**Exodus**

**1: 1-22**

**“Stuck in Egypt”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-7 Keeping His Promise**

**III.) Vs. 8-14 Another brick in the wall**

**IV.) Vs. 15-22 Enmity between Gods people, and the devil**

**I.) Intro.**

It has been said that history is nothing more then His ---- story! We saw this when we went through the book Genesis. That book started with God and the birth of creation; yet strangely Genesis records more of mans failure then it does Gods success. Look, for a moment, at the final verse in Genesis (50: 26), as we read that **Joseph died, and was put in a coffin**. That is the end result of man living apart from God, ***a wooden box in a land where God didn’t attend them to be***. Since the third chapter of Genesis, we read that death came upon creation because of mans sin. We live in the realm of death soon are later we all will have to deal with it. **Death teaches us that apart from God, our lives are a failure**. As great a foe as death is there is still someone that conquers death. **God** has overcome death, in fact right after mans failure He began to purchase mankind back from the jaws of death as we read in Gen. 3:21 “...**for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them**.” We are told in Heb. 9:22 that **“...without shedding of blood there is no remission**.” So God knew all along of mans rebellion and even after the fall shed the blood of an innocent animal to make a covering for their sins.

 The name Exodus was given at the time of it’s translation into Greek. The word means “**exit, way out, road out or departure**”. The Hebrew title follows the pattern of naming a book off of the first few words of the book, “**These are the names**..”. Thus the rabbis call it “*The Book of Names*” this is the title of the book in Hebrew. How fitting this is as Exodus is all about God creating a “**road out for man kind from deaths bondage; so the road is a road towards redemption**.” There are three main sections to the book:

1. **Chp. 1-18 Let My People Go:** In this section we will see that it is about God getting His People out of Egypt.His people out of bondageH The main focus is the Lord raising up a man to be a deliver, and the processes by which God will use Him to free his people.
2. **Chp. 19-24 A special treasure, a holy nation:** The next section deals with God revealing His attributes to His people. There we will see that God does not just call His people out of something He call them to something as well.
3. **Chp. 25-40 Living among His people:** Finally, we will discover Gods purpose for all people which is to dwell with them in fellowship. We shall see this in Gods commanding them to build a tabernacle.

**We see a parallel to all of us, God desires to free us from sin and calls us to Himself that He might dwell with us**! The author of the book is none other then the main figure of the book, Moses. His life is broken apart in this book in groups of forty years.

1. Chp. 2:1-15: His first forty years are seen in Pharaoh’s place. **So for forty years he thought he was something when he was nothing.**
2. Chp. 2:16 - 4:31: His second forty years were spent in the desert of Midian. **So he spent the next forty years think he was nothing when he was something.**
3. Chp. 5-40: His last forty years he in the wilderness as the leader of God’s people. **So the last forty years he realized that God delights in using nothing to accomplish something.**

The book also reminds us of four great events which point to events in a believer’s life as well:

1. **The Passover**: The judgment of God upon sin, Passover the people of God because the shedding of innocent blood. Of coarse this speaks of our conversion when we confessed our need for Jesus and His blood was sprinkled on the door posts of our heart.
2. **The crossing of the Red sea**: This is where God took a bunch of people and made them His people. We speak of this work when we say that we are a new creation. This happens at the same time of our conversion when we brought out of the bondage with the world and into His kingdom.
3. **The giving of the law**: Here God brought to His people at Mount Sinai the realization of His character of Holiness. For the believer this is our growing process as we get into His word and realize more and more who He is.
4. **The construction of the tabernacle**: This is Gods provision for dwelling with man. It is here that we see that God desires to dwell with us in spite of us and it is all based upon what He has done for us.

**II.) Vs. 1-7 Keeping His Promise**

Vs. 1 The word “now” is not how this book starts in the original language, rather it starts off “And”. What this shows us is this is nothing more then the sequel to Genesis. So Moses goes back to give us some important information as to where he left off in Genesis. Let me make several points here that are needed to fill in the gaps:

 These seven verse fill in a time frame of over 430 years. The reason this is important is that this was not some arbitrary time frame it was an exact time frame according to Gods plan to reach the world. In Gen. 15: 13 we read that, “*Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years*.” Why this 400-year period and why did God allow them to go through persecution?

* 1. Clearly, God used Egypt to bless Israel, not only in protecting them from the famine, but also in protecting them from dwelling in the land of the Amorites, who were far more superior in number. The Jew’s were given the land of Goshen and God causes a famine to send them to a nation that was fiercely prejudice as they believed themselves as racially superior towards all people. In Genesis 46: 34 Joseph’s told his family to tell the Pharaoh, “*Your servants' occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we and also our fathers,' that you may dwell in the land of Goshen****; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians***.”
	2. Further more God had a plan that needed to be carried out towards the Amorites. Gen. 15-16 “*But in the fourth generation they shall return here,* ***for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete*.”**  What an amazing statement this is. God removes His people from a land in order to prepare them for a time when they will go back into the land to remove those who are an abomination to Him.

When they left the land of promise they were 70 strong, when they re-entered the land 430 years later they were over 2 million strong. God had promised that He would greatly multiply His people and He kept His promise.

Vs. 2-5 Notice that the name Jacob is used and not Israel. Jacob means “he grasps the heel”. Israel means, “He struggles with God”. Yet when you get to verse 7 the descendants are called the children of Israel. We can clearly see the work of God in the life of the people of God. We often see things only from one perspective, God sees through the lens of eternity. He sees us from deceivers to overcomes! Next we are given he manes of those who were Israel’s son’s:

* 1. Vs. 2-3a Leah’s and Jacob’s first six sons’ in order of their birth.
	2. Vs. 3b, 5 Then you have Rachel’s second son Benjamin whom she died during child birth. Joseph is not mentioned here for he is **already in Egypt** (verse 5).
	3. Vs. 4 Then we are given the two sons through Rachel’s maid servant Bilhah Dan and Naphtali. Lastly, we have Gad and Asher the two boys from Zilpah Leah’s maid servant.

It took 50 years for the clan to grow from 5 to 70, yet with a standard growth rate of 6% in 430 years they would grow to over 2 million.

Vs. 6-7 Here we see that Egypt became a birth place for the nation. It is good to recognize that God has a plan for you, but it is equally important that you realize that this plan will have some turns in it that you would never have expected. I can see Abram looking up into the sky hear the Lord tell him that his descendants would one day number as the stars in the sky, then also hear that this was going to be through slavery in a nation not their own. LIFE DOES NOT MAKE SENSE! **We are not to make sense out of life, folks, our peace comes not from the journey but rather who it is we are walking with**! With all of this blessing it is difficult to understand the need to be delivered, until we read the rest of this chapter.

**III.) Vs. 8-14 Another brick in the wall**

Vs. 8 When Stephen told this story in Acts 7 he says that the people grew and multiplied in Egypt “*till* ***another*** *king arose who did not know Joseph*.” The word another in the Greek means another of a different kind. The Pharaoh that was in power during Joseph’s time was Egyptian, but according to Isa. 52: 4 the Pharaoh of this time was Assyrian he was a different nationality altogether and during the time he came into power he ran out the Hykos who ruled during Joseph’s time out.

Vs. 9-10 It appears that Gods blessing upon the Israelites became obvious to all. I think at times you can tell God is blessing in the direct proportion to how much warfare you are experiencing! All to often I hear Christians say things like, “*I don’t know what I’ve done wrong that God is punishing me for.*” Perhaps it is not that you have done anything but rather that God is preparing you for something still greater! The fear and jealousy of the people of the Pharaoh was obvious, they were concerned that their enemies would exploit the blessing of Israel and join forces, making a security risk.

Vs. 11-12 The first phase of the enemy’s plan is given to us here, oppression. So we read here that they sat taskmasters over them. They put the Israelite men into work crews forcing them into slave labor. Two cites are listed as having been built be the forced labor of the Israelites were treasure cites made of brick which the Israelites made with straw supplied by the Egyptians. The pyramids were not built by the Israelites as they had already been in existence by this time.

 The more they afflicted them the more they grew. That is the way it often goes the more the world tries to put down the believer the more they are blessed and prosper.

Vs. 13-14 when they saw that that was not having the desired results they removed the straw from the process. The idea here of the enemy is that of preoccupation with the things of the world. Take the children of God away from the blessings of God and into the things of the world that enslave them. That is what the Pharaoh did here, just got them preoccupied with the things of Egypt.

**IV.) Vs. 15-22 Enmity between Gods people, and the devil**

Vs. 15 Here we are told of the second phase of the enemy’s plan, “*killing all the male Jewish boys*.” This is not new Satan tried it through Cain as he killed his brother, Herod would try it in Jesus’ time killing all the male children two years old and under, of coarse Hitler and Stalin tried it as well. There has always been enmity between Gods seed and Satan’s seed.

 So God rose up two midwives who were probably over all the other midwives. Now most often midwives were chosen because they were barren themselves. These two ladies named “beauty and splendor”. It always amazes me that God seems to place people that seem to be insignificant or perhaps thought of as cursed to be used for His purposes. Have you ever wondered about why God has chosen you? Perhaps its not for what you have but what you don’t have.

Vs. 16-17 The fear of the Lord was the reason why they did not do as Pharaoh had requested. The question often comes up here is it all right that they lied to Pharaoh.

1. We don’t know that they lied to Pharaoh. Verse 19 tells us that they told them that the Hebrew women delivered faster then did the Egyptian women so the children were already born prior to their arrival. It could be that they just decided not to arrive in any hurry, thus what they said was true.
2. Second there is a higher law to obey and that is Gods. Clearly what God rewards here is not the way in which they acted but rather the reason why they acted, (verse 21). It was that they feared God that the Lord looked upon.

Notice the twofold blessing here:

1. Vs. 20 First the nation was blessed by the obedience of these two ladies. When we choose to obey God no matter who we are the Nation is blessed because of our obedience. Mother’s never think of your role as unimportant, because of your obedience this nation will have a future.
2. Vs. 21 Look at this carefully here were two ladies that traditionally we believe were barren, yet because they feared God were blessed with children. Do you see the point? What was it that Pharaoh was putting to death? Male children! The Lord places these gals right with the rest of the mother there in Egypt. Folks a lot of times God brings us through things to test our hearts then blesses us with what it was that test our heart to begin with. May I just say that there are no wasted days in the class room of Gods grace, every day is vital that you pay attention!

Vs. 22 Here was the last of Satan’s plan and it involved the Egyptians. To get the nation to be involved with the killing of the Israelite boys. In all of this what we see is the reasons that led up to God bring forth a redeemer. And the fact that He uses ordinary people.

**Exodus**

**2: 1-10**

**“Taken from the Water”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-10 On The Water**

**I.) Intro.**

There is a twofold danger in looking at Bible hero’s, or for that matter any person we greatly admire.

1. First is what I call **deifying** them. That is when we only look at their success and not their failures. We can see this to the extreme in some churches where they refer to certain men and women of the Bible as “Saint”. You can even pick up in some commentaries the excusing away of bad behavior. When we fall into this danger we elevate the man above God and begin to worship the creation or the instrument above the creator.
2. The second danger is equally bad yet it is the opposite. This is what I call **demonizing** the hero. You can see this attitude on the hearts of the Pharisee’s as they attributed the actions of Jesus to the Devil. Many biographies of hero’s only point out their short comings to the exclusion of what they did right. The danger in this is pride in our own self’s.

The Bible does not make this mistake of it’s hero’s we see them warts and all. In this chapter there are three incidents in the life of Moses which show us the hand of God and the hand of Moses.

 a.) First, the birth of Moses.

 b.) Second, his attempt to deliver his brethren.

 c.) Third, his life in Midian.

**II.) Vs. 1-10 On The Water**

Vs. 1 It is amazes me that as Moses sat down and wrote his own story with out much fan fare. We are not even told the names of his parents until the sixth chapter. There in verses 18-20 we are told that Moses fathers name was Amram which meant “High people” and his mother’s name Jochebed which means “Jehovah glorified”. It is also in the 6th chapter that we are told that Amram married his aunt on his father’s side thus they were both descendants of Levi.

Vs. 2 The scene is now set for the birth of the deliver. We left off in chapter 1 with the command of Pharaoh that every new born boy be cast into the river. That serves as the context of the birth of Moses. We are not told here that Moses’ parents already had two children, the sister of verse four, Miriam whom we are not even told her name until chapter 15 and was most likely 12 years older. And Aaron who we are not told his name until the 4th chapter, who was three years older according to (Ex. 7:7) and was born before the decree of Pharaoh.

 Why does God not see fit to include the names of the family members tell later? ***It is my opinion that God is saying to us that what is important for the making of the instrument of God is the character of the servants not their family back ground***. It is not the blood line that makes an instrument of God it is rather God’s blood line. The Bible declares the fact in verse two that Moses’ mother declared him as beautiful as she saw some wonderful qualities in Moses at his birth.

 In all the verses which describe his birth we are told that:

 Ex. 2:2 “She saw he was beautiful”

 Acts 7:20 “well pleasing to God;”

 Heb. 11:23 “because they saw he was a beautiful child;”

The key to understanding this lies in the original language and how that word is used else where. Literally the verse reads that “**she saw that he was good**”. The word is used frequently in the O.T. specifically in the writings of Moses where **it carries the idea of goodness as the result of being made or declared good by God.** It is the same word that is used in the creation account where God declared what He had created “good”. Stephen’s words in the Acts 7:20 passage points to this fact where we are told again that Moses was, “**well pleasing to God.”** It was not that Moses parents recognized some inward or outward significance’s in Moses, but rather they recognized that Moses was Gods child that is what prompted them to faith. God does not value us based upon outward or inward qualities He does so because of Who He is and the fact that He created us. Simply put we are special to Him because we are His creation. Moses parents acted in faith because they saw him as God saw him.

Vs. 3 The faith spoken here and else where is that of the hiding of Moses for three months and not that of placing him in the basket and into the Nile. In Heb. 11:23 and read with me, “***By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command***.” The high point of faith that the author of Hebrews points to is not the placing of Moses into the water but rather the hiding of him for three months. The passage on faith in Heb. 11 does not even mention the placing of Moses into the basket and on to the river. Acts 7: 18-21 is the same where we read, “***he was brought up in his father's house for three months***.” When Stephen tells this story he uses a word to describe the act of the parents as “*putting Moses out to die*” What this suggests to me is that the remarkable story of Pharaoh’s daughter saving Moses has much more to do with God’s faithfulness and goodness then it does the faith of Moses parents. That encourages me, for God is the One who is faithful, He is the savior of His people, all the more we ought to look to Him and not the faith of others!

 Moses was placed where other baby boys were placed right by the river bank. Now Moses mother fulfilled the intent of Pharaoh’s law but not the letter of it. The word “*basket*” is the same word used for Noah’s craft, “Ark”. This, from a parent’s perspective is hope mixed with desperation as they placed their three-month old son in a basket. They made sure that it would float and we are told that Miriam watched but not the Mom. She could not bear the thought of watching her child float down stream, but neither could she stand the thought of not knowing what had become of her son.

Vs. 4-10 He is where the story takes an interesting twist. As Moses floats along in his ark and his sister looks on who would be the worst person to find baby Moses? Why it would have to be the family of Pharaoh who made the decree to begin with, that would mean instant death. Yet we are told that it was Pharaoh’s daughter who went down to wash that the ark came floating towards. Can you imagine Miriam’s horror? “*Oh God no not this woman! Please God not this woman*!”

 Yet we are told in verse 6 that at Moses weeping her heart melted. She clearly knew that this was a Hebrew child. I marvel at God, who takes the worst of possible situations and turns them into a glorious blessing. We are so tempted to rule God out based upon the situation rather then trusting in His ability. We read of Paul’s words in Eph. 6:20 “***to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us***,” The salvation of Moses would be enough to serve as an example of Eph. 6:20 yet there is still more.

Vs. 7-9 We are told that Miriam sprang into action seeing the compassion of Pharaoh’s daughter and suggest her mother as nurse maid. So not only is Moses saved from certain death he goes back to stay with his family for some years for which they are paid. Man is God ever good!

Vs. 10 It gets better yet! Here we are told in verse ten that Pharaoh’s daughter names the child Moses which means “*because I drew him out of the water*.” So well now think of this for a moment. All Hebrew male children are being drowned in the Nile river under direct command of the Pharaoh. Yet the daughter of the Pharaoh saves a Hebrew male child in direct disobedience to his command and names the Hebrew male child “*drawn from the water*.” It is not a leap of faith here to see that no doubt the command was abolished for the daughter herself would have to been put to death.

 God delivers the deliver and in so doing delivers all the male children in Egypt. This shows us that even if we are the instrument of God it is God who is doing it all. By way of application to being an instrument of reaching the world: Simply allow God to move us by way of His Holy Spirit the way He sees best. What if Moses would have had the mind set of an adult and looked out of his little ship to that he was heading strait for the last person he wanted to be heading for. I can tell you right now that he would have started paddling the opposite direction. The fact that he was an infant saved his life and the lives of the nation. I’m always trying to see where I’m heading and God is saying to us this morning is not to worry about that as long as you are riding with Him!

 There is a 40-year gap between the 10th verse and the 11th verse. And if we are not careful here we lose sight of all that Moses does right as well as what he does wrong. So let’s finish this morning with some N.T. verse that will tell us what happened during those forty years.

1. Acts 7: 22 “**And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds**.” Sometime after he was weaned, Moses went to school. Egypt was the most technological nation of it’s time. In fact, the sciences, arts and engineering of that time has not been able to be duplicated even to our own day. Moses became equipped with all the wisdom that Egypt possessed. Now we are told in the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus that Pharaoh had no sons and that his daughter’s first son would of been heir to the throne. We are also told by him that Moses had become quite the war hero. It would be easy if I were Moses and say, “*Man I can be a deliverer of my people in a few years when I’m made the new Pharaoh*.”
2. Heb. 11:24-26 “*By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward*.” Here we are told that Moses at some period of time refused his position and choice his people. Moses did not lose his status as the future Pharaoh, he rather gave it up. Wow, what an important work God was doing!
3. Acts 7:23 “*Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel*.” There came a point in time where Moses began to realize Gods call upon his life, but this was after he had made his decision to follow the people of God.

It is here that we would come into the 11th verse. God was at work during those 40 years, and God is at work right here and now in our lives. He desires to equip us for that which He has called us.

**Exodus**

**2: 11-25**

**“Taken From The Water”**

**(Part 2)**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 11-15 Without Water**

**III.) Vs. 16-25 Drawing Water**

**I.) Intro.**

We now come to the second and third events in the early life of Moses. It was not Moses up bringing or characteristics that set him apart to be a deliver, it was clearly Gods handy work. There is a gap not filled in by the text of some forty years and according to Steven’s words in Acts 7: 22 “..**Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds**.” The intellectual development of the man Moses was clearly influenced by the time he spent in the courts of Egypt, he was trained and raised in their culture. According to verse 19 Jethro’s daughters all mistook him for an Egyptian which can only mean that he looked like an Egyptian, talked like an Egyptian and acted like an Egyptian. As such when Moses went any as the adopted son of Pharaoh’s daughter he would have heard the words of his body guards, “bow the knee” and every body would have to bow the knee.

 Yet at some time according to the author of Hebrews Moses “*when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward*.” Moses parents must have told him of his heritage as well as the promises of God towards the Israelites. Moses turned down, wealth, power, popularity; the **best that Egypt had to offer, for all the worst it had to give!** He chose to suffer affliction with the people of God. Suffering was not put upon him, he made a conscious choice to leave the lap of luxury for a life of hardship. In this world people don’t go with losers, they stay with winners, Moses wanted to be with the loser’s and he left everything to be on their team. The question of WHY is more about his spiritual development as we are told that he; “*esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.”* **Moses placed the right value on the right things**. **There was a point in Moses spiritual development that he backed up his belief by how he chose to live his life, “*reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.”*** And as we are told in Hebrews, he looked to his reward. That is the background to what takes place now in Moses. Here is a guy who has been living under the worlds way of thinking and doing things, he makes a conscious choice to become a believer and follower of the Lord at great cost to him self, yet joyful knowing the riches in Christ. But how will that all play out in every day life?

**II.) Vs. 11-15 Without Water**

Vs. 11 In Acts 7:23 we read Steven’s account of this, “***Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel***.” There ought to be in every believer’s life a time when just saying you are a Christian is not enough, when just going to church once or twice a week isn’t doing it. Some times this is gradual, as you begin to pull away from the things of Egypt, to others it is almost instantaneous. Moses had grown, not just physically but spiritually and just understanding the truths about his people was not enough, he had to go see for him self. Moses observed, their burdens and we are told that their burdens are best explained as that of an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. And Moses could not stand for the oppression of his people not even one of them.

Vs. 12 So with all the training of the Egyptians behind him and a passion for what God wants Moses does what a lot of us immature Christians try to do, **conquer the world with the principals of the world.** On a Christian front I see this all the time. The Church having the right desire, “*to reach a fallen people in bondage to the world*”, yet they do so by employing the worlds ways. The world has been in the entertainment business a lot longer then we have & they know how to appeal to the flesh. What brought me out of the world of sin and bondage was not entertainment it was TRUTH! And my Bible says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Notice, Moses “*looks this way and that way, and saw no one*”. Moses acted with premeditation as well as passion. He was trying to fulfill the call on his life by the energy of his own flesh. **He had manned wisdom and mans power and all it did was kill and bury**. If what Moses had done was what the Lord wanted why did he attempt to hide it?

 Steven in Acts again gives us insight into Moses thinking in killing the Egyptian, “***For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand***.” Now let’s see if we get the picture here? Egyptian’s persecuting Hebrews, Egyptian prince who is Hebrew yet looks and acts like an Egyptian kills an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. *“Yay, that does it for me and the rest of the three million sheepherders turned brick layers were ready to follow you! Oh by the way what was your name? Moses? Well you only have a few million more to kill and we are right behind you*!”

Vs. 13 Moses goes out the next day and sees two Hebrews fighting one of them oppressing the other and stops the fight. The word in verse 11 rendered “**beating**” and the one here rendered “**striking**” is the same word. Yet this time it is not two different people they are both Hebrews and Moses can’t understand why the one would beat the other. Moses, has not learned that you can not lead people that you are not amongst. It is a simple truth, but a profound one, “*You can’t lead people if you are not following God.*” Steven words this, “***that God would deliver them by his hand****, but they did not understand.”* God would deliver them but it would be His hand working through an X-Egyptian prince turned shepherd. What was it that the people did while they were in Egypt? Why they were shepherds! **Moses had to learn how to follow before he could learn how to lead**!

Vs. 14 Their response to Moses attempt*,* ***“Who made you Prince and Judge over us***.” Moses was the prince and judge over all of Egypt which would include them as well. **Moses came in as an Egyptian trying to lead the people by the ways of the Egyptians but they could only by led by the ways of a shepherd**. You can have all the credentials, but that does not make you a man that can lead others only God can do that and it is always the way of humility not power and authority! What was lacking in all of this was not Passion, Effort or Forethought. Moses had all of this what he did not utilize was the Holy Spirit. You can never do the work of God in the energy of the flesh it will only kill! All the training to lead Egyptians did nothing to lead Hebrews. Moses looked this way and that way but he did not look up towards God.

Vs. 15 Often you can learn a lot more about a person in defeat and failure then you can victory and what we learn about Moses is that God has more work to do in his life. Look at what Moses does with his failure:

1. Vs. 14b **Moses feared**: The self confidant Moses is now afraid. When we get out of the plan of God all our confidence goes. Now I’m not so sure that this is a bad thing for our confidence is not to be in ourselves but rather in the Lord.
2. Vs. 15 **Moses flees from his Grandfather**: All the passion for his people left him when he failed. Simply put he quit and ran! I see this a lot with Christians, we even have a word for it “burnout”. It happens when people with a passion for something do it with all they have only to not achieve what they wanted fast enough. Moses failed and his failure was because he attempted to Gods work in his power now he has lost his taste for Gods call. Yet God is not done with him.

We read here that Moses fled to Midian. This land here was most likely chosen by Moses for several reasons:

1. It was the land of Abraham’s younger sons through Keturah his wife after Sarah died. They settled on the southeastern Sinai in what today we would call west central Arabia.
2. The people of that land the Midianites were monotheistic and believed in the same God as the Hebrew people did. In fact, his father in laws name (Ruel) means friend of God.
3. The land of the Canaanites had an extradite treaty with Egypt, so that Moses knew that if he had fled their he would of been brought back to justice.

Moses must have felt as one big failure at this time, a big loser. He had abandoned his people, his call, his way of life. He left with nothing but the clothes on his back. I think that all of us at times experience Midian. The name Midian means “strife” and the strife was the warring in Moses members. And at the time we find ourselves there we are certain that we will be there for the rest of our lives, but the desert is part of Gods plan. It is out in the desert that Egypt and its ways get strip off of us. If you are in Midian right now, learn the lessons of it for you won’t be leaving it until you do. Moses came to Midian a prince but he would leave it a shepherd. He came to it a son of the queen he would leave it a son of a slave. He came to it wealthy, he left poor. He came to it a mighty warrior, he left it a meek man. Thank God for the Midian experiences in life as they fit us for service.

**III.) Vs. 16-25 Drawing Water**

Vs. 15b Moses failed because he went away from dependence upon the Holy Spirit and right after this failure he ends at a well of water. Nothing like blowing it to make us realize that we need the Holy Spirit. The word “dwell” means to make your home there or to settle there. The key to Christian living is sitting down and making your home by the well of the Holy Spirit. “*We need to keep ourselves under the spout where the Sprit comes out*!”

Vs. 16-17 God does not put Moses on the shelve, old Jethro had seven daughters and no sons, so they would get to the well real early and remove the stone and start watering the sheep only to bullied by the other shepherds who would come later. This was an everyday occurrence, until Moses steeped in to deliver them. God is showing Moses that His call on his life is still there but that he needs to learn how to lead. The word here “helped” means to deliver in the Hebrew. He just stood up, the root word here means to “abide”. Moses abided by the well! And just refused to move from the place of the well he stood his ground. I love the simplicity of the victory it was not about Moses kicking some bully shepherd tails, he just abided by the Holy Sprit and let Him do the work.

Vs. 18-20 Moses drew water for all of them the ladies and the sheep which indicates he is changing already. He has gone from doing it his way to doing it Gods way and more then that he has become a servant. People will follow a servant before they will ever follow a prince. In verse 20 Moses is so humbled out he does not even ask for anything in return.

Vs. 21-22 In the taking of Zipporah, “lady bird” and the naming of his son Gresham, “*an alien here*”, Moses still has more to learn and it will take 40 more years for he to be prepared. Moses saw himself still as an Egyptian but as time would pass he would see himself not as an Egyptian but as a Hebrew longing to take his people home to Canaan.

Vs. 23-25 When Moses left they fought with each other but in time they only cry to God. They moved form trying to do things by themselves to realizing only God could save them! The basis of God hearing their cry’s was the covenant between Abraham and God. It was not their faithfulness that came into Gods heart it was His own agreement He made with Abraham their for-father.

**Exodus**

**3: 1-10**

**“University of Fire Bush”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-4a A Burning Question**

**III.) Vs. 4b-10 A Holy Answer**

**I.) Intro.**

The stories of people’s lives are always incredible. How do people become who and what they are? What are the events in their lives that motivated them to become the persons that they are? Now I must admit I have selfish reasons as to why I love history; you see I’m looking for little nuggets for my own history. Those little insights that happened in some one else’s life that I can apply in mine.

 It is for these reasons that the story of Moses is so interesting to me; what were the key events that led Moses to become who he became? What we have before us today may just be the greatest turning point in his life. Further more if we can understand just what that was it may be the greatest turning point in your life as well.

 One of the greatest mysteries about God is why He so chooses to limit himself by using human means. If God wanted to deliver Israel out of Egypt why not just say so? We are talking about the God who spoke and everything leaped into existence. Instead, he uses this man named Moses, but why? ***The important part is not the use of the man but rather the revealing of who God is to the man***. God wants to reveal who He is to man kind, so that in the act of using a man they will come to know the God who sent him.

 The story is told of a seven-year-old about to make his first jump from the high dive at the local community pool. Though only 10 feet into the air to the little boy it looked like a 100 feet. The boy stood there and shook at the edge of the diving board obviously afraid to jump. The life guard seeing the line begin to pile up behind him started to encourage the boy to jump. Yet, all of the attention just made the boy more aware of his fear and failure. Moments passed and out of no where a large man stood up and walked over to the high dive, excusing himself he climbed the latter and slowly walked out on the board. As he approached the scared little boy he grabbed his hands and looked him in the eyes and said four little words that changed that little boy’s life. Now The four little words were from his father and were, “Scott, let’s Jump together!” God the Father comes to Moses at the high point of his life grabs his hand and says, “Moses, lets jump together!” As simple as that story is Moses first must know who His Heavenly Father is.

**II.) Vs. 1-4a A Burning Question**

Vs. 1 The N.T. accounts of this story give us the full picture. In Acts 7: 30 Steven gives some important information, “*And when* ***forty years had passed****, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai*.” From the point that Moses entered the land of Midian to the story here before us 40 years has passed. Moses was 40 when he left Egypt so now he is now 80.

 Moses has spent the first 40 years being educated at the best schools of Egypt in fact we are told that Moses schooling had made him, *“..mighty in words and deeds*.” There is little doubt that this education had done much to prepare him to lead Egypt, but it had done nothing to prepare him to lead Israel. So God put him back in school at Midian for 40 years. **Now you will remember what Midian means, “strife”. Simply put God sent Moses through the school of hard knocks**. “***Before we can be prepared for His service we need to be striped of what we think we know***.” In Moses case it took him 40 years in the school of hard knocks. If Moses is anything like me he spent the first 35 years complaining about being in this dumb school. I believe we can always shorten our stay some what in the school of hard knocks, if we will just be still and remember the words of Paul who said, *“..I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified*.”

 Moses learned how to be a shepherd of another mans flock! Here we are given another name for Ruel Moses father in law, “Jethro” which means “excellence or superiority”. Most likely this was his title. Moses was use to hearing the words “bow the knee” because he was royalty. People waited on him hand and foot now he waited alone on a bunch smelly old sheep. “*Much of Gods training is in the monotonous every day things which we learn in silence with out our knowing.*” Moses learned:

1. That people like sheep weren’t his, they belonged to one superior. Moses had acted before in away that was like a prince and a judge, now he was just a shepherd for his father in law.
2. That to lead people you must be among them, all the time! Moses spent allot of time alone with those sheep. Over the coarse of those forty years he had done just about everything you can with those sheep. He learned more from the sheep then he ever taught them!
3. He learned to listen in the wilderness. Ask any teacher who their best students are and they will tell you the ones that listen! The wilderness of Midian is one of the most desolate places on earth. There are no trees and very little wild life. Moses spent most of those 40 years in silence with exception to the bleating of sheep. Any person who lead others must be one who listens!

Moses led the flock to the back of the desert, to where he came to Horeb, the mountain of God. The word “Horeb” means “desolate wasteland”. If you were to go over there you would easily see why it is just a barren dry land scape. That probably summed up Moses’ last 40 years, a time when nothing was happening, his life felt as if it was dry, barren and all alone. Yet what Moses was unaware was that he was about to get his “Masters degree” at the University of Burning Bush!

 If you do a word study of this Mountain you will found some interesting stuff. First of Horeb, is the name of the mountain range, but their is a particular peak here that is called Sinai. It is also the place a few 100 years later God will meet with Elijah and commission him, as well as the place many believe that Paul got commissioned with the gospel. Is it not interesting that such desolate mountain range would be called the “mountain of God”? The last place in the world you would expect to meet God is a dry barren lonely place, yet it seems that God often met his servants there. “***God shows up in our loneliest most desolate times***.” We are always looking for God in the times of great success but it seems to me that He is much more real when we are out in the desolate times of our lives!

Vs. 2 Now there are some great things right here in Moses in counter with God at the burning bush.

1. The word for bush here is a very interesting one as it means a thorn bush. Remember that back in Gen. 3:18 because of mans disobedience God said, “*Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both* ***thorns and thistles*** *it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; For dust you are, and to dust you shall return*.” This old bush is a product of mans sin and rebellion.
2. If you look up this Hebrew word for “bush” you will find it only two other places. In Deut. 33:16 we read that, “*With the precious things of the earth and its fullness, And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush.*” That word bush is the same word as used here but the interesting thing with the passage is the word “dwelt” it is the word shekinah. It was the angel of the Lord or the shekinah glory of the Lord that Moses saw with his eyes. I believe that the angel of the Lord was none other then a pre-incarnate manifestation of Jesus. Further more we are told in 1 Corin. 4 that “..*glory of Christ, who is the image of God, .. and .. that the glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ*.” Jesus is the glory of God.
3. This leads me to the conclusion that it was none other then Gods grace that Moses was learning as he observed the bush on fire yet not consumed. Fire in scripture is always a symbol of judgment. Gods judgment upon human sin yet the bush not being consumed speaks of Gods grace.

Vs. 3-4a God does not speak with Moses until He has Moses’ attention. I said above Moses has to learn how to listen and give his attention to another. I see a lot of people who make the continual mistakes in their lives not because they don’t know the right things to do but rather because they don’t do as Moses did here and “turn aside to see the great sight, why the bush does not burn.” It was the grace of God that halted Moses and made his want to know more! His grace will only burn bright when we see it aflame in the wilderness of our falleness. We spend far too much of our time protecting our failures instead of admitting them. “**God dwells in the majesty of simplicity**!” Think of this, God choosing to reveal Himself and his character in a bush on fire yet not consumed! We are always looking for some magical experience, but God chooses the simplest of things to reveal who He is. In Gods university, every thing is the class room!

**III.) Vs. 4b-10 A Holy Answer**

Vs. 4-6 We see several things in God conversation that He reveals to Moses about Himself. Moses, over the last 40 years had begun to think: God does not care about me, He has no place for me but Moses is about to learn that God does care and does have a plan. Yet Moses is first going to learn something’s about God.

1. Vs. 4 God calls Moses twice by name. God had not forgotten about Moses or the call He had placed upon his life. No matter if we are in the land of strife by the hill of desolation God still knows our name. Moses, had not heard his name often in the last 40 years how sweet the sound of it when the Lord from the midst of the His grace called it forth twice. Look at Moses instant response, here I am. I love that! He must have felt as though he had been warming the bench for 40 years, but now the coach has called you into the game.
2. Vs. 5 God is Holy: Moses needs to approach God reverently. He needed to understand that you approach God not on being worthy to do so. A servant always took off his sandals upon entering the masters house. God is not the “*The man upstairs*”, “*My good buddy*” or anything else. He is our creator and we are His creation. Verse 6 makes it plain that Moses understood his falleness and God’s holiness. If Moses was to lead he needed to understand that he was to follow!
3. Vs. 6 Notice here how God chose to reveal Himself, as the God who keeps His promises. That is why He tells Moses who he was the God of. God had made promises to those forefathers and he was going to keep His promises through Moses. We all like to make good deals, but the trouble is that they don’t always turn out the way we thought they would, not so with God when He makes a promise to you He always keeps it.
4. Vs. 7 God is compassionate: He has seen all of the cries of His people. He new their hardships, felt their sorrows. Do you realize that Jesus is aquatinted with all your life? He went through everything that you have. You never to wonder if Jesus can relate to what you are going through the Bible says He is, yet with out sin. He understands!
5. Vs. 8 God is faithful: God is not just about lighting the burden He is about blessing your socks off. Our God wants to do far more then just deliver you out of bondage He wants to bring you into a place flowing with milk and honey.
6. Vs. 9 God is a God of action: In verse 8 He declares that He is coming down and here in verse 9 He says why, “*He has seen the oppression*”. God is not just all knowing He is all powerful as well.

Vs. 10 Moses was no doubt being blessed by Gods revelation of His character, but here God tells Moses that He is going to be used as an instrument. God has revealed who He is and now He tells Moses, “*Lets jump together*.” Life is not a spectator sport! It’s time to jump, but you’re not jumping alone, your jumping with God! Moses learns that most important qualification of a servant of God is knowing God. Nothing that God has put in our lives is a waist.

**Exodus**

**3: 11-22**

**“Wanted! Deliver, No Qualifications Necessary”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 11-14 Who am I and what is Your Name?**

**III.) Vs. 15-22 I Am with You!**

**I.) Intro.**

It is wonderful to see God reveal who He is before He ever tells Moses that, he has a plan for His life. Every where you go to day and talk with pastors about what they feel is the greatest need in the church today is to get people busy for the kingdom of God. There is a consumer mentality that has taken over the church of God. The folks at most church’s see themselves as mere customers. The question is how do we correct this problem? How do you take a bunch of folks who think they are the prince of Egypt and get them to a place where they just see themselves as servants?

 Well, last week we saw that:

1. You send them out in a deserted place and put them in the school of hard knocks.
2. Once you have striped them from themselves, you give them a glimpse of Gods Holiness and their depravity, with a covering of Gods grace. You bring them down to bare wood. It’s not that Moses did not have a finish on Him, it just was not the right finish!
3. Once you have done that they are ready, for the finishing. This week & next week we will see God applying the finish on Moses. Now this has many layers as well, in fact from 3:11-4:17 Moses lists 5 reasons why he could not be involved & in each of those 5 reasons God after doing some sanding applies another coat.

**II.) Vs. 11-14 Who Am I and What Is Your Name?**

Vs. 11 Moses having just encountered the character and nature of God was then told in verse 10, “*Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt*.” **Moses did not understand the little word, “therefore”. God had just revealed who he was and based upon who He was He was sending Moses. The important thing is not Moses it is the Who that is present with him.** Look at Moses, “*But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt*?” Moses mistake 40 years earlier was that he tried to do the work of God in the strength of man. Forty years pass and Moses is still thinking the same way. The only difference was that forty years ago he had confidence now he has none. In verse 4 Moses responded to God revelation with the words, “Here I am..”, now when he realizes that God is going to work through his fears and failures he responds with, “Who am I..”

 It seems that Moses sees himself as a “nobody” now. Moses argument goes something like this; “*God I was a big man in Egypt 40 years ago and I failed, now I’m a nobody and you want to use me*?”

Vs. 12a **Look again at what Moses said, “Who am I..” and now look at God response, “I will certainly be with you.”** God gets Moses off the focus of himself altogether.

