curse to the people of Egypt.

The Third Plague: Gnats

In verses 16-19 the third plague is sent to Egypt:

- Then the Lord told Aaron to stretch out his staff, strike the dust of the earth, and it will become gnats throughout the land.
- They did this and there were gnats throughout the land.
- The magicians tried to produce gnats but they could not.

- The magicians told Pharaoh this was from God, but Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not listen.

Note: The third plague of gnats came without warning.

The Fourth Plague: Swarms of Flies

In verses 20-32 the fourth plague is sent to Egypt:

- The Lord told Moses to go tell Pharaoh, God wants Pharaoh to let His people go to worship Him. Otherwise, He will send a swarm of flies throughout the land, but the land of Goshen where My people live will not be affected. This way Pharaoh will know it is Me.
- The next day swarms of flies appeared everywhere except the land of Goshen.
- Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and told them to sacrifice to God but stay in Egypt.
- But Moses said, no, their sacrifices were abhorrent to the Egyptians, they must go three days' journey into the wilderness.

Note: Moses' concern about the Egyptians stoning them if they sacrificed bulls or cows stems from the fact that the Egyptians thought bulls and cows represented Egyptian deities.

- Pharaoh said he would let them go, but not very far if Moses would appeal to God for him.
- When Moses left Pharaoh he appealed to God and the flies left the next day, but Pharaoh changed his mind and would not let the people go.


Note: This plague demonstrates God's power in separating the plague from the Israelites, and Pharaoh's inability to protect his people. Pharaoh tried to negotiate with Moses; sacrifice in the country, then sacrifice but don't go very far.

Exodus 9

The Fifth Plague: Death of Livestock

In verses 1-7 the fifth plague is sent to Egypt:

- The Lord told Moses to go tell Pharaoh, God wants Pharaoh to let His people go to worship Him. Otherwise, the next day He will send a plague against the livestock (horses, donkeys, camels, herds, and flocks) in the fields throughout the land, except for the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived.
- The next day the Lord sent the plague against all of the Egyptian livestock. They all died, but none of the livestock of the Israelites died.
- Pharaoh's confirmed that none of the Israelites livestock had died, yet his heart was hard and he still would not let the people go.



Note: The word “all” referring to the livestock (verse 6) raises the question that if all the livestock died where did the livestock come from that are referred to in verse 10? The word “all” may either be a figure of speech suggesting a large quantity, or it may be that the livestock in the fields died, but livestock in shelters lived.

The Sixth Plague: Boils

In verses 8-12 the sixth plague is sent to Egypt:

- Then the Lord told Moses and Aaron to take handfuls of soot and throw it up in the air while Pharaoh is watching and it will become boils on man and beast throughout the land.
- The magicians could not stand before Moses because they and all the Egyptians were covered with boils.
- But Pharaoh’s heart was hard and he would not let the people go.

The Seventh Plague: Hail

In verses 13-35 the seventh plague is sent to Egypt

- The Lord told Moses to go to Pharaoh the next morning and tell Pharaoh, God wants Pharaoh to let His people go to worship Him. Otherwise, He will send all His plagues against Egypt so you will know there is no one like Me in all the earth. I (God) could have obliterated you but I have let you live to show my power and make My name known in all the earth.
- Tomorrow at this time I (God) will rain down hail in Egypt. Bring your cattle into shelters, for whatever is not sheltered will die from the hail.
- Pharaoh’s officials who feared the Lord brought their servants and animals into shelter and those who did not fear the Lord left their servants and livestock outside.
- The Lord told Moses to stretch out his hand toward heaven and there was hail, thunder, and lightning throughout the land of Egypt. The hail struck down man and beast, and shattered trees in the field.
- Only the land of Goshen was untouched.
- Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and repented, saying he had sinned, that Yahweh is righteous, and I and my people are guilty.
- Pharaoh told Moses he and the people could go.
- Moses said when he left the city he would ask God to stop the hail so you will know that the earth belongs to God. But I (Moses) know you (Pharaoh) still do not fear God.
- When Moses left the city the hail and rain stopped.
- But when Pharaoh saw the hail and rain had stopped he sinned by hardening his heart and would not let the people go.

Exodus 10

The Eighth Plague: Locusts

In verses 1-20 the eighth plague is sent to Egypt:

- Then the Lord told Moses to go to Pharaoh because his heart was hard so God could do these signs among the people, and the Israelites could tell their children and grandchildren about the signs and they would know that God is the Lord.
- The next day Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh saying God wants Pharaoh to let His people go to worship Him. Otherwise, the next day He will send a plague of locusts throughout the land that will devour anything missed by the hail.
- Pharaoh's officials asked Pharaoh how long will you remain stubborn? Don't you realize Egypt is devastated because of this man?
- So Moses and Aaron were brought back before Pharaoh who asked exactly who will be going to worship God? Moses answered they all must go, women and children and their flocks. Pharaoh refused, saying only the men could go.
- The Lord told Moses to stretch out his hand and the locusts came and destroyed everything left by the hail. Nothing green was left on the plants or the trees throughout all of Egypt.
- Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron again and said he had sinned against God. Please appeal to God and take away the locusts.
- God took away the locusts but Pharaoh hardened his heart once again and would not let the people go.

Note: The plague of locusts destroyed what little is left in Egypt but Pharaoh's heart remains hardened. Even when his people confront him he remains recalcitrant. He tries to barter again – go but don't take your children. Once again he admits his sin, but has not repented.

The Ninth Plague: Darkness

In verses 21-29 the ninth plague is sent to Egypt:

- Then the Lord told Moses to stretch out his hand and bring darkness on the land for three days, yet the Israelites had light in Goshen.
- Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said they could take their families and worship God, but they must leave their flocks behind.
- Moses said the flocks and herds must also go, because they would not know what to sacrifice until they left.
- Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go. He even said Moses and Aaron would never see his face again or they would die.

Note: To never see Pharaoh's face again is a reference to a formal



appearance before Pharaoh. Moses does see Pharaoh again (Exodus 12:31).

Additional thoughts for consideration:

- *Pharaoh's stubbornness and hardness of heart caused the destruction of his entire nation; the rivers, the land, the plants, and the livestock. He lied, deceived, and tried to barter. He recognized his sin but, but refused to repent.*
- *So may leaders today set their minds on a course of action and despite all the warnings from God they stubbornly pursue their course, refusing to admit their sin, repent, and turn back to God!*

What I Noticed Today (Exodus 11-13)

Exodus 11

The Tenth Plague: Death of the Firstborn

In verses 1-10 the tenth plague is sent to Egypt:

- The Lord said to Moses He would bring one more plague on Egypt and then Pharaoh will let you go. In fact, he will drive you out.
- Announce to the people that both men and women should ask their neighbors (Egyptians) for gold and silver jewelry.
- The Lord gave the people favor among the people of Egypt, and Moses was highly regarded among Pharaoh's officials.

Note: Like plagues 3, 6, and 9, plague 10 came without warning.


- The Lord told Moses about midnight I will pass throughout Egypt and every first born male, from Pharaoh to a servant will die. Every firstborn of livestock will also die. A great cry of anguish will come over all Egypt.
- The Lord told Moses Pharaoh will not listen to you so that My wonders will be multiplied in Egypt. Moses and Aaron did all these wonders, but Pharaoh's heart was hard, and he would not let the people go.

Exodus 12

Chapter 12 details God's instructions for the preparation for the first Passover and its celebration. It moves back and forth between instructions for the Passover, the exodus, and back to Passover instructions.

In verses 1-20 the Lord provides instructions to Moses regarding the Passover feast:

- God established a new calendar for the nations of Israel. This month (Nisan, which means "start") was to be the first month in their year (March-April on the Gregorian calendar).
- On the tenth day the people were to select an unblemished sheep or goat from the flock. There should be one animal per household, or if a household was too small, they would gather with a neighbor. The animal selected was to be kept until the fourteenth day.
- Then at twilight, the entire nation will slaughter their animals. They are to put some of the blood of the animal on the doorposts and lintels of the houses in which they eat the animal.
- The entire animal is to be roasted, not boiled or eaten raw. Eat it with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs.



Note: The unleavened bread symbolizes leaving in a hurry. The bitter herbs (probably endive, chicory, dandelions) symbolize sorrow or grief.

- The entire animal must be eaten that night; any remaining portion must be burned in the fire.
- You must eat it dressed for travel, with your sandals on and your staff in your hand. You must eat it in a hurry; it is the Lord's Passover.
- God will then pass through the land of Egypt and strike every firstborn male, man and beast.
- The blood on the houses will be a distinguishing mark for the Israelites. God will pass over any house marked with blood.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

- This is to be a memorial celebration to the Lord passed on as a permanent statute to future generations.
- You must eat unleavened bread for seven days.
- On the first day you must remove the yeast from your house. Anyone who eats what is leavened during these seven days must be cut-off from Israel.

Note: Eating unleavened bread is a reminder of how they left Egypt in a hurry and what the Lord did for them in rescuing them from Egypt. Anyone who eats leavened bread is disrespecting what God did in rescuing them.