 **The problem with us humans is that we are to aware of ourselves, both from a positive stand point, from a negative approach, consumed with our own failures**. God ignores the human solution and gets Moses to look at God who is the only One able to deliver. God never answers the question of “who am I”; instead He reminds Moses of the fact that “He will certainly be with him.” The important question is not who we are it is whether or not God is with us!

 **In the Hebrew the words “I will be” is the first person singular form of the words “I am”, though they have different tenses they are the same word**. **God is revealing to Moses that I am is with you. Moses confidence must never be in himself at all it must be in God who is sending him**.

Vs. 12b Now notice the second part of this, *“..And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain*.” God says that He will give Moses a sign but not until after he has done what God has told him to do. **We often look for signs to see if we should move forward but God gives signs only confirming our step of faith**! So that we will learn to trust who God is above what He does. If our faith is tied to what God dose, then there is no true faith it must be tied to Who He is. Faith: **Is when we take what we know to be true about God and use that to interpret our situation and circumstances**. God is simply getting Moses to act upon Gods character! God does not say, “If” in this sign. Instead He says (**When and shall**), “***When*** *you have brought the people out of Egypt, you* ***shall*** *serve God on this mountain.”* This is Gods personal guarantee. God is telling Moses, “You’re not going alone!”

 Now matter what we are facing God is in control of your life and you’re not going alone. Further more with Him in charge you are going to have victory! Because that is what God tells Moses here, “When you have brought them out..”

Vs. This brings Moses to another question: Who is God? God had told Moses that what matter was who was going with him not who he was. So Moses wants further clarification on who God is. God had shown Moses that He was Holy, full of grace compassionate and a God of action, but how would that play out in every day life, especially when it came to leading a nation out of Egypt? Moses is trying to play out different scenarios in his head. He is thinking about all the possibilities of failure and the first one he is reminded of is the fact that last time he went to just one Hebrew and acted on his behalf he said, “who made you prince and judge?” Moses is ready to go but what about the 3 million Jews? They may need a little more to go on then “God told me!” In those days’ names meant something as they represented a person’s character. In the book of Genesis every time God revealed more of His Character He did so with a new name like “El, which means high” or “Shaddai, which means mighty”. Even the Egyptians named their gods after their perceived attributes like “Ra, which means swift.”

Vs. 14 God reveals His character to Moses in the words “I am” and there are different tenses of the same Hebrew word further more so is the word translated LORD in verses 15-16. In verse 15-16 that the word LORD is all in capitals. The reason is that in the Hebrew that is just the constants YHVH. This is the same word only in the third person singular of the word to be, and means He is or He will be. God is revealing in this the covenant name for God that it is He who makes and keeps His promises. God is and always has been and always will be! God wanted Moses and the Israelites to know:

1. That it is only He that exists, there are no other Gods. He is the God who is and all others are figments of people’s imaginations.
2. That he is self-existent. He is the only creator and has no creator. God exists apart from and independent from anyone or anything. Practically, He is a God who does not need any help, thus there is nothing that can thwart His will.
3. That he is unchangeable. He is not the God that has evolved or was anything else. What ever he was, He continues to be and will be forever. Thus what He has begun to do He will bring into completion because there are no changes which can happen to alter His plans and purposes.

If you go to the gospel of John, you will find Jesus referring to himself as “I am” and each of the seven times he does he puts an end on it.

1.) John 6:35 **To those that are hungry and thirsty He declares**: “*I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst*.”

2.) John 8:12 **To those who are in darkness, He declares**: “*I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life*.”

3.) John 10:9 **To those that can’t find their way, He declares**: “*I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture*.”

4.) John 10:11 **To those that need protection, He declares***: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep*.”

5.) John 11:25 **To those that are down and out, He declares**: *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live*.”

6.) John 14:6 **To those in need of direction, He declares***: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*.”

7.) John 15:1 **To those searching for meaning, He declares***: “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser*.”

Simply put “I Am” allows you to fill in the blank to meet your needs. What ever you may need God is the One who alone can meet that need. Further more with God there is no WAS or WILL BE there is only the present. God is today, all that He was He still is. He has nothing to learn, nothing to acquire, nothing to become. He alone is reality.

**III.) Vs. 15-22 I Am with You!**

Vs. 15 God shows how He is going to be with Moses. This verse as well as in verse 6 God declares that He is the God that keeps His promises. But did you notice that referring to all these men who have died God never says that, “He WAS the God of them.” God is the God of the living not the God of the dead and even the end of life will not thwart His purpose and promises!

17 times in these 12 verses God shares with Moses that He will do and it shall happen!

Vs. 16 God wants them to know that He knows their past, (He has seen). Maybe you are going through something right now and you feel as if God does not care, but He does He sees it and in His timing He will act!

Vs. 17 Further more God has a plan for their future blessing. Oh there are some battles ahead in that land as well but God will do the fighting. I think often we get bummed out because we don’t realize that God is at work all along. We don’t have to make it happen we can trust Him!

Vs. 18-22 God lays out exactly what will happen before it comes to pass. What this shows us is all that we can do is be faithful it is only the Lord that can cause it to come out right. **When you come right down to it, all we have going for us is God**! But with God being for us who can be against us? God will see to it that you will be returned the lost wages while you were in bondage, He will take care of the hard-hearted Pharaoh’s. You won’t leave empty handed! So how about it, are you ready to trust Him?

**Exodus**

**4: 1-17**

**“Here I Am, Send Him”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-9 Signs for Unbelief**

**III.) Vs. 10-12 Help I’m Broken**

**IV.) Vs. 13-17 I Don’t Want to Go**

**I.) Intro.**

In chapter 3 Moses had a close encounter with God. From verse 4 through verse 10 God personally reveals His character to Moses. Having done so God then commission Moses to bring out His people. Although 40 years had passed since Moses had tried to exercise God’s work by human effort he none the less still saw it the same way, coming through him.

 In verse 18 of chapter three God told Moses that the Israelites would listen to him. Yet apparently that was not enough for Moses. Now remember that it is Moses who is telling us this story. When you tell a story about your self, do you show all your faults & failures? Why, of coarse you do. There is no way in reading this that Moses comes out in a good light. So, why would Moses be so honest? Well I think that Moses is speaking for the benefit of you and I. Peter speaking of the prophets of old said, “*To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you*..”

 Moses has weaknesses that he is very aware of and in every one of his five objections God continually forces Moses to deal with them that in his weakness God would make him strong.

# II.) Vs. 1-9 Signs for Unbelief

Vs. 1 It appears that Moses has been thinking for 40 years that the failure in his life was do to himself and some lack of ability. Here we are given the third of Moses’ questions. In each of them there is a pealing away tell you get at the real root of the problem.

 God was aware of Moses thinking, He tells Moses that He is the God of Grace, that He is the I Am, then in verse 18 He even tells Moses that they will head his voice and that Pharaoh will not but all of this is part of His plan. Moses is still fixated upon his own self. All along God has been telling Moses that the problem with Moses is that he thinks too much about his self.

 Moses asks, “Suppose they say, the Lord has not appeared to you.” I believe that for the most part these signs are for Moses as much as they are for the Israelites. These three signs God was revealing to Moses He could have chosen anything to be a sign but He chose these for a reason. There are three things in the life of every believer, (**the devil, the flesh, and the world**), that will cause us to fail and in each case God would have us to know that He has over come them.

**The Devil**

1. Vs. 1-5 **Sign of the rod and the snake**: The elements of this sign is made up of three things, the rod or staff, the snake, and Moses taking it up by the tale.
2. **The rod or staff**: To a shepherd the rod had many functions but it’s primary one is very basic, **SUPPORT**. It was used to support a person as they walked up difficult terrain. It was also used as a tool to protect the sheep in leading them. But in each of these cases it was always used as a support. Spiritually speaking what supports us as we walk along in this life is Gods grace. God had said that He was the Great I Am, that is, He is the One that can alone support us. To which Moses replied that he was still afraid of failure. So God is saying it is, “**Hey, Moses it is by grace that you stand not human effort**.” Now that brings us to the next part.
3. Vs.3 **Casting it to the ground and it became a snake**: There are two parts here that need to be looked at.
4. **The casting of the rod to the ground:** The idea here is that the rod represented Gods grace. God is saying that to not rely upon His grace is to not be able to stand or support yourself. Moses was seeing his ability to stand from only his abilities and not the Lords. When we Christians try to do anything apart from His grace we lose the only basis of support. Paul would say in 2 Corin. “*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God*,”
5. **It became a serpent**: There are three words in Hebrew that are translated snake or serpent. This is the most common one and it is used some 30 times. It is the same word used in Gen. 3: 1 referring to the devil. When Moses did this to Pharaoh in chapter 7:10 the word use there is different, there it means sea monster. Look at Moses reaction as it says that, “he fled from it”. God is saying, “*When you cast aside my grace as a basis of support you open up yourself to the enemy*.” When we try to stand in our own strength we always give opportunity to the devil in our lives.
6. Vs. 4 **Reach out your hand and take it by the tail**: I know a little bit about catching snakes. When I was a kid, we used to catch them. You never catch a snake by the tail because if you grab a snake by the tail they will reach right around and bite the tar out of you. What you do is you distract them with one hand why you reach around with the other and quickly grab them right behind the head. If you can control the head you control the whole snake. So why would God tell Moses to grab it by the tail? The only way you could do this, especially if you were as afraid as Moses was here, is **by faith**!

God was teaching Moses some great things of why we fail and how to over come it. We fail when we try to stand apart from His grace, but we can by victorious when by faith we take hold of our failure and trust God. God has authority over the greatest reason for failure, the devil. Satan can not thwart God in your life if you by faith take hold of His grace. Notice what happened to that snake when Moses was obedient, it turned right back into a rod. God tells Moses in verse 5 that the Israelites will believe that I have sent you when they see that you through Me have authority over the devil, even though you have failed before.

**The Flesh**

2.) Vs. 6-7 **The sign leprous hand and the whole hand**: Here we are given two elements of this sign.

1. **Put your hand in your bosom ..and he took it out and it was leprous**: Leprosy in scripture is a symbol of sin, and the hand symbolizes the energy of the flesh. So when Moses put his hand near his heart, “bosom” it turned out sinful. What God is showing Moses is that failure will occur when your heart is not right with God. Moses did not fail because of lack of ability, he failed because his heart was not right with God. When we try to serve God with a wrong heart it always fails, apart from God we are always unfit for service.
2. Vs. 7 **Put your hand in your bosom again**: The principal that God is teaching Moses, “*It is not the hand that affects the heart but the heart that affects the hand*.” Change your heart and what you are doing will change as well.

The heart that is not right with God will always bring about failure in our lives. But the good news is that if we get out hearts right with the Lord we can be restored as whole! We can be victorious as we get our hearts right with God, no matter how bad we have failed.

**The World**

3.) Vs. 8-9 **The water from the river will become blood on dry land**: Here we are given the last of the signs. Notice that this sign was only to be used if they did not believe the first two. This sign is rather simple, taken of the water out of the Nile and the pouring it onto dry land.

1. Egypt as I have said before is a symbol of the world and the lifeblood of Egypt was the Nile river. Egypt owed its very existence to the Nile and it’s over flowing its banks. God is telling Moses; we fail when we try to adopt the world’s ways to do His work. Moses, learned in all the ways of the Egyptians, failed when he tried to apply those methods to Gods call. So what is he to do? Dump it out onto dry land. Dump it out and it turns into the blood. There is nothing of value in my life accept the blood of Jesus and trusting the world system will get you nowhere.

God giving victory over the three areas or reasons why we fail, the devil, the flesh, and the world and each case if we trust Him we have victory. A victorious life is one lived in faith and dependence upon God. When that happens we can be confident in God for He alone is dependable.

# III.) Vs. 10-12 Help I’m Broken

Vs. 10 Moses is still not convinced; the word “eloquent” here is the word for man. Moses is saying if you will I’m not a man. Now you will remember the words of Steven concerning Moses ability to speak in Acts 7 *“..Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was* ***mighty in words*** *and deeds*.” Moses is thinking that he failed because he was not a good enough speaker. “I don’t have the ability to persuade people.” The difference between Moses 40 years ago and now will be God not his ability or lack of it to speak.

 It is not how well a person speaks that makes them effective or not effective, it is Who they are speaking about and Who they are relying on when they speak! This then is one of the greatest excuses we all use to not serve the Lord, “I’m not gifted in this area or that.” “If I was just better looking, more intelligent, or had a better personality, I’d be better fit for His service.” ***God is not looking for ability He is looking for availability***.

Vs. 11-12 God’s answer to Moses is not on what he lacked but rather on what he needed.

1. Vs. 11 God says that He made the mouth the way that it is and the ear the way that it is. Even if you have all those things what good are they if you are not relying and trusting in the Lord. It is not the smooth talker that God can use rather it is the one that simply trusts the Lord. The person who is deficient in certain areas can be more affective for the Lord because they do not trust in their own selves but rather in the Him.
2. Vs. 12 God is telling Moses that if he trusts Him God will speak through him. Let me put this another way so we can all grasp it; “*What people need is not something it is Someone.*” ***God’s design is to show Himself sufficient in our insufficiencies***.

**IV.) Vs. 13-17 I Don’t Want to Go**

Vs. 13 Moses has finally gotten to the real problem, he does not want to go. The bottom line is Moses is saying, “*I don’t trust you*.”

Vs. 14a This angers the Lord, because unbelief is always rips us off. God has shown over and over again that Moses problem was one of trust, now finally Moses says, I don’t trust you. Hey you may not be able to trust man but you can trust God. ***Moses was not unable, he was unwilling***.

Vs. 14b So God here says, “*Look Moses, you are all caught up in your self and your ability, but you haven’t even said a word and here is your three-year older brother on his way to meet you. Your worried about how people will receive you but Aaron is going to rejoice when he sees you.*”

Vs. 15-17 Poor Moses, because of his lack of trust God allows him what he wants and it is here that you are in trouble. Because what you want rarely turns out to be a blessing. Aaron will be the one who allows the nation to turn to idolatry.

 **Exodus**

**4: 18-31**

**“Returning to Egypt”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 18-20 A Future, Not A Failure**

**III.) Vs. 21-23 They Belong to Me**

**IV.) Vs. 24-26 You Belong to Me**

**V.) Vs. 27-31 You’re Not Alone**

**I.) Intro.**

God has always been into people and what is more amazing is that He uses people to polish people. The only way that you can polish a diamond is with another diamond. So the Lord uses us to further polish each other to shine Gods glory.

 God is about to use Moses as part of His polishing dust, but before He can do this He has to prepare Moses. So a few weeks back we saw that God does so by first revealing to Moses who He is. God gave Moses several signs that were intended to show Moses that He was greater then Moses failures. There are three things in our lives that will cause us to fail, “the devil, the flesh, and the world.” So God gives Moses the sign of the rod, which is grace by faith. Then to over come the flesh God shows Moses that all he needs to do is get his heart right and what he does will be right. Lastly, God shows Moses that if you are struggling with the world, dump it out and get rid of it. This week we see God give Moses some last minute instructions. **In these verses we shall notice four things God wanted Moses to know before he went back to Egypt**.

**II.) Vs. 18-20 A Future, Not A Failure**

Remember what Egypt was to Moses; not only did it represent home, **but it also represented the place of his greatest failure**. No wonder Moses had reluctance when the nation needed him what did he do. Forty years pass and God asks him to return. How would you respond if God sent you back into the areas of your life that you most often failed?

Vs. 18 Moses returns from his conversation with the Lord to Jethro his father in law. Before Moses is given any further instructions he first had to be obedient. God is interesting in you dealing with our past failures. I wonder how many times Moses during those past 40 years thought about his failure in Egypt. Yet, Moses was ready to act in faith and go back to deal with his failure.

 Notice the words Moses uses to Jethro as they reveal the state of Moses heart. “***Please let me go and return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive***.” This statement by Moses sets the context of the rest of this passage. No less then six times in chapters 3-4 God tells Moses that not only are the Israelites alive but that God is going to use Moses to deliver them to a land flowing with milk and honey, (3:8). But here before his father in law he says that he wants to go and see if they are still alive. One theory is that Moses does not quite know how to tell Jethro that he has just had a conversation with God in a burning bush who told him to go back to Egypt to set free 3 million slaves from the hand of the mightiest man on earth. That might be part of it, but I suggest to you that there might be another reason. ***I think that Moses had ran away from his problem but his problem had not ran away from him***. God is always showing us areas of our life that He is working on, we can run if we want from them but the truth is that they will always be there when you stop! Moses running from the problem had no doubt caused problems with his brethren, but notice how he over reacts, “*to see if they are still alive.*” Jethro with out knowing anything says, “*Go in peace*.” Moses had anything but peace at this moment. “*Peace! Peace, when I’m going back to the very place where I let everybody down then I ran away from it instead of taking responsibility, leaving everybody else to pay for my mistake*.”

Vs. 19 God says to Moses***, “Go, return to Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead***.” Moses wants to talk about the past failure; God wants to talk bout the hope of the future. Moses is stuck in the quagmire of guilt but God says, “**Stop dealing with the past and start realizing the future**!” “**So you blew it, I knew you would, those guys who sought your life they themselves are dead, so go back**.” **The future is full of hope because of Who God is, and not of who we are not**! Paul says to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 2:9 “*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him*.”

Vs. 20 One last thing here notice what Moses takes with him as he heads back to Egypt:

1. His family. Is that not what God had given him in spite of his failure?
2. He brings with him the rod of God in his hand. Which as we saw represents Gods grace.

We don’t need to dwell on past failures, instead we can move on in the hope of the future.

**III.) Vs. 21-23 They Belong to Me**

Vs. 21 The second thing God wanted Moses to know as he went back to Egypt is to show Pharaoh all the signs, which He had shown Moses. Those signs were as much for Moses as they were for anyone else. Moses was consumed with his own failure, so God has given him these signs so that Moses might be continually reminded that God has overcome his failures even if Moses is battling the devil, flesh and the world.

 Yet we are told that in spite of these signs Pharaoh would still not obey. Moses who is struggling to entering into a place of failure is told that even though he is being obedient and doing everything that God has told him it still is going to appear as though he has failed. God is saying that He is going to allow Pharaoh to have what he wants, namely a hard heart. It is not that God will harden Pharaoh’s heart but rather that God knows that his heart will become hard.

Vs. 22 Look here at what God is saying to Moses, “**Israel is My son, My firstborn**.” Moses is hearing something that no one else has ever heard concerning Israel, that Israel belongs to God. God is telling Moses that no matter how much you love your brethren I love them more. What this is telling Moses who is consumed with failure is that God who can not fail is in complete control. “*You go and tell Pharaoh that though he may think that Israel is nothing but a bunch of worthless slaves, they are in reality My sons and daughters*!”

Vs. 23 Further more God tells Moses that if Pharaoh doesn’t let His children go he will kill Pharaoh’s children. God is saying that He knows the situations and that even thought they may not look like they are in your best interest you have to trust Him that they are. So Gods second word to Moses is that ***success is in His hands not yours***. Those problem areas are His problems and as you yield your life over to Him He will deal with them.

**IV.) Vs. 24-26 You Belong to Me**

Vs. 24 Now we come to this strange little section. May I just remind you that Moses is the one that is telling us what happened here, with that said this is another one of those embarrassing moments. It is here that we get the third thing God wanted Moses to know that, ***the only one he had to please was God***!

 Now we are not sure just how it was that God was ready to kill Moses only that this was the case. You can see the family of four walking to Egypt and all of the sudden as they stop for the day Moses is near death.

Vs. 25-26 It is here that we are told of Moses little, “*Lady Bird*” taking charge and performing circumcision on their youngest son Eliezer, “My God is help.”

Back in Gen. 17: 10-12 God had commanded Abraham as a sign of the covenant between them to have every male child be circumcised. In the N.T. we are told that in Rom. 2: 28-29 “*For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*..” What circumcision was all about was an outward sign which symbolized the cutting away from the old nature. So why would Moses not circumcise his son? We are given a clue in Zipporah’s rebuke of Moses. It appears that she viewed this as somewhat barbaric. So Moses was wanting to please his wife above the Lord and in so doing he was not being obedient to the Lord. Moses was always to concerned at what others thought when in reality we must first and foremost please the Lord. Moses was about to go and speak to the most powerful man on the earth about Gods people being set free to worship God, how could he do so if he himself was not following? As Moses went back to Egypt God wanted him to be concerned with following Him and not mans opinions, not even his wife’s. It is interesting here that you do not here of Zipporah and their son’s until the 18th chapter, which is when they return from Egypt. It appears that they went to stay in Midian with Jethro until Moses return.

**V.) Vs. 27-31 You’re Not Alone**

Vs. 27 Moses although told that Aaron was coming out to met him, finds out that the older brother whom he had not seen in 40 years had also been told to get him. So the last thing God shows Moses, ***he is not alone***. One of the greatest obstacles we have to overcome as we go back into the places where we have failed is the feeling that we are all alone and that no one will want to be around us. So God sends his brother who also heard from the Lord.

Vs. 28-29 Now don’t go by this verse to quickly because as Moses told Aaron all that God had said, Aaron must have believed him as he went with him to the elders. All we need is someone who will believe the best for us. We all need cheerleaders in our lives, folks that will come along side us in spite of our losing track records and say, “*I’m with you brother*!” That’s what God does for Moses. ***Man never under estimate the value of a friend***!

Vs. 30-31 Man look at what God does with the man that was a failure, he has given him signs and encouraged him so that Moses walks back in the area of failure and God performs a wonder as the elders of the nation not only believe him they worship God.

**Exodus**

**5: 1-21**

**“Who Do You Belong Too?”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-9 The Battle Begins**

**III.) Vs. 10-14 Get Back Too Work**

**IV.) Vs. 15-21 Can’t Things Just Stay the Same?**

**I.) Intro.**

Much of the land of Israel is in dispute as to which it belongs to. God had told Moses that Israel belonged to Him (4:22), yet Pharaoh also was claiming ownership (5:1). **Now whom do you think Israel herself would claim she belonged to**? Last week we saw Moses move in faith back to the greatest place of failure and when ever a person does this they can be sure of one thing, **opposition**! The areas of our lives, our thoughts, actions, emotions and wills, are being fought for as to whom they belong. God says they are His and wants to set you free so that you can worship Him. The devil says they belong to him, and he wants then to enslave you to himself. You have a choice in this as well; who do you say they belong to?

**II.) Vs. 1-9 The Battle Begins**

Vs. 1 Notice the word “**Afterward**”. Moses and Aaron came to request the release of the Israelites “afterward”. Look at the progression; in chapter 4:31 they told the leadership what God had told them and the people responded, “**they heard, they believed and they worshiped**.” Those of you who have been Christians for a time realize that this feeling of pure hope is going to face reality very soon. We will need to realize that mere enthusiasm with out action is just hype. Now notice it is right on the heals of this that they boldly go before the most powerful leader in the world to ask for the freedom of the Israelites. You talk about riding a high wave of emotion. Can you imagine how strange this all must of been for Moses? Forty years ago he walked those same halls of the palace not as a leader of the slaves but instead as the heir apparent to the throne. Moses, request was the one that God had instructed him to ask for in chapter 3:18, “***three days out one day to worship then three days back***.” Sounds like an unreasonable request for 400 years of forced labor, just give me a week’s vacation and we will call it even! Moses make this very simple request, “*Let My people go*!” Moses is going to say these same words **seven times** here in Exodus to Pharaoh. But in every case in Exodus they refer not to physical freedom but rather to spiritual freedom. Moses cry to set Gods people free has as it’s goal the liberation of Gods people spiritually. Oh, they were in bondage physically but the request of Moses from the Lord was concerned with their right to worship whom they choose.

Vs.2 Why wouldn’t Pharaoh allow them to go worship whom they wanted? Perhaps he was afraid that they would not return, but I think that there is a more plausible truth. Each Pharaoh was thought to be the child of Rah the sun god. So he was sat next to the idle in the temple and worshiped right along with Rah. Pharaoh was anything but a public servant all the public lived to serve him. His power and authority were supreme. There is an inscription by the Pharaoh on a temple in Egypt that reads, *“I am that which was, and is, and shall always be, and no man has lifted my veil*.” ***The freedom of any man has to do with whom they worship not where they worship***. If they are free to worship the true and living God, then no matter where they are and what you do to them they shall never be enslaved to anyone. In John 8:36 Jesus said, “***Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed***.”

It is my opinion that Pharaoh realized this truth. Thus his response, “*Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?*” To understand Pharaoh’s statement is to understand the plagues that God sends upon the Egyptians. ***Every one of these plagues goes against one of the gods of Egypt.*** Through the plagues God is showing Pharaoh that He is god and Pharaoh is not. Pharaoh goes on to say that even if he knew the Lord he would not let them go. It does not matter to Pharaoh Who God is it only matters to him who he is.

Vs. 3 Moses even tries to persuade Pharaoh that it is in his best economical interest to let them go to worship the true God lest He judge Pharaoh’s slave labor. But this does not convince him. You can never compromise or reason with the god of this world with the things that enslave you, it does no good.

 Egypt is a symbol of the world system. This system is one that before we were Christians we all lived our lives in accordance with, Eph. 2:2-3. Then like the Israelites we here the word, believe and worship. We come to know Jesus personally, but we are still in the old world system. So we now are Christians living in a world that is worshiping a different god. when we start trying to worship the true God there is opposition, from two things.

1. Vs. 2 First, there is a god of this world, Pharaoh, who tells us through T.V. friends, family and other things that he does not know this God that we want to worship and even if he did he is not going to let us go.
2. Vs. 4 Then we have, the pressure from the flesh which was enslaved to the things of the world, to which the god of this world is (Pharaoh) is only to happy to remind us and command us to get back at our old way of life.

Vs. 5-9 The god of this world has a great fear in seeing anyone set free to worship the true God. He will do everything in his power to see that you remain enslaved by the things of this world. If the god of this world does not want, you to go this way then this mean that what he is keeping you from what will set you free!

 Notice carefully how the god of this world (Pharaoh) handles the Israelites attempt to be free spiritually to worship the true God. He uses the same things today.

1. Vs. 5 Here it is the use of time, specifically Idle time. His complaint to Moses is this, “*Look if they have enough time to worship the true God then they have enough time to be enslaved to me, the god of this world*.” So that is what the god of this world does, *“Look church is on Sunday, that’s enough.” “You want to worship?” “I’ll let you worship the things of your flesh all you want and you know how pleasurable they are, remember*?”
2. Vs. 6-7 Here we see again in the realm of time, that the god of this world makes unrealistic demands on us. He will fill you with so much stuff to do that it becomes impossible to keep up. Then here comes a masterstroke, the bricks of life, aren’t holding together they are crumbling apart, yet the demand has not decreased. **So we start wondering if this Christian thing is working at all.** Were trying but we just keep falling behind. Before, when were not Christians we were enslaved but it was not as bad as it is now, we think. Yes, there were demands on us, but there was not the Church thing, reading the Bible and prayer. “*Why, I don’t have time for those things, I’ll just let those slide and watch some T.V. instead; there is that good R rated movie I’ve been hearing about*.”
3. Vs. 8 Now that he has you starting to compromise and fail he brings in guilt. “*Your just lazy, that’s why you can’t keep one foot in the world and one in the Church and keep going.” “Why, everybody else can still play in the world and be a good Christian*.” Right here we begin to wonder if this Church, God thing is all worth it. I mean it’s just not fun, something has to go.
4. Vs. 9 The final ploy of the god of this world is twofold:
5. Give them more work, that they may labor under it. Gone now is any remembrance of that time when you heard the word, believed, and worshiped. The god of this world wants you to forget that time. **Because if you will remember it you will remember that what you heard, believed and worshiped set you free from what now again enslaves you**. It’s important that you realize that you are already free and that the god of this world has been slowly dragging you back into bondage to the things of the world.
6. Lastly, once he gets you to forget the truth of being set free, he then tells you that all you heard in the past was “false words”. You see the god of this world knows that the key to keeping you enslaved has to do with hearing the word of God. So he has got you so busy, so quilted down with failure, that you start medicating yourselves with the things that enslaved you in the beginning.

Your belief poses a threat because of other enslaved people see it they will want to be free to. So the god of this world attacks you, gets you to compromise to be consumed with the things of the world to the point where you no longer hear the word of God. So the god of this world has two options:

1. **Hinder the speaker**. This can come in many ways but the most effective today is get the speaker to think that the Bible just is not applicable to the struggles of the listener. Why, you can not say the things of the Bible because it just does not fit their struggle. Give them 20-minute messages full of pithy sayings. Be full of charisma and entertaining. The effect is that the listener never hears the Word of God!
2. **Hinder the listener**. And we have already discussed how this works. Just through the use of time.

The strategy works brilliantly. Moses tells them that the Lord has come to set them free from the bondage of the world. They hear, believe and worship God because of this truth, only to find out that the god of this world makes life more difficult which makes the word of truth look like a lie. The hopeful truth of Gods word when put next to painful, constricting slavery of this life makes it look as if the Bible was nothing but a collection of false words. So the god of this world then further distracts us back into the things of the world which further makes it seen as if the Bible is what is causing our struggle. What was once hope now seems like nonsense. Through affliction, the god of this world has been telling us, don’t listen to the word. Don’t read it, don’t believe it, don’t trust it, and just get rid of it. Don’t believe God, he does not exist, He does not love you, for He only takes away the fun things in life. You belong to me!

**III.) Vs. 10-14 Get Back to Work**

Vs. 10-13 Here we read that Pharaoh’s taskmasters implement his plan. The result was that unrealistic demands were impossible to meet as they were now searching the land to find straw to make bricks. Now I can’t help but see the church today laboring under the god of this world running away from the Bible to all sorts of worldly straw. It does not make since to us, we have just experienced for the first time the truth of Gods love for us and the fact that God has a plan for our lives and everything we are facing screams at us the opposite. As far as we are concerned the pain of live speaks louder then Gods word.

Vs. 14 The outcome of this is the leadership is beaten down. The truth is that the greatest challenges come right before the greatest victory. It is easy to have joy when things are easy, but true maturity is when we still have joy when we are in the midst of the battle. Many Christians make this same mistake; they have some stress so they run away from the word of God right to the god of this world and he gives them more bondage.

**IV.) Vs. 15-21 Can’t Things Just Stay the Same?**

Vs. 15 When we are faced with such contradictions with the Word of God and our situations what do we do? Well, we get angry. And what do we do with our anger? We look for someone to blame. So that is what the Israelites do they blame Pharaoh. God was claiming that they were His children and the god of this world claimed that they were his slaves.

1. First, there is a big difference between being someone’s child and being someone’s slave, but apparently not from the perspective the Israelites. That is because like us they have spent more time as a slave to the god of this world then we have been a child of God.
2. Since this is true they are far more prone to believe the lie of the god of this world then they are to trust the trust God.

The way we see ourselves will have everything to do with how you will handle the contradiction between the truth of Gods word and the situation of the god of this world. If like these Israelites you still see yourself as a slave to the god of this world then you will react like them, a victim. But if you see yourself as a child of God then you will recognize that God created the Pharaoh. And since that is true then He has a plan that we may not fully comprehend, but we know that we are the apple of His eye therefore it will work in away that glorifies our Father.

Vs.16-18 Pharaoh’s response is that, “*If you are my servants, then you serve me and if you got time to talk about worship some other god then you have to much time on your hand*.”

 The bottom line is, **whom do you belong to**? In 1 Kings 18:21 we are told of Elijah’s words to the Israelites after he defeated the prophets of Baal. Elijah said, “***How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word***.” Is it the Lord God, then follow Him! The god of this world has no power over you then the power you let him have! What if you say to him, “*I’m worshiping the true and living God no matter what*!” There is another story of three young Israelites who faced the same decision. Dan. 3:16-18 “*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.*”

Vs. 19-21 When they come out of their meeting with Moses and Aaron they are mad at them and God. They are living under the tyranny of the immediate and have lost perspective in who’s hand they belong. There is no more miserable person in all the world then a Christian who is confused as to who they belong too. Struggling with life in the world trying to live by the principals of the Bible. God allow us to go through this so we finally get fed up with sin and allow him to deliver us. Sin can become so comfortable that even as Christians we don’t want to leave its false security. So God allows the devil to put us in bondage to the pint that we will want out. So the sword that you may think is going to destroy you may very well be the one that is used to deliver you! Thank god that we have become a stench to the god of this world.

**Exodus 5:22-6:27**

**“Not Why, But Who”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 22-8 I Am and I Will**

**III.) Vs. 9-13 Stick to My Plan**

**IV.) Vs. 14-27 Called by Grace not Giftedness**

**Intro.**

Moses greatest fears of chapters 3-4 have become the reality of chapter 5. Now God had told Moses that this was going to happen but that in the end Pharaoh was going to be forced to let Israel go. **Folks, we can only grow in faith when the Lord allows us to be put in situations that we would not chose for ourselves**. God reveals to us that He has everything in control and we rejoice only to come up against a situation that appears to reveal to us that He is not in control.

## **II.) Vs. 22-8 I Am & I Will**

Vs. 22-23 Now under the affliction of Pharaoh the Israelites cried out to Pharaoh and cursed Moses, (5:16-21). Moses now cries out to the Lord. There is a since in which Moses complaint to the Lord is a good thing. At least he knew who to cry out to. Forty years earlier he had failed and he ran away from his problems now he issues his complaints to the Lord, that’s progress.

 The jest of Moses complaint is that: “*Forty years ago I failed and now I come back in obedience to You and I fail again. Lord I’m just a loser, I told you I was*. ***Why****, Lord if you knew that I was just going to blow it again would you send me back to Egypt just to fail.*” (Vs. 22) Folks, it seems to me that we human beings are most prone to ask the WHY question. If we don’t ask the WHY question then we will at least ask the WHAT do you want from me God, question. I submit to you that though these are valid questions to ask they are not the ones that tend to bring you piece of mind. Security is a fragile thing when we are trying to make since out of life’s uncertainties. WHY does not bring me out of my problem, I just don’t understand but now if you come up to me and say, “*Dale you can try to figure out this problem or you can trust me I know the answer I’ll do it for you*!” **The reason for my new confidence is because the answer to my problem was not WHY, it was a WHO**!

### Vs. 1-8

A.) Vs. 1 Notice here the certainty of God’s answer back to Moses, *“Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh*.” There are no if’s or maybes here, only you shall see and will do. The first thing God does for Moses is to remind him that what He said He will do He will do. In Mal. 3:6 the Lord reminds us that, “***I am the LORD, I do not change***;”

B.) Second notice that the Lord tells Moses that he shall **SEE**, the Lord work on Pharaoh with a mighty hand so that he will let them go. God is telling Moses that he is going to find out based upon first hand personal knowledge. When we SEE what God is doing we will be better able to know Who He is! That goes to support my next point.

C.) Vs. 2 Four times in these 8 verses God answers Moses WHY question with the words “I Am”, which tells us that God is revealing WHO He is. (verse’s 2, 6, 7, 8) Moses asks WHY and God does not answer the WHY instead He says, “*Moses the better question, the question that will make since of the WHY is the WHO. Therefor you need to know WHO I Am, so this is WHO I Am and this is what I’m going to do with little old Pharaoh and further more Moses your going to get to watch me defeat him*.”

 D.) Vs. 3 Here we have curious statement by the Lord to Moses.

1. First God says that *He “appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty,*” The words “*God Almighty”* are El Shaddai and refers to Gods invincible power and might. Though God did reveal Himself by this name some 6 times in Gen. and 31 times in Job, he clearly was known by His covenant name as well. In fact, Jehovah appears some 162 times in Genesis alone. So how could God say that by that name He was not known to them? The key to understanding this is to be found in the word, “**known**”. There are two basic uses of the word “*known*” in scripture, the first has to do with a **casual acquaintance**, the second refers to **knowledge by experience**. So it appears that the patriarchs knew God casually by His covenant name but not personally.
2. This brings me to my second point, God clarifies His covenant name here by making 8 statements about it. We are going to look at those 8 statements in a moment but for now let me just say that in each case they emphasize God as the One Who Redeems His people. **Simple put the “I Will’s” reveal His will, which is to redeem.**

God is telling Moses that the patriarchs had no personal understanding of God as their redeemer. God is saying in verse 4 that though they understood God as the One whom kept His promises they, according to verse 5, were not the ones that would understand HOW He was to keep His promises, namely by redeeming them out bondage. **God is showing Moses that all that is happening is just furthering His work, which is to reveal WHO He is**. This goes to answer part of Moses Why and what question. “What does God want? Well He wants to set you free.” Gods purpose and plan in allowing all that took place was to reveal to His people the only way that they could understand that He was by His very nature a redeemer, a God who desires to set you free. There are two parts to freedom.

1. Vs. 5 To set a person free from bondage. We are most familiar with this concept, the release from the things in this life that hold us, but I want you to see that Gods redemption has another equally important part.
2. Vs. 4 It is also to place in a new place that is characteristically full of joy. The promised land if you will. God places the Joy before the release from the things that hold us. ***God would have us run to something and not away from something. We will only let go of the things that hold us if we are certain that what we are going towards is better***.

“God does not just want to set you free from the things that hold you, He wants to place you into a new state of eternal joy! Look at verse 7 and 8.

1. Vs. *7 “I am the LORD your God who brings you* ***out from*** *under the burdens of the Egyptians.*” The words, “***out from”*** is the first part of redemption or freedom taking you “out from the burdens” of what in slaves you.
2. Vs. 8 “*And I will* ***bring you into*** *the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage*:” the words, “***bring you into***” that’s into the new place of joy.

The 7 “I will’s” in verses 6-8:

First of all, these are not the only 7 “I will’s” recorded in scripture.

1. There are the 7 “I will’s” of Gen. 17 where God promises to bless Abraham.
2. Then there is the 7 “I will’s” of Jer. 31. Where the Lord promises to bless all people through the New Covenant.
3. Lastly there is the 7 “I will’s” of Satan recorded for us in Isa. 14, yet in this statement all of Satan’s promises are towards himself and he is unable to fulfill any of them. Where as Gods are towards us and He is able to fulfill all of them*.*
4. *I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians*: This speaks of Gods gracious purpose, to redeem us from the world. The things of the world are oppressive. So God promises to bring us out of this world system.
5. *I will rescue you from their bondage*: This was more then just relief from the things that burden us it is a complete severance from the condition. A slave can be sold to a good master, but he still is a slave. God is promising to take us away from slavery all together.
6. *I will redeem you with an outstretched arm*: Here the promise is to purchase us by use of His own outstretched arm. Our redemption will be through His purchasing us, through His Son’s outstretched arm! 1 Peter 1:18-19 tells us that we were purchased with the precious blood of Jesus.
7. *I will take you as My people*: Here we see that they are promised to occupy a unique relationship to God, they would be His people. God does not save us then run off and leave us. He takes us back to His house that we can live with Him! If you are truly saved you won’t run off and start living as you once did because you have been transformed.
8. *I will be your God*: Here we see a God who serves us, who ever lives to bless us. God chose us and has placed His love on us not because we deserve it, but rather because of who He is. When you are weak He will be strong.
9. *I will bring you into the land*: Here we see that He will always keep His promises even if they were not made to us but to our forefathers, or even if we do not live to see them completed He will always keep them. He has a plan which is to bless you!
10. *I will give it to you as a heritage*: Lastly, we see that He also has a purpose, to give you a heritage. He gives you a gift, you can not earn it. In Eph. 1:3 we read that He has, *“..blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*,” It’s our inheritance, which as we all know is ours by way of relational association. Simply put we did not earn in we were born into it!

**III.) Vs. 9-13 Stick to My Plan**

Vs. 9-13 Now these last two sections we will cover rather quickly. In verse 10 and in verse 13 God gives Moses an opportunity to go by himself, then after Moses does not go God includes Aaron. I think God is always giving us the opportunity to grow and mature.

Vs.12 Moses says that the Jewish leaders won’t listen to him so how does God expect Pharaoh to listen to him? Moses is looking at this through his ability or the lack of it.

Vs. 13 God does not give into the pity party, instead He commands them both to Go. The consequences are not up to you and I they are up to God. He knows just what He is doing. God is telling Moses here, “***Don’t give up get going***!” Endurance to God’s plan is the key to seeing success!

**IV.) Vs. 14-27 Called by Grace not Giftedness**

Vs. 14-25 In the middle of all of this God has Moses right down his family background from Jacob’s first three sons Reuben, Simeon, Aaron & Moses forefather Levi. To let them know that God had not made a mistake He had it all planed out that even from a bunch of losers like these guys He could still accomplish His purposes. If he could do it through there ancestors, then He would do it through them. It was about Gods ability, all they had to was, follow God. The fact of the matter God had prepared them for the task they had and it was seen in their being born into that family. Gods calling automatically means Gods enabling!

Vs. 26-27 God tells us here that He is so sure that these two guys are going to succeed that He is recording the ancestry to prove that they are the same two losers. God can spin gold out of straw and He does so that all may marvel not at the straw but in He who alone can do wondrous things.

**Exodus**

**6:28-7:13**

**“A Word For Moses a Sign For Pharaoh”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 6:28-7:2 Can I have a word with you?**

**III.) Vs. 3-7 Actions speak louder then words**

**IV.) Vs. 8-13 A sign of things To Come**

**Intro.**

Things are about to change in the book of Exodus. Moses will be transformed from a man obsessed with his own failures to a man ready to be used as Gods instrument. For six chapters and eighty years of His life Moses God was at work in fashioning a tool that He would use as the instrument of redemption; now God will use that instrument. ***Now I am not certain how long it took God to deliver Israel out of Egypt, but it is safe to say that it was a great deal shorter then it took him to make the tool***! Based upon that observation I suggest to you that, “*God is more interested in you then He is in using you*.” Another thing I see brings me back to my days as a goldsmith; “*A well crafted tool can take longer to make then the time it takes to use it, but you could never accomplish the task without it*!” For the next 5 chapters everything God is doing is about communication. The purpose of the sign and the 10 plagues is to communicate. In fact, we are even told what God is trying to communicate. Eight times in these five chapters God tells us that He is performing the plagues in order that they might **“know**” that He is the Lord. Obviously He wants Pharaoh to know that He is Lord and through Pharaoh the Egyptians would know that He is Lord. But there are two other groups that are going to see that He is Lord as well, namely Moses, Aaron and the Israelites.

**II.) Vs. 6:28-7:2 Can I have a word with you?**

Vs. 28-29 These two last verses in chapter 6 recap verses 11-13 in which Moses and God conversed concerning Moses inability’s. In between both of these two conversations is the recording of the genealogy. The emphasis in the genealogy was the first three sons of Jacob and specifically the tribe of Levi. From this tribe we are brought to Aaron (verses 23-25). The question that ought to come to mind is, “*Why Aaron and not Moses*?” Why detail the ancestry of his brother Aaron? It goes back to when God first called Moses out of Midian in chapter 4:14. It is clear that God meant Aaron to be an encouragement to Moses, in fact we are told in chapter 7:1-2 that he will be the mouthpiece for him.

 Simply put, God knows who they are, He is aware of our frailties and yet He still commands them to go. Amazing how many excuses we can come up with when we are looking at ourselves. Now notice what God says, “*Speak to Pharaoh* ***all*** *that I say to you*.” God is giving Moses every opportunity to step out in faith. He has told Moses that he is aware of his failings, He has given Moses an encourager and most importantly He has told Moses that all he is required to do is share to Pharaoh What God has given him. I other words Moses is not responsible for the outcome as long as he shares what God has given him.

Vs. 30 Moses again complains of his lack of ability. Now either Moses is saying that he has speech problems or he is saying that he has heart problems like Isaiah said in 6:1-8. To me Moses problem is in whom he trusts. How like Moses we are; so prone to trusting ourselves and our own abilities above Gods word. Now it is interesting to realize that Moses is going to be used to speak to Pharaoh the Word of God and yet it is this very Word that Moses is struggling with trusting in.

Vs. 1-2 Now here we have these strange word from God concerning Moses and Aaron and their relationship to Pharaoh.

 a.) First, look at how patient God is with Moses this is the 7th time Moses has shown his lack of trust and yet God still deals with him in grace. Prov. 24:16 says, *“..a righteous man may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity*.” Instead God again tells him what he is to do and reveals to him that he has placed him in authority over the mightiest ruler in the world.

b.) Pharaoh rejected Moses first dealings with him asking the question as to who the Lord was. Since Pharaoh would not deal with God he was now going to have to deal with Moses. This would let Moses know that it was not his inability that was causing Pharaohs hard heartedness rather it was Pharaohs rejection of the word of God.

1. One last point here, how unfortunate it is that the Mormons, use this verse to try to explain their false teaching that we will one day become Gods. Clearly looking at Moses frailties will tell you that Moses is not all-powerful or all-knowing. Instead he is saying that Moss will be speaking for God to Pharaoh & that Aaron will be speaking for Moses. God is showing that it is He that places one above another.

So we see here is twofold, God reassuring Moses & second God showing Moses that He was going to be speaking to Pharaoh another way, through signs & wonders. God will always speak to the heart of man first through His word, but a person rejects His word then He will reveal Himself through other means.

**III.) Vs. 3-7 Actions speak louder then words**

Vs. 3 There are some questions as to what is meant by the words, “*I will harden Pharaoh’s heart,.*.” 18 times in Exodus we are told that Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and they are equally divided between God doing it and Pharaoh doing it. It appears that God began the process. What we have here then needs to be looked at in light of the character of God.

1. The context makes it plan as to the reason for this, “*and multiply My signs and wonders in the land of Egypt*.” Further more God says in verse 5 that through these signs and wonders that “*The Egyptians shall know I am the Lord*.” So the purpose was clearly given; that God would make Himself known unmistakably above the gods of the Egyptians.
2. Now you will remember that Pharaoh himself asked in 5:2 “*Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice.*.” So God has been revealing Who HE is. How did He do that? Will first, He did it through Moses by way of the Word of God which Pharaoh rejected. So by the Word of God Pharaoh’s heart was becoming harden to Who God was. Do you see that? God was hardening Pharaoh’s heart by revealing Who He was. Simply put this was cause and effect. Pharaoh wanted to know Who God was, so God is obliging him of his request. Now because Pharaoh would not respond to the Word of God, God is going to multiply the signs and wonders and we shall see that the further the revelation the more hard the heart of Pharaoh becomes. So what’s your point? Well think of the world now like Pharaoh, not believing who God is. **Folk’s, people reject Jesus not based upon lack of knowledge but rather because their heart becomes hard to the revelation**!

Vs. 4-5 Now you have hear what will happen to a heart that refuses to respond to the truth of who God is. God will still reveal who He is only it will be through His judgment. Notice again the reference to His outstretched hand being that which will this time reveal Gods judgement. Yeh, so? Well the cross of Christ both shows Gods judgement for our sin which reveals the truth that we are redeemed, but at the same time rejecting the cross of Christ becomes our judgment. The same outstretched hand that redeems is the one that will judge. The only difference has to do on whether or not you harden your heart to the truth.

 One of the most incredible sights we visited in Israel was the garden tomb. What struck me was the fact that the place where they lay Jesus was right next to where He was crucified. In fact you could so position yourself that you could look at both locations. The place of utter rejection to some has become the place of redemption for others.

Vs. 6-7 Lastly, we are told the quick obedience of Moses and Aaron. No deviation from what God told them. We are also given their ages 80 and 83. Man can you picture these two old guys coming in before this 40 something Pharaoh? God did not care about their ages He calls the foolish to confound the wise.

**IV.) Vs. 8-13 A sign of things To Come**

Vs. 8-9 Now you will remember that this sign was first given to Moses back in chapter 4. Now there are several differences in the use of this sign:

1. In chapter 4 it was Moses that performed it here it is Aaron.
2. In chapter four it was a snake here the word for serpent is different. The word here means a sea or land monster. In fact, this is the only place out of 27 times in the Bible where this word is translated, serpent. Most often it will revere to a whale or a dragon. Now if you know your ancient Egyptian history you will realize, that in Egypt there was very little history related to the snake and quite a bit dealing with the crocodile. Egyptians symbolized everything and, either a animal, bird or insect represented all their gods. Their chief God was Ra the sun-god and his chief enemy was Sebak an evil looking creature with a crocodile head. They also had another god named Apepi who was the sworn enemy of Ra and he to appeared as a crocodile. The Egyptians had these elaborate ceremonies in which they showed Apepi trying to prevent Ra the sun-god from rising. Interestingly enough the ritual was about the Egyptians trying to destroy Apepi.
3. Another difference here is that there is no mention of them taking up the serpent or if you will crocodile. Simply put this sign was to show something different to someone different.

Vs. 10 Now Aaron goes and does just as God had told him to. Can you imagine what was going through the minds of Moses and Aaron as they came before Pharaoh. Then the Joy in seeing the Lord work?

Vs. 11-12a Not to be out done Pharaoh calls in all his wise mine and sorcerers. We are told in 2 Tim 3:8 that their names were, “Jannes and Jambres and that they resisted Moses, and the truth because they had corrupt minds, and disapproved of the faith”

 Now this brings up an interesting point: How were they able to duplicate the feat? Well I believe that Satan has power but not to create only to duplicate. We ought not be surprised by what Satan can do. Just because it super-natural does not mean it is from God, we need to check all things by the Word of God.

Vs. 12b-13 Here we are given the outcome:

1. First Aaron’s rod ate the other crocodiles. God was showing here His superiority over that of the Egyptian gods. As well as perhaps showing that they can thwart Gods purposes.
2. Second this further hardened the heart of Pharaoh.

I want to conclude this mornings teaching with a quick over view of the ten plagues recorded in the next few chapters.

 The plagues appear in a series of three each with the tenth being by it’s self.

1. In the first three plagues the Lord shows the difference between His servants (Moses and Aaron) and the servants of the Egyptian gods. Even though the magicians are able to duplicate the first two plagues they are unable to reverse the effects and they are unable to duplicate the third altogether. Finally, they say in chapter 8:19 “This is the finger of God”.
2. In plagues 4-6 the Lord shows the difference between His people Israel and the Egyptians. Why the plagues effect the Egypt they do not effect the land of Goshen where Israel dwells.
3. In the next three plagues 7-9, God shows how He is different then all other gods. He says, in 9:14 that “there is none like me in all the earth.” And of coarse they worshiped the creation.
4. In the 10th plague God shows that He alone is sovereign as He works not through Moses or Aaron.

So how about it Whom do you trust in?

**Exodus**

**7:14-8:19**

**“Who’s in Control?”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 7:14-25 Who is the Sustainer of life?**

**III.) Vs. 8:1-15 Who is the Creator of life?**

**IV.) Vs. 8:16-19 Who is in control of your life?**

**Intro.**

We now come to the ten plagues that God brought upon Egypt. A careful look at them will reveal a pattern. They are brought in three segments of three, with the tenth standing by it’s self. The first of each of the three starts out with the words, “*in the morning*” then both it and the plague that follows it come with a warning from Moses, while the third comes with our warning.

* The first three Aaron uses the staff and they produce **discomfort.**
* The second three no staff is used and they produce **damage.**
* The last three Moses uses the staff and they bring about **despair**.
* The last one produces **death**.

The word plague means “blow or stroke”, and although the blow or stroke effected the Egyptians the blow was actually leveled against the gods they worshiped. God wanted to show all, that He is the one who is in control. Four times in two chapters Moses records for us the words, “***as the Lord had said***.” Ultimately the one that we trust the most is ourselves. It is only when plagues or blows come against this that what we have faith in is shaken enough for us to evaluate our spiritual lives. There are four groups in these chapters that were effected in some way by these plagues and we are often in one of these categories.

1. **Moses**: Who in obedience, moves forward in his trust in the Lord in spite of outward success. Moses represents the believer who chooses to trust God at His word even if he does not see the results.
2. **Israelites**: Who are moved from complacency by way of affliction and are in despair because they are not trusting in the Lord but looking at the results.
3. **Magicians**: Who’s religion on paper looks powerful enough but in reality can only partially satisfy. There is enough ritual to convince them that they are good people, but no power to deliver or change their lives.
4. **Pharaoh**: He is what I call a crises Christian who often turns to the Lord when there are some crises; only to go back to the former way of life when the crises is over.

You will find out looking at these plagues that God will be attacking the things that you have put your trust in if it is not Him.

**II.) Vs. 7:14-25 Who is the Sustainer of life?**

Vs. 14-18 We are clearly told here that God was doing this because the of the hardness of the heart of Pharaoh. The Nile River was the lifeblood of the nation of Egypt. In fact, Egypt is nothing more then a desert with the Nile running through it. Every year it would overflow its banks pushing out the silt which they would then use to grow their crops. With out the Nile Egypt would be uninhabitable. **To the Egyptian with their multiple deities the Nile was the sustainer of life**. The idols that were worshiped as god and goddess of the Nile was:

**Hapi**: The spirit of the Nile. A fat man with breasts of a woman indicating the powers of fertility and nourishment.

**Isis**: The goddess whose blood stream was thought to be the Nile.

**Khnum**: Who was the keeper or guardian of the Nile.

Vs. 17-18 God is going right after that which the Egyptians thought sustained life and He shows that instead of sustaining life if will bring about death, He says that it can not even quench their thirst. You may be thinking I’m not worshiping the gods of the Nile. Hey what are you trusting in to sustain your life? Is it your job, health, family and friends? If you are trusting in those thing’s, then you are worshiping the wrong God because only God is the one that sustains life.

Vs. 19-21 According to Gods word Moses and Aaron head towards the Nile. All the water even the water that was stored in vessels turned into blood. These vessels would have carved on them the image of an idol of worship. This was all done in the sight of Pharaoh. The fact that the water that was stored up also turned into blood shows us that even the things in our past that we’ve trusted in to sustain us will not produce life. God may use things but we are not to trust in them. Daily we are looking to all sorts of things to sustain our lives when we need to give thanks to the God who alone sustains us.

Vs. 22-25 We see the results of this attack against the false gods that they worshiped as the sustainers of life.

**Magicians**: These guys by way of their religious energy reproduce the **effects** of the judgment but can do nothing to **reverse** the judgment. Folks, this is nothing more then an attack against a relationship with God. *“Hey I go to church and tithe, I’m a good person!*” But all this shows is that they can produce death not life! These Magicians know religion but they don’t know God. Many in the world today settle for knowing religion and not knowing God. Wearing robes chanting, doing all sorts of religious secrets, but there is no power to effect change. These guys were perfectly satisfied to stay in their pride of religion, what they have done to produce death. Even though in the first two plagues they could duplicate the judgment they could never reverse its effects. All that religion does is worsen the effects of judgment!

**Pharaoh**: Clearly God is showing Pharaoh that he is not in control, but Pharaoh refuses to believe that. This all took place in the sight of Pharaoh but all of this just hardens his heart to the truth. There are opportunities in our lives that come up revealing to us that we are not in control. Notice that I said that they are opportunities, because it is then that we realize that we can not control the situation or circumstance, it is at this time that we can choose to trust the sustainer of life or not. The sad truth is that most will be like Pharaoh they will just harden their resolve to be god and seek all the more to control their lives.

**Israelites**: We are not told specifically how they responded, we are told that the effects of this plague was felt through our all the land of Egypt which would have included Goshen. It is a safe bet that they responded the same way they did in chapter five where they choose to look at the outcome instead of the Lord. All they see is that they are miserable, not only are they still slaves they have no water to drink. So many **Christians today choose to interpret who God is based upon their circumstances instead of interpreting their circumstances on who God is**!

**Moses**: Lastly we come to poor old Moses who steps out in faith does what God has told Him to do but with no signs of change. But the key to Moses resolve is found right here, “***Just as the Lord had said***.” This plague was showing who the sustainer of life is and God through His word had said what would happen before it happened. He is the sustainer of life, He knows the beginning form the end, thus He is in control even if things aren’t working out as you want, they are working out as He wants! We are told here that this plague lasted some seven days, with the results of those in need of water digging around the river so they could drink. How much is that like us, still trying to hang on to our old ways rather then turning to God.

**III.) Vs. 8:1-15 Who is the Creator of life?**

Vs. 1-6 To the Egyptian’s, frogs were sacred and you were not allowed to kill a frog. They had made an idol named Hequet which had the form of a woman with the head of a frog. It was believed that from her nostrils came the breath of life. Simply put Hequet was the creator of life. The Psalmist in 105:30 describes the extent of this plague by saying, “*Their land abounded with frogs, Even in the chambers of their kings*.” These frogs went every where including the bed. They thought of the frog as a sign of fertility so God makes sure that the frog goes into the bed of Pharaoh. Even more humorous is the fact that they would not kill the frog because they worshiped it. ***In the first plague God destroyed what they worshiped, here he increases it until they see the frog not as a blessing but as a curse***.

Vs. 7-10 Again let’s turn our attention to how the different groups respond to this plague.

**Magicians**: Here our religious folks duplicating the judgment, but reversing its effects. Now just what Egypt needed at this time was more frogs. They go through all the religious stuff and all it does is produce judgment. Religion and being religious does not create anything. We are not saved by works but by grace through faith, and all the religious hype won’t do anything but create a big sink.

**Pharaoh**: Here you will see a difference between the religious Magicians and Pharaoh. Old Pharaoh knew that religion was just adding to the problem so calls for Moses do pray to the Lord. Right here Pharaoh sees that God is in control. And he makes a deal that if Moses will ask God to get rid of the frogs then they can go worship. Here we see our first case of crisis faith. Notice that it is conditional! God does not make deals with us. Moses puts him to the test in verse 9-10 by allowing him to pick the time in which he will ask God to remove the frogs. Pharaoh chooses the next day, which shows us that he is not all that serious and is still holding out for some other hope other then turning to God. Many won’t turn to God until they have no other choice and when they do it is in some sort of deal. God makes no deals; you surrender as you are now and he delivers!

**Israelites**: This no doubt was the same as the frogs covered the land of Egypt. So all they see is that they have gone with out water, now they got these dumb frogs everywhere and they are still in the same situation as before.

**Moses**: Vs. 10-13 Moses is growing in grace here as he follows the Lord. He is allowing the Lord to do all the work and he is not concerned with the outcome, only obeying His Word. Notice the heart here praying for his enemy, just wanting what God wants. He has come along ways by just obeying the Word and not being concerned about the outcome.

Vs. 14-15 Here we are told the results; religion stunk for it only creates death not life. Further more it’s stench was over all the land, yet it was enough relief for Pharaoh to turn back to his old ways, not heeding the word of the Lord. God knows this to for He alone is the creator. Many people today are looking for something to give them life, so they turn to entertainment, drugs, anything that brings life to them. But what happens is the very thing that they needed to have meaning ends up hopping all over their lives and making a mess out of it! Hey, Christian do you realize that the only One that can bring meaning and purpose in life is a relationship with God and it’s free! So why turn to frogs?

**IV.) Vs. 8:16-19 Who is in control of your life?**

Vs. 16-17 Now this plague comes without warning upon Egypt and so to in our lives some times God goes right after the areas that we have set up to worship. There is some question as to what this plague was, some say gnats, others lice, and a few say mosquitoes. The root word here means to “*cover, pinch, or nip*”, so most likely this would be either lice or mosquitoes. The earth God was Geb or Set who was the god of the desert. To the Egyptian there was no life in the desert so here we see God giving life to the desert and doing so to judge Egypt. We have God showing that He gives life to that which is dead. In the first two plagues the Magicians duplicate destruction but can not reverse its effects but here God shows that he can take that which is devoid of life and give it life. Notice the effects this upon the four different groups:

**Magicians**: Vs. 18 They still tried to duplicate this but were unable to do so. Religion is unable able to bring life or control life no matter how much it attempts to do so. That’s the farce about religion a lot of effort but no change. Finally, these guys realize that religion is not working this must be the hand or finger of God. They witness in effect to the power of God over all their secret arts of religion, yet we are not told if they repented. We do know that according to 12:38 that a mixed multitude went out of Egypt.

**Pharaoh**: Pharaoh just stiffens at his resolve to be his own god. It is not the lack of evidence that causes people to reject the truth about God instead it is the truth of that evidence and their desire not to yield to the truth. Like trying to walk a dog on a leash all the dog does is pull the opposite direction.

**Israelites**: Still no difference as to how the plague effected the Israelites. If only they could see that this plague was causing them to want to be separate form the world and untied to God, but all they could see was the discomfort of change.

**Moses**: He just continues, no matter what the circumstances show, to obey the word of the Lord.

God will always be revealing what we are trusting in and if it is not Him then be ready to have those things stripped away, but remember that what He wants to replace the false worship with is Himself. My prayer is that you will see these things in life as the finger of God making Himself known to you!

**Exodus**

**8:20-9:12**

**“A Difference Between People”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 8:20-32 Deliverer or Destroyer**

**III.) Vs. 9:1-7 Provider or a Pest**

**IV.) Vs. 9:8-12 Health or Harm**

**Intro.**

After the first three plagues were felt upon all the land of Egypt, I wonder if Pharaoh was beginning to think that these plagues were nothing more then natural disasters? Life is all about who is in control. As believers we will readily admit that God is in control, but it is often that only through adverse circumstances that we will really be able to see who is in control. God loves us so much that He will continually reveal to us that we are trusting in wrong things. In the second chapter of Jeremiah God spoke through the prophet about the failure of Israel as they were about to be taken captive by the Babylonians. “***For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns; broken cisterns that can hold no water.***” What you are trusting in is what you are truly worshiping! So why hew out broken pots that can’t even hold stagnant water?

**II.) Vs. 8:20-32 Deliverer or Destroyer**

Vs. 20-21 At certain times of the year the Nile River was used as a place for special religious rites and Pharaoh who was seen as a god was very much a part of this. This must have been a source of irritation to Pharaoh to see Moses and Aaron waiting for him as went down to worship false gods. These two were becoming a plague themselves, yet even though God was showing Pharaoh who was in control he was still practicing his false religion.

 I love to see God’s grace here towards Pharaoh, He could have just wiped this guy out with one word, but instead He chooses to warn him. The guy is down their worshiping false gods with a hard heart and God sends Moses down to warn him. Pharaoh was at that bank serving his gods and God says let My people go that they may serve Me.

 The word “flies” is not in the Hebrew instead it reads, “I will send swarms on you.” The word “swarms” can mean any number of insects, but in Psalm 78:45 the psalmist speaking of this very plague says that the swarms that He sent among them, “devoured them”, or literally ate them up. They very well could have been flies or mosquitoes or some other insect.

There was to be no escaping the torment that these insects would bring in the houses nor on the ground that they walked they were to be every where. These flies were represented by the scarab beetle and were often found in Egyptian they were though of as good luck charms associated with their main god Ra and symbolized eternal life. Even today you will find folks wearing these beetles as jewelry. Interesting how people who have control and trust issues have good luck charms. They are in essence admitting that they are not in control. ***All will have eternal life, but the life they will have apart from God is eternal torment!***

Vs. 22-24 Here then is a new feature in God’s striking on Egypt. For the first time He is going to only strike the Egyptians while not striking the Israelites. And He tells Pharaoh the reason for the change, “*that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the land.*” Pharaoh was the sovereign over the land, what he said went, but God is going to show him that he is not the sovereign over the land, God is! Only God could send a plague that would only effect Egyptians and not Israelites, and tell in advance that it was going to happen.

Vs. 23 There is an interesting word here that God uses to describe the “difference” between His people and the Egyptians, it is a word that means to “*set a ransom*.” God was telling Pharaoh that not only had He paid the ransom He was holding them hostage.

Vs. 24 The root of the word in verse 24 “corrupted” means to decay or to utterly ruin. These bugs reeked a havoc on the Egyptians. Now I don’t know how you feel about bugs that bite you but you can imagine not being able to escape their “good luck” charm.

Vs. 25-32 So what effect did this have upon the four different groups, Moses, Israelites, Magicians, and Pharaoh?

**Moses**: Was at first fearful that neither Pharaoh nor the Israelites would listen or follow him. In fact, all he had done so far had produced only more hard hearts. Yet, in faith he continued. Now God rewards that faith by making a distinction between His people and the people of the world. Now doubt that furthered Moses resolve to obey God’s Word.

**Israelites**: Here for the first time in spite of their lack of trusting God they were shown God’s blessing, even if it was in the form of mercy, (not getting what they deserved). God was doing this without any merit of their own. We are told else where that the same gods that he was worshiping they themselves were attached to. This shows that God has always blessed His people not their own “goodness” but rather His! When you ask the majority of people where they are going after they die they all say heaven, but when you ask them why they will say because they are a good person. But that’s not the entrance exam, faith in Jesus alone is.

**Magicians**: They we are not told specifically how they reacted, in fact they don’t really show at all in these next three plagues. It is safe to say that they were still trying to reverse the effects of the plagues. In chapter 9:11 they are described as unable to stand because of the boils which can only mean that prior to the sixth plague they were standing. Those who stand by their religion only to see it continually fail will eventually drop out of it.

**Pharaoh**: Vs. 25 It appears that Pharaoh recognizes that he is not in control, but the truth is that he is already trying to make a deal. He gives permission to worship in the “land”; in other word’s stay in Egypt. Then in verse 28 he says you can go out of Egypt but not very far. God does not make deals. When we seek to bargain with God over obedience we are saying that we still want control.

1. Moses objects to this for two reasons:
2. Vs. 26 First, practically Moses says that since some animals were sacred to the Egyptians that in sacrificing them to God would anger the Egyptians. Can you imagine the uproar if the gods that the Egyptians worship was the slain for sacrifice?
3. Vs. 26 More importantly, the Lord had commanded that they sacrifice in the wilderness and obedience is what the Lord requires. Folks, ground is never gained by compromising the word of God.

Vs. 27-32 I marvel at the grace of God towards Pharaoh. Still Moses knowing that he was deceitful in the past warns him not to be so now. Pharaoh asks that Moses intercedes and so he does. As Moses prayed according to God’s will there was not one bug left on the Egyptians. God has revealed to the all that he is both deliver as well as destroyer. Yet He did so in reverse order. To those that trusted Him He was first a deliverer, but to those that rejected Him he was first a destroyer then a deliverer.

**III.) Vs. 9:1-7 Provider or a Pest**

Vs. 1-4 According to verse 5 God tells Pharaoh that he has 24 hours to let His people go or the next plague is about to happen. The plague seems to be against the Egyptian god Hathor who was the mother goddess. The Egyptians like Hindu’s thought of the cow as sacred. There is an ancient record of a battle that the Egyptians lost because the folks they were fighting with put a herd of cattle in front of them. The Egyptians did not want to kill any cattle so they refused to fight and were defeated. We are not sure what this plague was but what ever it was it wiped out all of the Egyptians beasts of burdens. Not only were these animals worship they were also a sign of wealth. The point being the more flocks you had the wealthier you were.

 A lot of folks today worship a sick cow of materialism, trusting in their financial situation instead of God. It appears that not all of the Egyptians animals were afflicted as some are preserved and then saved during the seventh plague of hail.

Vs. 5-7 Here again we see how this plague effected these different groups.

**Moses**: Can see the grace of God being poured out upon God’s people. He sees the failure of the gods that others have placed their trust. We to can see the failure in our own lives when we have trusted in other thing instead of His Word. So many today, are trusting in other things, only to find out it does not work.

**Israelites**: You will remember that the Egyptians despised them because they were shepherds now God is rewarding their flocks above that of the Egyptians. They could see how trusting in the Lord was the way to be blessed. God was lovingly guiding this group in spite of themselves.

**Magicians**: They are not seen in this section, but no doubt still tried to cling to their dying gods. Man, does this ever look like us! We are so stubborn to let go of those things we worship even if they are dying all around us.

**Pharaoh**: Vs. 7 He had to check it out and see if God had indeed spared the herds of the Israelites. But even after this he still would not obey God’s Word. There seems to be no limit to how far people will go in their rebellion against God. Here are all these dead animal’s belonging to Egyptians while the Israelites animals were in great health.

**IV.) Vs. 9:8-12 Health or Harm**

Vs. 8-9 With out any warning God has Moses go to the furnaces where they would sacrifice humans and take up the dust to scatter it to the winds. And boils broke out on animals as well as people. Since Pharaoh witnessed this plague first hand I wonder if he was the first to brake out. The word “boil” means to burn and it has the idea of a painful, swelling skin inflammation. You will remember that the Egyptians were obsessed with cleanliness, in fact they worshiped the god Sekhemt who had power over disease. In Deut. 28 Moses says that these boils afflicted them from, the sole of the foot to the top of the head.

Vs. 10-12 It was so bad that the Magicians who were obsessed with cleanliness were unable to stand before Moses. They were unable to perform their religious secrets. False religion was closed down because it did not work. Yet even this did not change the heart of Pharaoh.

**Exodus**

**9:13-10:29**

**“Who Is Like the Lord? part a”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 9:13-17 A warning of grace**

**III.) Vs. 18-26 He who feared the Word of the Lord**

**IV.) Vs. 27-35 I’ve sinned this time**

**Intro.**

The last set of three plagues God shows the futility of having your own way. First, with the hail you see that pride brings upon your life nothing but destruction. Everything is effected by pride and the worst type of pride is the kind that refuses to make changes even when faced with ruin. Whatever is not destroyed by our resistance to Gods grace, will be eventually ate up. And all that will be left in our lives is complete darkness. In this section that God had a twofold purpose in bringing these blows against Egypt.

1. First, according to verse 9:14 “*that they may know that there is none like Me in all the earth*.” God wanted Pharaoh to realize that only He is sovereign, both in mercy as well as judgment. These plagues are designed to show the world that God alone is in control and that trusting in any other god is foolishness. According to Josh. 2:9-11, some forty year’s latter Rahab testifies before the spies of the effect that this had upon those living in Jericho. She says; “*I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the* *Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you****, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath***.”
2. Second, according to 10:2 God wanted this to be a constant reminder to His people that He was who He claimed to be and was worthy of their trust. His work in redeeming them was to be told and retold to every generation. Sixty-two times in the Bible Gods says to Israel that He has redeemed that “*out of Egypt*.” God wants us to know Him as a redeemer and this action here in Egypt is clearly one of the ways in which He showed Himself that way.

**II.) Vs. 9:13-17 A warning of grace**

Vs. 13-14 At the start of the last series of plagues God calls Moses to again get up early to warn Pharaoh. This is the longest warning yet in all of the plagues and the reason for it is found in verse 14, “*for I will send all my plagues to your very heart*.” God desires to woo you to Himself and adverse circumstances are not His first option. Jesus said in Matthew 9:13 “*I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance*.” I’ve caught myself in the midst of some trial wondering why God did not just talk to me instead of bringing me to my knees, only to have Him reveal to me that He had been talking to me only I was not listening.

 An appeal is made in verse 13 to let Gods people go that they may serve Him. God says three times in these verses that He is over all the Earth, (14-16) and the Egyptians worship, the earth. They worshiped the creation instead of the creator. God tells them that in all the earth which they worshiped there is none like Him. Further more if they persist they will be cut off from the earth. Finally, He tells them that the very fact that Pharaoh has been allowed to be ruler was to show God’s power over all the earth. That would happen in one of two ways: First it would happen if Pharaoh would simply repent and acknowledge Him as the One, true God. Or it would happen as God defeated his gods. Every knee is going to bow before Him it is only a matter of what you are going to be doing while your knee is bowed!

Vs. 15-17 God reveals to Pharaoh as well as us the why He does what He does. Now in all of these God is showing that He alone is sovereign.

1. **MERCY**: First in verse 15 He says, “*Hey if I wanted to just judge you for being wicked I would have just wiped you out*.” By the Word of His mouth those plagues would have been more sever and that would have been the end of it. Perhaps you have had a few of those times in your life that you **recognized** that Gods sovereign hand of mercy saved you. But how about those countless other times where you were totally unaware that God’s mercy saved you? Those were times when God was demonstrating His mercy towards you. God says to Pharaoh; “*Man it’s My mercy that you are still breathing and I’ve done that to give you a chance to come to know Me*.”
2. **GRACE:** Second, He tells them that He has blessed him so that His power might be seen through him. “*Hey, with out Me you would not be Pharaoh*.” Paul quotes this very verse as an explanation of His grace to the nation of Israel. He says in 9:16 “*So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy*.” God’s blessings are not on merit they are on grace. Stop to think about it for a moment, here in Exodus God is blessing a bunch of idolatrous people headed by a murder who was full of himself. While at the same time He is judging a bunch of idolatrous people who is headed by a murder who is full of himself. The difference is that the first group is recognizing the fact that it is by Gods grace.
3. **GLORY:** His mercy and grace have been granted to us in order that the world may recognize that it is not because of us it is in spite of us. So that they may praise God and want to come into a relationship with Him. God even uses Pharaoh’s resistance to Him as a way of revealing who He is to the world. God warns Pharaoh and says, “I’ve shown you mercy, I’ve revealed my grace and still you exalt your self.” I think the worst kind of deception is self-deception.

**III.) Vs. 18-26 He who feared the Word of the Lord**

Vs. 18-21 The average rainfall upon Egypt a year is less then one inch. They did not depend upon rain to water the crops, they depended upon the water in the Nile. What we know about this plague against Egypt is that it was unique in all their history. Can you imagine how rare this was to the Egyptians?

Vs. 19-21 God gives them a chance to respond to the Word of God by recommending that the Egyptians as well as the Israelites gather in their livestock and harvest. Here in the 19th verse God makes it known that if they do not gather all and bring it home it will be destroyed. To not head the word of God in your lives is to invite destruction. The benefits to obeying the Word of God saved the livestock of the Egyptians as well as the Israelites; the Bible works. Here in verses 20 and 21 we see that people made a choice to obey the Word or not.

Vs. 22-26 We can see that the destruction of the land of Egypt to those who refused to obey the Word of the Lord was great. The Egyptians worshiped the sky god Nut. ***It is my opinion that you were a nut if you worshiped Nut***! Only the land of Goshen was not touched. Those that heeded the Word of God were no doubt rejoicing and those that had not were weeping. We are pretty sure that this plague came in late February because verse 31 and 32 to tells us what crops were destroyed by the hail. Which means that this was about one month before the 10th plague in which Passover took place. Now we are not sure how long it took for all the plagues to happen but it was most likely all with in a year’s time. When you put that into perspective it was a bad year for the Egyptians. No doubt this played a part upon their response of obedience as well as their rebuke of Pharaoh in chapter 10 verse 7.

**IV.) Vs. 27-35 I’ve sinned this time**

Vs. 27 The first thing that strikes me is the words, “this time”. Pharaoh was only considering this past wrong doing as sin. Sorry does mean that you are sorry you got caught, nor does it mean that you don’t like what your rebellion has brought upon you. No, it means that you have turned from your sin and you are now desiring the Lord to change your heart.

Vs. 28 This shows that Pharaoh has come to realize that God is powerful they have identified that but they are not willing to submit their live to Him. People will come to you and ask you to pray for them but they will not submit their lives to the God that has all the power. “*Oh I believe the Bible*”, but when it comes to really surrendering their lives and practicing obedience no way. What lacks in Pharaoh is that he knows nothing of the goodness of the Lord, he is treating the Lord as if He is electricity.

Vs. 29-30 Moses knows that Pharaoh is just responding to the situation and not in true repentance to the Lord, yet God still bestows His grace and mercy towards him. Let me just say that God knows what true repentance is and what it is not. All Pharaoh was after was relief form the effects of his rebellion. He still wants to be in control and anything that will allow him to get back into control he will do even if it is admitting he was wrong.

 There is a pattern here when Pharaoh saw that his little world of control was slipping away. First he tried just to ignore it. Then he tried to manipulate the situation. Then he tried false repentance. Then he tried to make deals with God. After that he learned to say the right things with out truly meaning them. Lastly he just threatens and gets angry. Let’s not just be grieved by the consequences of our sin but truly be grieved as David was at the sin it’s self.

**Exodus**

**10:1-29**

**“Who Is Like the Lord? part b”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-11 A prideful snare**

**III.) Vs. 12-20 Eaten out of house and home**

**IV.) Vs. 21-29 Light and darkness**

**Intro.**

The 9th chapter revealed how God in His grace warned Pharaoh and the Egyptians of the consequences of their rebellion. In the 20th and 21st verses we are told that some “*feared the word of the Lord*” and some did not “*regard the word of the Lord*”. In verses 23-25 we are told the severity of destruction upon the land of Egypt, specifically those who had not regarded the “*word of the Lord*”. It is here that I think that we can learn a few things about true repentance:

1. **True repentance recognizes the benefit of obedience before the event not after**. Those who feared the word of the Lord obeyed the word of the Lord and saw that the benefits of obedience far out weighed the fruit of disobedience. God had shown Himself as a God who would keep His Word, if He said that hail was going to come down it was a coming. There are those people who wait until it starts falling before they act. Verse 25 says that the hail came upon man and beast but I wonder how many men were destroyed as they tried to save beast? I’m always amazed at those people who when offered a chance to respond to God’s grace choose rather to wait until they sow some more sin thinking that they will have a further opportunity to get right with God. ***There are many carcass’ in the fields of procrastination***!
2. **Second, any confession that does not lead to obedience is not sincere**. In Pharaoh’s confession of verse 27 we see his continued response of verse 35 it is obvious that he was not sincere. It is again startling how many folks; in jail have some sort of religious confession only to re-nig upon it after they are released. This week we will conclude the plagues or blows against Egypt and again see how Pharaoh reacts to these opportunities to get right with God.