- You must hold a sacred assembly on the first day and the seventh day. No work is allowed except preparing what you eat.
- The Festival of Unleavened Bread is to be celebrated because of the day God brought the Israelites out of Egypt. It is to be celebrated as a permanent statute for future generations.
- It is to be celebrated from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day of the month.
- There must be no yeast in your houses during that time.

Passover Instructions

In verses 21-28 Moses instructs the Israelites on the proper observation of the Passover feast:

- Moses instructed the elders of Israel and told them to select an animal from their flocks and slaughter the Passover animal.
- Using a cluster of hyssop, dip it in the blood and brush it on the lintel and doorposts of the house.
- You may not go out of the house until morning.
- When the Lord passes through Egypt He will pass over houses where He sees the blood.

- The people are to pass this command down to future generations and to teach the meaning of the celebration to their children. They are to observe this ritual when they enter the Promised Land.

The Tenth Plague & the Exodus

In verses 29-41 the 10th plague comes and the Israelites leave Egypt:

- At midnight the Lord struck every first born male in Egypt from Pharaoh to the prisoner, and every firstborn of the livestock.
- During the night Pharaoh got up and there was loud wailing in every house in Egypt because there wasn't a house without someone dead.
- Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and told them to get the Israelites and go with all the people and the flocks and worship Yahweh.
- Pharaoh also asked for Moses and Aaron to bless him!
- The Egyptians urged the people to leave quickly because they feared they would all die.
- The Israelites did as Moses said by asking their neighbors for gold and silver jewelry and for clothing. In this way they plundered the Egyptians.
- The Israelites travelled from Ramses in Goshen to Succoth. About 600,000 men with their families.

Note: From Numbers 1:46 the exact number listed is 603,550. Assuming wives and children, the total number of people who left was probably around 2 million.

- An ethnically diverse crowd (a rabble) left with them, along with their flocks and herds of animals.

Note: A number of non-believers (also referred to in some translations as a "rabble") left with them, perhaps to escape servitude in Egypt.

- The Israelites had been in Egypt 430 years (from 1876 B.C. to 1446 B.C.).
- God kept vigil over them throughout the night as they left.

Passover Instructions

In verses 43-51 the Lord gives Passover instructions to Moses and Aaron:

- No foreigner may eat it, but any circumcised slave may eat it.
- A temporary resident or hired hand may not eat it.
- It is to be eaten in one house.
- The meat may not be taken outside the house and you must not break any of the animal's bones.
- The whole community of Israel must celebrate the Passover.
- A foreigner who resides with you may eat it if all the males are

circumcised; he will become a native to the land.

- All the Israelites did this just as the Lord commanded.

Exodus 13

Chapter 13 continues with instructions for the celebration of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the route of the exodus out of Egypt.

In verses 1-16 God continues His instructions regarding the firstborn and the Passover celebration:

- The Lord told Moses to consecrate every firstborn male; both man and domestic animals belong to the Lord.
- Then Moses told the people to remember this day leaving Egypt by God's strong hand.
- Nothing with leaven may be eaten.
- When the Lord brings you into the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey, you must continue this ritual in the month of Abib (also called Nisan).
- For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread and on the seventh day celebrate the festival (Passover) to the Lord.
- During the festival there may be no leaven found among you.
- Let it be a sign for you that you remember the Lord's instruction and how He brought you out of Egypt.
- When the Lord brings you into the Promised Land you are to present every firstborn male; they belong to the Lord.
- You must redeem every firstborn donkey with an animal from the flock, or break its neck if you do not redeem it.
- You must redeem every firstborn of your sons.
- In the future, teach your children about how the Lord brought you out of slavery in Egypt by His strong hand, when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let you go.

Note: God instituted the Feast of Unleavened Bread as a memorial of His leading the Israelites out of Egypt. Four times in chapter 13 Moses tells the people as they celebrate the feast to remember that God had saved them.

In verses 17-22 the route out of Egypt:

- God did not lead the people the shortest route out of Egypt because that passed through the land of the Philistines and He was concerned that if they faced war they would retreat back to Egypt.
- So He led the people toward the Red Sea along the Road of the


Wilderness.

Note: The exact route of the Road of the Wilderness is unknown, but likely went through the Sinai Peninsula to the Wilderness of Shur (Exodus 15:22).

- Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, fulfilling the promise of the Israelites not to leave him in Egypt, but to bury him in the family grave in Canaan.
- They left Succoth and camped at Etham on the edge of the wilderness.
- The Lord went ahead of them as a pillar of clouds in the daytime, and as a pillar of fire at night.

Note: The exact route of the Exodus is debated by scholars. There are three predominant theories; a northern, central, or southern route. The map below from the Holman Book of Biblical Charts depicts the southern route, which in my opinion most closely matches the description in the scripture.





Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *Four times in chapter 13 the people are told to celebrate the Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread as a reminder of what the Lord did to save them, and how he redeemed them from Egypt. They are told several times to teach their children about the celebration and its purpose.*
- *We would do well to remember that God has saved us through the death of his one and only son upon the cross! And that in saving us God will protect us from our enemies, and lead us where He would have us to go, but we have to believe and trust Him!*
- *If we do not teach our children, we are only one generation away from complete apostasy!*

What I Noticed Today (Exodus 14-16)

Exodus 14

Chapter 14 describes the Egyptian's pursuit of the Israelites, and the Israelites escape through the Red Sea.

In verses 1-4 God speaks to Moses and gives him instructions:

- That night (the night the Israelites arrived at Etham) God gave Moses instructions to double back to Pi-hahiroth and camp between Migdol and the Red Sea.
- God said He would harden Pharaoh's heart again and Pharaoh, thinking they were lost and confused, would pursue them. Then God will receive glory from Pharaoh and the people of Egypt will know that He is Yahweh.

In verses 5-14 Pharaoh pursues the Israelites just as God had said:

- Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about releasing the Israelites, realizing they had lost their labor force.
- Pharaoh gathered 600 of the best chariots in Egypt along with all the other chariots, each driven by an officer, and his army, and pursued the Israelites. He caught up with them at Pi-hahiroth.
- As the Israelites saw the Egyptians approaching they were terrified and cried out to God for help. They accused Moses of bringing them into the desert to die. They even said they would have preferred to stay in slavery in Egypt.
- But Moses encouraged the people telling them not to be afraid, that God will fight for you today and you will never see these Egyptians again.
- In verses 15-31 God saves the Israelites as they escape through the Red Sea:
- God told Moses to tell the people to break camp and get ready to leave.
- Then God told Moses to lift up his staff over the sea, to divide the sea. The Israelites will pass over on dry ground, and the Egyptians will pursue them.
- The Angel of the Lord and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of the Israelites to behind them. Neither group came close to each other all night.
- Moses stretched out his staff over the sea and the Lord brought a strong wind that separated the sea and dried the floor of the sea.
- The Israelites walked through on dry ground while the water of the sea

was piled up on either side of them like a wall.

- The Egyptians set out after the Israelites in the morning watch, but God brought confusion among them. The Egyptians realized God was fighting for the Israelites against Egypt.

Note: The night hours were divided into three “watches.” The first watch was 6-10pm, the second watch was 10pm-2am, and the third watch, the morning watch, was 2am-6am.

- God told Moses to stretch his arm out over the sea and close it at daybreak. The waters closed in over the Egyptians and none of Pharaoh’s army that had gone into the sea survived.
- When the Israelites saw the great power of the Lord and what He had done for them they feared the Lord and believed in Him and His servant Moses.

Exodus 15

Chapter 15 opens with the first song recorded in the Bible and God’s provision of water in the desert.

In verses 1-18 Moses and the Israelites sang a song of praise to the Lord:

- Section 1, Verses 1-6. The Lord is praised for His strength and power as He defeated the armies of the Egyptians and saved the people of Israel.
- Section 2, Verses 7-11. The Lord is praised for His majesty and the power of His wrath as He shattered the enemy. There is no other like God who is glorious in His Holiness.
- Section 3, Verses 12-16. The Lord is praised for leading and redeeming the people He loved. Terror and dread will fall upon Philistia, Edom, Moab, and Canaan until the Lord’s people pass by on their way to the land the Lord has promised them.
- Section 4, Verses 17-18. The Lord will bring them to the mountain of His possession that He had prepared for them. The Lord will reign forever.

Note: Certain words are repeated in the song. In verse 6, “Lord, Your right hand” is repeated. In verse 11, “who is like You” is repeated. In verse 16, “until your people” is repeated. These repeated words mark the end of each previous section of the poem.

Note: The nations Philistia, Edom, Moab, and Canaan are listed in the order in which the Israelites will encounter them on the way to the Promised Land.

In verse 19 the Lord’s victory over the Egyptian army and how He saved the Israelites as they walked through the Red Sea is recounted.

In verses 20-21 Miriam (Moses’ sister) sings and dances with a tambourine praise to the Lord.



In verses 22-27 God provides water in the wilderness:

- Moses led the people of Israel three days' journey into the wilderness to the desert of Shur (northern part of the Sinai Peninsula).
- They came to an area known as Marah (Marah means bitter, or bitterness). The people could not drink the water there because it was bitter, and they complained to Moses.
- Moses cried out to the Lord and the Lord had Moses throw a tree into the water and it became drinkable.
- The Lord made an ordinance for the people and tested them at Marah. He told them if you carefully obey Yahweh your God, do what is right in His eyes, and pay attention to His commands and statutes, He would not inflict disease on the people that He had inflicted upon the Egyptians.
- Then they came to Elim where there was water and date palms.