# II.) Vs. 1-11 A prideful snare

Vs. 1 Three times we are told in Exodus that Pharaoh hardened his heart and six times we are told that the Lord did. The word that is recorded for Pharaoh’s hardening is means to **rebel or to be resistant**, while the word that is used of the Lord hardening Pharaoh’s heart means to **make stiff or to firm up**. ***The word of the Lord firmed up Pharaoh’s heart against God’s word***. That is what happens when we have a hard heart; God’s word comes in and we resist it. The more we hear it the more we resolve to not listen. What is even more tragic is that it was God’s word of grace that stiffened Pharaoh’s resolve to not respond. Yet even though Pharaoh was not responding to God’s grace and the Word of the Lord, it was still fulfilling His purpose. God was manifesting His nature through the Word as well as through the plagues, one was through His grace the other through judgment but either way He was making Himself known. Back in chapter 5 Pharaoh was given the opportunity to respond to God’s revelation of Himself to which Pharaoh replied, “*Who is the Lord*.” For 5 chapters God has been showing Pharaoh just who He is. But not only has Pharaoh been learning, who He is, everybody else has been as well.

### Vs. 2-3 To illustrate His point, God shares with Moses how these plagues were working two separate ways depending upon the willingness of the heart.

1. Vs. 2 To the Israelite’s and their descendants God’s signs were **a continual reminder of Who their God was**. God was giving His people the opportunity to experience His power. Their yet unborn children are benefiting from their struggle and faith. As the preceding generations needed to step out in faith they would recall how God had showed them that He was for them. Further more, they were going to be able to share how God was faithful to them even when they were not faithful. In fact, that story has been told even today through the Passover celebration.
2. Vs. 3-6 To Pharaoh they were a warning to humble himself. The problem with Pharaoh is the problem with most of us at times, pride in the heart. He simply did not want to give in to God. This is the first of three question posed to Pharaoh, this one by Moses, the second two are recorded in verse 7 from his officers:
3. “*How long shall this man be a snare to us*?”
4. “*Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed*?”

Think of the boldness this took to confront the most powerful ruler in the world who was thought of as a god. Pride is a terrible thing as it effects all it comes into contact with. Every time we resist the word of the Lord in our lives we are being proud. Notice here that humility was to shone by action and not just words. Pharaoh had said he had blown it but to God that was not humbling himself before God. No, it took the action of letting His people go.

### Vs. 4-6 Moses plainly reveals to Pharaoh the consequences of a refusal of humbling himself:

### Vs. 4-5a So many locusts that they will not be able to see the ground. Locusts were feared for their ability to utterly destroy crops in a few minutes. In the Bible they are a symbol of divine judgment.

### Vs. 5b They would eat what was left from the hail. So the locusts ate the crops that had not been destroyed by the hail.

### Vs. 6 They would fill their houses.

### As you look at the effects of this plague it is obvious that if we become hard hearted to the point of Pharaoh that our pride will cloud us tell we will not be able to move, sustain our lives or find any rest. That’s what pride will do if we refuse to humble ourselves, it will so consume us like locusts upon the earth.

### Vs. 7 The three questions addressing Pharaoh’s pride. The first dwelt with the effects of pride upon Pharaoh himself. Here what are in view are the effects of pride upon others.

### Pharaoh’s pride was effecting others. His own servants are growing tired of Pharaoh’s pride. Pharaoh was still trying to control but in his attempt to do so it was not only wiping him out it was destroying those around him. Even these servants saw the practicality of obedience at this stage of the game. Seven plagues have come and gone, which have attacked them as well and facing the further destruction of disobedience. What they are responding to is not the goodness of God but rather the power of God to judge.

###  Lastly, they remind him that his pride has destroyed the land. How foolish we are when we refuse to surrender to the Lord? Pride had effected Pharaoh, it had effected those around him, and Lastly it had destroyed every thing that he so loved.

Vs. 8-11 Look at Pharaoh’s attempt to get Moses to compromises here. “*Who are the ones that are going? “Hey, Moses you can go but these little ones here they got to stay*.” Moses refuses to compromise, “*If we go they go!*” I’m reminded of the words of Joshua, “*As far me & my house we will serve the Lord.*” “*The Lord had better be with you, when I let your little ones go*.” Pharaoh says, “*Letting your kids go is evil*.” Why put them in jeopardy out in the wilderness?

Vs. 11 Look at this: “*Not so! Go now you who are men*..” Pharaoh is saying you don’t believe me go head those of you who are men go ahead and take your kids. Satan is always trying to place those seeds of doubt. The one that is doing all the threatening is a liar!

# III.) Vs. 12-20 Eaten out of house & home

Vs. 12-15 Look at the contrast of Moses next to Pharaoh everything that the Lord tells him to do he obeys. So he takes up the rod of the Word of the Lord and God works. Locusts in the Bible were especially feared in that they were an agrarian society. Especially in Egypt, they prayed to Seth the god that was suppose to protect the crops. Prophetically locusts always represent judgment. Egypt and Seth being judged three ways:

1. First they covered so much of the land that they darkened the earth. Which shows us what pride will do in your life it will keep you from being able to freely move around. These guys were hemmed in as was Pharaoh by his own refusal to humble himself before the Lord.
2. Second, the locusts ate every source of food that had remained after the hail. They destroyed every green thing. Pride destroys our lives! The things that sustains us is wiped out when we cling to pride instead of humbling ourselves before the Lord.
3. Lastly, as we saw they filled their house, in other words because of pride there would be no peace or rest in their houses. If we are at each other’s throats, it’s because we refuse to surrender your lives over to the Lord.

Vs. 16-20 Now this prayer of repentance looks good on the outside. He repents of his sin against God and man, then he even asks for forgiveness. But all Pharaoh does here is say the words that would end the out come of his actions. Godly sorrow leads to repentance, but true repentance will be seen in a changed heart that will continue. Obedience to the word of the Lord is not an option. What’s amazing to me is that the Lord because of His grace and mercy allows Moses to again intercede for Pharaoh only to see him harden his heart. Because God is gracious we ought not think that for as Peter reminds us in 2 Peter “*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance*.” So many think that God will not judge because he has not yet done so. Paul reminds us again in Rom. 2: 4-5 “*Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*,”

# IV.) Vs. 21-29 Light and darkness

Vs. 21-23 Eventually if we remain in our pride darkness will surround us. This plague came against their chief god Ra the sun god. It was to him that counted on to have the sun rise and fall. The effects of this darkness are described as:

1. Darkness that may be felt: I have been down into Mercer Caverns as well as Moaning Caverns and in both of these cave they like to get you way down there then they turn out all the lights. Man is that ever a weird experience, it is best described as a darkness that you can feel.
2. Second it was described as a darkness that would last three days. In 1 John we are told that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. So this was a time when the presence of the Lord was removed from the land of Egypt. When it was dark there would have been nothing as to remind them of who the true God was. Pharaoh had said he did not know who God was so He removes His presence.
3. Thirdly, it was a darkness that kept them from fellowship with one another. When God is not present in our lives fellowship with our fellow man is broken. That’s why I always start in marriage counseling by asking where their relationships are with the Lord.
4. Lastly, they were able to see light only in the house of those who were Israelite’s. Can you imagine what that would do to you knowing that you could be inside enjoying the fellowship with those were basking in the light and you were not there because of your own pride?

That describes what hell will be like, for those who refuse to humble themselves and instead die in their pride. Three times in Matthew Jesus, describes hell as outer darkness. The land of Egypt lay in darkness the same amount of time that Jesus would remain in the tomb.

Vs. 24-26 Again Pharaoh tries to make a deal this time you can take your children but leave the animals. But no compromise with Moses it’s all out obedience.

Vs. 27-28 A final warning from Pharaoh to Moses to which he agrees. Look at how pride has defeated Pharaoh. “*The day you see me you shall die*.” Why wait after the hail to destroy your life, the locust’s have eaten every thing, why wait until darkness surrounds you and it your about ready to breath your last. Never let pride keep you from fellowship with the Lord!

**Exodus**

**11: - 12:13**

**“The Lord Does Make a Difference”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-11 A blessing or a final blow?**

**III.) Vs. 12:1-6a A Chosen lamb.**

**IV.) Vs. 6b-13 A lamb slain.**

**Intro.**

Life, from our perspective, is all about choices. To make right choices, which all of us would like to do, we need good information. Most of us believe that with good information we will continually make right choices. The truth of the matter is that this is not so. There are those times when we choose wrongly and suffer the consequences of our actions. Such is the case before us with Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Their wrong decision to this day has become the basis of the greatest celebration in Israel (Passover). More then that it is the greatest for-runner to the work of Christ in all the Bible. We have before us today is the source of praise songs to God, yet those praise songs include the wiping out of Egypt’s firstborn sons. According to 12:30 “*there was not a house where there was not one dead*.”

 Can you imagine for a moment a Nazi group not only going to the Holocaust Memorial and sing praise songs against the 6 million people slaughtered? Some people feel the same about God for taking the first born sons of Egypt as they would Nazi’s singing at the Holocaust Memorial. All the plagues have been the “***acts of God***” this one however is the ***hand of God***. How are we to view this passage differently then we would man’s inhumanity to man?

**II.) Vs. 1-11 A blessing or a final blow?**

Vs. 1-11 Here we are given the “preamble” to the Passover. To understand chapter 11we need to realize that Moses does not place this in chronological order. Instead verses 1-3 happen right before 10:24-29 where Moses went in to Pharaoh to hear his final offer. Further more Moses’ speech to Pharaoh, (11:4-8) happen in between verses 10:26-27. Lastly 10:28-29 happened right after 11:8a where Moses explains that the Egyptians will say, “get out!” That’s how all of this unfolds chronologically. With this as the picture we can begin to see the responsibility that Pharaoh and the Egyptians had to their own destruction.

1.) Through out all of the 9 plagues God had been revealing to Pharaoh and Egypt the futility of worshiping their gods. In fact, God says so in chapter 12:12 where He says, *“..against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am LORD*.” What Pharaoh, the Egyptians and the rest of the world was worshiping is **Themselves**! The gods that the true God was destroying are none other then the images of ourselves that we set up to worship. God in His mercy and grace shows that they are not able to sustain or provide for us. In fact, it was the death of their firstborn sons that would remind them of the fact that they are not in control, which is why they did not want the Israelites around any longer.

Clearly a distinction had been made by God that it was far better to be His child then to be fatherless.

2.) Lastly, God gave Pharaoh and Egypt a choice, and they choose not to obey the Word. All of Egypt knew what He had said, we are told that they even thought of Moses as, “great”. They could have done just as the Israelites had done and the angel of death would have passed over them as well. In fact, some did as we are told in 12:38 that a “mixed multitude” went out with them. God did not take and kill the first born sons, their own pride did! This is not the Nazi’s wiping out 6 million Jews. This is Egypt committing mass suicide upon their own first born sons!

So why sing praise to God about it? What we praise is that God’s mercy and grace was available to us who just as much deserved to die in Egypt yet we received what He offered freely.

God bless his children two ways:

1. Vs. 1-3 **Grace**: He gives them what they don’t deserve. Some versions use the word “borrow”, but the word actually means to request. Though this was a payment for a debt owed them it was Gods grace which provided it, through the favor in which the Egyptians now saw them, in fact 12:36 describes their wealth obtained from the Egyptians as “plunder”. Moses reflects back upon what God had said in chapter 3:21 *“****I will give*** *you favor in the sight of the Egyptians and you shall not leave empty handed*.” Back wages for 400 years of forced slavery. God had promised Abraham in Gen. 15:14 that they would leave Egypt with “great possessions” and God provides back all of what was owed His children.
2. Vs. 4-8 **Mercy**: The Lord clearly warns Egypt what awaits them. The death of the “first born” has several elements to it.

1.) Vs. 5 It was **without discrimination**. All of the first born sons would be effected equally, from the highest to the lowest would be taken. The judgment was not based upon position or personal stature.

2.) Vs. 6 That it was **unparalleled**: They could not look at this as some coincidence. By the way that this judgment fell upon those Egyptians they could not deny that it was super-natural. Only those first born sons were effected.

1. Vs. 7 It was **selective**: Only the Egyptians who did not take part in the Passover were judged. A dog did not even bark in the houses of the Israelites.

Now Israel was just as sinful as was Pharaoh and Egypt. They were not getting what they deserved and it is based upon the obedience to the word of the Lord. Man is that ever true in our lives we are no different then most of the folks in the world, we are sinners just like them.

**III.) Vs. 12:1-6a A Chosen lamb.**

Vs. 1-3 Moses now speaks the word of the Lord to, he goes from Pharaoh and Egypt to the “congregation of Israel”. The Jewish nation had two separate calendars but both are according to a lunar calendar. This is why the Jewish Passover differs from year to year and is not always related to our Easter.

1. The first one was the civil calendar, which started in our September – October at the end of harvest season, and it is during this time that Jewish people celebrate their new New Year “Rosh Hashanah”. But this falls of the 7th month of their religious calendar. Today Israel only recognizes the civil calendar.
2. The second one is sacred and the Lord instituted this religious calendar. Which started in the month of Abid (ear month because the grain was in the ear.) After the Babylonian captivity the name was changed to Nisan which was a Babylonian name for the same time period.

God is saying that as far as He was concerned they were having a spiritual “new birth”. In fact, He wanted them to realize that time was starting over for them as He was delivering them out of bondage. God chooses Spring to do that because it is in the Spring the “new life” is made visible. Israel entered Egypt with 70 plus family members and they are leaving with several million as they become a nation. God is saying to them that as far as He is concerned the year starts at the time of their redemption. We have a “new beginning” in Jesus and we need to continually see ourselves as new creatures in Christ. It is there that I’m refreshed by Who He is and reminded that it is He Who alone cleanses me from my sin and failure.

Vs. 3 We are told the first thing about redemption, **always involves a sacrifice**. With in the concept of redemption and freedom, there must always be some form payment price. The price for human redemption is death. And there are two kinds of death’s represented here.

1. The first is seen in the death of the first born. To reject the Lord is to pay the price. Which of coarse not accepted.
2. The second, is seen in the Passover lamb.

It is interesting that both of these are fulfilled in Jesus who according to John 3:16 was Gods “first born” Son, who on the cross became the Passover lamb (1 Cor. 5:7).

a.) vs.3 It was personal: There was a lamb in for every house. God did not want some lamb that was outside of each family. He wanted the families to understand the price of their redemption. God does not save nations He saves people in nations, and through those people He reaches others.

1. Vs. 3, 6 It was to be precious: This lamb was to live with them for four days. I’m sure they became fond of the lamb, it was part of the family and everyone in that house new that this little lamb was going to die for them. They saw the lamb was innocent it had not done a thing wrong.
2. Vs. 4 It was to be private or intimate: Centered around the family if the family was to small then they were to get with the family next. The point being that God desired that the lamb would be closes enough to each person, so they would understand individually the cost being paid for their redemption. Notice that it was according to each mans, need. The lamb was given according to need.
3. Vs. 5 It was to perfect: The word blemish means an “acquired defect”. It could have gotten tangled up and damaged by the world in which it lived in. No scars. Peters says that Jesus was also with out spot which means that it can have no inherited defect as well. Jesus was both without an acquired defect from the world as well as without an inherited defect.

**IV.) Vs. 6b-13 A lamb slain.**

Two more things here that I want you to see:

1. Vs. 5,6,7 Notice Moses did not say you shall keep “them” but you shall keep “it”. The words “it” (singular) speaks of the lambs (plural). He was speaking of sacrificing 1000’s of lambs that night yet as this is written every one of those lambs points to only one Lamb, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
2. Vs. 6 All the assembly was involved in the deaths of the lamb: All of us are responsible for the death of Jesus as it was for all our sin that He dies. The only difference lies in appropriating His blood. There was not one person who could claim that they were good enough to not have the Passover lamb be sacrificed for them. The ones that thought that they did not need to sacrifice the lamb were the Egyptians Now a spot as they faced the death of their first born sons. Those lambs died so their sons did not have to, they were a substitute.

Vs. 7 They were to take the blood Now a spot as place it upon the doorposts of the home. Interesting because in so doing the blood would form the points of the cross. It was the life of the lamb that saved them from the judgment of death. Just as Moses would latter write in Lev. 17:11 “without the shedding of blood there is no remission”. It was not enough that they knew that the lamb had to be killed, if all they did was know the truth and not apply it then they were to be judged right along with the Egyptians. Neither could they watch their neighbors apply the blood and sit at their house and not do it, the act of what their neighbors did could not save them.

Vs. 8-10 They were not to boil it and eat it whole because not a bone was to be broken and to put it into a pot would mean that you would have to break its bones. It was to be roasted in the fires which speaks of judgment. Bitter herbs to remind them of the price of their redemption. No leaven or yeast in the bread because yeast speaks of sin and they were to leave that old life style behind they were to no longer be slaves to sin. They were to leave nothing behind, appropriating all of the sacrifice. They were leaving Egypt and nothing was to be left behind in the former life.

Vs. 11-13 There was a moving or walk associated with the sacrifice. If Pharaoh and the Egyptians would have obeyed the command, they too would have been saved. God says, “when I see the blood, I will pass over you.” There was not a person saved who was doing his or her best, or because they were honest and good. God said I’m only looking for the blood!” They were not to look out the window and see if it was really going to happen if they did they would have died. Nothing needed to be added, it was simple trust in God’s only provision.

**Exodus**

**12:14-51**

**“Memorial Day”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 14-28 Rejoice, remember, reach**

**III.) Vs. 29-36 The blessing of obedience**

**IV.) Vs. 37-51 From worriers to warriors**

**Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 14-28 Rejoice, remember, reach**

Vs. 14 In verse 13 God had just announced the purpose of the Passover, “*And when I see the blood, I will pass over you.*.” What would that mean to those of that generation and the ones that would follow? How did the events, which was a new beginning for the nation, to be expressed then and in the future? Well I think that God wanted them to do three things, REJOICE, REMEMBER, and REACH OTHER.

 **Rejoice**: God does not want Israel to forget what Passover was all about so for these next few chapters He tells them what it was for and how they were to express themselves during it, but more then anything else He wants them to realize the joy of it.

 Sixteen times in these verses the word “Lord” appears, first and foremost Passover and the ceremony that came about from this is about the Lord! Our salvation, our life, our everything is about the Lord. What kind of memorizes comes to your mind when you think about the day you came to Jesus? The Lord tells them that this day shall be a “**memorial**” to them.

When some people think of a “memorial” they think of some monument and that does not bring up exciting feelings. The root of the word means “memento”. One of those treasures that you purchase to remind you of the wonderful time that you had while on vacation. God is given them a “memento” of his freeing them from slavery. In the very next sentence He tells them what that “memento” is; “you shall keep it as a FEAST to the Lord.” The word “feast” here has two meanings:

1. A victim or a sacrifice.
2. A festival or a feast.

What this suggest is that it was a time of great remembrance upon the sacrifice and because of that same sacrifice it was a time of great celebration. Every time they took part in Passover they would remember the sacrifice of the lamb and rejoice in the fact that God had provide the Lamb for their freedom. Look at verse 11 for it says that it was the “Lord’s Passover” and again in the 26th verse we are told that it is the “Passover sacrifice of the Lord”. They were celebrating the Lord’s sacrifice. God has given you Himself and the day you received Him was a “memento” for you forever. You can forever go back to the day that you first received the Lord and at once be taken to the place of joy as well as understand the price paid for your joy. That is what communion is to be for us as well a time when we regularly take stock of the cost of our salvation as well as rejoice in it!

 Five times in these verses God reminds them the reason for the celebration, *“It is a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt*.” God does not just have some mindless celebration. No, God wants them to appreciate the meaning behind it. In fact, three times in these two chapters He tells them to explain to their children the meaning behind it, (12:26). They were to celebrate by:

1. Vs. 15-20 **By living sincerely**: Say what you will about this celebration, but one thing was for sure they took it seriously. This is not your normal laid back come whenever you want the way you want party. No there was a strict code given to us right here.
2. **Vs. 15,18-20 No leaven**: Leaven is yeast that comes in the flower water mix that actually causes the dough to spoil. When it spoils it puffs up the mixture and gives it a flavor that most folks like, (kind of sounds like pride). Now leaven in scripture has two similar ideas neither of them good.

1.) It caries an **idea of sin**. We are not to come to our day of celebration with any unconfessed sin. We are to get rid of anything in our lives that does not please the Lord. So often people think of sin as what is good not what is bad. You will see T.V. adds describing some desert as “*sinfully delightful*.” The truth of the matter is that some things that may be temporarily pleasing to our appetites are misery in our lives.

2.) The second idea is that of **hypocrisy**, or pretending to be something that you are not. A person who hides behind a mask presenting an image of something that in reality are not.

The Lord says here get rid of any thing that would hinder you from the true celebration. Don’t come to the feast with any false stuff. It is come as you are and you are now Holy as He is Holy, so that is the way you should come. Look at how serious this was to the Lord, verse 15, to so continue on in that old former way was to find yourself out of the party, cut off from the celebration.

 B.) Vs. 16 **No work**: God tells them that they were not to work, instead they were to recognize that they were called out. They were once slaves now they were set free to serve the Lord. The only thing they were allowed to do was prepare to party with the Lord. This reminds me that my salvation is not my work it is His! I can not earn His favor I can only receive it! Heb. 4:10 reminds us of this truth, “***For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works..***” I’m through with striving in my flesh to be good enough now I’m resting on His goodness. What this says to me is that we are to live sincerely before the Lord, that is what please Him that is how we honor Him. **So the first thing we see about Passover was that it was a time of rejoicing**.

 Verse 17 eludes to another reason why we are to rejoice; it is the way in which the Lord now sees us, “*for this same day I will bring your* ***armies*** *out of the land of Egypt*.” Armies? What armies? Don’t you just love how God address these Israelites. **They were a bunch of worriers now He calls them warriors***.* That is how the Lord sees them in the blood of the lamb.

Vs. 21-23 This brings me to the second thing that Passover was to be for them, a time of REMEBERANCE. The first thing I see is that God instructs Moses to take the elders of Israel first. I don’t think that you can effective lead people any place you are not willing to go yourself. God new that the way to reach the multitudes was through the leaders, but what were they to remember?

1. Vs. 21 That their **lives were at the cost of another’s** and that it had to be personal. “*Take lambs for yourselves…and kill the Passover lamb*”. They were not any better then the rest of Israel they to need to come to remembrance of the truth that they were sinners and that their sin made them guilty.
2. Vs. 22 **Obedience to the Word of God was absolutely necessary for their salvation**. They were not above the truth, they could not say to the rest of Israel, “*do as I say not as I do*.” If they did they would be as dead as the Egyptians. Folk’s obedience to the word of the Lord is not an option. Hyssop is a plant that grows in small cracks in rocks with a strong sent. This little plant shows up time and again in scripture and always as an instrument in cleansing. It reminds me that of faith, small as it might be if it is used to apply Christ’s blood to the door of my heart I will be cleansed.
3. Vs. 23 Lastly, that it was only **dependence upon the Lord that saved them**. In Egypt they thought that the god Osiris was the giver of life, but the elders knew that the Lord would not allow the destroyer to come in.

Vs. 24-28 The last thing God wanted them to know about the Passover was that was to be a time of REACHING out to the next generation. Notice again the words of verse 27, when the children ask, “*What do you mean by this*..”, they were to say, “*It is a Passover sacrifice of the Lord*.” It was not a sacrifice of the lamb but rather a sacrifice of the Lord. The responsibility was clearly laid upon that generation to reach their children and keeping the Passover was a means to share the truth of the work of God in their lives.

 What was the result of this? Well look at verse 27b “*they bowed their heads and worshiped.*” Don’t just teach people the need to go to church, no teach then the need to worship the true and living God. Verse 28 says that they went away and did so. Obedience to the word of the Lord was connected to true worship. It was not what they said that indicated that they worshiped, no, it was what they did in response to the word of the Lord. Many people think because they show in a building at a worship service that they are worshiping God, that’s not worshiping God only obeying His word is that.

**III.) Vs. 29-36 The blessing of obedience**

Vs. 29-36 Now we are again told of the blessings of obedience and it is twofold:

1. Vs. 29-32 They did not get what they deserved. As Israel was worshiping Egypt was weeping. Death is the great equalizer is it not? Pharaoh who had promised in 10:28 to kill Moses if he saw him again is now in the middle of the night sending for him. What a change Moses was the one who spoke of the Lords wishes in “*Letting His people go*”, no it is Pharaoh who tells Moses to take everything and everyone and go. The Final words of Pharaoh are “*bless me also*.” Pharaoh is now asking for prayer from Moses. How different things could have been if Pharaoh would have just heeded the word of the Lord.
2. Vs. 33-36 Then you have the second blessing that of getting what you don’t deserve. So they take again according to the Lord had told them, plus the plunder they received from the Egyptians. God bless because of Who He is not upon our deserving anything. Now if they had not done according to the Word of the Lord well there would have been no blessing so they had a part to play as well.

**IV.) Vs. 37-51 From worriers to warriors**

Vs. 37- 41 As they take out on there journey they travel some 20 miles from the supply city of Ramesses to Succoth which means shelters. Again notice that a mixed multitude went up from Egypt, no doubt some of them were believers and other were those who escaped Egypt on the good graces of the Lord. It was no doubt some of these that were the complainers. Further more we are told that they took no provisions. Because the Lord was their provision. And in all of this it was according to what God had said in the Bible. God calls these worriers warriors. As far as God was concerned this rag-tag group was now His army, we to have been transformed by the blood of the lamb from slaves to warriors. And it’s all through His power.

 Those who were allowed to take part in the feast were only those who were set apart in the Lord. That is what circumcision is all about the cutting away of the old life representing a new life in Christ. You could hang out with the children of Israel if you weren’t circumcised but you could participate in the feast!

**Exodus 13:1-22**

**“Alive Sacrificially”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-10 Separate from sin**

**III.) Vs. 11-16 Separate to the Lord**

**IV.) Vs. 17-22 Lead by the Lord**

**Intro.**

Last week we saw the Lord instituting a memorial day in which what He had done for Israel would be celebrated. Clearly God wanted a party in which those that participated would know the reason for the celebration. In this chapter God goes on to explain how He now wanted them to live.

* In the first section, (1-10) He tells them that they are to live separate from sin.
* Then in verses (11-16) He tells them that He wants them to live surrendered to Him.
* Lastly, in verses (17-22) He tells them how to accomplish these two ways of living, (dependent upon Him).

Through out Israel’s deliverance God’s miraculous hand was clearly seen, but God did not want Israel just to see His hand only upon their deliverance He wanted them to know that it was His hand that would continue to sustain them no matter where He took them. We put an awful lot of importance upon how we start things and not upon how we finish things. The purpose of these memorials or mementos was to cause Israel to continue to depend upon the Lord.

The 1968 Olympics held in Mexico City will be forever remember not upon the victories of the contestants but rather upon the last place finish of a marathon runner from Tanzania, Stephen Akhwari. Soon into the race he injured his right leg after a horrible fall. The race was concluded for over an hour when a bandaged Akhwari entered the stadium wincing with every step. Several thousand spectators began to clap as he limped around the track finally crossing the finish line as the crowed leaped to their feet in wild approval. Later at a press conference he was asked the obvious question; “*Why bother to finish when you had no hope of winning?*” Akhwari looked at the reported as if he had just asked the dumbest question anyone could ever asked and replied, “*Sir, my country did not send me 5,000 miles to start a race, they sent me 5,000 miles to finish it*.” Stephen Akhwari had run sacrificially and knew that what matter was not who came in first but rather who finished!

# II.) Vs. 1-10 Separate from sin

Vs. 1-2 God had spoken of the Passover feast how they were to celebrate with out leaven. Now God is showing them how that related to them personally. He is showing them that they belong to Him. The firstborn in scripture cares with it several important ideas.

a.) Exodus 4:22 tells us that Israel was God’s firstborn and this honored that truth.

b.) The firstborn was thought of as being the best. He was the one in which all inheritance and privilege was passed on from parents to children. God was showing them that **our best always belongs to Him**.

c.) Finally, God wanted to remind them that He had spared the firstborn of Israel through the shed blood of the lamb so He is saying that the nation belongs to Him. He is giving them a living object lesson. Every time the firstborn member of their own family or animal was born they would be forever reminded of whose they are, they belong to the Lord.

The idea here is that of being devoted to the Lord, and the price paid for that devotion. Clean animals were to be sacrificed unclean animal and humans were to be redeemed or bought back with a price which recognized that there was a price paid for their freedom, (about 2 ½ ounces of silver according to Num. 18:16). In the N.T. the word “***firstborn***” appears only nine times and seven of those times it is in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ being the “firstborn”. Once it is used, as it is here in Exodus as Israel being God’s firstborn. Lastly, in Heb. 12:23 we believers are described as, *“..the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven*,” Now hold on with me a moment because every one of us are called the “firstborn” of God. Therefore, we to have experienced God’s mighty hand of deliverance from sin by the outstretched hands of His Son the Lamb of God slain for us. **So we are His exclusive possession**. In verses 5 we are told that this was to take effect when they entered into the promised land, but we have already done so to which according to Eph. 1:13-14 the Holy Spirit is the seal of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance. We ought to be living as Paul described in Gal. 2:20: “*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me*.” It ought to look as though we give Him the best of every thing.

Vs. 3-10 So How do we give the Lord what is His?

A.) Vs. 3 “**No leaven bread shall be eaten**”: Paul said it this way in 2 Cor. 5:17 “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*” The old self life stile of sin is gone, it’s passed away. In Jewish thought you really became what you ate. That is why rules were made about what you could eat and with whom you could eat. The Lord is saying don’t be partaking of the old eating habits of the flesh. You’ve been purchased with a price so turn away from those things of sin.

B.) Vs. 4-5 “**It’s a new beginning and a new place to live in**”: It’s a new time and new place in your life, so don’t live in the old place and the old way any longer.

C.) Vs. 6-7 “**Your new way of living is 24/7 and is a joyful celebration**”: Before sin meant death and separation from God now they are a live separated to God. Not only have they changed location but also God wanted them to know that it was a permanent change of address. The Lord wanted to tie together that the life of purity is a party. What kind of party is it if it has to be centered on escaping? “*Hey, man just got to tune out, drop out, dope up*!” Not so with the Lord He wants us to be totally conscience of where you are and whom you are with.

D.) Vs. 8-10 “**Bring others with you with a testimony and His word**”: Here we are told that they were to share this celebration with their sons. Start with your testimony of how the Lord delivered you from your old life stile. Then we ought to be sharing with them the Word of the Lord, (verse 9). It is based upon this verse that they started warring phylacteries, which were small leather boxes, which held these verses on their foreheads and wrists. What the Lord wanted them to do was put it on the heart so that it would be in their mouth. God wanted them to obey the word and so display it in their lives that others would see it not ware it as an ornament.

## **III.) Vs. 11-16 Separate to the Lord**

Vs. 11-13 The first part of our separation is that we were separated FROM, sin. Now we come to what we are separated TO, Himself.

1. Vs. 11 **“..when the Lord brings you into the land He swore to your fathers, and gives it to you.**”: God wanted them to know that He is the One who is faithful to keep His promises. It does not say “**if**” the Lord brings you into the land, but “**when**” He brings you into the land. It is clear that God wanted them to realize that their inheritance was a gift not something that they had earned. The promise was not even made to them but to many generations before them. Yet, they were the ones reaping the benefits of His promise to Abraham.
2. Vs. 12 **“..Shall be the Lord’s**.”: God wanted them to realize that He was their Father. He was their protector, deliver, and provider. Yes, we are to give Him our best, but we have received from Him His best. I have no problem with the Lord being my boss because He loves me and everything He does is for my benefit.
3. Vs. 13 **“.. every donkey you shall redeem.. and every man among your sons**.”: Every beast of burden, or what ever troubles you give to the Lord. God wants you to not carry around those things that weigh you down. Every morning I look in the mirror I’m thankful that he redeems the jackass! The donkey was not a clean animal so the blood of the lamb could only purchase it. If they were not going to redeemed it then it’s neck was to be broken, so today if those donkeys out there don’t want to be redeemed then they will one day have their neck’s broken.

 Vs. 14-16 God wanted to remind the future generations of Who He was and how that would impact their lives now. Often our failures are because we don’t understand who God is in our lives. It is by “*His strength that we live*”, (verse 14-15a). God had ordained this to always be the reason why they serve, (*sign on their hand*) and a motivation of why they now live, (*a sign between your eyes*).

**IV.) Vs. 17-22 Lead by the Lord**

They were separate **from** sin, and separated **to** the Lord, but how was they to be done daily? By simple following Him.

Vs. 17-18 Notice that God did not lead them in the way that was the easiest. The way of the Philistine’s was along the coast and would have been the quickest route to the promised land. God does not care about what is the **quickest** route in your life He cares about what is the **best** route in your life. You may think that there are quicker routes in your life to get to where you want but it may not be the best.

Vs. 17b God new that they were not ready for the battle they were to face if they went by way of the sea there was the Egyptian army posted along that route as well as the Canaanite army as they came into the promised land. So God saw that they would just go back into slavery. So the quick route would not have been so quick after all. Perhaps your trying to get to some place in your life now and there are all these road blocks and you just can’t figure out why God does not just remove the road blocks. Well there are some battles that you would have to face that He knows that you that you would change your mind and go back to the world.

Vs. 18 So He lead them by way of the Reed sea. He was already training them, so although they were not yet ready for the battle He was preparing them for the day they would be. God never puts you on a shelve you are always in training for life a head of you.

Vs. 19-20 Now look at some ways that He lead them:

1. Vs. 19 “**He guided them by faith**”: They took with them the bones of Joseph. Joseph was a man of faith who made them promise over two hundred years prior to take his bones with them when they left. In Gen. 50: 24-26 he made his brother promise that when God took them out of the land to the land of promise that he wanted to buried in the land that God had promised. So for 200 years Joseph’s bones lay in a coffin above ground. Those bones were speaking to the nation the way of faith! **This tells us that God will guide as by faith not by sight**!
2. Vs. 20 “**He guided them one step at a time**”. We all want to know how all of it is going to turn out but God says no, “*I’m only going to show you this much today*!” Did you ever notice that we are always camped at the edge of the wilderness? It seems to me that we are always on that place of uncertainty, not knowing what life has for us the next day. Say, what you will about the Christian life but one thing is for certain it is not boring.
3. Vs. 21“**He Guided them by His visible presence**.”: First His presence was there 24 hours a day and it was in a way that demonstrated His assurance of safety. It is interesting that in 14:20 we are told that this same pillar that was light to Israel was darkness Egypt. The Word of God that is light to us but the non-believer can not comprehend it. Today we are given His word to guide us. You know what the acronym for the word Bible is? **B**asic **I**nstructions **B**efore **L**eaving **E**arth!

God guides us today, ***by faith***, ***one step at a time***, ***through His word***. One last little thing to notice in verse 22 He did not stop guiding them through the presence of His word until they came to their home. And you know what He won’t stop guiding you either so why not trust His word?

**Exodus 14:1-31**

**“Seeing the Work of the Lord”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-9 I’ve got them right where I want them**

**III.) Vs. 10-14 Fear not, stand still, look up, & be quiet**

**IV.) Vs. 15-31 Faiths deliverance, prides destruction**

1. **15-22 faiths deliverance**
2. **23-29 prides destruction**
3. **30-31 results**

**Intro.**

### In 13:17 we are told of God “leading” Israel, now for the nation this was their first experience of being led by God. Moses had some experience with this but to the nation this was all-new. When we become Christians we have a life time of doing things our way. We have been the captains of our own ships, or at least we think we have. Then you give your life to Jesus and the former things have passed away. So you are now trying to live your life by His leading not what seems right to you. Now I don’t know about you but it all felt kind of weird. I mean I really wanted to allow God to lead my life but I had no history of this & no real knowledge of what this looked like. What I discovered was that God had given me some things to go on just like He did Israel which we saw last week:

### Vs. 19 **He would lead them by faith:** Old Joseph’s bones were a testimony of one mans trust in God’s promises above what he could figure out or see. So to we have to learn to trust Gods word in spite of the consequences. Someone once said that “**Faith was believing God’s Word in spite of the evidence**.” Folk’s that’s not faith that’s *SUPERSTITION*! No! **“Faith is obeying God’s word in spite of the consequences.**”

### Vs. 20 **He would lead them step by step**: We all like to have every bit of information we can before we make a commitment to go, but God does not tell us everything. No, instead He leads us to where is best for us not based upon what we see but rather based upon who He is. So when God is leading you get use to moving one step at a time. Again you will notice that He led them to the edge of the wilderness, which speaks to me about how God would have us always dependent upon Him.

### Vs. 21 **He would lead them by His presence**: Now today we don’t have a cloud by day & fire by night directing our every move. No, we have something much better the “sure Word of God”. Ps. 119:105 says, “***Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.***” It’s where we get our direction & guidance.

### So there you have the basics & you start out following God based upon those simple things. You’re a little shaky on this whole God thing but you start out by faith, one step at a time, looking to His word to guide you. Some time goes by & you start to think, “I can do this!” Then, all of the sudden is happens you find out that you have been following God & He has led you right into a trap which you can so no way out. Now don’t give me any lines*, “No way, man it’s been just one great success after another*.” When we allow God to lead sooner or later you are going to find yourself in a situation where it looks as though God’s ways & Word was wrong. It is here that you have your first of many crises of faith. Now if you have not had this happen before then you will one day. So what do we do? Well, this morning we get to see how God handled it & why!

### **II.) Vs. 1-9 I’ve got them right where I want them**

Vs. 1-9 What is clear in this section is that:

1. Vs. 1-2 God was the one that changed their coarse. “*Now the Lord spoke…saying turn the camp before “Pi-hahiroth between Migdol and the sea. Camp there along the shore, opposite Baal-zephon*.”
2. Vs. 4 God had a reason of why He was changing coarse: “*I will gain honor over Pharaoh…that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord*.”
3. Vs. 3, 5, 6, 8, 10 God knew how Pharaoh, Egypt & Israel would see this change of coarse: “*They are bewildered by the land…why have we let Israel go…so he made ready 600 choice chariots & took his people with him & pursued Israel…& overtook them camping by the sea.” “And when Pharaoh drew near...Israel saw that the Egyptians marched after them…so they were very afraid…&….cried out to the Lord*.”

When you first read this change of direction it means absolutely nothing to you unless you have a great grasp of ancient Egypt geography. We are given some strong clues of what this change of direction looked like based upon how Pharaoh & Israel saw it. Geographically God directs them to a place where their backs were to the sea & on the sides were two mountains. If you will God placed them into a cul-de-sac, which there was only one way out & that was the way in which they came. Pharaoh clearly saw it as a very bad decision one in which left Israel closed in. Israel does not seem to recognize this until 600 chariots closed off the mouth of the valley in which they camped.

 So what does all of this have to do with me? Well God had already directed Israel away from the sea route & into the wilderness. Why? Because He knew that they were not ready to fight for their freedom. Now I wonder how many of these 3 million Israelites comprehended that God was taking them away from the natural choices that the world would choose? Perhaps some of them saw that where God was leading was not the normal way to go, but since there was no problems they went along with it. But now as they are heading out in the wilderness, uncharted territory, God suddenly heads them back the road they came in on, further more to a place that hems them in. Now, if you are all new at allowing God to lead you & you are just following Him, by faith, step by step, through His word, & now he has you going in circles the same way you came in. In all practical ways it looked as if they were totally lost & all of this while they were being led by the Lord? Why you might just begin to wonder if this God that you have committed your life to really has it altogether.

Not hitting home yet? Come on now, you can’t tell me that you have never felt as though God was making a bad decision in your life as you are following Him. It just does not make since to you that He led you here & then has you go back to there, only to have to get stuck here. Man that seems all too familiar to me. That’s all cool until you come crashing into a trap with no way out! Then you really begin to doubt God’s ability to lead saying, “*Man, I just don’t get it Pastor I’m doing everything the way God said to & now this has happened*.”

All of this reminds me of the old T.V. show “Get Smart”. Don Adams, who played agent 86 “Maxwell Smart”, would always find himself in these situations where Kaos, the evil organization, had him pinned in. Then he would call Control on his shoe phone saying, “Chief, I’ve got them right where I want them!”

That’s what the Lord has done, He has led Israel to a place where they have no other choice but to trust Him, further more He led them to a place as bait for Pharaoh & Egypt so that He could show both of them He alone is Lord. Folk’s that seeming dead end place that you find yourself in right now is not an accident, neither is it a demonstration of God’s poor ability to lead you as you learn to follow. No! **It is a place designed by Him to show you that He alone is Lord & that you follow Him not because you understand the places He takes you in life. No you follow Him because of Who He is!**

This week I was reading in Kent Hughes book, “*Liberating Ministry from Success Syndrome*”, where he says that early on in ministry he was shown by God the truth of Jer. 29:11 “*For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope*.” He shares these important truths with reference to God’s guiding:

“*There never has been & never will be a thoughtless action of God towards me. There is not a single item of evil in His plans for His people, neither in motive, conception, revelation, or consummation. This does not mean that we are shielded from hardship or misery, it means that God’s plans are never for evil in the believer’s life, instead they are always with an eye towards their well-being & wholeness – always*!”

Folk’s only in eternity will everything come into focus. In the first few seconds in heaven our perspective of God’s guidance will cause us to fall upon our faces in absolute praise of His leading us. The truth of Jer. 29:11 is ours to experience daily if we will only heed the 13th verse of Jer. 29, ***“If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me***.” Oh, man do you get it? There must be as Kent Hughes says, “*A God-focused obsession in our lives if we are to fully experience the benefit of His promises*.”

**III.) Vs. 10-14 Fear not, stand still, look up, & be quiet**

Vs. 10-12 Here we have Israel’s reaction to God’s guiding them into this trap. Now it ought not to surprise you because it is how most of us react. I will not spend too much time on this these verse but I do want to point out how our flesh responds when we are not trusting the Lord’s guidance.

1. Vs. 10 **Fear**: We ever there is a battle over control & we realize that we are not in control our very first reaction is fear. Did you see that they were not afraid until Pharaoh’s army sealed of the mouth of the valley? As long as they could see some way of getting out of their situation they were not afraid, but the moment they were beyond the scope of their intellect they were, “greatly afraid.” Trusting God’s leading is no problem as long as you can understand the whys. No as my son is driving all over Merced, I am starting to get use to the fact of it. The other day he offered to take me to the store. So? Well, I realized that I was no longer ridding with him as a instructor was. No, now I was just a passenger who had no control! Fear seized me but I went by faith & kept my mouth shut, & he did great.
2. Vs. 11 **Unhappiness**: Clearly since they can not figure out how they are going to get out of this they are not “happy campers”. Do you get the pun of their sarcasm? Egypt in known for what? The pyramids & what are those pyramids? Well they are nothing more they huge crypts. Egyptians were consumed with the after life, so every where there were burial places. So they say, “Hey, did you lead us out here because there was not enough room to bury us in Egypt?” They are not only questioning the action of Moses they are questioning his motivate as well, “Why have you dealt with us, to bring us out of Egypt.” Hey, Moses did you get some kick back on getting us all killed. I mean are you in the body bag business?”
3. Vs. 12 **Bitterness**: They now remind Moses that they told him back in chapter 5 that they just wanted him to leave them alone. “*Man, I was never wanting to follow God any way & now that you have made me do so it is not working out the way you promised.” “Better to be a slave to the world man, then to be miserable in this weird place*!”

Sound familiar? Hey, we are all at times like these Israelites afraid, unhappy, even bitter. The sad fact is that we like them have seen the Lord do miraculous things in our lives that we all too often forget. The correlation in our lives is all too obvious, we would often chose the worlds ways of comfort, non-threatening, non-challenging, no risks. Because real life in Christ means that we are not in control & that is not comfortable, it is threatening, challenging & risky. So we stay in the worlds slavery instead of going after faith’s freedom. Why? Because we perceive the freedom of faith as Eeyore of Winnie the Pooh, “We are never going to make it!”

 But how do we grow unless some time we choose to take the joy of the risk of faith even though it means that we aren’t sure of where that may lead us, what we are sure of is Who is leading us!

Vs. 13-14 Here we are told the words Lord had Moses share with Israel in light of their doubt. Now If I was Moses & I had just heard their complaints after God’s clear leading I would have resigned on the spot. “*Look God, you said that these were your kids, so that means that they aren’t mine. So I’ll tell you what I’m just going to swim across this lake just so I don’t have to hear them complain any more & it I drown then a t least I won’t have to hear them for another 40 years*.” But instead Moses gives them four clear instructions as to how to handle the crises of doubt & unbelief:

1. “**Do not be afraid**”: **Fear will either energize us or paralyze us either way it can be destructive**. So the first thing Moses tells them is not to react but rather respond. Don’t react to the wave of emotionalism, don’t give in to the desire to react to fear. The **how** of your response will only be right in as much as you have dealt with the rational of **why** you are responding that way. Does that make since to you? If you allow fear to be your guide then your reaction may cause you to make a decision you will regret the rest of your life. It appears by the next statement that Moses makes, that their reaction was going to be to run, (stand still). And if that is the case then they would of looked like they were going to fight Pharaoh & his army which would of meant that they would of been slaughtered & those that survived would have been again enslaved.
2. “**Stand still**”: This is the Lord’s answer to those in a crises of faith. Fear will demand that you retreat or advance, impatience will tell you to do it now, presumption will tell you do what is right before it is time, but faith says, stand & while your standing be still! Paul writing to the church of Ephesus about spiritual warfare in chapter 6 tells them 4 times in four verses to stand. All God ever has us to do in Christ in difficult times is to “stand” on His victory. That’s exactly what Moses tells them in verse 14, “The Lord will fight for you,..” The battle belongs to the Lord! It is amazing to me that God tells them to stand still & then in verse 15 He tells them to go forward. It is as though God says, “Hey, don’t go out in your own strength & effort, but do go out in Mine!”
3. “**Look up**”: You see they are to do something. What was that? Well, it’s to see the salvation of the Lord. Now it is interesting to look at these verses in the Hebrew because the word salvation is the Hebrew equivalent for the name of Jesus, (Yeshuwa) & the word Lord here is the word Yehovah. So this sentence says “*See the Jesus of God.” Man is that ever cool, “Don’t go out & do it in your own strength instead look for Jesus your salvation that is God*.” So when you are struggling, look to Jesus stand in His victory allow Him to give you His peace. Notice how emphatic our salvation is, “which He will accomplish for you today.”
4. “**Be quiet**”: Here he tells them not to complain about their troubles. All that whining does is show everybody that you are not trusting in the Lord. Before they are ever to take a step the first thing they are to do is shut their mouths. How many times have we talked ourselves out of trusting in God by our own complaining? So why are we to hold our peace? Because the Lord WILL fight for you. So don’t be living & acting as if He is not going to.

## IV.) Vs. 15-31 Faiths deliverance, prides destruction

1. **15-22 faiths deliverance**

Vs. 15 It does not take much imagination to feel what Israel must of felt. Chariots were what tanks are today & Egypt had brought 600 of them & placed them at the mouth of the valley. It must have looked as though Pharaoh was going hunting for fish in a barrel. Any person at all can see a ambush & Pharaoh clearly thought that he was going to exact some revenge.

 Now for all of Moses faith & pep talk he was just a man as well, so as soon as he is done talking to Israel for God, he talks to God. That’s a good thing right? Well normally but evidently he was having a gripe session so the Lord says, “What are you crying to me for, get going!” There is a time for prayer & seeking the Lord but after that it’s time to act on it. We on the board here have talked with the Lord, we have discussed together what needs to take place so that in 18 months we will move into our own building & God said, “move forward”. So that is what we are doing! I don’t know how He is going to deal with all the things ahead of us, frankly it’s not my problem it is His.

Vs. 16-22 Here we are told of the “angel of the Lord” which is equated to the Lord being in the pillar of cloud & fire, (13:21). The only conclusion I can come up with here is that the “angel of the Lord” is not an angel but a messenger & here as else where in the O.T. is preincarnate manifestation of Jesus, or a Christophanie.

 So the Lord surround them, do you see that in verse 19? The Lord was not only there to guide them He was there to protect them from the advancing Egyptian army. And what was light to the Israelites was darkness to the Egyptians. So to is the Word of God today to us it lights our way but to those in the world it is darkness.

Vs. 21-22. First off the Red Sea of 13:18 is more accurately “reed, or papyrus sea. The term describes the region north of the Gulf of Suez on or near the Bitter Lakes & the Lake Timsah in what is now the Suez Canal, which links the Mediterranean sea with the Red Sea. We can not be certain of this but geographically it fits better then does the 100 mile across Red Sea. Though it would not of been as deep or as wide does not make it any less of a miracle. What we do know is that there was enough water there to make crossing impossible & at the same time make drowning possible.

 I came across a interesting article concerning the possibility of the parting of the Red or Reed Sea. In the L. A. Times 3/14/92 titled “Research supports Bible’s Account of Red Sea Parting” by Thomas H. Maugh It goes on to say, “*Because of the peculiar geography of the northern end of the Red Sea, researchers report Sunday in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society, that a moderate wind blowing constantly for about 10 hours could have caused the Sea to recede about one mile & the water level to drop 10 feet, leaving dry land in the area where many biblical scholars believe the crossing occurred*.” I just love it when science is actually correct.

**23-29 prides destruction**

Vs. 23-25 Now right here we see the pride of Pharaoh & the Egyptian army. One has to wonder why they would go after the Israelites knowing what had happened to them during the plagues. Several things might give us the reason:

1. Israel had the fire by night guiding them so clearly they could see the pillar of water on either side, but to the Egyptians all they saw was darkness. In other words they were following several thousands foot prints with out looking on either side. That’s what pride will do to you, it will blind you of danger.
2. Vs. 24 Tells us that it was only during the mourning watch that they saw what awaited them. The mourning watch goes from 2 am. tell sunrise.
3. Vs. 25 Tells us that it is then that they tried to turn around & head back only to have their wheels fall off. It is then that they say, “*Let's get out of here! The LORD is fighting for Israel against us*!”

Vs. 26-29 We see the out come was the total destruction of the mighty Egyptian army. Yet the preservation of God’s people. That is the same choice today that people have to trust God or fight against Him.

**30-31 results**

Vs. 30-31 The results were that they saw the Lord fight their battle & that He knew which was the right way after all. They also believed the Lord, but you know what is sad? They do exactly what we do when we come up to a crises of faith the next time, they fail to appropriate the truth learned about God the last time! So how about it are you ready to

Not react to emotions, stand of His work, trust in His power & rest in His peace?

**Exodus**

**15:1-27**

**“New Surroundings by Joy”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-17 A song for the past, present and future**

**III.) Vs. 18-21 Let’s dance to the music**

**IV.) Vs. 22-27 How did that song go again?**

**Intro.**

In chapter 15, victory is won by the Lord and the people break forth in spontaneous praise to the Lord. Yet, by the end of the chapter, three days out, they are singing a different song. Folks, I can relate to that. I’m normally an up beat guy; I kind of always see the glass ½ full instead of ½ empty. But there are occasions where I doubt the Lord’s faithfulness and become a pessimist. I remember talking to a person one time and was encouraging them not to be so pessimistic to which they replied, “*I’m not a pessimist, I’m a realist*!” God forbid that we should stop praising the Lord because things don’t work out the way we think they should, that’s not our prayer any way. Instead we ought to praise Him because they are going to work out the way He wants them to!

**II.) Vs. 1-17 A song for the past, present and future**

As we break apart this song sung while at the sea there are several important things to remember.

1. ***It was a song according to verse 1 that Moses wrote and instituted and the Israelites only followed the example of Moses***. Moses starts out with the first words of the song, “*I will sing, to the Lord*.” At the start Moses declares what He will do and to whom He is going to do it. The response to this was that the children of Israel sang it as well. But what they needed to learn was that they were to sing this song not only the seashore of victory but also through the desert of dryness!
2. ***It was a song that affirmed their trust in God***. This song seeks not just to record the blessing of victory over the Egyptians. It seeks to use that victory as a basis of continual trust in the Lord who “*will fight for you*..” (14:14). In fact, it will serve as the division of this song. Verses 1-13 are past and present tense expressions. Seven times in those verse you read the words “has” and “were”, all affirmations of what God **HAD** done on their behalf. Then in verses 14-17 the song switches to the future tense as eight times in five verses the word “will” is used. Clearly, this was a song that had a pointed message, “**The victory won over the enemy here and now assures the future victory**.” God’s whole plan to start with was not just to lead them out of bondage it was to lead them to the land He had promised to their forefathers, (3:8). Phase one of that plan had now been accomplished and they needed to realize that He Who accomplished phase one would with equal success accomplish phase two!
3. Lastly, it was a song that would be called back time and again in the future. In many ways this incident and the song that it inspired became a sort of national anthem. It is mentioned or eluded to 15 times in the Psalms and 12 times in the prophets. Even in the future it will be sung as we read in Rev. 15:3 that during the great tribulation it will be sung as an encouragement to the tribulation believers. To remind them of God’s continual faithfulness. The song assures Israel as well as us of what God can do based upon the knowledge of what He has already done. By His strength, He has deliver us from bondage. And more then that bring us to the land to which He has promised. Or as Col. 1:13 puts it, “***He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love***,”

Vs. 1-13 A song of God’s past and present work!

Vs. 1-2 Verse 1 is the chorus which was latter, (vs. 20-21), picked up by Moses sister who is by now 90 + years old. What a seen this must have been of see this 90-year lady dance to the Lord. Verse 1-2 starts with and then is repeated eight times in this song, the use of the first person pronouns, (I and my). That tells us that the song was meant to be sung personally. “*The Lord is my strength and song*,” Etc. God’s deliverance is viewed through the understanding of His character. In other words, because of Who God is by nature He had to act! He threw the rider into the sea because He is “*strength, salvation, Jehovah*”. Jehovah, by the way is used 12 times in this song. So putting this together this song is to remind us of our Dad who is always acting on our behalf.

Vs. 3-8 The events that had just transpired are poetically described. Even though Moses sings this song with a view to the natural destruction of Pharaoh and his army, (*drown by the sea, depths covered them, sank to the bottom like a stone, etc*.). Yet the direct hand of God brings it all about, (**He has** thrown them into the sea, **Your right hand** has dashed the enemy to pieces.) Moses is singing of the fact that God can cause the natural to act unnaturally. Don’t be looking at the situation or circumstance as to your reason for rejoicing rather look to God who controls everything.

Vs. 9-10 Take on the thought that Moses sang about in the third verse, “*The Lord is a man of war*.” God is not only able in His sovereignty to control the natural, he is also able to prevail over those who arrogantly pursued Israel. Notice all the “I will’s” of the Egyptians. Yet in contrast to how “positive” Egypt was, God is the one Who had victory over the mightiest army in the world at that time! He blew the wind and they sank like lead. What this song reminds us is that we should not doubt God no matter what enemy is pursuing us, as long as the Lord fights our battles we can move forward in confidence.

Vs. 11-13 These verses look at the Lords character and nature drawing the conclusion from what He did. Moses and the Israelites recognize the greatness and goodness of God, as being far above any other. What is great here is that when you go back to chapter 6: 7 you read, “*I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*” After accomplishing what He said He would do Moses and the Israelites praise Him. The events in our lives are designed with the same in view. The goal is to reveal more of His character and nature to us. I pray that we to learn to sing His praise.

The first 13 verses of this song was about God’s defeat of Egypt, the next 4 verses deal with how that victory will defeat Israel’s future enemies. Using a sports world term, we are talking about **momentum**! An Israel has a ton of it now. Then came into the match with Egypt huge underdogs, and into the forth quarter they were seen as an army. But how would they hold up in the pressures of the forth quarter? They wiped them out! This was just the first game of the season. God had not only promised to bring them out of Egypt he had promised to bring them to the land of promise.

Vs. 14-16 Here they sing about how this victory will be received by the nations who now occupy the land that God had promised their forefathers. Some 40 year’s latter, as they entered Jericho Rahab told the Israelite spies, “*For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt*,”. God uses one victory in our lives to build the next one. Then in the very next sentence Rahab recalls what God did to “*the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed*.” That’s the chiefs of Edom mentioned in verse 15. In verse 16 Moses even uses some of the same words used in the destruction of Egypt to describe what God will do to the future battles, the Egyptians sunk as a stone the future enemies will be as still as stone. Your angel passes over Israel, now Israel will pass over their enemies.

Vs. 17 Based upon these facts as seen in the victory over the Egyptians God will bring them into the land of promise. I believe God would have us remember how He has brought about victories in our lives through trusting in Him. And as Paul says to the Church at Philippi that we can be, “***confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ***.”

**III.) Vs. 18-21 Let’s dance to the music**

Vs. 18 What a great and glorious promises! It does not say that Israel shall rein forever and ever; it is only the Lord that shall rein but according to 2 Tim 2:12 “***We shall also reign with Him***.”. His victory is ours!

Vs. 19 Again Israel’s hope and future is tied to God’s deliverance. So to is ours! Our hope is in the finished work of Christ. Whom we are told in Heb. 12, is “*the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*”

Vs. 20-21 Miriam is back into the picture the first time since chapter 2, where she was instrumental in saving here brother Moses. I’m not sure how this song went but it appears to the words of verse 21 as an oft-repeated chorus. I love the fact that this old woman got up and led the women in praise to God. I don’t think you would get many of us middle age cool people starting this out. But the young and the old are not worried about how they appear before others.

There is no more spirituality in emotionalism as there is in being ultra reserved it all has to do with the heart of the one that worships. Worship is a participation exercise; God forbid it becomes a performance. When you sing unto the Lord you do so for the audience of One. So old Miriam with a tumbrel in her hand a song in her heart and movement in her feet went out to lead the nation in the spontaneous praise to the Lord.

**IV.) Vs. 22-27 How did that song go again?**

Vs. 22 Here we have the setting of their first movement as freed people. I kind of think that this song was being sung not just by the sea but as they started their hike into the wilderness of Shur. Over 2 million of them walking out trusting God with this great song in their heart. Three days goes by and the supply of water starts to dwindle. The first day that chorus could be heard every where, “For He has triumphed gloriously..” The next day, there were less people singing but most of them were perhaps still humming it. By the third day no body was singing or humming any more. Can you imagine going into that camp after the third day and you start to sing the song again and you get dirty looks. “*Hey knock it off with that dumb water song, don’t you get it we don’t have any more water*!” “*Three days and not a drop, you sing one more bar of that thing and I’ll drown you in the first mud puddle we come too*!” Where was the praising God for victories in the future? Where was the praise to God who can take the natural and use it super-naturally?

Vs. 23 Then, just as the song had died out some one says in the camp that they see some water a distance off. Then the song starts to get sung again! Imagine the disappointment? As some of them scooped up a handful of that water and found it undrinkable? Things that we expected to turn out the way we wanted them to not doing so. Were parched for good news only to find ourselves choking on disappear.

Vs. 24 When we get our eyes onto our situation as the reason to praise God then the waters will always be bitter. Don’t praise God because He does what you want. No when things come out the way you want you should praise Him for what that shows is that He loves you and knows what you need before we ask. Man do we ever forget His character and promise’s quickly. Praise Him for Who He is, which can be seen in what He does.

Vs. 25 So Moses does what we all should do cry out to the Lord and the Lord instructs Moses to place this tree into the water, which makes it drinkable. We do not know what kind of tree this was or any thing like that. But it is interesting to look at this symbolically for a moment. Water always represents the word of God and the cross is often called the tree. We often don’t find obedience to the word sweet but when we place the cross of grace in it makes the water sweet! When you lose your joy in the Lord go back to the Word of God and remember how He has worked on your behalf and it will quench your thirst every time. It was a test and they failed. They won the war but lost the battle. ***God does not create joy by new surroundings He creates new surroundings by joy!***  They were singing the right song, but failed to understand that the chorus should have been, “**Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders?”** It’s a rhetorical question, which we must never forget the answer!

Vs. 26 Here God promises that if they obey the word of God then they will see health. It is interesting that all the dietary laws were what caused them to stay healthy. God is again showing Himself worthy to be trusted in our lives.

Vs. 27 Seven miles away was this oasis at Elim with 12 wells of water and 70 date palms. How many sons of Jacob were there? How many left from Canaan to go to Egypt because of a famine? If you guessed 12 and 70 you got it right! The Lord saying to them by placing them here by this oasis, “You can trust me because I always take care of your needs!”

**Exodus**

**16:1-36**

**“Food for the Soul”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-12 What’s for dinner?**

**III.) Vs. 13-21 Get ready for supper**

**IV.) Vs. 22-36 Remembering to rest**

**Intro.**

Last week we took a look at the song, which was sung by the nation as they started out on their journey. A song of praise to the Lord’s great victory in their lives, but one that three day’s latter had changed to the “blues”. There is another song that perhaps they could have sung. The classic theme song known to all of us children of the 60’s and 70’s which goes like this; “*Just sit right back and you'll hear a tale, a tale of a fateful trip, that started in this tropic port, aboard this tiny ship. The mate was a mighty sailin' man, the Skipper brave and sure. Five passengers set sail that day for a three-hour tour! A three-hour tour*!”

We Christians must remember that our journey is not a “***three-hour tour***” and to praise the Lord not only when situations and circumstances meet our expectations. Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 2:14 “*Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ*”. At the out set of their spiritual journey God was showing them His consistency in spite of their failure. The grumbling is met with His grace and mercy time and again, until they meet with Him at Mount Sinai. Then they are allowed to wonder in the wilderness for 40 years until the last of that generation has died.

## II.) Vs. 1-12 What’s for dinner?

Vs. 1-2 All of us live with in the realm of two great concerns that at times consume us, they are called “**today and tomorrow**” or if you will the “**present and the future”**. Elim was an oasis (15:27) where they were refreshed and probably sang the song of victory. The present was taken care of so they were not worried about the future. When they had worried about the water God in His grace and mercy provided sweet water when it was bitter and fresh water up the road. God was showing them that He was able to take care of today and tomorrow.

 Several key things that relate to the setting are given us in these verses.

1. Vs. 1 **Their location was changing**: They were leaving the Oasis of Elim heading out on their way to Mount Sinai, which we are told was through the wilderness of Sin. The wilderness of Sin is actually pronounced “Seen” and has no reference to our word “Sin”. These guys went out and were going to find themselves between the freshness of God’s abundant blessings and the place where God was going to establish a covenant relationship with them. This would include a greater revelation of who God was and what that meant to them. They were in that place of wilderness called the “**day to day” grind**!
2. Vs. 1 **Time had passed**: We know that exactly 1 month had gone by since they left Egypt. They had been on the road 1 month, the excitement of the journey was over with and they were already sounding out the familiar words we have all heard as we travel, “***I’m hungry, I’m thirsty, when are we going to get there?***” When things are new and fresh seeing, or experiencing, something new will carry you for a while but as time goes by and the scenery does not change; attitudes will.
3. Vs. 2 **Attitudes effected every body**: Notice that this spirit of discontentment effected the “whole congregation”. *Growling stomachs meant grumbling lips*. In fact, the word grumble or murmured appears 9 times in the first 12 verse in its various forms. Moses points out that though they did their complaining against the leadership it was non the less against God (verse 7).
4. Vs. 3 **Attitudes distorted reality**:
5. It distorted the past:
6. **How they saw the Lord**: In stead of seeing the Lord based upon His past faithfulness they saw Him on their present circumstances. There are 9 references in the first 15 chapters to the “hand of the Lord” and each time He is seen as the helper and redeemer of His children. Not one time will you ever read that he was the killer of His people. But here God’s character and nature have been distorted to fit their circumstances. “*Things are not happening the way we want, when we want, therefore God is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*\_!” Gone from their memory is God’s continual faithfulness in spite of their failure! All they see is, “*What have you done for me lately*?”
7. **How they saw their past**: Notice some exaggerations; according to the way they now saw it all they used to do was set around the table and eat all these great foods, as much as they wanted. Talk about your revisionist history! They were enslaved to the Egyptians, making brick without straw! According to their present perspective they were better off dying fat and full in bondage to the world then, to be free and dependent upon the Lord!
8. It distorted the present: Clearly they now made the leap to conclude that God’s intention was to kill them with hunger in the wilderness. A bad attitude warped them into believing things that are not true! “*It was all an evil plot in cohorts with Pharaoh to wipe us out*.” I’m sure that if this was a movie then Oliver Stone would be the director.

Vs. 4-5 God announces that, in light of their complaining He is going to bless them. That does not make since! These buggers have just been fussing at God’s character and nature. Whenever God refers to His providing food for them He calls it, “*bread from heaven*” (5 times). But when ever complaining Israel speaks of it they call it “*Manna*” or “*what is it*” (18 times)! Jesus made it clear that the “*bread of God*” came down to give life to the world, (John 6:32-33).

Vs. 6 They are struggling with God’s character and He continues to show them that He is a gracious, merciful God that blesses not on merit but rather on grace. The Lord never stops trying to show us His character and nature. God knows who He is working with, a bunch of dirt bags! He understands that they are acting upon their own insecurities. Paul writes in Rom. 2:4, “*that the goodness of God leads you to repentance.*” So according to the first part of that verse we ought not, “*despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering.*”

Vs. 7-9 Again notice what the Lord says here”

1. Vs. 7 Because of their murmuring – ***They shall see the glory of the Lord.***
2. Vs. 8 Because of their murmuring – ***They shall have meat in the evening and full bread in the morning.***
3. Vs. 9 Because of their murmuring – ***They shall be brought nearer to the Lord***.

But also look at the fact that God wants them to know that their murmuring has not been against the leadership it has been against Him.

Vs. 10-12 Look at what they saw when they looked toward the wilderness? **The glory of the Lord**! And what is it that He wanted them to know about Him? Verse 12 tells us, “**You shall know that I am the Lord your God**.” Using these two statements as a basis of interpreting the instructions concerning the gathering of manna we can see two important principals for our own lives.

1.) Gathering a certain quota every day: Provision for the present is to be found a daily dependence upon the Lord. You will not be able to gather enough of the Lord today to last tomorrow. As you face the wilderness to look to the Lord as the only source of hope!

2.) Gather twice as much on the sixth day: Provision for the future is to be found in honoring God in every thing you do, even the most basic thing of eating!

Now this is a test! Whether or not you will trust His Word!

Our real problem is who is in control. I hope that I do not offend any one here but when a person does not give an offering it does not bother me but it ought to bother them. It shows that there is a real control issue in their lives and if they give some of their hard earned cash to the Lord then they won’t be able to make it. They fail to see God’s hand as a loving hand instead they think it is a hand in their pocket. God wants to demonstrate His presence to you in the midst of affliction and adversity but you are not letting Him.

**III.) Vs. 13-21 Get ready for supper**

Vs. 13-15 Evidently there is a phenomenon that often takes place during the spring time as quail migrate north from Africa going across the Red Sea. They fly non-stop low to the ground and when they finally tire to fall to the ground exhausted, unable to fly until they have rested. So it appears that this event happened the place where these quail stopped was in the camp of the Israelites.

 Then on the next day all over the ground lay this “bread from heaven”, which came visible after the morning dew. We are told that it was a fine seed like substance about the size of a sesame seed, which was sweet to the taste, (verse 31). Now this was not a natural assurance as some try to make it. The Arab’s have tried to identify it with a substance known as mann, which is formed in small quantities when a tiny insect punctures the bark of the tamarisk tree. It then drinks the sap and sweats a clear liquid, which becomes hard after evaporation, when the sun comes up it quickly disappears. The trouble with this being the phenomenon known as manna is that it never appears in large quantities, it does not happen year around and only happens in a very small geographical area. Not to mention the fact that according to the Bible this manna would spoil and breed worms five days a week if kept but on the sixth day it could be kept over night with out spoiling.

 Based upon their name of the bread of heaven you can tell that they were being taught the lesson that **God promises to meet the need not the expectation**. They interpreted who God was based upon circumstances lining up with their expectations. God uses both the natural supply of meat with that of the supernatural supply of manna to show them that He can meet their needs in both arenas!

Vs. 16-21 Here are the first of the instructions on how to gather the manna.

1. Vs. 16 **Gather it according to each mans need**: About 2 quarts a day was the amount. That is what the Lord said as well, “*Give us our DAILY bread*.” They were to trust the Lord for what He would give them daily. Some today take the Lord’s gifts and refuse to trust Him so they hoard it. In so doing they take God’s gifts and turn then into possessions.
2. **Check heart to see whom you are trusting in**: When you take what God has given you and make it a possession, you will squeeze the life right out of it. The attitude this creates is that we deserve what we have. The gift of God can so quickly turn into an obsession. Staying up late counting your money worrying over every little penny. “*Hey, I can’t give the Lord anything I’ve got to buy that new gadget.*”
3. **Trust Him for tomorrow not just today**: Folks, we need to learn to trust the Lord for He will give tomorrow as He has today. You see what happens when you try to hold on to the gifts that He has given you? It just ends up stinking and producing maggots. Fly larva, which lives off of dead and decaying things! Deut. 8:3 reminds us the purpose of God feeding the Israelites manna was to. “*Humbled them, allowing them to hunger, and fed them with manna which they did not know nor did their fathers know, that He might make them know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD*.”
4. **Be diligent and obedient**: We have a part to play God provides but we need to gather! If they didn’t then the sun would come up and melt it away. So you can not say, “*Well I’m just not going to work God will provide*.” Yes, God does provide be we need to go gather what He has provided.

**IV.) Vs. 22-36 Remembering to rest**

Vs. 22-26 Here then is another principal which reminds us that the most important thing in life is not what we eat but rather whom we worship. God wanted them always to have the right perspective. Food is necessary but fellowship with Him is more important. God did not want them to find fulfillment upon what they did in gathering. He wanted them to find fulfillment only in a relationship with Him. Today, people try to find fulfillment in their careers but there will be none found just as there was no manna to be found on the Lord’s day.

Vs. 27-29 Yet with that said they had to go and see for themselves. The word remain here means to sit. There are a great many of us trying to find our fulfillment in our hobbies as well but you will find that empty as well! Does that mean that you can’t have your hobbies? No, but I do think that it is easy to being to worship your hobby. How much time, talent and treasure do you spend on your hobby compared to what you spend on your relationship with Jesus?

Vs. 30-36 The last part of this chapter deals with taking time out for them to remember the Lord'’ provision in their lives. Then we are told that God provided that way for 40 years then He provided another way.

**Exodus**

**17:1-16**

**“Present When Absent”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-7 Water from a rock?**

**III.) Vs. 8-16 The Lord is my banner!**

**Intro.**

The young nation has had only 1 month of experiencing in the leading of God and so far they had not done so well. Their first real test was only three days from God’s miraculous dividing the Red Sea, when they got thirsty only to find the waters at Marah were bitter, impatiently they grumbled against God who made the waters drinkable, then God led them 7 miles away to the Oasis at Elim. Next we saw, they again grumbled against the Lord because they had no food. To which the Lord in His grace brought them the bread of heaven and meat. You would think that they would start to, “**trust in the Lord**”. Their problem is not that God is not leading, it is that their trust is in the way they are going instead of Who is leading them! God often leads us into difficult situations to show us that we need to trust Him and not where we are going.

**II.) Vs. 1-7 Water from a rock?**

Vs. 1 The first verse of chapter 17 sets the tone for the entire chapter. Moses writes down the migration of the nation from the wilderness of Sin “seen” to Rephidim (ref-I dim). The word means “**resting place**”. It was supposed to be a rest stop, a place to freshen up but instead it is anything but a rest stop. In the first seven verse we are told that upon arriving at the “rest stop” they found that there was nothing to drink. To make matters worse in verses 8-16 while they are still there a bunch of bikers from the outlaw gang called the Amalekites shows up and start attacking the weakest members of the nation.

 So how did they get to such a bad “resting place”? Well we are told how they came upon this spot, “*according to the commandment of the Lord*.” God was guiding them by His presence of the cloud by day and fire by night and this is where He has led them! A place where again they have no water.

Vs. 2-3 Here were are given the **response of the people** to the first crises. They are mad at Moses and indirectly mad at God. We are told in verse four that they are mad enough to kill Moses. Notice the change of attitude from the crises of a lack of water in chapter 15:24 to this same dilemma here in chapter 17. In chapter 15 they spoke to Moses in a form of a question, “*What shall we drink*?” Now when facing the same situation, they make a demand, “*Give us water*!” When their expectation was not met the first time there was puzzlement, now they are angry. The word “contend” means to toss or wrestle with another.

 Again they go right back to the conspiracy theory in verse 3 attacking the motives of Moses. Their attitudes have not gotten better with seeing the Lord’s provision in the past they have gotten worse. They are now ready to kill Moses and are putting God to the test. In verse 7 we are told that they even ask the question*, “Is the Lord among us or not?*” Can you imagine asking such a question in light of the visible presence of God? Rom 8:16-17 tells us “*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ*.” Whenever we doubt the Lord’s word we are putting Him to the test. When we don’t trust God’s word for our lives we are saying that He is not trustworthy, we are writing Him off! Instead of looking to God and how faithful He has been to them in the past, they choose to look at their situation and use that to interpret who God is. Every difficult situation that God allows us to go through will become a test to us on how we are going to handle it.

Vs. 2, 4 We are given the response of Moses to the people. First he deals WITH them then he deals FOR them.

1. **He calls them on the carpet**: Vs. 2 “Your anger towards me is showing your heart towards the Lord and you have written Him off.” Notice Moses asks them why they are writing God off, when they should be saying, “Hey He has been faithful so far lets just sit back and see what He does this time!”
2. **He goes to the Lord for them**: Now I like this because of how it’s worded. Moses does not say, “What shall I do **FOR** these people?” No, he says, “What shall I do **WITH** these people.” Moses conveys the urgency of the situation, “They are ready to kill me.”

Vs. 5 It is interesting in light of Moses question of what to do with the people that God gives Moses four things to do for himself. Often the problem in leading people is not the people it is where you are as a leader!

1. “***Go on before the people***..”: Several things come to mind when I read these words.
2. Don’t be a man pleaser but rather be a God server! Don’t concern yourself with what the people want concern yourself with what God wants.
3. Don’t retreat advance! You can’t lead people from behind. They need to see you out in front trusting the Lord so that they will follow.
4. Get away from those who are not trusting the Lord. All to often effected by people who don’t trust the Lord. ***Moses biggest danger was not from the stones of the people but rather from boulders of doubt***. We need to get away from the problem so that we can gain perspective.
5. “***Take with you some elders of Israel***”: Surround yourself with people that are like minded. We need to have around us those that also want to totally trust the Lord. Not only will they be an encouragement to you but they will be built up to help lead other to trusting totally on the Lord. Moses, was not to be a “Lone Ranger” Christian. Our, job is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. We ought to be working ourselves out of jobs.
6. “**Take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river**.”: Several things come to mind as I read these words.
7. The staff represented that which support Moses. What is it that supports us in all that we do? Well it is God grace. It is as if God is reaffirming Moses by saying, “*Lean on Me and I’ll do all the work*!”
8. Moses had asked what to do with the people and God responds by reminding him of the past victories won by totally trusting in Him. Moses might be inclined to try something new, and God is saying to Him, “*My grace is sufficient, not just for that situation but for every situation*.”
9. “***And go***.”: Lastly, be a man of action. Talk is cheap get out there and get to it! People can not follow those that are indecisive even if they are. In spite of Israel’s demands and complaining keep on leading them.

Vs. 6 If Moses does these four things the out come will be what is described in this verse. The word, “Behold” is a word that is used in scripture to get our attention. God is telling Moses “stop and take notice of what I’m Going to do.”