Note: The word translated “tested” in verse 25 is only used one other time in the Pentateuch. It is used in Genesis 22:1-2 in reference to Abraham being tested by sacrificing his son Isaac to God.

Note: Elim is an oasis in the wilderness about 7 miles south of Marah.

Exodus 16

Chapter 16 tells how the Lord provided quail and manna in the Desert of Sin.

In verses 1-12 the Israelites complain to Moses about being hungry:

- The Israelites journeyed on to the Desert of Sin arriving on the fifteenth day of the second month after they left Egypt.


Note: Regarding the Desert of Sin: “Sin” is a transliterated Hebrew word for “Sinai.”

- The people complained to Moses and Aaron saying they had plenty of meat and bread to eat in Egypt, and now they were in the wilderness and would die of hunger.

Note: They had been gone from Egypt for about 6 weeks so whatever supplies of food they had were probably exhausted by this time.

In verses 13-36 the Lord provides quail and manna to the people:

- The Lord immediately responded by telling Moses that He would rain bread (manna) from heaven. Each person was to go out in the morning and gather enough manna for the day. On the sixth day they were to gather twice as much.
- Moses and Aaron told the Israelites what the Lord would do to provide for them and what they were to do. He also told them this evening they would eat quail. And then they would know that I am Yahweh Your God.

- 
- That evening quail came.
 - In the morning as the dew evaporated there was manna on the ground. Moses told them to take two quarts of manna per person. Whether they gathered much or a little each person had just enough.
 - Moses warned them not to let any remain until morning. Some people saved some until morning but it spoiled and had worms, and Moses was angry because they did not obey.
 - They gathered manna every morning, and when the sun came up the manna melted.
 - On the sixth day, Moses told them to gather twice as much because the next day was a day of rest. What they set aside did not spoil or have worms, and they ate it on the seventh day.
 - Some people went out on the seventh day and did not find the manna. The Lord was displeased and spoke to Moses because the people had not followed His commands. They were to gather twice as much on the sixth day and the seventh day was to be a day of rest.
 - The manna resembled coriander and tasted like wafers made with honey.
 - Moses told Aaron to take two quarts of manna and preserve it in a jar for future generations as a testimony to what the Lord had done. So Aaron filled a jar with two quarts of manna and placed it before the Lord.
 - The Israelites ate the manna for 40 years until they reach the border of Canaan, the Promised Land.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *God made a deal with the Israelites, saying if you will listen to Me and do what I tell you, I will protect you. God says this twice in a slightly different way (Exodus 15:25-26). Listen and do. Listen and do!*
- *Imagine witnessing the parting of the Red Sea, the tower of clouds and the pillar of fire, and then a mere three days after singing about all God had done, start to complain about not having enough water. God provides water and a few weeks later you complain again about not having enough food, so God provides food.*
- *How often do we do the same thing! We sing praises to God when conditions are good, but the minute life turns hard we start to complain to Him. How often does God ask us to listen and do, yet we fail to even follow the simplest of instructions!*

What I Noticed Today (Exodus 17-19)

Exodus 17

Chapter 17 opens up with the Israelites complaining about a lack of water again, and they face their first enemy in battle.

In verses 1-7 the Israelites journey from the Desert of Sin and camp at Rephidim:

- The people complained to Moses again that there was no water, saying Moses had brought them into the desert to die of thirst.
- Moses cried out to the Lord for help.
- The Lord told Moses to gather some elders and go to the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock and water will flow out.
- Moses did this, water flowed out of the rock, and they named the place Massah (testing) and Meribah (arguing) because the people tested the Lord saying, is the Lord among us?

Note: Rephidim is believed to be the Wadi Refayld, near the site of Mount Sinai. Horeb is another name for Mount Sinai.

In verses 8-16 the Amalekites came and attacked the people of Israel:

- While they were camped at Rephidim the Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites.
- Moses appointed Joshua to select some men to fight the Amalekites.
- The next day Moses, Aaron, and Hur went to the top of the hill.
- As long as Moses held up his hand with the staff of God, the Israelites prevailed in the battle, when Moses put his hand down the Amalekites prevailed.
- So they put a stone under Moses so he could sit on it while Aaron and Hur stood on either side of him and held up his arms until the sun went down and the Amalekites were defeated.
- The Lord told Moses to write this down on a scroll as a reminder to Joshua that He would completely blot out Amalek.
- Moses built an altar to the Lord and named it, “The Lord is my banner.”

Note: Joshua is mentioned for the first time here. Hur is only mentioned here.

- **Note:** Amalek is the grandson of Esau. So once again there is a battle between the families of Jacob and Esau. Previously, God fought for

the Israelites, but this time they had to go into battle themselves, trusting God for the victory. The Amalekites were finally defeated by King David (1 Samuel 30).

Exodus 18

In Chapter 18 Jethro, Moses' father in law, comes to visit and gives advice to Moses.

In verses 1-6 Jethro arrives with Moses' wife and children:

- When Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, heard about the Exodus he visited Moses while they were camped at Rephidim. He brought with him Moses' wife Zipporah and his sons Gershom and Eliezer (Moses had sent them to Jethro when he started to leave Egypt).


Note: Moses was at the mountain of God where he first heard God speaking to him from the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-4).

In verses 7-12 Jethro praises Moses and God:

- Moses went out to meet Jethro and greeted him respectfully. Moses told Jethro about all the Lord had done for the Israelites in delivering them from the Egyptians and the hardships they had endured.
- When Jethro heard all this he praised God for all He had done for the Israelites. He said Yahweh is greater than all gods because of what He had done.
- Then Jethro brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God.
- Moses, Aaron, and Jethro ate a meal in God's presence.

In verses 13-27 Jethro gives advice to Moses:

- The next day Moses went out and received people from morning to night as he judged between them teaching them God's statutes.
- Jethro asked why are you doing this by yourself. He said you will wear yourself out, because you cannot do it alone.
- Jethro suggested that Moses should represent the people before God, and he should instruct them in God's statutes. However, he also suggested Moses select able men, God-fearing, trustworthy, and hating bribes and place them over commanders of thousands, hundreds, and fifties. These men should judge the people.
- Any difficult cases they can bring to you, but all the minor cases they should judge themselves.
- Moses listened to Jethro and did all he suggested. He chose able men and put them over groups of thousands, hundreds, and fifties and they judged the people.
- Then Moses said goodbye to Jethro, and he returned to his own land.



Note: This sequence of events appears to not be in strict chronological order. Moses implemented Jethro's suggestions in Deuteronomy 1:9-15, after the Lord had given Moses the Law.

Exodus 19-40

These next 21 chapters through the end of Exodus involve the establishment of God's Law, and the worship of God in the tabernacle.

Exodus 19

Chapter 19 describes the Israelites as they arrive at Mount Sinai:

- Three months after leaving Egypt, the Israelites arrived at Mt Sinai and camped there.

Note: The exact location of Mt. Sinai (the mountain of God where Moses saw the burning bush) is unknown, but scholars traditionally identify it as Jebel Musa, also called Horeb, in the Sinai Peninsula.

- Moses went up on the mountain of God and God told Moses to explain to the Israelites what He had done to bring them out of Egypt.
- God proposed a covenant with the people. If they would listen to Him and keep His covenant, He would be their God, and they would be His treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, and His holy nation.
- Moses came back down the mountain and told the elders what God had said.
- Then all the people responded they would do all the Lord commanded. So Moses went back up the mountain and told God.
- The Lord told Moses He would come to Moses in a dense cloud so the people would see and believe all that Moses told them.
- Then the Lord told Moses to go and consecrate the people for two days, and wash their clothes. No person was to come to the mountain or set foot on it or they were to be stoned. When a ram's horn sounded the people could then advance toward the mountain.
- On the third day, God came down the mountain. Moses gathered the people and moved toward the mountain. The entire mountain was shrouded in smoke because God came in fire.
- The Lord spoke to Moses and Moses went up the mountain. The Lord then told Moses to go back down and warn the people not to come up the mountain in an attempt to see God or they would die.
- The Lord told Moses to go back down the mountain and bring Aaron back with him. But the people must not try to follow them up the mountain. So Moses went down and told the people.



Some additional thoughts for consideration:

- *The people actually ask Moses is God among us or not (Exodus 17:7). Seriously? See the tower of clouds and the pillar of fire? How can they question God's presence when He is clearly right there with them!*
- *There are several important lessons in these chapters: 1) Every difficulty that confronts us in life is an opportunity to trust God, 2) Leaders need to delegate tasks and they need to be very careful in selecting the right kind of men and women to help, 3) Because of Jesus and His sacrifice we can now draw close to God, and 4) God cares about equal and appropriate justice in all matters of life.*

What I Noticed Today (Exodus 20-22)

Exodus 20

In chapter 20 God gives Moses the Ten Commandments.

In verses 1-17 God delivers the Ten Commandments to the people of Israel:

- God begins by reminding the people who He is and what He has done: He is their Lord, the One who redeemed them from slavery by bringing them out of Egypt.
- Do not have other Gods besides Me.
- Do not make an idol in any form and worship it, for I am a jealous God. Those who hate God will be punished, but He loves those who keep His commandments.
- Do not misuse the name of the Lord.
- Remember the Sabbath day and keep it Holy. Work for six days, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord.
- Honor your father and mother.
- Do not murder.
- Do not commit adultery.
- Do not steal.
- Do not give false testimony.
- Do not covet your neighbor's property.

Note: The first four commandments deal with our relationship with God, and the last six deal with our relationships with each other.

Note: In Hebrew there are two forms of negative commands. One form is for immediate, specific situations. The other form, as used in the Ten Commandments, is for a general prohibition; “don’t ever do this.” It is a command from a superior to an inferior, but never from an inferior to a superior.

Note: Commandment #6; “Do not murder” is a better translation than some that read “Do not kill”. The word *rāṣah* means "to slay". It is used to describe homicide, the illegal taking of a life. It is different than the word used for the killing of an animal, for killing in war, or for a legal execution.

In verses 18-21 the people respond in fear:

- The people saw the lightning and smoke, and heard the thunder and the

trumpet and trembled in fear that God would kill them.

- Moses reassured the people that God has come to test them, that they would fear Him and not sin.

In verses 22-26 God gives Moses additional statutes governing worship:

- God tells Moses to speak to the Israelites.
- They are not to make gods of silver or gold.
- They are to make an earthen altar and sacrifice their burnt and fellowship offerings on it.
- If you make a stone altar you must not use cut stones.
- You must not go up to My altar on steps and thus expose your nakedness to Me.
- If they obey, God will come to them and bless them wherever they are.

Exodus 21

In Chapter 21 God gives Moses statutes to give to the people regarding male and female slaves, and personal injury:

In verses 1-11 God gives Moses laws about slaves:

- When you buy a Hebrew slave he or she is to serve for six years and is then to be set free.
- The master must give provisions to the servant when he is released.
- If he arrives alone he leaves alone. If he arrives with a wife, he must leave with his wife.
- If the master gives the man a wife and she bears children, the children belong to the master, and he must leave alone.
- But, if the slave declares he does not want to leave, the master will pierce his ear with an awl and he will serve the master for life.
- If a man sells his daughter as a slave she must not leave as males do.
- If she is displeasing to her master, he must allow her to be redeemed.
- He must not sell her to a foreigner.
- If the master chooses her as a wife for his son, he must deal with her like a daughter.
- If he takes an additional wife, he must not reduce the provisions or marital rights of the first wife.
- If the master does not do these things she may leave free of charge, without any payment of money.
- **Note:** These laws are specific to Hebrews who own Hebrew slaves. Because they were to be set free at the end of six years, they really

are more like indentured servants than what we refer to today as slaves. People could sell themselves into servitude to get out of poverty or to pay off a debt.

Note: The section regarding the selling of a daughter is with the expectation that the daughter will be a concubine or second-class wife to the master like Hagar, Bilhah and Zilpah were to Abraham and Jacob.

In verses 12-36 God gives Moses laws regarding death penalty crimes and personal injury:

Verses 12-17 describe four crimes that required the death penalty:

- Premeditated murder (vv. 12, 14).
- Physical violence against one's father or mother (v. 15).
- Kidnapping (v. 16).
- Cursing (or verbal abuse) of one's parents (v. 17).
- A provision was made for causing accidental death in the form of a city of refuge (v. 13).

Verses 18-27 describe laws regarding lesser crimes of personal injury:

- A person injured in a fight, whether or not it was premeditated, was to be compensated for their lost time at work, and provide for his complete recovery (vv. 18-19).
- A master must be punished if he beats a slave and the slave dies (v. 20).
- If two men get in a fight and a pregnant woman gets hit and delivers prematurely, the man must pay compensation based on the degree of injury to the woman and the baby. The compensation must be appropriate and equitable based on the injury (eye-for-eye).
- When a man strikes a male or female slave in the eye and they lose the eye, the slave must be set free as compensation for the loss. The same penalty for a lost tooth.

In verses 28-36 God gives Moses laws regarding negligence:

- If an ox gores a man or woman the ox is to be stoned and its meat may not be eaten, but the owner is innocent (v. 28).
- If, however, the ox has a habit of goring and the owner does not restrain it and it gores someone the ox must be stoned and its owner put to death (v. 29).
- The owner may pay a redemption price of whatever is demanded of him by the dead person's relatives and avoid the death penalty (v. 30).
- If the ox gores a male or female slave the redemption price is 30 shekels of silver, and the ox must be stoned (v. 32).
- If a man digs a pit and does not cover it and an animal falls in he must

pay the owner of the animal for the loss, but the dead animal becomes his (vv. 33-34).

- If a man's ox injures another man's ox and it dies, they must sell the living ox and divide the proceeds, and divide the dead animal. If the ox has a habit of goring and was not restrained, then the owner must compensate the other for their loss and the dead animal will become his (vv. 35-36).

Note: Interestingly, the restitution price for an ox goring a slave is 30 pieces of silver. The same price that Judas received for betraying Jesus!

Exodus 22

In Chapter 22 God details for Moses six more categories of laws or statutes that the people must obey:

In verses 1-4 laws concerning theft:

- If a man steals an ox or sheep and butchers or sells it he must repay for the ox five cattle, and four sheep for the sheep.
- If a thief is caught in the act of breaking in at night and is killed, no one is guilty of bloodshed. However, if the thief breaks in after sunrise there is guilt for bloodshed.
- A thief must make restitution for whatever was stolen. If he is unable to make restitution, he is to be sold (as a means of repaying the debt).
- If what was stolen is found alive in his presence, he must repay double.

In verses 5-6 laws concerning crop protection:

- If a man allows animals to graze in another's field, he must repay with the best of his field.
- If a fire gets out of control and damages a crop the one who started the fire must make full restitution for the loss.

In verses 7-15 laws concerning personal property:

- If a man gives money or goods to a neighbor for safekeeping and the money or goods are stolen, the thief must repay double. If the thief is not caught the neighbor must appear before judges to determine if they stole the property. If guilty they must repay double.

Note: Since there were no banks, people often gave valuables to neighbors for safe-keeping.

- If a man gives an animal to a neighbor to care for but the animal is injured, dies, or is stolen the one must appear before the Lord and take an oath swearing they had not taken the other's property. If the animal is stolen he must make restitution, but if the animal is killed by wild animals no restitution is required.

- If a man borrows an animal from a neighbor and the animal is injured or dies while the owner is present, no restitution is needed. If the owner is not there, restitution must be made.
- If the animal is rented and is injured or dies no restitution is needed, because its loss is covered by the rental price.

In verses 16-17 laws concerning seduction:

- If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged and has sex with her he must pay the bride-price for her to be his wife.
- If the father refuses to give her to the man to be his wife, he must still pay the bride-price.

Note: The value of a woman as a wife was diminished if she was not a virgin which is why the bride-price must be paid. Seduction of an engaged woman required stoning (Deuteronomy 22:23-24).

In verses 18-20 laws concerning capital offenses:

- You must not allow a sorceress to live.
- Whoever has sexual intercourse with an animal must be put to death.
- Whoever sacrifices to any gods other than the Lord must be put to death.
- In verses 21-27 laws concerning protecting the vulnerable:
- You must not exploit a foreigner or oppress him.
- You must not mistreat any widow or fatherless child.
- If you lend money to My people you must not charge interest.
- If you take a person's cloak as collateral for a loan you must return it to him before nightfall.

In verses 28-31 laws concerning respect for God:


- You must not blaspheme God, or curse a leader among your people.
- You must not hold back offerings from your harvest or your vats.
- Give Me the firstborn of your sons, and of your cattle, and flocks on the eighth day.

Note: Sons were to be dedicated to God through circumcision on the eighth day. Firstborn animals were to be redeemed through payment of the redemption price.

- Be my Holy people. Do not eat the meat of a mauled animal, give it to the dogs.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *God separated the Israelites from the rest of the world to be His people. He entered into a covenant relationship with them, like a marriage, in*



which both parties promised to be faithful to the other. For the Israelites to worship other gods was like adultery in marriage.

- *God provided the Ten Commandments and the other statutes not to provide a path to righteousness and salvation, but to make them realize they lived in sin and must be saved by faith in God alone.*

What I Noticed Today

(Exodus 23-25)

Exodus 23

In Chapter 23 God provides Moses statutes governing justice, the celebration of the Sabbath and annual feasts, and a promise about the conquest of the Promised Land.

In verses 1-9 God provides Moses statutes governing the proper administration of justice that expand the ninth commandment.

- You must not spread a false report.
- You are not to be a malicious witness.
- You must not follow a crowd in doing wrong.
- You must not follow a crowd to pervert justice.
- You must not show favoritism to the poor person in a lawsuit.
- You must not deny justice to a poor person.
- You must not make false accusations.
- You must not kill the innocent.

Note: Given the context, the word for *kill* is a prohibition against executing the innocent.


- You must not take a bribe.
- You must not oppress the foreigner.