1. “*I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb*”: Horeb was in the wilderness and the word means desolate. What a great promise this is, no matter how lonely leadership or the situation is God says, “*I’m going before you and I’m standing ready for action*.” **Moses may see an angry mob, but he needs to see a loving God**! Moses, just like the Israelites needed more then just water they needed a fresh vision of the Lord who alone can refresh in desolate times! Moses is never asked to lead others without first being lead himself. What a great comfort that is. **Moses was told to Go where the Lord would already be standing**! The best we can do for others is to lead them to where the Lord is standing!
2. “*you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink*.”: Is there a more unlikely place to find water then a rock? They were in need, thirsty and yet God leads them to an unlikely place to find that which could quench their thirst. We are told in 1Cor. 10:4 that this rock speaks of Jesus. The rock smitten for us on the cross is Jesus. Jesus said, “*If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink*.” Then in the last invitation of the Bible, (Rev. 22:17) Jesus says, “*Come! And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely*.” God is showing them that He alone can refresh us and that the refreshment is in Jesus’ work on our behalf at the cross!

Vs. 7 Moses names the place “trial” and “quarrel” and they will be mentioned to 21 times in the O.T. and always as an example of the hard heartedness and in spite of that the grace of God in providing living water for them. In every instance where Israel lacked something they always acted prematurely. God would have provided for them if they had only trusted Him. The word “rock” will appear some 66 times to describe Israel’s hope of God’s faithfulness. God can make living water flow from a rock, but for it to flow from the human heart takes you trusting Him alone.

**III.) Vs. 8-16 The Lord is my banner!**

Vs. 8 We are told that Amalekites were descendants of Esau. They are the same people who we are told that Saul was ordered to wipe out and did not so he lost his kingdom. Further more later on we are told in the book of Esther that Haman who tried to wipe out all the Israelites was a descendent of Amalekites.

 Deut. 25:17-18 tells what their strategy was they, “*attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary*;” These guys went after the ones furthest away from the group, those most vulnerable. There are a lot of people today in the rear ranks, weakened because they are not in consistent fellowship with the body of Christ.

Vs. 9-13 Four men, with Joshua who was put in charge of the battle, Aaron and Hur who’s job it was to lift up the hands of prayer with Moses so that victory could be obtained. God allows Moses, Aaron, Hur and Joshua all to be used to defeat the enemy. God would have us to pray always as if our life depended upon it. We are to pray and so live with passion.

Vs. 14-16 We are told that this was to be a never ending battle but yet one that the Lord will have ultimate victory. This battle represents our battle against our flesh which we continue to war against and will until we are in His presence.

 Moses calls the altar, (the place of worship) The Lord is my banner. This is all one word in the Hebrew. A banner is a flag which is used to really the troops behind. So Moses is saying, “**Rally behind the Lord, it is He that I look to, trust in and follow.**” When you are, in a marching band or a military unit you follow the standard bearer. They had followed the Lord and that had gotten them out of water and into a fight, how is that possible? I have come to the conclusion in my life that ***the more God seems to absent in my circumstances the more He is really present***. Don’t look at your circumstances as the basis of trusting the Lord trust the Lord no matter what you circumstance!

**Exodus**

**18:1-27**

**“Life Is Hard But God Is Good”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-12 My God works**

**III.) Vs. 13-27 I know God & your not Him!**

**Intro.**

The 18 Chapter is a transitional one as it bridges the initial stages of Israel’s wondering with that of God meeting the nation at Mount Sinai. The spiritual development of the servant that God uses has been seen in the life of Moses. God chooses him and used him before he had anything to do with delivering a nation. You will recall that his life being spared by Pharaoh’s daughter no doubt saved all the other male Hebrew babies. Then you have recorded those first 40 years growing up in the house of Pharaoh, educated, refined, yet instead of that being an asset in became a liability as he under took the work of the Lord in the energy of the flesh. Then we are told of the 40 years in the wilderness, where Moses learns to follow so he can lead. He is striped from pride, yet he still sees the work from what he can do for God rather then what God can do for him. Then we have seen Moses used of God, successful in his service as he obeys the Word of the Lord & sees the Lord standing before him.

 With all of that as truth God is not done dealing with Moses, in fact God is never done, in this body, in dealing with any of His servants. Through God Moses has defeated Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The physical obstacles, of the Red Sea, lack of water and food, even the Amalekites; Moses handled in the energy of the Lord. But now Moses faced his biggest challenge he had yet faced: **Himself and the tyranny of the urgent**!

**II.) Vs. 1-12 My God works**

In this section we are told of Moses father in law (Jethro’s) visit. Through out the Bible we learn a lot about Moses but we are not told much about his home life. What kind of husband and father was he? Num. 12:3 informs us that his character was, “*was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth*.” So that would seem to indicate that he was probably a good guy at home. There are only a few references in scripture about his dealings at home and they are not that favorable.

1. In chapter four Moses had refused to circumcise their son Eliezer and judging by Zipporah’s response she viewed the whole practice as barbaric. So Moses reluctance was because he wanted to please his wife more then the Lord.
2. You do not hear of Moses’ family again until here in this chapter. In verse 18:2 we are told that at some time Moses “***sent here back***” to Jethro which implies that she did not god voluntarily. You can search the scriptures for references for his family and find very little about them. Gershom had a son named Shebuel (return to God) and none of his other children are mentioned. Eliezer had only one son named Rehabiah who we are told became chief. Zipporah is only mentioned three times herself in scripture and this is the last time she will be mentioned.

We ought not make an argument out of silence but all of this would lead me to believe that Moses was at very least preoccupied with ministry at the expense of his family, something that I have a little experience in myself. These verses leave us with more questions with regards to Moses family life then they do answers.

1. Jethro hears of the work of the Lord on behalf of Moses and Israel. Yet we are told in verse two that he has to take Moses family to him. Moses had been separated from his family for a year.
2. Geographically Moses had passed by the area where Jethro and his family was, so instead of going right to where his family was Moses passes by them.
3. Lastly, when Jethro comes with his family Moses goes and talks with Jethro and not his family.

We can allot for some of this behavior through the difference of culture but even still when you read the rest of this chapter one can easily see Moses preoccupation with ministry at the expense of his family.

Vs.1 The basis of Jethro’s visit was because he had “**heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people**.” I take that to mean that to Jethro all was safe to bring back Moses’ family to him. Back in chapter 4:18 Moses had gone to Jethro and asked permission to go back to Egypt, to which he replied, “Go in peace.” I can just imagine Jethro anxiously awaiting any news that came that way about Egypt. The reports that came back were all about what the Lord had done, and not about what Moses had done.

Vs. 2-6 We are told the purpose of Jethro’s visit was that of a family reunion. These verses retell the story of Moses’ two sons as well as Jethro bringing them to him. I can’t help but wonder if Moses in writing this some time latter realized that he had not been much of a father and husband? Moses seems to be surprised by the visit and we are not told of any greeting from Moses to his family but perhaps it did that as well.

Vs. 7-8 From verse 7-12 we can form two equally important truths about life in general and ours in specific.

1. **Life is hard**!
2. **God is good**!

Moses greets his father in law in the customary way but what is interesting to me is that Moses bows down to him. Moses is now a leader of a nation, a war hero and yet he still has remained humble. Four times in verse 8-10 we are told how God delivered Moses and the nation. Again notice in verse 8 that Moses tells Jethro all the Lord had done. It is easy to handle pride when you fail, but it‘s a whole other thing to deal with pride when you have success. Moses does not sugar coat the story as he spoke to Jethro, he told of “*all hardship that had come upon them on the way*.” It seems that Moses spoke of how they lacked water and food. The word “hardship” means ***travel trouble***, Moses told of how the Lord had blessed them even though they grumbled and complained. Can you imaging how easy it would have been for Moses to leave that part out thus **giving the impression that God’s blessing were based upon Israel’s goodness?** But he does not; he makes sure that he shares that God’s blessings are based upon His goodness in spite of the lack of ours. The whole world is used to things by merit but they have no concept of grace! Charles Spurgeon said, “***We engrave our trials in marble and write our blessings in sand!***” We make it seem as though God has been unfair to us and all that we have good in our lives has come from our own self effort!

Vs. 9-12 Reveals the effect of Moses’ sharing had on Jethro.

1. Vs. 9 **REJOICED**: Jethro delights in all the “good” the Lord had done. Jethro gets the point on Moses’ sharing. “*Man you are right, Moses God is good, the way He delivered you guys knowing that you were just going to doubt Him and complain against Him!*” The word “rejoiced” means to make glad. I other words this blew Jethro’s mind about God.
2. Vs. 10 **BLESSED THE LORD**: This word mean to knell, to adore. Look at how Jethro describes the goodness of the Lord in the present-tense, (Has delivered). This tells me that old Jethro was realizing that since God had done this then He would continue to do so. Since that was based upon the Lord’s goodness and not mans then he to could be a recipient of God’s goodness. Jethro is beginning to appropriate the Lord’s promises in his own life. *“Man, Lord I want to know you who so love & care for people*!”
3. Vs. 11 **NOW I KNOW**: Jethro acknowledges personally the Lord’s greatness above all other so called gods. Jethro or Ruel was a Midianites. They were the descendants of Abraham’s younger son through Keturah. Though they were monotheistic it appears that Jethro was not fully convinced about the true God. What convinced him was that God judged the mightiest polytheistic nation by acts of plagues.
4. Vs. 12a **TOOK A BURNT OFFERING & SACRIFICES**: Jethro shows the reality of turning his life over to God by obedience to the Word of the Lord. Perhaps we would say that there was a radical change in his life. Some of you have made some changes in your lives and people have started to notice. Now when you’re around Christians they are very supportive but those out there in the world your old buddies they are not to keen on the idea.
5. Vs. 12b **ATE BREAD WITH MOSES’ FATHER-IN-LAW**: These guys all came together and hung out with each other in the Lord. Jethro became one with them in the Lord. This old Midianite priest became a follower of God and as such was accepted.

**III.) Vs. 13-27 I know God and your not Him!**

Vs. 13-14 The next day after the potluck Moses goes right out to work. From morning to evening dealing with the people’s difficulties. When you take into consideration the fact that there was around 2 million people this must have been quite a sight. I mean you think the lines at Christmas are bad this must have been a nightmare.

 Now notice the two question Jethro has for Moses having observed this all day.

1. What is it you are doing?
2. Why are you doing it?

The nation already had elders in fact Jethro had dinner with them the night before. But what he observed was that they were not “elding”. More importantly Moses had shared how God was good and took care of all the difficulties of the nation, and now instead of teaching the people that he was trying to handle that himself.

Vs. 15-16 Now as a reason for what Moses was doing he offers these two statements:

1. Vs. 15 Because the people want me to.
2. Vs. 16 Because we have always done it that way.

Never once did Moses say, “*Well you see I prayed about this and the Lord said do it this way*.” In fact, it will be Jethro that offers the suggestion then tells Moses to go seek the Lord on what he had said to see if it is of the Lord, (verse 23). Instead he says*, “The people wanted me to ask God’s opinion on matters*”. Now I must say that this is good that they desire to have the Lord direct them, but they have not yet learned that they can go direct to God. Second, a lot of times traditions get started out of a need but never gets any structure. ***You can count on life not going the way you count on***!

Vs. 17-20 Jethro says, “*Hey, Moses this is not effective. Look man these guys will drive you nuts and their waiting line will give them more things to come and complain about*.” Look carefully at those words, “*You are not able to perform it by yourself*.” I do not have any more of a direct line to God then you do. Neither does any other living or dead person. Moses was to do things for the people?

1. Vs. 19 **Go to God in prayer for the people**. E.M. Bounds once said, “*Those who would go to the people for God must first be willing to go to God for the people*!”
2. Vs. 20 **Teach them the word of the Lord**. Teach them the Word so that they will be able to correct their behavior before it ever has to get to you. The Word of God was to teach them:
3. **Way they must walk**. That is how they should behave towards each other.
4. **Work they must do**. That is how they should behave towards God.

I bet this was a bit humbling for Moses. I mean not only is this his newly converted father-in-law, but Jethro is saying, “*Hey, man anyone can do your job*.” Notice that what God did for the people was “good” but what Moses did was “not good”. It is good to want to serve the people but not when they don’t learn how to be dependent upon God. D.L. Moody once said, “***It is better to set a hundred men to work then do the work of a hundred men!***”

Vs. 21 Jethro gives Moses four qualities to look for in the servants he chooses:

1. **ABLE MEN**: The word means to have virtue and valor; you can’t know these traits until you have observed them in their lives. Men who have proven themselves by already doing the work. Put guys at those positions that have shown their gifts and abilities among the people. How many times have we seen folk’s in the church in leadership positions that have not proven themselves to be servant’s.
2. **FEAR GOD**: Those that first and foremost love the Lord. Find those guys out that want nothing more then to grow in the Lords grace and knowledge. They don’t need a title to serve they serve period because they are serving the Lord! Now because they fear God they are concerned on how they live their lives, so they live in the sight of God, holy chase lives.
3. **MEN OF TRUTH**: Men of the Word of God! Men that seek God daily through the Word. Self feeders, man! Find those guys who hunger for the word knowing how to rightly divide the word of truth in their lives so they can help other do the same!
4. **HATING COVETOUSNESS**: Not self centered but rather other centered. Look for guys that care only about God and others. Those are the ones you can entrust with other problems.

Vs. 22-27 So Moses was only to handle the situations that other could not deal with and the rest of his time he was to spend praying for the people and teaching them the Word. Now you can go to the book of Acts in chapter 6 and find the early church coming up with the same idea. We read in verse 2 and verse 4, “***It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word***.”

Jethro says here that if Moses does delegate he can expect three things.

1. Vs. 22 **IT WILL BE EASIER**: It will lighten the load because you will have more hands to the plow. With out folk’s stepping up we would not be able to further God’s kingdom.
2. Vs. 22 **THEY WILL BEAR THE BURDEN WITH YOU**: They will make it more fun! Hey when you have the crew we have here serving the Lord is not a burden it’s a blast!
3. Vs. 23 **YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ENDURE…and THIS PEOPLE WILL GO TO THEIR LACE IN PEACE**: The bottom line is that it will bare more fruit in the lives of other and yourself. Success will happen in our lives as well as the lives of others.

Moses was teachable and implemented the plan that the Lord gave Jethro.

**Exodus**

**19:1-6**

**“Time to meet your maker (a)”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-6 Do you know how much I love you?**

**Intro.**

By the 19th chapter of Exodus and Israel’s arrival at Mount Sinai, (where they will remain until the 10th chapter of the book of numbers), 11 months or 57 chapters of scripture will be devoted to their time at the mountain. This will be their first encounter with God! Sooner or later every Christian will ponder their life, they will say, “*What is this Christian life all about, why did He save me*?” Along with this there is the companion question of, “*What does God want from me*?” We are at this point in our journey through the book of Exodus. *The difference here in our text is that it is not the Israelites that ask the questions it is the Lord that answers them*.

 Israel had to learn that they were a nation and not Egypt’s work force. Freedom, is what nations, movements, and people long for. When people describe freedom today they do so with a selfish twist, “***The ability to do what you want when you want***!” That’s not freedom it’s ***anarchy***. God describes freedom in terms of a covenant, **a marriage between Himself and the nation**. As we look at this passage pay close attention to how God won the heart of Israel, for it is in God’s heart that we will experience ultimate freedom.

**II.) Vs. 1-6 Do you know how much I love you?**

Vs. 1-2 According to these verses, three months have passed making this the month of June when they finally arrived at the wilderness of Sinai. This would have been the approximate time later that the feast of Pentecost would have taken place. The significance of that in light of Church history, sheds light on what is before Israel. This journey very much mirrors our own journey.

They left Rephidim, (rest stop) and traveled thirty miles arriving at a small stretch of land 2 ½ miles long by ½ mile wide, that jetted right before it was a solid granite mountain known as Mount Sinai or Mount Horeb. Though this was to be a special time in their lives the surroundings would not have indicated that. In our own lives we shouldn’t put any importance on our surroundings as a gage to spiritual growth. We are right where God wants you to be. There are no short cuts, no ways to skip a step. If you try to do this, you will only find yourself repeating the journey.

This nation had been set free from bondage from the mightiest nation in the world; for three months God was guiding them to this place.

* Through the Red Sea
* Through the search for food and water
* Through the victory over the Amalekites

The Lord orchestrated every step, He knew exactly where He was taking them, but they had no clue. Israel set out on their journey according to the commandment of the Lord. This reveals a powerful truth: ***God has not just called us out of something; He has called us to something***. The “something”, as we shall see, is really Himself! ***All of what we go through is God guiding us to a deeper relationship to himself***!

Vs. 3-4 God led Moses back to the place where he had first encountered Him at the burning bush. The Lord address’s the nation of Israel as “the house of Jacob”. Israel was the name God had given Jacob after he had surrendered his life to the Lord. His name prior to that was Jacob as he was the weakest most carnal of their forefathers. God knew that there were some like Israel and some like old Jacob. Two things come to mind as I read this:

1. ***Israel was more like Jacob then Abraham***: They were not men of faith as was Abraham, instead they were connivers like Jacob and God knew that about them.
2. ***God still wanted to reach those who were still in the flesh***: God has a desire to draw you to Himself no matter where you are! And the processes are the same for both.

Vs. 4 God is going to reveal His purpose and plan for the nation, but before He Does He reminds them of three things that He already has done for them, the last of which was fulfilled that very day. Notice the words, “*You have seen*..”, as God is appealing to their own personal experience saying, “***Come on now you saw what happened***!” The truth is: ***Before God can reveal what His plans for the future are He has to get them to recognize and appreciate what He has already done for them.*** We are often self-absorbed worrying about tomorrow that we don’t realize what God has already done for us.

1. “**What I did to Egypt**”: God defeated the mightiest nation in the world. He had set them ***FREE***! In our life, God has set us free from the things of the world that held us, no matter how mighty they were God defeated them all at the cross. For Israel, all they had ever known was a life of slavery then by God’s outstretched hand he delivered them.
2. “**How I bore you on eagles’ wings**”: This is a reference to their three-month journey. God had led them away from battle when they were not ready, destroyed Pharaoh’s army at the Red Sea, provided food and water then defeated the Amalekites. Eagles are taught to fly in a most remarkable way. The mother simply destroys the nest around them, as they have no place to rest they have to fly. They flap their wings and head out all under the watchful eye of their mother. Then just as it seems that they will crash to their deaths she swoops down and bears them up on her wings. This is repeated until they learn to fly. God says here that this is how He has dealt with them. ***He has taken them out of their comfort zone to teach them to fly.*** The trials we face are part of the process to get us to try our wings in Him! But where are we to fly too?
3. “**And brought you to Myself**”: That’s the destination! The journey has a purpose to bring you closer to the Lord! ***God is not concerned with your temporal happiness He is interesting in drawing you nearer to Himself***! God does not just deliver us out of bondage, He has delivered you not only FROM, but TO! Salvation is not fire insurance it’s a relationship.

Vs. 5-6 Those three things God had done for them should have revealed what He has for them. The next two verse God shares ***how He sees them*** and ***how they can experience the benefits of how He sees them***.

 Fist notice the words, “*If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be.*.” There are three points of interest here:

1. “If you”: This reveals that the benefits of this were conditioned upon them. They would not experience this unless they fulfilled their part, obeying His voice and keeping His covenant.
2. “My covenant”: God is proposing to them! He is the initiator of the contract, one in which they have already benefited.
3. “Obey My voice….keep My covenant”: The way to experience all the benefits of this relationship is clearly stated, “**Stay in the Word of God**!” Apart from knowing and obeying the Word of God we will never experience the blessings of our relationship to the Lord.

God is not saying, “*Never blow it or your out*!” He is saying, “***If you want to experience all of Me then don’t break off the relationship*.**” It is God that will preserve the relationship. It is as Jude said, “*to keep yourselves in the love of God*.” As Jude goes on to say it is God, “*who is able to keep you from stumbling*.” With in six weeks of this they will all be having an idolatrous orgy around an idol of a golden calf! The reason they fall back into the world is that they failed to see themselves in the threefold way that God saw them.

1. “**A special treasure**”: God wanted them to know that He saw them as a Kings most prized jewel. All the nations belonged to Him because He is their maker and sustainer, but He choose Israel to be His special treasure. Not that Israel was the best looking or most talented? Scriptures tells us that it was quite the opposite. Moses writing in Deut. 7:7 declares, “*The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples*;” God sees us as His prized possession! You are His pearl of great price! Paul writes some thing similar to the Ephesians when he prays that they would know the riches of the glory of Gods inheritance in the saints.
2. “**Kingdom of priests**”: God desired that every one of them would be able to come into His presence. Not just the High Priest once a year but every believer. Israel was to be a light to the gentiles, the way in which they lived was to reveal that there is no other true and living God. They were to live so that the world would know that the best way to experience the fullness of what life is in serving the living God. Instead they were influenced by the nations around them.
3. “**Holy nation**”: A nation set apart from the rest of the world, fit for God’s purposes. They were to be living advertisements of God’s grace and power. It is amazing to read these words, “kingdom and nation” with the words, “priests and holy”. In God’s plan there is not separation of Church and state. We all are to serve at the pleasure of our King!

The question then arises, “*How then shall we live as His special treasure, priests and holy nation?*” The priests were to offer up the bodies of sacrifices upon the alter which was acceptable to the Lord. In the book of Hebrews, we are told that Jesus as our great High priest offered Himself once and for all. Rom. 12:1 tells us that we are to, “*present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service*.” What a picture! We offer our bodies to the Lord. “*Lord, here is my broken down old carcass. I’ve trashed it with self centered living, caused problems with others with it, had millions of sinful thoughts go through it, are you sure you want it*?” And the Lord says, “*I’ll take it, My Son died for that carcass and He has made it beautiful.*” Our offering of our bodies does NOT atone for our sin or anyone else’s but it does point other to Him. God wanted them to realize that what he did for them makes them who they now are! Further more what we now do must be based upon His perception of who we are.

**Exodus**

**19:7-25**

**“Time to meet your maker (part b)”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 7-15 Set yourself apart**

**III.) Vs. 16-20 A glorious appearing**

**IV.) Vs. 21-25 Not as good as it gets**

**Intro.**

Any one ever having looked into purchasing a new car has experienced the powerful draw of a “good” photograph. To gaze upon the full color glossy pages of the brochure is to imagine the thrill of riding in your brand new vehicle. The benefits are not listed they are suggested in the picture, FREEDOM, SECURITY, JOY, EXCITEMENT, are just some of the subliminal that coming off the pages. In the first six verses God clearly gave Israel a “**snapshot**” of the benefits of a relationship with Him, “*I’ll take you from where you were to where you want to be!*” God had already taken them from slavery to freedom, from weakness to power, from insecurity to security. Then He had revealed to them the future benefits of their identity in Him, their status would be that of a “**treasured possession**”, their job was to be “**set apart priests dispensing His love to the world**”. Those are the promises God offers Israel if they would agree to the contract. As good as this “snapshot” is it has limitations. That is like the law, as they reveal a lot about God, that He is holy and good. Further more they reveal to us that we are not and try as we might to obey them they can not take us to God. Rom. 7 Paul explains this to us,

“*Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin*.” The law was never designed to bring us to God only Jesus can do that. The law takes us to the mountain but Jesus takes us past the barriers into the presence of the Father!

**III.) Vs. 7-15 Set yourself apart**

Vs. 7-8 Fresh off of hearing how God saw them and what He had already done for them they respond with a desire to serve the Lord in “***all He said***”. The problem will not be in their desire but rather in their ability to accomplish it. They have agreed to follow the Lord before they even knew what that would be. Of course no price would be too much if God was to see them that way. Perhaps they thought that if they just followed the right rules they would be able to accomplish getting closer with God. The truth of the matter is that the rules could only bring them so close to God, but never could they come into His presence.

Vs. 9 God reveals to Moses that He is going to speak to him in a cloud so that the people would watch and learn to trust in Moses leadership. God is clearly establishing Moses leadership before the people. The thick cloud symbolizes the presence of the Lord and when the people hear the Lord speak to Moses they will realize the unique relationship that God has given Moses before the people.

 There is a similar seen in the N.T. where the Father establishes Jesus as the only mediator between heaven and earth. Jesus took Peter, John and James up the mountain where Jesus was transfigured before them. We are told that a cloud formed and a voice was heard which said, “*This is my beloved Son; listen to Him*!” Moses was the mediator of the old covenant which led people to the mountain but Jesus brook down those barriers and has taken us into the presence of the Father.

Vs. 10-15 In this time of preparation for meeting the Lord. First there are two phrases that God tells Moses to share with the people in these verses that are absolutely necessary to enter into a relationship with the Lord:

1. Vs. 11, 15 “**Be ready**” (Repent): The people are told twice to be ready.
2. The first time we see these words it is followed by the words, “for the third day”. The point being that meeting of the Lord was soon at hand, if you will there was no time to waist they needed to prepare for the meeting now. We procrastinate so much but when it comes to knowing and walking with God we must not do so.
3. The second time they are admonished with the words “*be ready*” they are again told about the third day but the words, “*do not come near your wives*” are added. This is a reference to intimate relations between man and wife. God values the marriage relationship above any other earthly relationship but even this should be placed in the right order when it comes to a relationship with the Lord. Simply put “readiness” carries with it the idea of making any changes necessary that is another was of saying repent! Any relationship we have that would hinder us from entering into the most important relationship needs to be changed not discarded but rather put in the right perspective.
4. Vs. 14 “**Be sanctified**”: (washed in the blood) This word means to be set apart for a specific purpose. The way that they were to be set apart was to wash their clothes.
5. Vs. 10-11, 14 “Wash their clothes”: Most people had only one set of clothes this was seen as a new beginning. The idea is also that of being clean set apart, (verse 14). If you will, God is saying, “*You have been told how I see you now I want you to see yourself the way I see you, clean washed in my blood.*” Folk’s you are ever going to grow in your relationship with the Lord you need to see your self as God sees you. Only those cleansed from sin can enter into a relationship with the Lord.

There is one other thing we see in these verses:

1.) Vs. 12-13 “Set boundaries”: They were not to be flippant as they approached the Lord. God is showing them that they need to approach Him His way and only those that have repented and been washed in the blood of Jesus can approach Him. The Bible says *that “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*.” Obedience is more important then feelings. They were to submit to the Word of the Lord not how they felt even if they felt as though they wanted to get closer to God they needed to do so in the way He said! It was the death penalty to try to approach God in a manner He did not prescribe. You can only draw near to God by way of His Son! They could not come to Him until the third day and they had to stay at a distance.

In all of these preparations God is sharing with them that He desires that they have the same heart towards Him that He has with them. This is very much like a marriage and God has said His vows, He has demonstrated His love towards us and we are invited to be His bride but not if we are not serious about it. Can you imagine courting your spouse and showing your love and when it come to the marriage pledging your love only to have them smack a big bubble and say, “*Yeh, what ever*!” So God has every right to expect us to be faithful towards Him.

**IV.) Vs. 16-20 A glorious appearing**

Vs. 16 It says here that in the morning of the third day was when these manifestations of the Lord’s presence happened. Remember that it was the same time when Jesus rose from the dead! Think of the remarkable difference between Moses and Jesus. Moses brought the nation of Israel into an encounter with the living God, but the could only take them to the foot of the mountain. Jesus on the other hand not only took us past the barriers and boundaries we are told that He took us all the way into heaven. In Eph. 2: 6 say’s that we are seated with Him in heavenly places. Here God descends to earth and so to in Jesus. But the difference is that when Jesus ascended He took us with Him.

 So what is all of this awesome phenomena of thunder, lightning, thick cloud, fire, smoke and an earthquake convey to us? It shows the character of the Lord. God is Holy, in fact we are told in 1st John that there is no shadow or turning at all. The people get the point right away and tremble. God is the same today as He was then, yet now we enter into His presence boldly. Because we do so through the work of His Son.

Vs. 17-19 Folk’s there is a reverence that we all ought to have towards the Lord. God wanted them all to realize that they were in His presence by grace not merit! Now even though we can now approach His throne boldly we do so by grace. The Bible say’s that it is a, “***fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God***.” I pray that we all appreciate the incredible privilege we now have to come into fellowship. Hebrews tells us, “*Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water*.”

**IV.) Vs. 21-25 Not as good as it gets**

Vs. 21-25 Look at the limitations of the old covenant. The people could only come so close and if they came any closer to God they would die. People today try to approach God based upon the law or good works they will never be able to do so. No amount of good living will get you up the mountain of His holiness, only faith in Jesus Christ can do that. In the Old covenant there was a certain distance from the Lord, they could not draw near to gaze upon the Lord as we can through Jesus yet so many today still prefer to stay at a distance. This reminds us that we can not just take our relationship for granted. God sent Moses down to make sure that the people won’t try to take the grace of God in vein. With the awesome splendor of the Lord we ought to appreciate His grace all the more. In the Old Covenant God’s majesty and might was displayed to all, but only a few could draw near. In the New covenant we have beheld His glory and majesty in His Son, all can draw near. **Did you know that if you look into the face of Jesus you can see forever!** In the manifestation at Mount Sinai the truth of His holiness is seen which demands separation. In the manifestation at Mount Calvary His grace is seen which is how we can draw near to a Holy God! The holiness of God and the Love of God have meet together at the cross. We must never diminish the holiness of God and our need to be pure. For it is in this purity that we experience the benefits of our relationship. The coming of Jesus made it possible for us to have intimate fellowship with the same God who manifested His nature on Mount Sinai. The barriers, which were of necessity to keep men from this Holy God, have been taken down. The barrier was because of our sin and Paul says in Ephesians 2:13-16. “*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the* ***middle wall of separation****, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.* So what can we do with this truth? Enter in man! You don’t have to con God or do all sorts of rules you can just come right in through the finished work on the cross, but what ever you do please come in all in Jesus are welcome!

**Exodus 20:1-11**

**“Laws of Love”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-3 Who you are to love**

**III.) Vs. 4-6 How you are to love**

**IV.) Vs. 7 The conversation of love**

**V.) Vs. 8-11 A day set-aside for love**

**Intro.**

We last saw Israel preparing to hear from the Lord. If you think of this as a wedding ceremony; we have gone through the first part of the ceremony where people are sat down and music has played. The groom has been waiting for us (the bride) and we have finally arrived to where he is. Having done many weddings over the years the next part is where you welcome the people and let the bride and groom know that what you are about to say is very important. All of that has taken place now comes the **call to commitment and the vows**. You know the part, “*Will you promise to love honor and cherish until death do you part?*” God says His part in verse 2 and asks us to respond in verses 3-11. Then in verses 12-17 we demonstrate that we love God by the way we love each other.

The ten commandments or Decalogue literally means the “ten words”. These “ten words” form an introductory summary of all the law, which Moses will cover in the rest of Exodus and Leviticus and Jesus will sum up in two Matt. 22:37-40 “*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*.” Several things jump out right away:

1. **They are a treaty**: Archeologists have found that these “ten word” follow a style of writing which was consistent with a treaty that a King would make with his subjects. To Israel this would have looked like what a Great King would do in making a treaty with them. First he would state his identity (verse 2) outlining what he has done promising to protect them in the future. Next he would demand absolute loyalty (verses 3-5). Then there would be a list of obligations, (verses 6-11).
2. **They are personal**: The word “you” which appears 15 times is singular not plural. The mood of the word is an exhortation. In other words, each person is urged to enter into this covenant personally. You could well put your own name instead of the you! “*Dale, shall have no other gods before Me*!”
3. **They are not new**: You can find these same ten word, (four of which relate to how we worship and six on how we relate to our fellow man), implied in some form in the book of Genesis. For instance, in Genesis 35:2 Jacob tells his household to “*Put away the foreign gods that are among you*.” **These words were written on hearts before they were placed on stone**! Further more we find them written in other cultures as well accept without belief in the true God. It seems that these were if you will a code of ethics in many cultures to regulate social relationships. The difference with these “ten words” is two fold:
4. Everything stems from what God has done for them, (Vs. 2).
5. Everything socially is based upon Israel’s relationship with God. Or how we relate to others depends upon how we relate to God. If we love God and obey Him then we will also so love our neighbors.
6. **They are God’s standard for Israel’s culture**: A nation is judged by its culture, clearly God was giving Israel a national character that would reflect His nature. A nature that was at it’s very core “Holy”, what we would today call moral. So then the law or “ten words” was to establish a new culture by which a world would be reached. Some one has well said that these “ten words” outline Israel’s “WORSHIP, WORK, and WALK”. If applied as a nation they would be a light to the gentiles.

**II.) Vs. 1-3 Who you are to love**

Vs. 1 “**And God spoke all these words**.” These are not the “***ten suggestions, or the ten opinions***” they are God’s words His commandments. With that said the first four deal directly with WHO and HOW we are to worship. The first and most important law is to love God, as Jesus would put it “*with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind”.* If you were to ask most Christians what our highest priority is most would be able to come back with the right answer, but few would be able to tell you just how to do so. How is our love towards God to be expressed? Yet before God instructs us on how to love Him, He reminds us of who initiated the love.

Vs. 2 The words “*I am the Lord your God*”, are repeated five times in this section. In verse 2 and then repeated five times God wants Israel to know that what He wants them to do is always based upon:

1. **Who He is**.
2. **What He has done for them**.

God sets Himself apart from every other so-called god and they can be assured of that by the way He has acted on their behalf. God alone can alter the coarse of history, He alone controls history. Further more God did so because of His love for them. God has singled you out to be the object of His love! Before He ever makes one commandment He reaffirms His love for them. They are just asked to respond to His love by loving Him alone. Because He has loved you alone.

Vs. 3 Now we come to the first “law of love” which begins to answer the above question of “*How is our love towards God to be expressed*?”

1.) **EXCLUSIVELY**: The relationship that we have to God is to expressed in a manor that excludes us worshiping any other thing. There are very few people who don’t want any thing to do with God. Most of them don’t want to reject God altogether instead they just want to add Him to the other things they already worship. So what’s the big deal about worshiping other things along with God? Well think of this in terms like a marriage relationship. Suppose your spouse came up to you and said, “*Honey you know that I love you, but I want to love others as well is that Ok with you?” “I mean I will love you more then them but I still want to love them as well*.” God wants an exclusive relationship with you and no small love towards something else is satisfactory. Is this because God is just insecure? No it’s is for our benefit that the relationship remains exclusive. Look at the how He words this, “You shall have no other gods (not god) before me.” Do you see that? God forbids the worship not of another god but other gods. God knows that we can not find a single replacement for Him instead we will substitute many things for what we really need, Him. The truth of the matter is that nothing else we worship will ever fully meet our needs. Further more if we try to worship other things along with God we will soon find ourselves not trusting the true God in some area thus we will be insecure. The exclusive relationship is for our benefit not His!

 Now the word “gods” is really a name we use it to refer to a title. A person’s gods are that which are the master passions that governs their life. They are that which a person worships and serves. Most of the time they are worshiped for the benefits, which they produce. They are worshiped as a means to an end. They are worshiped for what they can do for me rather then who they are. Notice the words, “before Me”, it literally means “to my face or in opposition to Me”. The word before is even translated “hostility towards”. God says that to have other gods and to just add Him to those is an act of war against Him.

**III.) Vs. 4-6 How you are to love**

Vs. 4 Now we come to the second way we are to express our love towards God.

1. **Singularly**: God not only wants us to love Him exclusively but singularly based upon His nature. Idols are used as a substitute for God and their worship was tied closely with images especially those that are idealized.

This commandment does not forbid making an image of something for artistic purposes; it forbids the making of an image as an aid to worship. There is no physical representation that we can make in nature that can fully represent the true and living God. Because He is Spirit and must be worshiped in Spirit and in truth. While a person may start out making an image that represents the Lord soon they will worship instead of the Lord! The idol begins to be a “rabbits foot”. We see this in the bronze serpent on the pole that Moses made, as well as the ark of the covenant as the Israelites began to worship both.

 The Catholic Church has left this commandment out so that they can continue their image worship, but so they can continue to have ten they divided the tenth into two. Remember this is a **prohibition against making an object the source of worship**. It is interesting to go back into ancient cultures and see the little idols they made and what it was they represented in their lives. Even Israel fell victim to worshiping these little idols.

* There was *Molech* and he was the **idol of pleasure**
* There was the **idol of the mind or intellect** and he was called *Baal*.
* There was the **idol of power** and he was called *Mammon*.

We have not changed much have we. A lot of folks have carved out idols in their lives of pleasure, intellect and power. They are found in the hobbies, things, people, jobs, and clubs we rap ourselves up in. Nothing man made can ever do justice to Who God is. The created is always inferior to the creator, no image can ever fully represent or reveal God to man. In Hebrews 1:1-3; “*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.*”

Vs. 5-6 Here we are told why they are not to make idols because He is a jealous God. But what does that mean? Well it does **not** mean envious of other gods because He knows that they are figments of people’s imaginations. God’s jealousy is love in action. He refuses to share the human heart with anything or anyone. He wants you all to Himself. Let me put it this way, “**God is jealous *for* us, not *of* us**!” Here as well we are told that if we turn away from God then there is a good chance that the next generations will turn away from Him as well. Yet if we continue to honor Him then there is a good chance that the next generations will as well.

**IV.) Vs. 7 The conversation of love**

Vs. 7 Now we come to the third law of love. So far we have seen that God’s laws of love dealt with not wanting to share us. This law of deals with our verbal worship.

1. **Whole heartedly**: To understand this law of love we need to understand two things:
2. The name of the Lord: His name includes His nature, His very person all that makes God Who He is. If you will His reputation. When you put another person down you are not criticizing the name on their birth certificate you are saying that they can not be trusted.
3. Vain: This word means, empty purposes. We can do this why we use His name in a profane way. But we can also do this when we use His name to confirm something that is not true, “I swear to God”. Or to fill in gaps in out speech such as when we are surprised, “Oh my God!” Or when we use His name and not really mean it from the heart.

We are not to speak using God’s name in any way that does injustice to His character or nature. I hear folks, all the time saying well God led me here to do this or that and the only reason they do so is to give credence to what they wanted all along. When my wife says with a full heart, “Honey, I love you!” And then I turn around with out even thinking about it and say; “I love you too.” I’m taking her name in vain. Simply put God wants us to think about Him when we use His name.

**V.) Vs. 8-11 A day set-aside for love**

Vs. 8 Now we come to a day that God wants us to set aside for the specific purpose of remembering His love. If you look up the word Sabbath or, Sabbath’s you will find it mentioned some 172 times in the Bible. To understand this law of love we need to look at two verses that proceeded this dealing with the Sabbath.

1. Gen. 2:1-3: Here you will find that God finished His creative work, rested and blessed it because He rested. The important thing to notice here is that no commandment is made in that passage.
2. Ex. 16:22-30: Here we see God granting a seven-day week instead of the Egyptian 10-day workweek. God was giving them a day of to enjoy Him!

Then we came to this passage and to the fourth law of love, which is told us right in the first sentence.

**4. Remembering to Love**: God clearly wanted Israel to remember the “wedding” day if you will. He wanted them to always realize how much He loved them and how they promised to be faithful. This day was to be especially set apart for worship.

Vs. 9-10 Every week they were to have an anniversary of their mutual love. There was to be a nation wide shut down so that they could celebrate their love. They were to plan ahead to that they would have their work done.

Vs. 11 They are reminded that the Lord made the heavens, the earth and all that is with in them. Israel ought not worship the creation but rather the creator. Instead they were to imitate Him in the act of creating. Israel was not to worship idols but they were to worship by being idol. It is wrong for us to worship God by making cheap imitations, but we are to worship Him by imitating Him.

 In the New testament we are we are told that we are not under the obligation to observe the Sabbath because Jesus has fulfilled the purpose of the Sabbath. The rest we enter into today is to be experienced not just once a week but every day. So why do we worship the Lord on Sunday instead of Saturday? First it is the day Jesus rose form the dead. Second the early church meet on this day to worship instead of Saturday. Paul says in Col. 2:16-17 “*So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.*” I personally think that we believers ought to make everyday our anniversary day with the Lord.

**Exodus 20:12-15**

**“A Set Apart Life a”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 12 A sanctified home**

**III.) Vs. 13 The sanctity of life**

**IV.) Vs. 14 The sanctity of love**

**V.) Vs. 15 Sanctified property**

**Intro.**

Last week we began our study through the “ten words” better know as the Ten Commandments. These words reveal the heart of God towards man and how they related to my own life. Jesus said, “*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled*.” We are told that we, “*become dead to the law through the body of Christ*.” We also understand that, “*a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified*.” So the question is: ***Why bother to study and apply something that we are clearly dead to because of our new faith in the finished work of Christ***? Folks, what we are dead to is these “ten words” being basis of our right standing before God. These “ten words” still act as our, “*tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith*.” Paul goes on to say, “*after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*” I find that the law still brings me to trust in Jesus to love and live as He has called me to.

Again these ten words, sum up all the law and are divided into two groups:

1.) Vs. 2-11 Four commandments that deal with what Jesus called the first commandment “*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind*.”

2.) Vs. 12-17 Six commandments that deal with how that love for God will be seen in the world, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*.”

We are going to look at three aspects of these six commandments:

* How Israel saw these laws
* How the church understood them
* How we ought to apply them today

## **II.) Vs. 12 A sanctified home**

Vs. 12 These 23 words that make up the 5th commandment and are repeated in Deut. 5:16 and Eph. 6:1-3 are:

1. A commandment obligating children regardless of age to honor their parents. In fact, it would appear that most likely the majority of those hearing these words were adults. Thus honoring your parents does not stop once you become an adult.
2. There is no specific action mentioned which is said to indicate honor. We are not told to do anything in particular; thus we are to assume that we always need to ask ourselves, “*how is what I’m doing or not doing going to honor my parents?*”
3. This is our first commandment that obligates us to mankind and with the first people we meet, our parents. It also comes with a promise which is twofold:
4. Long days: If you will long life.
5. Living in the land of promise: A blessed life.

Summarizing this then I would say that **God is giving Israel a key to a healthy society, a set apart home**! The foundation of any society is to be seen in the family. If the family unit is destroyed, all of society will fall. The word “Honor” means to give weight to or to fix a value towards. What this commandment is saying is that if you love God then you will love your parents. Oh, they may be flakey, old fashion or even unbelievers but you are to value them for the good of the society.

**How Israel understood the 5th commandment**:

Deut 4:8-9 “*What great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day? Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren*.”

Obedience to the 5th commandment played a special role to every other commandment. The laws of God were to be passed done from parents to children, so then if the children were to learn to love and live as God wanted they were going to have to do so from first learning from their parents. If they honored their parents, then they would obey the word of God. Society would break apart if children did not honor their parents, because it was through them that they would be instructed on how to live.

 Now think a moment about this with regards to our society and you can see why America has so declined as a society. Generation after generation has departed from the values of their parents, thus leaving us a society that continues to push the envelope further towards anarchy. Honoring their parents was fundamental for the passing on of Israel’s faith from one generation to another.

**How the church understood the 5th commandment**:

Jesus had much to say on this commandment in Mark 7:1-13 and Matt. 15:1-9, most of which dealt with how the Pharisees had departed from the intent of the 5th commandment. The Pharisees were teaching that adult children did not need to care for their aging parents if they dedicated their possessions to God. Jesus taught that when you honored your parents you were honoring God as well, if you honored God you were honoring your parents that these two truths were in completely harmony with each other! The early church understood that this was an important commandment to the furtherance of the gospel as well. Paul spoke of how because of sin in the human race children would be “*disobedient to their parents*” and that all of this was because they were lovers of themselves. Part of our fallen human nature “*rejects authority*” of any kind, thus Paul’s words in Ephesians that we are to “*obey our parents in the Lord*.” To not live this way was is to deny the faith that they say they posses. Christianity would be passed on from generation to generation as parents shared Jesus with their children and children obeyed their parents in the Lord.

**How the 5th commandment relates to me**:

1. **No higher calling**: The fact that this is the first commandment that effects all of society indicates the truth that there is no more important job then being parents. For years now society has looked down their noses at parents who train up children in the way they should go. I can’t help but wonder if one reason for the lack of honoring parents is because they are nonexistent. Parenting does not stop at a certain age! It just goes through a new stage.
2. **No greater gift**: There is no greater gift we can give society then to value and honor the home. The best way to do this is to place Jesus first in your life. All to often adult children do not make their parents a priority in their lives. What goes around comes around. Someone has said, “*The elderly are the only outcast group that everybody expects to join, because nobody wants the alternative.*” So how we treat them today will determine how we will be treated tomorrow.

**III.) Vs. 13 The sanctity of life**

Vs. 13 Notice here that word is “murder” and not kill. In Hebrew like English these are two different words. The commandment is against murder, not killing. Murder is the taking of a life without legal justification, (execution after due process) or moral justification (killing in defense). Thus this is not a prohibition against capital punishment neither is it a prohibition against joining the military or police force.

**How Israel understood the 6th commandment**:

The Hebrew word for murder always stressed premeditation and deliberate action. It did apply to accomplices as well as the actual person who did the killing. Interestingly Moses was familiar with murder as it was he who premeditatedly killed an Egyptian (2:12). As we look at the rest of the old testament we get a clear picture of what constituted murder.

1. Only premeditated murder was punishable by death. If he lied in wait for him verses a fight that takes a life. To act presumptuously and kill craftily was death. So God made the distinction between 1st degree and 2nd degree by what lay at the person’s heart.
2. Negligent homicide, where a person knows of a danger and willfully avoids doing what is necessary to prevent it was also punishable by death.

In all of this God is telling Israel that all life is precious to Him. There were cities that were provided for those who stood trial and found that they had unintentionally taken the life of another. All life is a gift from God and protecting life became the responsibility of every member of society.

**How the church understood the 6th commandment**:

Again Jesus interpreted this commandment to include dealing with the attitude of the heart that would lead to murder. Anger that is harbored against another can lead to murder and even viewing another person as inferior, worthless or a liability can lead to murder. Jesus went on to say that unresolved conflict and relationships that have not been reconciled can lead to murder. James gives us a bird’s eye view of the attitude of the heart, which can lead to murder when he says, “*Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war*.”

**How the 6th commandment relates to me**:

Obviously we have no right to take a life in any way that constitutes murder. Any life that God has intended to live should be allowed the right to live, this would of coarse include abortion, euthanasia, suicide as well as homicide. Because of today’s medical advancements we are having to face decisions that never before has society had to deal with. Machines are now employed to artificially sustain life that would not be possible with out them for prolonged amounts of time. I have been asked several times by people as well as having to deal with this issue myself as to my opinion on “pulling the plug”. I believe that these must be dealt with on a case by case basis, but one thing can help your family out greatly in case of these events is putting down in writing your wishes! The prohibition against murder is more than just the sacredness of life and not killing, it obligates us to seek to save life! If we see someone dying of starvation, we are obligated to seek to save that life. We need to be pro-active towards life which means that we are reaching out to those in need. Further more God’s position on life would give us the urgency to share His love & hope to a world that with out shall all die. We are told to “lay down our lives” so that others may live. The question for us is not, *“Have I killed anyone, rather it is have I died to myself that others may live*?”

**IV.) Vs. 14 The sanctity of love**

Vs. 14 Amazing as it may sound in today’s society adultery was punishable by death. As we saw in the situation with the 5th commandment the family was seen as the foundation of the society so that anything that would place that in jeopardy was taken very seriously. So God again speaks in general terms as to a marriage relationship that is set apart to Him. Clearly God condemns the act of sex outside of the marriage covenant. Through out the Bible God sets certain things a side for specific use sex and marriage fall into this category.

**How Israel understood the 7th commandment**:

In the story of Joseph and Potiphar, Joseph clearly understood that marriage was an exclusive relationship in which intimacy was to be shared. Joseph knew that not only was it sin but that this sin like all other sins was against God. Future more we are told that a person who gets a lady to sleep with them was to pay their dowry. Israel was to distinguish its self from all the other nations by remaining sexually pure. Adultery was seen as worse then sex outside of marriage because of the potential to destroy the home.

**How the church understood the 7th commandment**:

Jesus explained this commandment in terms of looking upon another lustfully. It is adultery in the heart that is only stopped from the act because of lack of opportunity or lack of courage. So we are not innocent of this sin just because we have not had the opportunity to sin the way we wanted to. Paul goes on to explain in Ephesians that the Christian marriage was to mirror that of the relationship we have with Jesus, thus loving only one which is seen as being faithful is related to our relationship with the Lord. Being set apart to God was often repeated as abstaining from sexual immorality. This was in a non-Christian culture a radical departure from what the rest of society was practicing. The marriage union which God establish is seen as “undefiled” and set apart. Sexual purity starts with esteeming that which God has given “marriage” and the one in whom God has given us our spouse. A person can not say that they honor God and yet are living together.

**How the 7th commandment relates to me**:

This commandment ought to make us reevaluate love and marriage. We live in a society that parades it’s self around with sexuality. Today sex has become a toy to be played with as often as you want with as many as you can. There is no question as to the devastation this has had upon our society. Our society preaches that sexual pleasure is never wasted, thus virginity is looked upon as something you should want to get rid of as quickly as possible. Even with in the church we see an ever increasing permissive attitude towards promiscuity. I believe that what God here states is that of a higher value upon intimacy then the world does. When God sets apart sex only for the marriage union He does so not because He considers it of little worth, but rather because it is so highly prized. In my house my wife has some fine china that she values, it is displayed in her cabinets, but only used on very special occasions. It is not that she does not care for it that it is not used every day rather it is that she values it so very much that it is only used on special occasions under the greatest of care! Our culture is lying to us about how they value sex; if it is so valued why is it so common to share with any one? It is the believer that has valued sex to only use it as God has intended in a marriage relationship.

**V.) Vs. 15 Sanctified property**

Vs. 15 God gives Israel laws to govern that which He has given them. He sees that which we have not as ours but rather we are stewards of it, care takers if you will. Since it is not ours why try to get more? Stealing and theft at it is very core reveals that the heart view of ownership is wrong.

**How Israel understood the 8th commandment**:

Israel broke down this commandment into several categories of theft three, which are active, and two, which were passive.

1. Embezzlement: which is the misuse or misappropriation of that which someone has entrusted to our care.
2. Theft: which is the act of taking what belongs to another. Now this usually takes on two forms.
3. *Robbery*: which is taking by force that which does not belong to you.
4. *Stealing*: which is taking by stealth, or fraud which is taking by deception.
5. Extortion: which is gaining another person’s property by illicit use of authority. This can be seen in charging excessive prices when one has to have the product.
6. Negligence, which results in a loss: like a lawn mower throwing up a rock that breaks your neighbor’s window.
7. Failure to return something which was lost to it’s owner: like something that you found and did not seek to return it.
8. Failure to give that which belongs to another: like their wages

It is interesting that according Hag 1:2-4 that Israel was guilty of stealing by not giving to the Lord.

**How the church understood the 8th commandment**:

Jesus told the man that came up to Him and asked what he must do to inherit eternal life that among the other commandments he must not steal. Paul in Rom. 2:21 exhorted the church in Rome not to teach one thing and do another using the analogy of stealing. There is not much on this commandment in the New Testament, with the exception of Eph. 4:28 which says, “*Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need*.” The point is that as one becomes a believer there ought to be a change in their lives. A thief does not work rather he lives off of the work of others, so Paul says that a Christian ought to put off being lazy and go to work.

**How the 8th commandment relates to me**:

Hopefully there are no Christians who are doing armed robbery, but that does not get us off the hook. Theft is taking something from others without giving something equal in return. The Bible teaches us that we need to give freely with no expectation of receiving anything in return. Christianity is the exact opposite of stealing. We often say when we got something at a good deal that we got it “at a steal”. Whenever we purchase something or use something and do not adequately compensate them for what we have gained we are stealing. Allow me to list some of these:

* Using the supplies or your time of the company you work at for personal things.
* Using bootlegged software, video’s, or music tapes with out compensation.
* Littering or allowing your pet to mess up another’s yard is robing them of their time.
* Taking advantage of someone whom is selling something under price unknowingly.
* Price fixing.
* Depriving workers the fruit of their labor. Now form a Biblical perspective; not giving to the church you attained is stealing for you are benefiting from the fruit of others labor.
* We steal from God when we withhold what is due Him, praise, or hearts etc.

**Exodus**

**20:16-26**

**“A Set Apart Life b”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 16 The sanctity of truth**

**III.) Vs. 17 Sanctified desires**

**IV.) Vs. 18-21 The failure of fear**

**V.) Vs. 22-26 A pure & simple heart**

**Intro.**

God had taken 3 million folks out of bondage and brought them into a deserted place to tell them ten words. Ten simple words that if they apply in their lives will turn their bulbs on and light up the world. Jesus took those same ten words and reduced them to two:

1. Vs. 2-11 = commandments 1-4 Love your God above anything or anyone. Or if you will make sure you are connected to the right power source.
2. Vs. 12-17 = commandments 5-10 Love your fellow bulbs, I mean neighbor as your self. Or make sure that having been rightly connected to the power source you are properly connected to all other bulbs.

Having already gone through eight of these wiring instructions we have two more to cover then we shall look at two more things to check in case your bulb is still not lighting.

1. Vs. 18-21 Make sure you are properly grounded.
2. Vs. 22-26 Make sure there is no interference to the power source.

**VI.) Vs. 16 The sanctity of truth**

Vs. 16 One of the biggest differences between mankind and the animals is the gift of speech. Since the fall communication has been corrupted, falsehood and lying has been a problem. So God here says that if you are in love with Him then truth and communication will be set apart. Now specifically these commandment deals with truth in the context of a trial.

**How Israel understood the 9th commandment**:

The culture of Israel was vastly different then what we have now and this could be seen in the courts as well. In our country we have professionals who carry out our laws, police, and court officials. This was not the case in Israel there were no police officers, no prisons and society was not mobile. Those that committed a crime were your neighbors, so it became important to establish the basis of determining who was telling the truth. All violations were considered by the same court, there was no civil court and criminal court it was all the same. When a person was found guilty they either made restitution, paid for their crime with the loss of part of their body or it cost them their life. So the 9th commandment deals with those that would commit perjury. The truth is that God’s laws are perfect but men are not so there must be away to establish the truth of a witness so that justice can be rendered. On a broader perspective this commandment went outside the courtroom to where they lived and included:

* **Slander**: spreading a lie with intent to do harm
* **Spreading rumors**: repeating a report about a person without careful investigation.
* **False witness**: not saying something when someone utters something untrue about another.

Israel handled this was that the person who saw the crime must initiate the process. And in fact they were to cast the first stone in a capital case. Witnesses were put under oath. So they would do a through investigation to make sure that the person was guilty because **if the witnessed had lied they would get the same punishment**.

**How the church understood the 9th commandment**:

Jesus taught that as believer’s, truth ought to be the very least you can expect so that oaths were really unnecessary; truthfulness is to be our way of life. The apostles taught that those who did not tell the truth would suffer for it. Further more this was applied to those that would teach the Bible and to say things that would accommodate non-believers was to bear false witness of the truth. So much so we are encouraged in James to *“let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment*.”

**How the 9th commandment relates to me**:

The tongue is a powerful tool and it can be a curse or a blessing. True testimony is essential for the administration of justice and righteousness in our society. God requires truthfulness from us at all times and in every situation. So we need to speak the truth in love every time we open our mouths knowing that “*every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment*.” Our lives as well as our words are a testimony of who God is. And the question we need to ask ourselves is, “*Are we seeking to cover someone’s faults with love or share them with others?*” When you speak of another you are speaking about their reputation so be careful!

**VII.) Vs. 17 Sanctified desires**

Vs. 17 The word covet means to “***delight in***”. Notice that delighting in is not evil or sinful in it’s self. Rather it is WHAT you are delighting in that causes you problems. The problem is when we “delight in” things that are not ours or not eternally beneficial. Whew, that gets me off the hook! No! Because all that you have is not yours but rather it is God's’.

**How Israel understood the 10th commandment**:

Coveting is unique in that it deals with what a person **feels** rather then what a person **does**. You can not see a person covet, you can only see the results of their coveting. Coveting is a such a strong desire that the one who covets will do anything if possible to get it. I notice that, we only covet what others have and what I can not have. And the reason can I not have it is because it belongs to another his, house, wife, job, possession. So to look at this list you will find items that are specific which a neighbor can not give (his wife) or will not give (house, job, or possessions). Coveting is the desire to gain at another’s expense and by it’s very fact that nobody can see another covet it is concealed. So Israel saw this as a sin that often led to an outward actions of murder, adultery, stealing, lying. So here God tells them to deal with this in the heart before they manifest it outwardly.

**How the church understood the 10th commandment**:

Now, Jesus said that we are to “*not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*.” Jesus understands that by the way He created us we are going to “*delight in*” that’s the way we are made. We are going to “*lay up*” for our self’s treasures the only question is **where**. Further more Jesus elaborates on why it is not good to lay up treasures here on earth. He say’s the problem is that the storage containers here on earth are no good. He says that the earth as a storage container is plagued by, bugs that will eat it up your treasures, rust that will corrode your treasures, or crooks that will steal them. Paul called coveting the root of sin and said that he would not of know what sin was except for the 10th commandment. The Jews had reduced the laws to outward things, but the 10th commandment was the attitude of the heart.

**How the 10th commandment relates to me**:

The truth is that what we “desire most” is what we value most. If we love our neighbor, we will not want what they have we will instead rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those that weep. What you value most will determine what we are willing to give up? We will always sacrifice the lessor for the greater. Here is where we can covet or delight in, the Lord and His word. I did a word study on these words “delight in” and came up with some interesting things. Most often these words occur to tell us what not to delight in and to rebuke Israel because they did not delight in approaching God. Paul said, “*For Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong*.” Paul was delighting in the things the world regards as liabilities not assets, because he found that it was in those things that he gained that which was most precious, the Lord.

I have found that the more I am covetous the less likely inclined I am to give because I am consumed with getting and I can’t get if I’m giving. At the same time the more I delight in the Lord the more I’m inclined to give because it is in giving I obtain more of Him. Paul reminded the elders at Ephesus that while among them for three years he labored not taking anything from them. Then he quotes Jesus and says, “*It is more blessed to give than to receive*.” It’s all a matter of what you delight in.

**IV.) Vs. 18-21 The failure of fear**

From verse 18 through chapter 23 we are in a section commonly called the “Book of the covenant”, it is Israel’s oldest law book. It contains the specific stipulations or ordinances between Israel and God, which is only summarized in the ten commandments. In this section you have the practical application of the Ten Commandments to specific situations. But before we get to the specifics in these chapters we get an indication to how Israel responded to just the general “ten words”.

Vs. 18 These guys were blown away by the presence of the Lord. It was an awesome sight and it terrified them. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God. He is absolute 100% pure. And all of this was manifested outwardly in thundering, lightening, and smoke coming from, the mountain.

The Holiness of God, His perfection, reveals about us our imperfection and does not draw us closer to God it makes us stand afar off. God wanted these guys to know two things:

1. He is holy.
2. They are totally depraved.

And judging by their response here they got it. These guys realized how far short of God’s glory they were. If I compare myself with others I may not look to bad, but when I compare myself with perfection it does not matter if I’m a little closer then you are I’m still an eternity away.

These guys knew from the content of the law and the display of God’s glory that they were way short of God’s perfection. Go ahead a few thousand years and see how Israel latter on interpreted the law to make it a standard of righteousness. Paul would say of his former self prior to knowing Jesus he thought of himself, “*concerning the righteousness, which is in the law, blameless*.”

Vs. 19 They are afraid to come close to God, further more they don’t want God to even speak to them direct. Instead they want Moses to be the mediator between God and them. They want a go between someone to bridge the gap from God’s perfection and our imperfection. So Moses became a typology of Jesus which was fulfilled in the Jesus. Paul said to Timothy, “*there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.*” God’s holiness caused the nation to recognize that they need someone to bridge the gap. That’s what the law is suppose to do as we read in Gal. “*the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ*.”. The law brings us to the mediator! How sad it is today though when you see folks looking for another go between. The catholic church looking to Mary or one of the saints.

Vs. 20 Moses tells them that the law did what it was suppose to do bring them to fear God because of their sin, but it can’t keep them from sin for very long. In fact, before Moss even gives the specifics of the law in verse 24 he tells them that a sacrifice for sin is going to have to take place.

Fear may keep us from sin for awhile but it won’t last long. God had clearly told them not to worship idol’s yet in forty days they make an idol to worship instead of the Lord. Here is what we learn about ourselves through the failure of Israel:

1. Fear is not a good motivation to holiness. Think of this in your own life, the fear of something can get you to stop for awhile but soon it wares off. Over eating, can shorten your life, but how many of us start diets then go off them, “just this once”?
2. Vs. 21 Obedience out of love is the best motivator. Moss was no better then the rest of Israel yet he “drew near” where God was. Love drew Moses near to God, fear drew them away. Perfect love casts out fear we are told in 1 John. Moses was just a big a sinner as was the rest of Israel could draw near to the Lord, because of grace! Moses knew that he was guilty before God but he also knew that he was forgiven. If God wanted to wipe him out, He could have done it along time ago.

**V.) Vs. 22-26 A pure and simple heart**

Vs. 22-23 God goes right back to whom they are to worship and how they are to do so. The first four laws dealt with keeping your heart pure in worship towards the Lord. What we worship and how we worship will eventually effect every other area of your life. When God revealed Himself to them at Sinai they did not see any form because He knows that they would turn that form which represented a living God into a dead idol. The first thing we notice about how God would want us to worship Him deals simplicity. If you go back and look at the other nations around Israel, you will find a maze of ritual. All these complex religious things that people had to do to appease their dead idols. But not with God, keep it simple just worship me, not an idol that you make.

Vs. 24 Another thing we notice in this verse is that there was no specific location in which they were to worship God. “*In every place where I record my name*..’ The remembering of His name is tied to His blessing, but notice that it is He who will cause His name to be remembered. Notice that the alter of blessing is tied to sacrifice but not ours His. The purpose of the burnt offering was to atone for our sin, and the purpose of the peace offering or fellowship offering was so we could enjoy the presence of the Lord. And in all of this we see it is the Lord initiated this. God has simplified His worship by blessing us so much that we just want to sing His praises and we can do that any where at any time!

Vs. 25-26 Here are two things God say that will hinder our worship of Him:

1. Vs. 25 Not putting a tool on the stone alter. Don’t glory in what you have done for the Lord. No matter how well meaning we are if we hew out an alter we soon begin to worship the alter instead of the Lord. What we do or have done for God ought never to be worshiped! God knows the tendency of our nature is to worship what we do for Him rather then what He has done for us. God wants us to be blown away by Him not some building or monument that was suppose to be fore God’s glory. Make the alter out of dirt, common ordinary dirt. That’s what God has done by placing His Holy Spirit in us these earthen vessels.
2. Vs. 26 Now this was because they were robes and if they went up by steps they would have to hike up the robes and they would show their flesh. God does not want to see our flesh in worship.

Let me conclude by saying that anything that draws us away from worship to God is idolatry. Amazing section of scripture I pray that we may always keep our worship of Him simple, glorying in what He has done, and never in our own self effort!

**Exodus 21:1-36**

**“House Rule’s part 1”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-11 Set apart servants**

**III.) Vs. 12-27 Human rights**

**IV.) Vs. 28-36 Animal rights**

**Intro.**

After the Lord gave the “Ten Commandments”, which made up the moral law and God’s claim upon the nation to the people, in verse 19 they asked Moses to be the “go between”. So the words recorded in this chapter through chapter 23 are not given direct to the people but rather to Moses making up the civil law, which would be their social legislation. The elders would use these laws to establish the legal presidents that would set them apart from other nations. They have become a standard for most judicial systems in the world today. They are God’s “house rule’s” for social order within society.

I know of no home that does not have certain “house rule’s”. You know the rule’s that govern the simple things that make your house run smoothly. One of ours is when you enter the house you take off your shoes. Now the rule was put in place to save the carpets. So if you violate this “house rule” you are sternly warned to take them off, however if you are a foreigner to our house you can still ware your shoes on the carpet with out any repercussions.

I have heard people say that you can not legislate morality or social behavior but the fact is that laws, or the absents of them is legislating morality. There have to be in place laws that seek to equitably govern our social behavior to not do so is to guarantee social immorality and total chaos. Though not all of these laws apply to us today they are non-the less valuable for us to look at. Today God has given us His Word so that we Christians can behave in a way that will impact our society as well. I’m all for voting on candidates and propositions but I am convinced that the quickest way to effect change in our society is for me to live as Jesus did!

**II.) Vs. 1-11 Set apart servants**

Vs. 1 Moses, at God’s instructions, establishes a standard of behavior so that when the people appear before the elders there will be a consistent judgment. All of us at times have been at the wrong end of a judgment. People set down rules and then bend the rules for some and not others.

Vs. 2-6 The first set of ordinances that God lays before them is one that regulates indentured servants. How interesting that all is in light of the fact that the nation had been slaves for 400 years. The first rights that God wanted to establish was the rights of servants. To get a better picture on slavery with in the nation of Israel it is important to realize how a person became a slave to another Jew. There were six ways a person could find himself or herself a slave:

1. Extreme poverty: If a person found himself or herself in such a condition as to not be able to fin for themselves they would sell their freedom to another and be their hired hand. This was an agrarian society and if your crops did not come in you would hire out to another. Most of us work for someone else, thus we would be considered a servant of the company we work for they tell us the hours we work the amount of compensation we get etc.
2. A father would sell his children: This may seem to be a bit harsh on the outside, but the idea is really more like an apprenticeship. A father might sell his child to a man who was a goldsmith or something so that they could learn the trade. This is still done in some countries today as the trades are passed down from generation to generation.
3. A person who could not pay their debt: A person who had accumulated a debt would have to go and work for the person they owed until the debt was paid off. This would even happen if the husband died and could not pay off his bills then the wife would then be obligated.
4. A thief: If a person stole something and there was a loss they would have to pay a fine. Now if they were unable to pay the fine then they would then be sold and the amount for their purchase was to be paid to the victim.
5. A prisoner of war: If during a battle they were taken as part of the spoils then they would find themselves a slave.
6. A prisoner of war who has been ransomed: In this case they were liable to pay back the price it took to purchase their freedom.

God established these standards to treat the above six ways a person could find himself or herself a slave.

1. Vs. 2 Servitude was never a life long: The max they could be forced to work was six years. At the end of six years they were set free. Even if the person had got himself or herself into the situation because of a foolish act they were only in it for a maximum time of six years and were to released in the year of jubilee.
2. Vs. 3-4 What ever you brought into slavery you took it with you: There was to be no extortion. You could not set a person free and not his wife or property. However, if the man had gotten married and had children they stayed. He could redeem them or work for their release as well.
3. Vs. 5-6 Servitude could be your life’s choice: This is one of those “what if” clauses. There were several reasons why a person would want to stay a servant, but notice the order.
4. I love my master: The primary reason was love of the master even before the family. The slave recognized that he had it better under the master then he did in the world.
5. I love my wife and children: It was in the best interest of the family that they stayed in servitude.
6. I will not go free: Obedience to the master was better then freedom in the world.

Eight times in the N.T. Christians are refereed to, as a bondservant and that is what Moses is saying here. A bondservant is one that recognizes that servitude to a loving master was better then slavery to the world. There were certain perimeters that the judges would want to make sure of, which we have already noted above. The most important one was that the servant had to be doing this not out of debt or obligation but only out of love and that love was based upon the master’s love and goodness towards him.

Vs. 6 In the ceremony that would show this the servant was brought to the door of the house and his ear was pierced or opened with an awl in the presence of witnesses, which should that he was going to serve the master forever. What this should symbolically was:

1. By going to the door of the house, that he was attached to the master and to his family. It showed that he belonged out of love to the family he served for life. This was not something that he could change his mind on later it was a once far all act!
2. By having the ear pierced or opened it was his way of saying that his ears were always opened to his master’s words. Not just to hear them but to obey them.

Having made this commitment, the servant was never treated as a slave but rather he was treated as a member of the family. That is what we have done as believers in Jesus but did you ever stop to realize that this is what Jesus has done to win our freedom? Jesus, we are told in Philip. 2:7 made Himself of no reputation and took on the form of a servant. In Psalm 40:6 speaking of the conversation between Jesus and the Father we read, “*Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened*.” Jesus could have gone home to the Father but instead he went through the doorway of death for us to purchase us back to the Father.

Vs. 7-11 Here we are given the rights of female servants. First off this was very rare but in certain instances it would happen:

1. In the case of extreme poverty, the daughter would be better off in a home that could provide for her. It was only allowed in the case where she and her family were starving to death. And only if she was unmarriageable. This was only for a period of no more then six years then she would be set free.
2. Vs. 7 Another reason would be for what I said earlier in the case of serving an apprenticeship. Again she would be set free in six years, but notice that she was treated differently then was the males; “*she shall not go out as the menservants*”. The deal was that the parents were compensated for her labor the idea was that she could be bought out of her contract earlier.
3. Vs. 8 If the master intent was to marry her then she had to be treated as if she was his wife with out any of the privileges of marriage. Though she belonged to him he could not do to her as he pleased. He either had to marry her or set her free but he could not sell her to someone else who would just use her. If someone else took a fancy to her and he did not want her then she could be redeemed by the guy.
4. Vs. 9-10 We are told if his intention was to have her married to his son then he had to treat her as if she was his daughter. And if the son backed out of the deal then he had continue to provide for her and make sure she had every opportunity to marry.
5. Vs. 10-11 He had to take care of three areas:
6. Her food, she must not be fed slop she had to fed what the rest of the family ate.
7. Her clothing, she could not be given hand-me-downs she was again to have the same rights as the rest of the family. No Cinderella, in other words.
8. Her marriage, she was to be given the full rights of any other married woman if she was married to the master or to his son or anyone else.

If he did these things, then he did not have to pay her any money but if not he had to pay her at the end of her six years. Such rules in society was radical and truly set apart Israel from other nations.

**III.) Vs. 12-27 Human rights**

Vs. 12-14 God made a distinction between manslaughter and premeditated murder. The issue was of premeditation and treachery. God does not place killing and crimes of passion on the same level as 1st degree murder. In fact, God has a place where the judge could send the killer to protect them. There were no police so the victim’s family often was the ones trying to bring this to justice and with out protection vengeance would rule the day. It was to be society that acted on behave of the victim not the victim’s themselves. There was to be no mercy for first-degree murders though, they could not hide by the altar they were to be taken out and dealt with the same day of their sentence. These cites were not built until the time of Joshua.

Vs. 15-17 A child who murders or attempts to murder their parents were to be put to death. Even if the child threatens to kill the parents they were to be killed. This did not just refer to children but to adults as well. This might seem a bit harsh but God sanctified the home and He knows that if we allow anarchy in the home then in will permeate all of society. There had to be a generational respect for the knowledge of God was passed down from the parents to the children. The elder generation was at the mercy of the younger generation, so God say NO to euthanasia. Children who do not respect their parents will respect for no authority and will be a danger to all society. Paul describes these kind of people as those “without natural affection.

Kidnapping which is stealing another person’s freedom was a capital offence as well. Enslaving people against their will was wrong and was not tolerated. Our country fought a civil war on the issue of slavery but in reality it was not slavery as the Bible describes it. It was wide spread kidnapping and those that did so should have been put to death. To say that the Bible encourages or even supports slavery is to be ignorant of the truth!

Vs. 18-19 Here we have the laws of compensation for personal injury. Notice that this was confined into narrow perimeters. There was no payment for “pain and suffering”. A person was only compensated for their loss, medical bills and lost wages. If we would have stayed to these principals, we could have done with out a lot more lawyers!

Vs. 20-21 Here are the rights concerning “workman’s comp.” In other cultures, servants were nothing more then property so you could kill them and not get in trouble, that was not the case with Israel. The thought of remaining alive for a few days was a way of determining intent. The master beating a slave was wrong but if through hard work or accident he died he was not help responsible. It was hard to believe that a master would want to destroy his own work force, so if the slave recovered the master lost the wages he would have received if the servant had been able to work.

Vs. 22-25 Here we are given the laws of retribution. The case is that of a pregnant woman. If the baby and woman were Ok, then the judge shall pay a fine that is fair. But if there was death then it would be the death penalty if it was premeditated. And if there was permanent damage then like for like was the maximum that could be extracted.

 Verse 24 is the earliest account we have of this law, but you need to know that this is an act of mercy. This was the maximum amount that could be imposed upon the guilty. Nothing here was ever to be part of private revenge as so often you hear people quote this verse it was only to be applied by society not the victim. This was a law that meant that the punishment had to fit the crime and it checked the desire for revenge. Our flesh wants always to add a little more own to those that have done us wrong. You beat me then when I beat you I’m going to run up the score. Only the loss could be compensated nothing more could be extracted.

Vs. 26-27 In the case of the servant the loss resulted in their freedom, what ever got them in that place they were no longer in debt etc. The bottom line was that you had better treat people right or it would cost you. Lose your temper and hit someone even if they were your slave and you would pay for it. What we see in all of these laws is the value God places upon any and every human life.

**IV.) Vs. 28-36 Animal rights**

Vs. 28-32 God establishes negligence here in the case of a bull that gores someone. If it was the first time it was only a fine, which would compensate the family for the loss. But if the bull had done this before and society had not been protected then the owner and the bull were both going to pay with their lives or there would be a fine paid that would enable the person to redeem their life. The price paid for a servant that was gored 30 pieces of silver. This the price paid to Judas who turned Jesus over to be gored for our sins on the cross.

Vs. 33-36 Lastly we have the first shop sign that reads “***You broke it you bought it***!” If negligence results in another’s loss of property you had to pay the full price of the loss. In a nut shall Israel was to take personal responsibility for their actions.

**Exodus 22:1-31**

**“House Rule’s part 2”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-17 Responsibility and restitution**

**III.) Vs. 18-20 Three things God hates**

**IV.) Vs. 21-31 Compassion conservative**

**Intro.**

Last week we saw God ordering the social life of the nation by what I’ve called “house rules.” It is amazing how simple yet specific these laws were. Laws are there for our benefit; the only time we don’t see it that way is when they interfere with what we want to do. Occasionally laws become obsolete do to a change in technology but for the most part they establish order and the lack of them creates chaos. Rules are to guide social behavior for the betterment of all and they correct bad behavior that we may not be aware of.

**II.) Vs. 1-17 Responsibility and restitution**

This section deals with things lost and responsibility making whole or complete that which was lost. Six times in 12 verses the words restore or restitution appears and the word literally means to make whole or complete. We are talking about negligence on the part of some which resulted in the property loss of others, but that is not the case in verses 16-17 when that which was lost was a girl’s innocence and the need to pay restitution to her and her family.

Vs. 1 The law made the distinction between stolen animals that were still alive in the possession of the thief and those that were killed or sold for a profit. If the thief still had the animal, he had to return it and pay a fine. But the thief who had stole animals for profit had to pay four sheep or five oxen for everyone taken. Clearly the person who stole for profit was doing so out of greed. If the person could not pay the fine, then they would be sold as indentured servants with the price of their sale going to the victim. Why the difference between oxen and sheep? It was kind of like grand theft verses that of petty theft. Trained oxen were far more valuable them sheep.

 The thief was made to pay restitution. You have heard the old adage, “*crime does not pay*”, well here it did pay, up too 5 times to every thing they took. It was not profitable to steal from others to get ahead.

Vs. 2-4 The victim was given the right to protect his family with reasonable force. The victim could only defend himself with lethal force at night against a thief but not during the day. At night the victim would not know if the thief had a weapon or not, neither would he be able to determine whether the intruder’s intent was to steal or kill. During the day the victim could see the person and that their intent was to steal thus there would be no need for deadly force unless it was for revenge and if so then they would be guilty themselves. If the person was caught during the day, then the regular laws pertaining to stealing applied which according to verse 4 which was if the animal was alive they had to pay double. So it would be better for the thief just to go buy the animal then to steal it because if he stole it then it was going to cost him double.

 This show us that victims were given certain rights and the laws were geared for the victim instead of the criminal. Today it seems our laws are geared more for the criminal then they are for the victim. It would be good for judges and lawyers to go back and read these chapters, as they are the source of most of our laws today.

Vs. 5-6 Restitution was to be paid in the case of damage to property not just possessions. The owner of an animal was responsible to make sure his animals stayed on their property. It did not matter the intent only that damage was done, ***negligence did not excuse responsibility***. Further more the restitution had to be given in the form of the “best” of the perpetrators land.