In verses 10-19 God provides Moses statutes governing the Sabbath, the Sabbath year, and festivals:

- The land was to be worked for six years but allowed a Sabbath year rest in the seventh year.
- Man was to work for six days but rest on the seventh. The Sabbath rest was for the animals, slaves, and foreigners as well.
- Obey Gods commands and do not invoke the names of other Gods.

Note: The prohibition against invoking the names of other gods does not mean their names could not be spoken (since many appear in Scripture), but the people were not to recognize the existence of other gods by calling on them for help.

- You are to celebrate a festival in My honor three times per year: the Festival of Unleavened Bread (March-April), the Festival of Harvest (or First-Fruits, spring), and the Festival of Ingathering (autumn).

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- You must not offer the blood of the sacrifice with anything leavened. The fat of the sacrifice must not remain until morning. A young goat must not be boiled in its mother's milk.

In verses 20-33 God makes promises to Moses if the people obey, and gives warnings if they disobey.

- God said He would send an angel to guide the Israelites into the Promised Land. They were to obey the voice of the angel, and do not defy him.
- If you carefully obey him then I (God) will be an enemy to your enemies.
- My angel will go before you and bring you into the Promised Land, and wipe out its inhabitants.
- You must not bow down to their gods or imitate their practices. You must destroy their sacred pillars.
- Worship the Lord your God and He will bless you (provide food, remove illnesses, and multiply your children).
- I (God) will make your enemies turn in terror from you and drive them from you over time as you multiply in numbers.
- You must not make a covenant with them or their gods.
- You must not allow them to remain in your land or they will make you sin.

Exodus 24

In chapter 24 God confirms His covenant promise with the people of Israel.

In verses 1-11 God confirms His covenant with the people:

- God directed Moses to get Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and 70 elders and come to worship the Lord.
- Moses alone is to come up the mountain.
- Moses told the people all the Lord's words and the people answered they would do everything the Lord had commanded.
- The next morning Moses set up an altar with twelve pillars (one for each tribe) at the base of the mountain.
- The young men made fellowship offerings on the altar to the Lord.
- Then Moses read to the people all the words of the Lord he had written down (called the "Book of the Covenant"), and again the people confirmed they would do everything the Lord commanded.
- Moses then sprinkled the blood from the sacrifices on the altar and on the people, saying this is the blood of the covenant the Lord has made with you.
- Then Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and the elders went up the mountain of God



and saw God. God did not harm them. They ate and drank.

- Then God called to Moses to come further up the mountain so He could give Moses the stone tablets of the Law.
- So Moses and his assistant (Joshua) went up the mountain, leaving the rest behind.
- Moses told them to wait for him and if any disputes come up they should bring them to Aaron and Hur.
- Moses went further up the mountain and the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai covering it for six days.
- On the seventh day, the Lord called to Moses. Moses entered the cloud and remained on the mountain 40 days and nights.
- To the Israelites below the Lord's glory looked like a consuming fire.

Exodus 25-27

There is incredible imagery in these chapters that detail the construction of the tabernacle and its contents!

Exodus 25


Chapter 25 describes the construction of the tabernacle. The tabernacle served one purpose, it was where God dwelled among the people (25:8). While God could have spoken the tabernacle into existence He chose instead to have the Israelites make it from materials they brought as offerings. The plans He gave for the tabernacle were extremely detailed.

In verses 1-9 God gave Moses instructions to take an offering for the construction of the tabernacle:

- The materials to be collected included precious metals, yarns, linen, animal skins, woods, oils, spices, and gemstones.
- God told Moses they must make the tabernacle and all its furnishings according to the directions He would give them.

In verses 10-22 God gave instructions to Moses for the construction of the ark of the covenant (or testimony):

- The ark was to be made of acacia wood, covered inside and out with gold.
- Poles of acacia wood were also made and overlaid with gold and inserted into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry it. The poles were never to be removed.
- The tablets of the testimony (the Ten Commandments) were to be placed inside the ark.
- A mercy seat was to be constructed and overlaid with gold. On top of the mercy seat, two golden cherubim were fashioned facing one another.

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- The mercy seat with the cherubim were placed on top of the ark.
 - God would meet with Moses above the mercy seat between the cherubim, and give His instructions from there.

In verses 23-30 God gave Moses instructions for the construction of the table:

- The table was to be made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold.
- Four gold rings were to be made and attached to the table through which poles made of acacia wood overlaid with gold were to be inserted to carry the table.
- Plates, cups, pitchers, and bowls were all to be made out of pure gold.
- The bread of the Presence was to be placed on the table before God at all times.

Note: The bread of Presence was 12 loaves of bread made with fine flour and placed on the table in two rows of six. The bread was for the priests to consume. The table was placed just outside the Holy of Holies (where the ark was kept).


In verses 31-40 God gave Moses instructions for the construction of the lampstand (menorah):

- A lampstand was to be fashioned out of a single piece of gold. It resembled an almond tree with seven branches total; three on each side and one in the center. Each branch had cups shaped like almond blossoms with petals. The top of each branch had an oil lamp to provide light for the room.
- Snuffers and firepans were also to be made of pure gold.
- The gold needed to make the lampstand and the implements were one talent (approximately 75 pounds).

Note: The Hebrew word for almond is similar to a word that means “to watch over.” Aaron’s staff was made of almond wood (Numbers 17:8), and in Jeremiah 1:11-12 an almond branch is described as a symbol of God watching over His word.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *It is interesting that degrees of closeness to God existed at Mt. Sinai. The people were furthest away, the elders were permitted to come closer, then Moses and Joshua closer still, and then Moses alone was permitted onto the mountain to be with God for 40 days and nights.*
- *Today, because of Christ’s finished work on the cross, we are all allowed to be close to God, to glory in His presence. Yet there are some who remain at a distance, some who are a little closer, and some who are very close. For us, it is a choice, we decide by our actions exactly how close to God we want to be!*

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- *Jesus Christ is the bread of life (John 6:35). The Word of God is a light to our paths (Psalm 119:105). Christ's finished work on the cross removed the barrier of sin that comes between us and God. Now, for those who believe, we are God's sanctuary and His spirit lives in us (1 Cor. 3:16)!*

What I Noticed Today (Exodus 26-28)

Exodus 26

In Chapter 26 God gives Moses incredibly detailed instructions for the construction of the tabernacle:

- The tabernacle itself was composed of four layers: fine linen, woven goat hair, leather from ram skins, and another layer of leather.

Note: The type of leather in the fourth layer is not certain. The Hebrew word is similar to an Egyptian word for a marine mammal similar to a manatee.

- The tabernacle measured 15' by 45' and was surrounded by a large courtyard.
- The opening of the tabernacle was always to be positioned so it faced toward the east.
- Two curtains were made: one separated the interior space of the tabernacle, and the other curtain was placed at the entrance of the tabernacle. The interior curtain separated the Holy of Holies where the ark and the mercy seat were placed.

Exodus 27

In Chapter 27 God gives Moses instructions for the construction of the altar for burnt offerings, the tabernacle courtyard, and the preparation of oil for the lampstand:

- The altar of burnt offering (also referred to as the bronze altar) was to be square, made of acacia wood overlaid with bronze, and placed in the courtyard in front of the tabernacle.
- Rings were to be installed on the corners to accept acacia wood poles. The poles were used to carry the altar.
- The courtyard surrounding the tabernacle measured 150' by 75' and 7.5' high. It was made of linen curtains supported by wooden frames set in bronze bases.

Note: The courtyard height kept the curious from looking in, but was only half the height of the tabernacle so people could still see the tabernacle from outside the courtyard.

- Oil for the lampstand (Exodus 25:31-39) was made of pressed olives.
- Aaron and his sons were to keep oil in the lamp so it would be lit from evening until morning every day.

- The lampstand was to be located inside the tabernacle outside the Holy of Holies.

Note: The table for the bread, the golden lampstand, and the bronze altar are all contained within the tabernacle. The bread is a reminder of our spiritual nourishment that comes from God. The lampstand was the only light inside the tabernacle. God is the light of our lives. The bronze altar where sacrifices were made was needed to atone for sin before coming near to God.

Note: As with the scene at Mt. Sinai there is a distinct separation among the people regarding the tabernacle (ch. 27). The people were kept outside. Levites were allowed inside the courtyard area, and only priests were allowed inside the Holy of Holies.


Exodus 28

In Chapter 28 God gives Moses detailed instructions for the priest's garments and the priest's consecration to serve God. The purpose of the priesthood is to serve God (28:1). God equips the priests for their service with the garments and sets them apart by consecrating them.

- God instructs Moses to call together Aaron and his sons Nadab, Abihu, Eleazer, and Ithamar to serve God as priests.
- God instructs Moses to have their priestly garments (a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a tunic, a turban, and a sash) made by skilled craftsmen.
- The garments were to be made out of gold; blue, purple, and scarlet yarn; and fine linen.
- The ephod was made of linen with a front and back attached over the shoulders by two straps. The shoulder straps were mounted with onyx stones bearing the names of the tribes. It was held together at the waist by a belt.
- The breastpiece was made of linen 9 inches wide with four rows of three precious stones each. Each of the stones was engraved with the name of one of the twelve tribes. It was attached over the ephod with four gold chains and tied to the waist with a blue cord to the waistband of the ephod.
- Urim and Thummim were to be carried inside the breastpiece and used for making a decision before the Lord.

Note: The meaning of Urim and Thummim is obscure, but scholars believe Urim means "light" and Thummim means "perfection." Where they were to be acquired or how they worked is unknown.

- The robe worn under the ephod was to be made of blue yarn. It was to be sleeveless and hang below the knees.
- Pomegranates made of yarn and gold bells were attached to the hem all the way around the robe.

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- The robe is to be worn whenever Aaron ministers before the Lord. Ignoring these instructions would result in death.
 - A medallion of pure gold was to be made and engraved with “Holy to the Lord.” The medallion was to be fastened to the front of the turban over Aaron’s forehead. It allowed Aaron to bear the guilt for the offerings placed before the Lord.
 - The tunic and turban were to be made of fine linen. An embroidered sash was to be made.
 - Once all these garments were made they were to be worn by Aaron and his sons. Aaron and his sons were to be anointed, ordained, and consecrated so they can serve the Lord as priests.
 - Linen undergarments were also to be made covering from the waist to the thighs and must be worn whenever they minister before the Lord.

Note: The priests were anointed, ordained, and consecrated. The anointing was of oil. The ordination was complete with the priest’s clothing. The consecration came from the blood sacrifice of a bull and two rams. Only then were they ready to serve God (28:41).

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *As believers, we are priests, set apart and consecrated to serve God and do His work. To do that we need to be attentive to God’s Word, to faithfully do the work He has called us to, and be careful in our walk as we serve Him!*

What I Noticed Today

(Exodus 29-31)

Exodus 29

In Chapter 29 God gives instructions to Moses for the consecration of the priests who are to serve the Lord. (These instructions are repeated in Leviticus 8.)

In verses 1-37 God gives specific instructions for the consecration of the priests:

- Bring a bull and two unblemished rams along with unleavened bread, cakes, and wafers made with oil to the courtyard of the tabernacle.
- Wash Aaron and his sons in front of the tent of meeting. Dress Aaron in his high priestly garments, and the sons in their priestly garments.
- Anoint Aaron's head with oil.
- Bring the bull and have Aaron and his sons lay their hands on the bull and sacrifice it.
- Take some of the blood and place it on the horns of the altar, and pour out the rest.
- Take the fat around entrails, the liver, and the kidneys and burn them on the altar.
- Burn the bull's flesh, hide, and dung outside the tabernacle courtyard as a sin offering.
- Bring a ram and have Aaron and his sons lay their hands on it and sacrifice it.
- Sprinkle its blood on all side of the altar.
- Wash the entrails of the ram and place the entire ram on the altar as a burnt offering to the Lord.
- Bring the second ram and have Aaron and his sons lay their hands on it and sacrifice it.
- Put some of the blood on their right ear, right thumbs, and right big toes.
- Sprinkle the rest of the blood on the sides of the altar.
- Take some of the blood from the altar and mix it with oil and sprinkle it on Aaron and his son's garment and this will make the garments holy.
- Take the fat from the ram along with the liver and kidneys and the right thigh, and one loaf of bread, one cake, and one wafer and put them in their hands and have them wave them before the Lord. Then place them

on the altar as a burnt offering.

- The breast of the ram and the thigh are to be waved before the Lord as a presentation to the Lord, and then given to Aaron and his sons as their portion.
- The Holy garments that Aaron wears are to be worn by his sons after him. They are to be anointed and ordained in them.
- Take the ram of ordination and boil its flesh in a holy place. Then Aaron and his sons are to eat the flesh and the bread before the tent of meeting. An unauthorized person must not eat them because they are holy. Anything left over in the morning must be burned because it is holy.
- Sacrifice a bull every day for seven days as a sin offering for atonement. Purify the altar when you make atonement and anoint it to consecrate it. In this way the altar will become holy and anything that touches it will be holy.

Note: It is interesting that during the consecration blood from the sacrificed animal was placed on the priest's ear, the thumb of their right hand, and the big toe of the right foot (29:20). Perhaps this signifies their need to be attentive to hearing God's Word, to doing God's work, and to walk carefully in their service to Him.

In verses 38-46 God gives Moses instructions for the daily offerings:

- Two lambs are to be offered every day: one in the morning and one at twilight. Each should be offered with grain (flour), crushed olives, and wine.
- This is to be a regular burnt offering to the Lord throughout the generations.
- I (God) will meet with you at the entrance to the tent of meeting, and I will consecrate that place. I will consecrate the tent of meetings. And I will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve Me as priests.
- I will dwell among the Israelites. I will be their God, and they will know that I am Yahweh their God who brought them out of Egypt.

Exodus 30

In chapter 30 God gives instructions to Moses for the incense altar, atonement money the bronze basin, the anointing oil, and the sacred incense.

In verses 1-10 God gives Moses instructions regarding the incense altar:

- The incense altar was to be made of acacia wood with horns and overlaid with gold.
- It is to have rings fastened to the sides so it can be carried with poles made of acacia wood. The poles are also to be overlaid with gold.

- The altar of incense is to be placed in the tent of meeting in front of the veil (the curtain that divides the space).
- Aaron must burn incense on it every morning when he tends the lamps and at twilight.
- You must not burn unauthorized incense on it, a burnt offering, a grain offering, or pour out a drink offering on it.
- Once a year Aaron is to purify the altar with the blood of the sin offering for atonement. The altar is especially holy to the Lord.

In verses 11-16 God gives Moses instructions regarding the atonement money:

- When you take a census each man must pay a ransom for himself to the Lord when he registers.
- Every man 20-years old or older must pay a half-shekel contribution to the Lord.
- The wealthy cannot give more and the poor cannot give less. It is a contribution to atone for you lives.
- The money is to be used in the service of the tabernacle.

In verses 17-21 the Lord gives Moses instructions regarding the bronze basin:

- Make a bronze basin and a stand of bronze. Place it between the altar and the tent of meeting.
- Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and feet from the basin whenever they come to minister before the Lord.

In verses 22-33 the Lord gives instructions to Moses for the anointing oil:

- Make a fragrant anointing oil from myrrh cinnamon, cane, cassia, and olive oil. It is to be used for anointing.
- You are to anoint the tent of meeting, the ark of the testimony, the table with all its utensils, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offering, and the basin with its stand.
- Consecrate them and they will become especially holy. Whatever touches them will become holy.
- This holy anointing oil must not be used for anointing a person's body. You must not make anything like it. It is holy. Anyone who makes something like it or puts some on an unauthorized person must be cut off from the people.

In verses 34-38 God gives Moses instructions regarding the sacred incense:

- Gather stacte, onycha, galbanum, and frankincense and blend them with pure sea salt.
- Grind them into a powder and place them in front of the ark of the

testimony in the tent of meeting. It must be especially holy to you.

- Anyone who makes something like it must be cut off from the people.

Exodus 31

In Chapter 31 God makes provision of skilled workers and gives Moses instructions for the observation of the Sabbath.

In verses 1-11 God appoints skilled workers:

- God appointed Bezalel, son of Uri, son of Hur of the tribe of Judah. He is filled with the Spirit, wisdom, and skill in designing artistic works in gold, silver, bronze, precious stones, and carving wood.
- God appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan to be with Bezalel.
- God placed wisdom in every skilled worker to make all of the furnishings, articles, garments, oils, and incense according to His commands.

In verses 12-17 God gives instructions to Moses regarding the Sabbath:

- The Lord reminded Moses to be sure to instruct the Israelites to keep the Sabbath.
- It is a sign between Me (God) and you through the generations. It is a sign that sets you apart.
- It is holy. Anyone who profanes the Sabbath is to be put to death.
- If anyone does work on the Sabbath, he is to be cut off from his people.
- The Sabbath is a perpetual covenant between Me and the Israelites.

In verse 18 God gave the tablets to Moses:

- Once God completed giving all the instructions to Moses He gave Moses the two stone tablets inscribed by God.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *God called and spiritually gifted with ability, intelligence and knowledge one man from the tribe of Judah and one man from the tribe of Dan to craft the articles needed for the tabernacle. In addition, God provided other gifted men to assist in the endeavor. Where God leads he equips us for the work, and provides resources needed to accomplish whatever it is He has in mind for us!*
- *God established the Sabbath as a day of rest. Six days' man was to work and rest one day, just as God did in the creation. Even the construction of the holy tabernacle was to stop on the Sabbath, and anyone who violated the Sabbath was to be put to death. God clearly takes the need for a Sabbath day of rest and refreshment very seriously!*

What I Noticed Today

(Exodus 32-34)

Exodus 32

In Chapter 32 the people break their covenant promise with God by making a golden idol.

In verses 1-6 the people make an idol:

- When Moses didn't come back down from the mountain right away the people came to Aaron and asked him to make a god for them that would go before them.
- Aaron told them to bring him their gold rings and with them he fashioned a golden idol in the shape of a calf, and they said, this is your God who brought you out of Egypt.

Note: A calf was a symbol of strength and sexual virility in both Egyptian and Canaanite cultures.

- Aaron built an altar and announced there would be a festival to God (Yahweh) the next day.
- Early the next day they got up early and made fellowship and burnt offerings.
- Then they ate and drank and got up to play (some translations "indulge in revelry").

Note: The word translated "play" or "revelry" suggests immorality.

In verses 7-14 Moses intercedes on behalf of the people:

- The Lord spoke to Moses telling him what the people had acted corruptly in making the idol and worshiping and sacrificing to it.

Note: The word translated "corruptly" means something that is so spoiled it has no further use.

- God accused them of being stiff-necked (stubborn). He wanted to destroy them and start over in building Moses into a great nation.
- But Moses interceded on behalf of the people. Pleading for mercy, Moses asked God to remember His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to bring them into the Promised Land. So God relented.

In verses 15-29 Moses confronts Aaron and the people:

- Carrying the tablets of the Law God had made, Moses came down from the mountain with Joshua. As they got close to camp they saw the golden calf and the people dancing. Moses was furious. He threw down the

tablets breaking them.

- He took the golden calf ground it up, put the powder in water, and made the people drink it.
- Moses then confronted Aaron asking why he led the people to sin so greatly.
- Aaron immediately cast blame on the people saying they were evil. Then he lied saying he had taken their gold, thrown it into the fire, and out came the golden calf.
- Moses saw the people were out of control because Aaron let them get out of control.
- Moses asked for those who are for the Lord to come to him and all the Levites assembled. Moses ordered them to kill all those who were still worshipping the idol. That day 3,000 people were killed.
- Moses commended the Levites saying they had been dedicated to the Lord and had brought a blessing upon themselves by their actions.

In verses 30-35 Moses intercedes a second time for the people:

- The next day Moses accused the people of a great sin and returned to the Lord to atone for them.
- Moses asked God to forgive them, and if not erase me from the book You have written.

Note: Moses's request is not to be removed from the book of life and suffer eternal damnation, but to be taken by God (premature death).

- God refuses to kill Moses but says He will erase those who sinned.
- Then God told Moses to go lead the people to the place He told them. He would send an angel to lead them.
- The Lord sent a plague on the people for the sin they committed by worshipping the golden calf.

Exodus 33

In Chapter 33 God establishes a meeting tent outside of camp to meet with Moses.

In verses 1-6 God rejects the people:

- The Lord told Moses to take the people he led out of Egypt and take them to the land the Lord had promised.

Note: The Lord did not refer to the people as "My people" as He had previously. He also did not say that "He led them out of Egypt."

- The Lord promised to send an angel ahead of them to take them to the Promised Land but He would not go with them because they were

stubborn and He might destroy them on the way.

- When the people heard this they mourned and removed their jewelry and did not wear it from Mount Horeb on.

Note: The whole point of building the tabernacle was it was the place where the Lord would meet with the people, but because of their sin He had rejected them and refused to go with them.

In verses 7-23 the Lord establishes an intimate relationship with Moses:

- Moses took a tent and set it up far outside the camp and called it the tent of meeting.
- It was a place where the people could go to consult with God.
- Whenever Moses went to the tent the pillar of cloud would descend on the tent and God would speak to Moses face-to-face, just as friends speak to one another.

Note: The phrase “face-to-face” is a figurative expression. No one can see God’s face and live (Exodus 33:20).


- Moses has an intimate conversation with God (There are three sections each begins with “Moses said/responded” vv. 12, 15, and 18.)
 - Moses asks God to teach him His ways, so he can know God and find favor with Him. Moses also asked God to consider these people His people. God replied that He would go with Moses, and would give him rest.
 - Moses said if You do not go with us, don’t make us go. Your presence is what will distinguish us from other nations. The Lord responded saying He would do what Moses had asked because Moses had found favor in His sight.
 - Then Moses asked to see God’s glory. God responded that He would show Moses His glory and goodness, and would be gracious and compassionate on whom He would have grace and compassion. But, said God, no one can see My face and live.
 - Then God put Moses in a cleft of a rock and passed by so Moses could see the glory of God from the back.

Exodus 34

In Chapter 34 God renews His covenant.

In verses 1-9 God replaces the tablets of the Law that Moses broke:

- The Lord told Moses to make two new tablets and come up on the mountain the next day.
- Moses did just as the Lord commanded and brought two new tablets of stone up on the mountain early the next morning.

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- God descended on the mountain in a cloud proclaiming his name, Yahweh. He is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and rich in love and truth, maintaining love to a thousand generations, forgiving wrongdoing, rebellion, and sin. But He will not leave the guilty unpunished; they will suffer the consequences of their wrongdoing to the third and fourth generation.

Note: This description of God is focused not on outward appearance, but on His personal character.


- Moses bowed down before the Lord and worshiped. He interceded for the people once again asking God to go with them even though they are stubborn. He asked the Lord to forgive them their wrongdoing and sin and accept them as His people.

In verses 10-28 God renews His covenant with the people of Israel:

- The Lord responded He was making a new covenant and would perform wonders as had never been seen on earth before.
- He would drive out the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.
- The Lord warned them not to make treaties with people in the land as they would be a snare to them. Instead, they are to tear down and chop up their Asherah poles and sacred pillars.
- You are never to bow down to another god because Yahweh is a jealous God.
- Do not eat the sacrifices of the people in the land. Do not take their daughters as brides for your sons. They will cause your sons to prostitute themselves to foreign gods.
- Do not make cast images of gods for yourselves.
- Observe the Festival of Unleavened Bread.
- The firstborn son and firstborn male livestock belong to the Lord and must be redeemed.
- You must labor for six days but rest on the Sabbath even during plowing and harvest times.
- You must observe the Festival of Weeks (Firstfruits) and the Festival of Ingathering. Three times a year all the males must appear before the Lord.

Note: God promised to protect them and their land during these three times a year when the men gathered to worship the Lord.

- Do not present the blood of a sacrifice with anything leavened.
- The Passover meal must not remain until morning.
- Bring the firstfruits of your land to the Lord.

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- Do not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.
 - God instructed Moses to write down all these words as a covenant He made with Moses.
 - Moses was with God 40 days and nights without food or water.
 - God wrote the Ten Commandments on the stone tablets.

In verses 29-35 Moses returns to camp reflecting the glory of God:

- Moses descended from the mountain with the stone tablets not realizing his face was shining from having been in the presence of God.
- When Aaron and the Israelites saw him they were afraid to come near him, but Moses called out to them and told them all the words of the Lord.
- After he finished speaking Moses put a veil over his face.
- Whenever Moses went to speak to the Lord he would remove the veil, and put it back on when he came out. He would then tell the Israelites all that the Lord had commanded.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *One of the challenges of being a leader and following God is that there will be times when people want to the easy road, and the leader must remain strong and faithful to God's direction. And, if a poor decision is made, a leader needs to take responsibility for their decisions!*
- *Do we get so stubborn and want our own way so much that we actually push God away?!*
- *God is both merciful and gracious in renewing the covenant.*
- *It is pretty easy to look at our society today and say that many have made covenants with foreign nations who don't believe in God, they have worshiped other gods (money, power, etc.), they have intermarried with non-believers, and the result is that we are one generation closer to a depraved secular society.*
- *My prayer is that as I meet God every day that I would come away with a changed countenance. A countenance that would be noticeable to others. A countenance that would draw others to Christ!*

What I Noticed Today

(Exodus 35-37)

Exodus 35-39

These five chapters describe the construction of the tabernacle in great detail.

Exodus 35

Chapter 35 opens with Moses giving the people the instructions for the Sabbath again, then continues with instructions regarding the building of the tabernacle.

In verses 1-3 Moses reminds the Israelites of the need to observe the Sabbath:

- Moses assembled the entire Israelites community and reminded them the Lord said they were allowed to work six days but must rest on the seventh. They were not even to light a fire (for cooking food) in their homes on the Sabbath.
- Anyone who does work on the Sabbath must be executed.

Note: This reminder was likely given for two reasons: the people had a tendency to disobey God's instructions, and they might be tempted to work through the Sabbath to complete the Tabernacle.

In verses 4-29 Moses gives instructions regarding the gathering of materials for the construction of the tabernacle:

- Moses instructed the Israelites to take up an offering for materials to be used in the construction of the tabernacle (vv. 1-4).
- Moses then called for skilled workers to come and prepare to make the furnishings, utensils, and garments needed for the tabernacle (vv. 10-19).
- Then the Israelites left Moses and everyone whose heart was moved offered materials and services needed for the construction of the tabernacle (vv. 20-29).

In verses 30-35 Moses appoints Bezalel and Oholiab as skilled workers to teach others:

- Moses told the Israelites the Lord had appointed Bezalel and Oholiab whom He had filled with God's spirit and wisdom with skills to work in all kinds of crafts. They also had been given the ability to teach others.

Note: This passage is very similar to Exodus 31:1-11. In addition to skill, God had gifted them with the ability to teach others.

Exodus 36

Chapter 36 opens with materials for the tabernacle being gathered and the start of construction on the tabernacle.

In verses 1-7 work on the tabernacle begins:

- Moses gathered Bezalel and Oholiab together with all the skilled workmen in whom God had placed wisdom and had been moved to come and work to begin the work.
- The people continued to bring their freewill offerings for the construction of the tabernacle. They brought so much that there was more than enough material gathered so Moses told them to stop the offering.
- In verses 8-38 construction of the tabernacle is described in four sections:
- Verses 8-13 describe the making of the fabric curtains that formed the sides and ceiling of the tabernacle. (See Exodus 26:1-6)
- Verses 14-19 describe the animal skin curtains. (See Exodus 26:7-14)
- Verses 20-30 describe the wooden frames of the tabernacle structure. (See Exodus 26:26-29)
- Verses 31-38 describe the curtains at the entrance and interior of the tabernacle. (See Exodus 26:31-37)

Note: The details of the construction recounted here are very similar to the instructions given in Exodus 25-26. The main difference is the order in which the material is prepared. In chapter 36 the tabernacle is built first, then the furnishings in chapter 37. In chapter 25 the furnishings are described first.


Note: It is truly amazing that these people had plundered from the Egyptians the very materials that God required in the building and furnishing of the tabernacle. What is even more significant to me, is that these are people who had just spent 400 years in servitude to Pharaoh making brick and building buildings. Yet when He needed skilled craftsmen God gave the people the gifts they needed to complete the work for which He had called them. All the craftsmen, in whom God had put skill and stirred their hearts (36:2), came forward and began to build everything.

Note: Looking back at chapters 35-36 the word “commanded” is used 6 times as the people gather the materials required for the construction of the tabernacle.

Exodus 37

Chapter 37 describes the construction of the interior furnishings of the tabernacle.

In verses 1-9 the construction of the Ark of the Testimony is described:

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- Bezalel made the Ark of the Testimony and the poles to carry it of acacia wood and overlaid them with pure gold. He made the Mercy Seat of pure gold, along with the two cherubim facing each other attached to the Mercy Seat.

In verses 10-16 the construction of the table and utensils are described:

- Bezalel made the table of acacia wood along with the poles to carry it and overlaid them with pure gold.
- He also made the utensils (plates, cups, pitchers, and bowls) for the table out of pure gold.

In verses 17-24 the construction of the lampstand is described:

- Bezalel made the lampstand of pure hammered gold exactly as Moses had described.
- He also made the seven lamps, snuffers, and firepans of pure gold.
- In all, the lampstand and its utensils were made of 75 pounds of pure gold.
- In verses 25-29 the construction of the altar of incense is described:
- Bezalel made the altar of incense and the poles to carry it out of acacia wood and overlaid them with pure gold.
- He also made the holy anointing oil and the incense.

Some additional thoughts for consideration:

- *I believe God gifts us with special skills when we become Christians. Skills that He intends for us to use in building His Kingdom. The question is, do we know what our gifts are and are we using them the way God intended?*
- *God cares deeply for us and He has given us instructions for how to live out our lives. Many reject God's plan then wonder why life doesn't turn out the way they had hoped!*

What I Noticed Today (Exodus 38-39)

Exodus 38-39

Chapters 38-39 record the details of the construction of the altar for burnt offerings, the bronze basin, an account of the materials used in the construction of the tabernacle and the making of the priestly garments.

Exodus 38

Note: Exodus 38:1-20 and Exodus 27:9-19 are similar. Exodus 27 is God giving the instructions to Moses while Exodus 38 is the actual construction of the items.

In verses 1-8 the construction of the Altar of Burnt Offering is described:

- Bezalel constructed the Altar of Burnt Offering of acacia wood according to the specifications given by Moses and overlaid it with bronze.
- He also made the utensils of bronze: the shovels, basins, meat forks, and firepans.

In verse 8 the construction of the bronze basin is described:

- Bezalel made the bronze wash basin and its stand.

In verses 9-20 the construction of the tabernacle courtyard is described:

- Bezalel made the courtyard: its hanging curtains of linen with their hooks and bases.

In verses 21-31 and accounting of the inventory of materials for the construction of the tabernacle are provided:

- Moses ordered an inventory of all the materials offered for the construction of the tabernacle and its furnishings.
- Levites completed the inventory under the direction of Ithamar, the son of Aaron.
- Bezalel and Oholiab directed the construction of everything the Lord commanded.
- 2,193 pounds of gold and 7,544 pounds of silver, and 5,310 pounds of bronze were used in the construction of the tabernacle and its furnishings.

Note: Exodus 38:8 mentions that the bronze basin was made from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting. There were no glass mirrors in those days, the mirrors were typically made from polished bronze. I think it is interesting that women

were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. There is no other mention of these women and their service, but it strikes me that serving right outside the tent where God met Moses would have been a great honor!

Exodus 39

Note: Exodus 39 and Exodus 28 are similar. Exodus 28 is God giving the instructions to Moses while Exodus 39 is the actual construction of the items.

Note: Starting in chapter 39 that every paragraph where something was completed ends with the phrase “as the Lord had commanded Moses.” This phrase occurs 7 times denoting the completion of an article of the priestly garments.

Note: Four times the word “commanded” is used at the end of chapters 38 & 39 in reference to the work of building had been completed. Looking back at chapters 35-36 the word “commanded” is used 6 times as the people gather the materials required for the construction of the tabernacle.

In verse 1 the priest’s holy garments for use in ministering before the Lord were made just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

In verses 2-7 the making of the ephod is described:

- Bezalel made the ephod of fine linen embroidered with gold thread.
- Onyx stones were mounted in gold settings to the ephod.

In verses 8-21 the making of the breastpiece is described:

- Bezalel made the breastpiece of fine linen and mounted four rows of gemstones corresponding to the 12 tribes of Israel.
- Braided chains and cords were made and attached to the breastpiece just as Moses had instructed.

In verses 22-26 the making of the robe is described:


- The robe was made of woven yarn with a collar.
- Pomegranates of yard and gold bells were attached to the hem of the robe, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

In verses 27-29 the making of other priestly garments is described:

- The tunics for Aaron and his sons were made of linen, along with turbans and headbands, undergarments, and sashes just as the Lord had commanded.

In verses 30-31 the making of the Holy Diadem is described:

- A medallion, the Holy Diadem was made of pure gold and engraved with “Holy to the Lord.”
- It was then attached with yarn to Aaron’s turban just as the Lord



commanded.

In verses 32-43 Moses inspects all the furnishings and garments that were made and blesses them:

- When all the work had been completed “as the Lord commanded” it was brought before Moses who inspected it to be sure that they had followed God’s instructions exactly, and he blessed all the people of Israel.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *The people had not done an especially good job of following God’s instructions in the past, but with regards to the construction of the tabernacle and its furnishing they followed God’s instructions to the letter. God had gifted them with skills, they used their skills as God intended, and the result was a blessing.*
- *Perhaps we would see more of God’s blessings in our lives if we would follow God’s instructions so closely and use the gifts He has given us the way He intended!*

What I Noticed Today (Exodus 40)

Exodus 40

Note: It's been 50 weeks since the Israelites escaped from Egypt, and they have been camped out at Mt. Sinai for nine months!

Note: All the materials for the construction of the tabernacle have been completed and inspected, and are ready to go, but Moses waits for instructions from God as to what to do next.

In verses 1-16 God gives Moses instructions for assembling all the elements of the tabernacle courtyard and the tent of meeting:

- On their New Year's Day, God tells Moses exactly how He wants the tabernacle to be assembled, and where all of the furnishings are to be placed.
- God also gives Moses instructions for anointing and consecrating all the elements of the tabernacle.
- Then Moses was to bring Aaron and his sons have them washed. Cloth Aaron in his holy garments and have him anointed and consecrated so he can serve God as His priest.
- Have Aaron's sons come forward and have them clothed in their tunics and anoint them so they may also serve Me as priests.
- Moses did everything God commanded exactly as God told him.

In verses 17-33 Moses finishes setting up the tabernacle:

- On the first day of the first month of their second year Moses set up the bases of the tabernacle and spread out the tent over it just as the Lord commanded.
- Moses placed the testimony and the ark with the Mercy Seat inside the Holy of Holies behind the veil just as the Lord commanded.
- Moses placed the table with the showbread in the tent along with the lamp and the lampstand just as the Lord commanded.
- Moses placed the gold altar in front of the veil inside the tent of meeting and burned incense on it just as the Lord commanded.
- He placed the curtain at the front of the tent of meeting and placed the altar for burnt offerings at the entrance, just as the Lord commanded him.
- Moses placed the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar and Moses, Aaron, and his sons washed their hands and feet in it whenever



they approached the tent of meeting just as the Lord commanded.

- Finally, Moses set up the courtyard around the tabernacle.

In verses 34-38 the Lord's glory descended upon the tent of meeting:

- When that work was done the cloud covered the tent of meeting and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.
- Moses was unable to enter the tent because the glory of the Lord filled the tent.
- The Israelites set out whenever the cloud was taken up from the tent of meeting.
- The cloud filled the tabernacle during the day, and fire filled the cloud at night.
- It was visible to all the Israelites throughout their journey.

What an amazing day this must have been!

Some additional thoughts for consideration:

- *I have a tendency to get involved in a project and rush ahead. Sometimes I know it is a project God has for me, but I keep going without waiting for God's instructions. Moses displayed great wisdom as a leader here. He did exactly what God commanded, and as each phase of the project was completed he waited until God told him what to do next.*
- *I need to learn to be more patient and willing to wait upon the Lord!*