 Fire control was also the responsibility of each person and again it did not matter if it was vandalism or negligence. The reference to thorns is an interesting one for it is what they used for fences at that time, in fact today when you go to Israel you can still see boundaries made of thorns or cactus. So restitution was to be paid if it burned the fence, destroyed the barn or silo, the crops in the field or just grazing land. It was only fair that the person responsible for the loss of another’s property compensates the person who had the loss. Again the word restitution means to “*make whole or complete*” it was not enough to say, were sorry they had to make it right.

A lot of folks don’t apply this to their lives, go out and look at your cars and notice the dings and pings from those that have hit your car and not paid restitution.

Vs. 7-15 These laws were to apply the principal of restitution to those items that were entrusted to you to keep for them. If you asked a person to take care of something for you while you were gone they were to treat it as if it was their own. So God establishes the “*good neighbor*” policy where honesty and integrity are applied. There were four ways a person would entrust their belongings to you:

1. Safekeeping without payment.
2. Safekeeping with payment.
3. Hiring the property of another.
4. Borrowing the property of another.

No matter what you were responsible as if it was your own. If the thief was caught, then the fine was paid to the owner not to you. If the thief was not found, then it was up to the judges to determine if the borrower had anything to do with its disappearance. If there was a dispute as to who the owner was of the damaged item, it was brought before the judges to determine who would have to pay the full value. Now if the loss came as a result of armed robbery or if a lion killed a cow the barrow would have to show this by bringing in a hoof or something showing the cause of death. If the guy rented the oxen and while using them they died he was not responsible to pay restitution, but if no one saw how they died they had to go in and swear that he did not mistreat the oxen.

 In all of this the bottom line was “*treat your neighbor as you would want to be treated if you were in the same situation.*” All restitution was to be paid on pre-determined amounts and percentages and was never left up to the whims of judges.

Vs. 16-17 God who knows full well how he made men and women and how they react after the fall and puts in place laws to protect a girl’s innocence against seduction. This has nothing to do with adultery or rape, which were capital offences. I kind call these two verse to the “player laws”. Young guys today think they invented the picking up on girls but it’s been around since the fall and God clearly wants to set apart His people from other nations.

 Guys will indicate love to a girl to get sex and a girl will give sex to get love. And God knows this so he set up protection for society kind of like the “*you broke it you bought it law*.” God’s not into to the “*just sampling or taking her out for a test drive*” idea that a lot of folks have today. God makes the distinction between being betrothed. To the Jew betrothal was marriage with out intimacy so if a guy hit on a girl that was engaged to another he was treated like an adulterer.

 Now this law may have not prohibited pre-marital sex but it sure put a price tag on it. If a guy got a girl to sleep with him then the best he could hope for was that he would be permitted to marry her. God was saying here that there is no such thing as casual sex all sexual relations carry lasting consequences and virginity was to be highly prized, if a guy got a girl to give in to him it was going to cost him several ways:

1. If she was willing and the father permitted it he has to marry her and he could never divorce her.
2. He had to pay the father a sum of money for the disgrace of his actions had upon his family, plus the bride price.
3. If he was not allowed to marry her then he had to pay the bride price, 50 shekels of silver. A shekel of silver is about $128.00 so that means he would have to pay $6,400 for her virginity plus an additional amount for the shame and disgrace suffered by the girl and if there was a physical injury more would have to be paid.

The guy would not have been called a “***player***” he would have been called a “***payer***”. This was a powerful law against living together and seduction because the guy knew that it was going by a lot more then a one-night stand.

**III.) Vs. 18-20 Three things God hates**

We come now to three things that God hated. The interesting thing is that they all involved the worship of false gods and the practice of worshiping these gods contaminated society. Many folks believe that God is just some insecure being who can’t stand us looking at other gods or something. We equate God with fallen human qualities but the truth is God does not want us worshiping other gods. He knows it is not a god and that the practices of worshiping it will give you know benefit but it will lead you into destructive behavior.

Vs. 18 The death penalty was to be given to those that practiced sorcery. The word sorceress means “*to whisper a spell, to enchant or practice magic*”. It was almost always associated with “*medicinal arts*” or the taking of drugs. There has always been a connection between taking drugs and occult practices. In fact, in Gal. 5:19-20 Paul says that part of the work of the flesh is *“..adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery*,” Now the word sorcery there is “pharmakeia” which is the Greek word for medication, where we get our word pharmacy from. Notice that Paul places idolatry right before sorcery, I believe that is because that is what taking drugs is really all about. Our society is saturated with taking drugs and the reason why folks do it is to escape reality. More often then not those who are taking drugs are the ones that are openly worshiping satan, many of them have opened themselves up to demonic possession. God says for the betterment of society those that do drugs and alter their state of consciousness are to be put to death. How many times do we read in the paper or hear on the news that a person committed some grisly murder while they were on drugs?

 These laws were given a nation that was to be set apart to be a light to a fallen world, so they were not intended for a non-believing world. As Christians these things Paul says in Eph 5 that such things ought not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; for those that habitually practice such things has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. I do think that the entertainment industry better quit glorifying wickedness as certainly many people think it is cool to go get high.

Vs. 19 Bestiality was a practice by some of the Egyptian cults as they worshiped nature. It was also a perversion of God’s gift of sex. The truth is that since our so-called sexual revolution all sorts of deviant behaviors have cropped up in our society including this one. We have gone to the phrase “*If it feels good do it*!” as the standard to our behavior then nothing should surprise us. We Christians have our own saying, “***What ever His word says do it***!”

Vs. 20 Lastly God says that any practice associated with worshiping false gods was not to be tolerated. Some of these folks worshiped their gods buy killing or sacrificing their children to them or other horrible practices. The fact is, what you worship is what you will become like and that is seen in the practices of worship.

**IV.) Vs. 21-31 Compassion conservative**

We have just seen what God hates here we turn to see that He has a soft spot towards three things, the stranger, the widow and the orphan. The world has a “***survival of the fittest***” mentality but with God He wants us all to be more than conquerors through Him who loved us, so He sets certain groups aside to make sure they are taken care of and not trampled on by the rest of society. **If God was producing the show all would be winners and none would be kicked off the island, He would hold accountable those that would miss treat the weakest**.

Vs. 21-24 There was to be no law of the jungle in Gods society, He did not permit the rich and powerful to exploit the poor and week. God reminds them that they were at one time oppressed as a people themselves. The Israelite was not even permitted to call a stranger by the word “stranger” for it was a derogatory term, let alone oppress them financially. You can always tell something about a person on how they treat a stranger. In God’s society racism had no place, you were to treat all as if they were from your own family. But they were not to adopt the bad habits of other cultures instead they were to loving influence them towards the worship of the true God.

 Widows and orphans were equally on God’s heart those that often get over looked today. In fact, God promises to protect them personally. Those that have so offended them have not to deal with society but He says they are going to deal with Him. How sad it is that Israel did not take Him seriously as in the first chapter of Isaiah we are told that God was going to make them orphans and widows because they had not defended the fatherless and plead for the widow. Hey, God hears their cries so should we! Cain asked God, “*Am I my brothers keeper*?” and the answer according to God’s word is yes!

Vs. 25-27 God extends the treatment of the needy as the apostle John put it not only in word but in deed as well. They were to extend a financial hand to those that had a need. In the above verses as well as they God is dealing with our self-centeredness.

 The law granted an interest-free loan to the poor instead of an out right hand out. To give them a hand with out giving them a handout. The word for interest is the word that means to bite or cut with the teeth, so they were not to gouge each other on loans.

Our welfare system in this state is a mess because we give folks the opportunity to get money for nothing. The lender could not embarrass the person under any circumstances by asking them to pay back the loan when they were not able to do so. However, if it was found that the person had squandered the money, was not destitute, or was able to repay the interest-free loans then they would have to pay it back up to their ability. Taking of collateral had to be reasonable on loans that were not for the relief of the poor and the collateral could never be items that were necessary for daily living. God promises to go after the person who accumulated interest on a person profiting on their lack!

Vs. 28-31 They were to show their separation to God in two distinct ways: The civil and the religious. There was not separation of church and state, if they loved God they would love the nation and the leaders He had appointed to keep order. Further more if they loved their nation they would be faithful in supporting the faith by giving.

1. Vs. 28 They were not to speak bad about God nor were they to speak bad about the person or persons God had placed over them. They could not degrade a governmental official. This is the most basic battle we face our tongue, God cares how we talk about Him and others.
2. Vs. 29-30 They were responsible to give faithful to God. It was to be in a timely manor not just when they felt like it.
3. Vs. 31 They were to show their holiness in how they conducted their search for meat.

**Exodus 23:1-19**

**“A More Perfect Union”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-19 Equal justice and general welfare**

**Intro.**

Several hundred years ago a group of idealistic men and women sat down to establish a new nation. With nothing more then personal experience and the Word of God as a model they pinned these opening words. “*We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America*.” The rest as they say is history! A nation of free men and woman, self governed, yet dedicated to the mutual benefit of all its citizens. Equal justice for all, the right of everyone to peruse happiness. We are not the first nation that sought such ideals, neither are we the first to fail to achieve them. In this chapter God reveals His heart towards justice and how to treat our enemies. He sets forth a year in which every member of the nation will demonstrate their trust in him by taking the year off. He gives them three national holidays in which they will celebrate His ability to provide and care for them. Lastly He declares His presidency and tells them how to make sure that they will succeed in the land that He has promised them.

 With all that as a back drop, why did they not make it? The answer may surprise you, it’s the same reason why these United States have not achieved our ideal either.

**II.) Vs. 1-19 Equal justice and general welfare**

These first three verses primarily deal with the conduct of those that are judges for the nation. The judges also served as the jury and it was important that these men would be fair.

Vs. 1 The Jews interpreted this law by first making sure that the judge had a character that was zealous for what was right irregardless of the parties that were involved.

1. To insure this, he would not listen to one side of the story without the other party present.
2. If one of the litigants was unable to express himself then the judge would help them in getting the facts of the case form their perspective out.
3. There was a strict policy against slander, the litigants were told to just state the facts of the case and not attack person’s character.
4. Ten types of witness’s were not permitted to give testimony: Women (*to emotional*), slaves (*not independent thinkers*), minors (*to immature*), mentally deficient (*not able to think*), blind (*can’t be eye witness*), deaf (*can not hear questions or answer them*), relatives of litigants or persons involved in the case (*not impartial*), one who can not control their own lusts (*unable to understand importance of telling the truth*), wicked person, which is described as a person who did not practice their faith (*did not care about truth*).

Vs. 2 The idea behind this was to make sure that the innocent was not convicted with out a majority of two. There were 23 judges and there had to be at least 13 to convict a person. The judge had to make sure that he was not just following the crowd in his decision even if the crowd was far more experienced then he was. In the case of a capital offence the first persons to speak were the newest justices to make sure that the older ones would not sway them.

Vs. 3, 6 No partiality could be shown for the poor man just because he was poor, for that would be unfair to the other litigant. But neither could you favor the wealthy at the expense of the poor. To make sure that there was no perversion of justice is what lay behind these rules.

 The Romans depicted justice as a woman that was blindfolded, with a sword in one hand and scales in the other. ***The idea was that justice would be tender but without respect to persons, just in her judgment concerning penalty but fair***. Jesus said, “*Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you*.” These rules ought to govern our behavior towards each other as well. We should not hear the testimony against our neighbor unless substantiated by two or three credible witnesses. We should not listen to one side of the story without having the other person present. We should not just follow what is popular in making a judgment against another. Justice and what is right ought to be what decides our actions not who is involved. We should not allow someone to attack the character of another instead just state the facts. If the body of Christ had done this through out the year’s there would never have been any church splits!

Vs. 4-9 These verses promote civil conduct and kindness towards those you have a problem with. These laws were set up so that a person would never need to go to court. Jesus stated them this way, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*” and “*Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you*.”

Vs. 4-5 The responsibility to love your enemies was even brought over to their animals. The Jews were always to ask themselves what they would want done if they were in the other person’s shoes. Further more if a man came upon a scene where a buddy of his had an animal down and an enemy had an animal down he was to help the enemy before the friend so as not to give into his feelings.

Vs. 7-8 Here we see the protection of the innocent from any miscarriage of justice. It was better for the guilty to go free then the innocent put to death. How different that was when Caiaphas the high priest said that it was better that Jesus, who was innocent, “*should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.*” Circumstantial evidence was not admissible under Jewish law for they did not have the means to test such evidence as we do today; instead only witnesses who actually saw the crime could testify. Further more if the testimony of two witnesses disagreed on the details then the person was set free of the charge. It was a crime to bribe a judge; if at any time he had received a gift or service from a litigant he had to dismiss himself from the trial.

Vs. 9 Since the Jews knew what it was like to be a stranger in the land they were to always treat those who were strangers with great respect and care. The idea was to always put yourself in the shoes of the other person and treat them, as you would want to be treated yourself.

 Our treatment ought to always be the result of love not obeying the law. Jesus has treated us so well it is the very least that we can do is treat other as He would treat them Himself. Folk’s spend the rest of your life treating other’s the same way you would want to be treated. Husbands, when you get home from work your tired, but you know what so is your wife. So when dinner is done get up and do the dishes for that is what you would want done if it were you. The Word of God is extremely practical if you want to apply it in your life!

Vs. 10-13 The Sabbath was given to the Jews so that they would learn to trust God for His provision. We are told here that the Sabbath day led to a Sabbath year in which the nation would take the year off as far as the land was concerned. For six years they would work the land then on the seventh they would not work it at all and during that time what ever came up in the land was ok to eat as long as you left enough for the poor, the stranger and the beasts of the field to eat as well. There was to be no storing up all that you had in other words. You were allowed to irrigate the land but it was forbidden to do any work to prepare the land for the following year, neither could you alter the way you ate the produce or sell it during the Sabbath year. All these laws came into effect 30 days prior to the beginning of the new year.

 There are certain Christian sects that maintain worship on the Sabbath and really think that they are doing it according to God’s Word yet I don’t know of a single one of them that every seven years takes the whole year off! Yet this was just as important as keeping the weekly Sabbath’s. In fact, according to 2 Chron. 36:20-21, it was Israel’s failure to keep the seventh year Sabbath in the land of promise that led to their judgment by God and captivity to Babylon for exactly 70 years since it was 490 years that they had been in the land. In Lev. 25:20-21 we are told that God would make sure that they had enough in that year by blessing them with enough crops for three years in the Sabbath year. The purpose of the year of was to worship God, so they were not to be into any other gods not even to mention their names. Being an agrarian society meant that these other gods were all dealing with fruitful harvests. So God did not want to be trusting in any thing other then Him.

 God wants you and I to be trusting in Him for everything each and every day. There are times in our lives that we go through a place where we are totally dependent upon Him for everything, kind of like a Sabbath year, so instead of trusting in your own work why not learn to trust in Him. And while you are in that state make sure you are gracious to everyone else as well!

Vs. 14-17 Along with the Sabbath year in which they set aside the whole year to appreciate the Lord’s provision God gave them three national holidays which, coincided with three harvest times, that they would recognize three specific attributes about the Lord concerning His nature.

1. Vs. 15 **Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover**): The was observed around mid March to mid April and was immediately after Passover. It was at this time that the barley grain would be harvested. This celebration was to remind them that God is a deliver. To us this celebration should remind us of salvation from judgment by way of the blood of the lamb and based upon that we need to put away sin (leaven) from our lives.
2. Vs. 16 **Feast of Harvest, Feast of First fruits or Feast of weeks**: It was called by all three of these names and took place 50 days after the Feast of unleavened Bread during mid May to mid June thus we know it as Pentecost (meaning 50). It was during this time when the wheat would be harvested and God was given the “first fruits” of the harvest. Here they ***celebrated God as the provider***. The Jews would go out into their fields and orchards the moment they began to see the crops ripen and they would tie a piece of straw around those crops making them the first fruits of the harvest and thus dedicated to the Lord. When they would ripen completely they would bring them into the temple and present them to the priest with great rejoicing. This was to be seen as such a celebration that you could not participate in this if you had just experienced a death of a close relative. So they would place 1/6th of their first fruits in an attractive basket along with seven doves to present at the temple. Some of the doves were to be sacrificed others were a gift to the priest. Now upon entering Jerusalem they would be greeted by crowds of cheering people and then as they went into the courtyard of the temple the Levites would chant Psalms. Upon giving the basket to the priest he would quote Deut. 16:3, “*I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come to the country which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.*” This is the day that the church became the “first fruits” of those who have been saved by the blood of the Lamb. So we to ought to enter into the temple bringing our first fruits with great joy and celebration.
3. Vs. 16 **Feast of Ingathering or Feast of Tabernacles**: This would take place around mid September to mid October when the produce from the vines began to ripen. It was to commemorate the dwelling in tents for 40 years. Every year at this time they would build booths and move out side for a whole week. This holiday follows Yom Kippur, which is a time, spent fasting and prayer seeking forgiveness for the sins of the last year. It was to remind the Jews of the blessings gathered from the field. A procession would be formed and as they worshiped they would offer this prayer; “*For Your sake, O our God, save now (Hosanna)! For Your sake, O our Creator, save now! For Your sake, O our Redeemer, save now! For Your sake, O You who search for us, save now*!” This I believe points to the future as God will one day gather His people into the Millennial Kingdom.

Vs. 19 The prohibition against boiling a young goat in its mother’s milk may have something to do with a pagan ritual in which this was done then sprinkled upon the fruit trees and field to promote fertility. Now the law only spoke of not eating the meat of mammals, which are the only ones that produce milk. Yet, if you go over to Israel you will not be able to have a cheeseburger. So don’t be asking for a “double double”! In fact, you are not supposed to have any dairy products for at least six hours after eating meet. It was wrong to make the mother an accomplice in the death of her child.

**Exodus 23:20-33**

**“The battle belongs to the Lord”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 20-33 The blessings of liberty**

**I.) Intro.**

Last week we just about rapped up the explanation of the ten words, better known as the “Ten Commandments”. As I studied this section I was amazed at how practical they are. If we, as well as society, would just put these into practice the world would be a much better place to live. In Mark 12:28-31 Jesus would answer the scribe’s question concerning “*Which is the first commandment of all*?” His response was, “The first of all the commandments is: *'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength*.” He then followed that by saying, “*And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these*.”

**III.) Vs. 20-33 The blessings of liberty**

Vs. 20-23 It was God’s desire that the nation would remain at Sinai for about 11 months then they would journey to Kadesh-Barnea where they would enter the promised land. Now of coarse that did not happen as they were unwilling to trust the Lord and instead wondered 40 years in the wilderness until that generation died out.

The word angel here is the word messenger and we are told that He will have “*My name in Him*”. This is what we call a theophany as it is a preincarnate manifestation of Jesus. Because it says here that God’s name is in the messenger. The name of the Lord is YHVH or Yahweh. Jesus’ name is literally; Yahweh is salvation or Yeshuah. So God is declaring that His presence would always lead them and that they should follow Him as they would follow God. These guys were readying themselves to enter in to the land of promise and God is showing three ways that He is ready for them to have all that He has promised for them **now.**

1. From chapter 20 – 23:19 He has told them how they are to live in the land of promise. Why would God spend all of this time explaining the rules of how to live together as a nation if He had no intention of letting this generation enter the land?
2. Second, in verses 23:20-33, He tells them that He himself is going to lead them to victory. The purpose is told us right here in the 20 verse, “*to bring you into the place that I have prepared for you.*” God was revealing this to them to give them confidence to follow Him into the land of promise.
3. Lastly, in chapter 24 and the first part of chapter 25 God confirms His covenant with them and then instructs Moses to encourage the nation to give to the construction of the sanctuary so that He might dwell among them. Again why tell folks that the nation is formed and set aside finances to build if you are not going to do so?

The failure to enter into the land was not because God did not want them there at that time. No, it was because they refused to trust Him to do what He said He would do! I firmly believe that this is what causes us to fail to reach all of what God has for us, we don’t trust Him for it. Now we say we trust Him but our actions or the lack of them says the opposite.

A lot of folk’s are into this guarding angel stuff and I do believe that angel’s are out there. But what a great truth it is to realize more importantly that we don’t just have a guarding angel we have a guarding God! Jesus was to go before them and if they obeyed Him then they would posses all of what He had for them. So too in our lives as we surrender our lives to Him then we will take procession of all He has for us. Obedience was tied to their blessing and so to in our lives as we step out onto His grace we will see His provision.

Vs. 23 Six nations are listed here and the Lord says he is going to take care of each one of them. God is saying how He will handle their enemies:

1. He will go before you and bring you into the land: That’s what He will do in your heart. He is going to put the Getty up in your go! That’s the preparation. Many times we have people tell us that something like, “*Well I can get you there, but once you’re there you’re on your own*.”
2. And I will cut them off: Now here we see that once they are in the land he is going to fight the enemies through them. He will root out the things that would hinder them from enjoying all that He has for them.

How about it what enemies do you face? Are you willing to follow Him and allow Him to cut them off in your life? If not, then you will never enter in to all that He has for you.

Vs. 24-26 In these next two sections God promises to deal with those things that hinder them inwardly as well as outwardly.

Vs. 24 Now as long as Israel stayed true to the Lord then He would stay true to them. But notice that they had a part to play in this as well. It was two fold:

1. The first part of this verse reveals what they should not be doing, “bowing down, serving, doing according to their works”. The blessing was tied to what they did not do. In other words, their lives were to be seen as separate in as much as they did not do what non-believers did.
2. Second, their lives were seen as going after the things in the land that did not belong. Get rid of anything that would hinder them from serving the true God.

I think we often wait around for God to work when He would have us to participate with Him. So He says so that He would bless them materially (bless their bread and water) and physically (take sickness away, no miscarriages). Wow what a promise. I can’t tell you how many times, in my own life as well as in the lives as others, that I’ve seen folks who have struggled materially and physically because they have refused to trust the Lord.

Vs. 27-31 God promises here to rid them of their external enemies. He will do this by causing confusion upon the enemy as well as sending hornets to drive them out. He will do it super naturally as well as naturally. There is a true story of this taking place in Israel’s recent history. In the Golan Heights near Mount Hermon in the area where in 1973 Syria and Egypt launched a dual attack called “The War of Annihilation,” as they were planning to annihilate Israel, and almost did. When they began their attack against Israel, they had incredible successes. The Israelis had built in the Suez Canal area what they called the barlev line, after General Lev. It was supposed to be a sort of, marginal line or if you will an impenetrable kind of defense. And they figured that they could hold out with this line of defense along the Suez. However, the Egyptians overran the barlev defenses in 24 hours. Up in the Golan Heights, Syria attacked with eight thousand tanks; which is 800 more than Hitler had when he started his war against Russia. All of this took place in a little, narrow, twenty-mile area. These tanks finally overran the Israeli lines, and they were moving down along the Golan Heights, and were within a half-mile of the Golan Heights headquarters, when, without explanation, they stopped their advance. Even to this day, no one knows why Syria stopped. At the time they stopped Israel had only two operational tanks. Syria had a tank brigade, which was made up of over 100 tanks, plus armored personnel carriers. Now there was, a young Israeli lieutenant named Zvki, who hitchhiked up to the Golan headquarters and said, “*I’m a tank commander. Do you have any tanks*?” He was told that they had one and if he waited a ½ hour, he would get a second one. So he helped unload the dead bodies out of the one tank refueled it, and took off with the two tanks to face the Syrians. As he turns the corner, just a ½ mile away, here’s the whole armored brigade. He orders the tanks to start firing, then notices that his tank was the only one firing. He popped the hatch and sees that the other tank was already knocked out of commission. And thought, “*This is no place for me,” so he headed over the hill*.” This area is really just a series of hills, so he began to race up and down along what is known as the tap line road. He would come up over a hill, shoot a couple Syrian tanks and bank down then race to another hill, coming over the top and shoot a couple more. As he was doing this he was reporting back to the Golan headquarters saying, “*The Zvki brigade just destroyed two more tanks and every time he shot a tank he would report back the same way.*” Back in the Golan Heights headquarters, they thought, “*Where in the world did he pick up the rest of the tanks*?” The Syrians figured there must be a whole armored division on the other side of the hill because he kept popping up over different hills. So they turned, and began to retreat. God put them to confusion. Had the Syrians known, they could have come right down to the Sea of Galilee and taken Tiberias. The two tanks in the Golan Headquarters were the only things that stood between them and taking Tiberias. But God put them to confusion. Mean while down on the Suez, where the Egyptians had taken the barlev line, they were confused because they had planned a three-day assault and instead took it within 24 hours. They were so surprised that they didn’t have any further orders at the present time. So they just sort of started to dig in, and that’s when the Israelis were then able to muster their reserves, they began to move against their entrenched positions. What the Egyptians didn’t know is that there were only ninety tanks between them and Tel Aviv. Had they continued their movement, they could have come right on up to Tel Aviv, facing only ninety tanks.

 But God put them to confusion as He says here, “*I will confuse your enemies*. *Those that are against you, I’ll confuse them.*” And He does to the present day. So those areas of our lives that have some pretty big foes we can see the Lord work if we yield to Him in obedience.

Vs. 30 He will do this “little by little”. That describes the work of sanctification in our lives as God changes us “little by little”. Now I like this because we often are waiting for some “big” thing to happen or our ship to come in when in reality God works little by little. In all of this there is a step of faith as they are to go into the land of promise. So to in our lives as we step out in faith God will work in our lives little by little so don’t get all discouraged about your struggles just continue to allow the Lord to work in your life.

Vs. 31 We see how much land he gave to them; “*from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea and from the wilderness of where they were at to the Euphrates River*.” The currant dispute in Israel is over such a small amount of land. In a recent article by an Arab American he points out some interesting facts that most of the world is not aware of through the news media. They’re is no such thing as Palestine. The first time that name was ever used was in A.D. 70 by the Romans after they committed genocide against the Jews. It was from then on that the Romans referred to the land as Palestine, which comes from the name Philistine. It never existed before or since! There is no language or culture known as Palestinian. Never has there been a land know by or governed by Palestinians until now. You can trace the roots of this to 1967 Arab-Israel war. And it is interesting to realize that the land captured, Judea, Samaria and East Jerusalem, was captured from Jordan’s King Hussein and not from Yasser Arafat. In fact, there was no interest in Palestinian nationality until after Israel won the war. Now there is a lot of talk as well about Jerusalem being the sight of the third most holy sight in all of the world. But again the truth is that Jerusalem is never mentioned in the Koran. So what is all of the fighting about? It is about the greed of the Arabs for all of the land which they already possess 99 percent of it. Israel only represents 1/10 of 1% of the landmass. So God here gives them much more land then they ever possessed.

I’ve got to wonder how much of what God wants me to have do I really possess? One of the things in heaven we are all going to have to face is the waste of our lives. Israel had so much given them and a guarantee to have it all if they would just trust the Lord and yet they never even possessed what little they choose. How about you?

Vs. 32-33 Lastly they were to make no covenant with the enemies in the land. So God tells them you will not succeed if you compromise. Now Folk’s let us leave this section of scripture with this admonition, “*We must not make any covenant with our flesh because if we do it will only be a snare to us*.” That is always the reason for our inability to possess all of what God has for us.

**Exodus 24:1-18**

**“Sprinkled in the blood”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-8 Sign here**

**III.) Vs. 9-11 Under His feet**

**IV.) Vs. 12-18 In His presence**

**I.) Intro.**

By the time we come to this chapter Israel has been out of Egypt a year and a half. Fresh in their minds still is the work of their deliverance, like all believers there was a unique personal experience that they were saved by the direct intervention of God. Further more on their journey to Sinai they had personally experienced how God saw them as His special treasure above all people, (Ex. 19:5), through His provisions of food and water. It was then that God told them that He wanted them to know Him better then any other people, further more He told them how they could maintain that relationship through honoring “ten words”. So for the next 5 chapters God dealt with relationships. As we come to the 24th chapter it is time to sign the contract, three things will stand out to us.

1. It is God who initiates this covenant even though all the benefits are Israel’s.
2. The confirmation of the covenant has two parts:
3. Vs. 1-3 verbal (an oath, verses 3,7).
4. Vs. 4-8 written (in blood).
5. Lastly, there are mentioned three varying degrees of closeness to the Lord and we shall see that we to have a choice as to how close of a relationship we want with the Lord.

**II.) Vs. 1-8 Sign here**

Vs. 1-2 Back in chapter 20 after God revealed His holiness to the people they told Moses, “*You speak to us, but don’t let God speak to us or we will die.*” So Moses drew near to God while the rest of the people stood afar off. That means that from chapter 20 verse 22 until now all the words spoken were from God to Moses alone. This will be the first time that the rest of the nation has heard God’s heart towards them.

 God now invites Moses, Aaron and his two older sons Nay-dab & A-by-hu, along with seventy of the elders to worship Him from afar. The 70 represent the judges appointed by Moses to judge the nation. What is interesting to me is that it is the same number that came to Egypt to escape the famine at the request of Joseph 400 years earlier. Simply put these 70 elders represent the nation.

These two older sons of Aaron will latter on be wiped out, we are told in Lev. 10:1-2, for acting on the things of God without seeking the mind of God. Their names Nay-dab means **liberal** and A-by-hu, **worshiper** really fit the action that took their lives. They were worshiping God according to their will and not God’s just like Cain the brother of Able. Rather then waiting on God who started the fire for the sacrifice they got impatient and started one themselves. This is the cast of characters that God is calling to a closer relationship with Him. Things have not changed much today: We have our repentant murders as was Moses, we to have folks who would rather gripe at God then walk with Him and we even have those that would rather worship God on their terms their way then His. Yet He still desires to draw each of them into a greater relationship to Him.

 There are three groups of folks here that can be seen in their proximity to the Lord and I kind of think that we have those same groups in the church today.

1. Men and women who stayed outside the barriers of 19:23 and worship the Lord at a distance. They are not able to get any closer to the Lord then the barriers of their lives. There is a cost in growing closer to the Lord and it is accomplished when you decide to cross the barriers that you have placed in your lives. Now it is true that these were barriers to protect them and not ones to separate them but in Christ He has removed the barriers they separate us from greater intimacy with. So if you have a barrier now in your life it is you who has placed it there and not Him.
2. Next you have the 70 elders who are able to go beyond the barriers in their lives as they respond to His call upon their lives. Like the elders here they respond to the word of God in different areas of their lives. As they continue to do this they experience intimate fellowship with the Lord but with all of the progress they still have a distance to go even though they are seated at His table for supper.
3. Lastly, you have Moses and Joshua, who are invited into the very presence of the Lord and His glory.

Unlike the Israelites we all have the same opportunity to come into His presence. Yet, many choose to not cross the boundaries of their lives and so they stay at the fringes of fellowship with the Lord. Then a few cross over and worship under his feet, but they still are at a distance. How close do you want to be? The choice is up to you. I look at all crises as opportunities to move beyond our comfort zones. As we have just heard these three share a building moment it makes me realize that they are moving beyond the walls that have separated them from greater intimacy with the Lord. Next we see what it will take for us to move beyond the barriers to greater fellowship with the Lord.

Vs. 3 In this verse we see the first part of the signing of the covenant, Moses goes before the people and tells them all of the Word of the Lord as well as His ordinances. God had shared these with Moses as the basis of how they were to maintain a relationship with Him and be a light into the world around them. These guys were going to enter into a relationship with the Lord as He had said in Exodus 6:7 “*I will take you as My people, and I will be your God.*” So how did what Moses do encourage such commitment?

1. **He told the people all the words of the Lord**: The Bible tells us that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. What this shows us is the importance of the Word of God in our lives as far as growing in our relationship to Him, but we are faced with a choice to either respond or ignore what the Holy Spirit is telling us. If we choose to respond, then there are two important things to recognize in their response to Moses teaching the Word of the Lord. The first part of this is the response in the form of a “*verbal commitment*.”
2. “*All the words which the Lord has said*”: What this reveals is that they were willing to move forward in their relationship with the Lord on His terms and not theirs. They wanted to move closer to the Lord and they realized that it was not about doing it their way. The song might be cool when Frank Sinatra would sing, “*I did it my way*!” but the truth is that you can never grow closer to the Lord by doing it your way. Neither can you say, “*Well, some of the word of the Lord we will do*.” If you do you will only be able to get as close as the part of the Word of the Lord that you obey.
3. “*We will do*”: Notice that there never was anything that they were forced to do. They were free to respond but it was only in response to all of the word of the Lord that they would experience the fullness of the relationship He had with them.

Vs. 4-8 Next we move into the covenant being confirmed not only verbally but written and signed as well. What is interesting is to see the direct response of the people to Moses as He three separate times brings up the Word of the Lord to the people. In verse 3 Moses told all the people the Word of the Lord and they responded by verbal commitment. Then in verse 4 here He wrote down all the word of the Lord and they respond by preparing a sacrifice and sprinkling blood upon the altar of the Lord. Lastly in Moses reads the covenant to the people and they respond by a verbal commitment which ends up with them being sprinkled with the same blood that was sprinkled upon the alter.

1. “**Moses wrote all the words of the Lord**”: There was a since that a verbal commitment to what Moses had said was not enough. When we hear something that you know that the Lord is telling us and we respond by saying, “*Man that really speaks to me*!” The next step is writing your commitment down. Some of you take notes on what God is telling you and I believe that this is the first step in making lasting change in one’s life. But look at what they were told to do in response to Moses writing the Word of the Lord down.
2. Vs. 4 *Build an altar with 12 pillars*: The 12 pillars we are told represented the 12 tribes. An altar is the place of worship and a place of sacrifice. And the fact that they were to set up 12 pillars tells me that this alter was to represent ALL of the nation. Moses intended to say that they were to completely come and worship in total sacrifice.
3. Vs. 5-6 The only way that the conditions of the covenant were to be realized by Israel was through the shedding of blood. Verbal obedience was good but the truth of the matter was that they were sinners and it was the shedding of innocent blood that ratified the covenant. Obedience to the Word of the Lord is based upon the work of Jesus and not acting in your own flesh. ***Fellowship with the Lord is nothing more then our continual choice to respond moment by moment to the sacrifice of His Son on our behalf.*** The death of innocent lambs reveals that a relationship with the Lord is maintained not by our merit but rather by His grace and our reliance to that grace.
4. Vs. 7-8 Moses reads what he had just written the “Word of the Lord”. They respond verbally by agree with ALL the Lord has said we will do and obey! They fully understand that what they are about to do is based upon complete surrender to the Lord. The covenant then is signed in blood, but it is not their blood, which is sprinkled upon them it, is the blood of innocent lambs. We grow as we yield our lives over to the Lord because we recognize that He has paid for the opportunity for us to be close to Him.

**III.) Vs. 9-11 Under His feet**

Vs. 9-11 These 75 folks get to move even closer to the Lord as they see the Lord. We know that they did not see the Lord in the way we see each other for the Bible tell us that no one has seen God except for Jesus. And Jesus said that if you have seen Him then you have seen the Father. Whom did they see? Well I think that they saw Jesus on the throne. But they don’t describe anything except what is under His feet, because they are on their faces before Him in worship so the only good look they get at anything is what is under his feet. It is cool to look at the verse in scripture that speak of seeing God because in every instance they describe similar things. The glory of the Lord was so great that they are worshipping at His feet. It says that it was like sapphire and as clear as the heavens. What great beauty they were taken into. Perhaps, what is described here is the idea of them looking up through the sea of glass around the throne I all they can see is His feet.

 We are told in verse 11 that they are amazed when in seeing the glory of the Lord they are still alive. That is what is meant by the phrase in verse 11. To lay a hand upon someone was to kill them. Amazingly that the Holiness of the Lord did not destroy them as they had thought in chapter 20:19. What had made the difference? It was the sprinkled blood. Their lives were protected because they had been sprinkled in the blood of the lamb. There is nothing to keep you from drawing near to the Lord today if you approach Him in the precious blood of His Son!

 It says that they not only saw God but that they sat down and had a meal with Him. God never changed who He was to accommodate them. No, through who He was He changed them. So that they could enjoy fellowship with them. It was like the fellowship that He had with Adam and Eve before the fall when He would walk with them in the cool of the day! Oh the potential we all have to come into the Lord’s presence. The only then that limits this is our unwillingness to move forward in every area of our life.

**IV.) Vs. 12-18 In His presence**

Vs. 12-18 God desires to take Moses even nearer to Him and invites him to come on up the hill so that He can reveal even more of His heart to Moses. It is obvious that Moses was going to spend some time up there as he makes provisions for the nation as he is to be away. The word “*glory*” in verse 16 is the word shekinah or the presence of the Lord. Now the Sinai looked as if it was on fire from the presence of the Lord but Moses was able to be their 40 days and 40 nights in the presence of the Lord. Again Moses answered the call of God to draw nearer to Him and was rewarded with being in His presence for those 40 days. Growth in Christ is a choice of following the call He has placed upon you to come near to Him. At any time, we can say “*No thank you I think I will just stay behind these barriers*!” But you miss out on the beauty of fellowship. The Lord is guiding us to a land flowing with milk and honey, are we willing to move out behind the barriers and go for it? If so you will not regret your decision.

**Exodus 25:1-9**

**“That I Might Dwell Among Them (part a)”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-9 Where God guides He provides**

**I.) Intro.**

God had been faithful to His promise and delivered the nation from bondage. He had adopted them as His special treasure now He is desiring to fulfill the rest of His promise to them that was spoken to Moses back in chapter 6:8, “*And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*..” The final 16 chapters of Exodus are focused around building the sanctuary. The next seven chapters, 25-31 deal with the intricate details of this building, everything from the building it’s self to that of the garments the priests were to ware. Then the next six chapters, 32-37 deal with the actual construction. Yet unless you are into construction stuff most of this is like reading someone else’s blue prints. In fact, many commentaries skip this section all together. Now as we consider this section it ought to peek our interest. Because God obviously has spent a great deal of time in having Moses record this for us. Immediately two questions come to my mind that I want answers for:

1. Why is the sanctuary so important that 16 chapters are dedicated to the details of its building? If you will, “*Why a building?*”
2. Is their any significance to all the intricate details of the construction of the sanctuary in my life? Or again, “*What does it matter what the building looks like*?”
3. First, let me answer from the perspective of the Word of God the first question, “*Why a building*?” God Himself tells us the reason for the sanctuary in verse 8 “***That I may dwell among them.***” In chapter 29:45 God connects it this way when He says, “*I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God*.” Take this verse and consider it in light of His nature. God is absolutely 100% holy and pure. In 1 Tim. 6:16 we are told that God, “*dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see*.” This being the nature of God and we being sinners it is quite amazing that He desires to dwell among us. He is holy and powerful and yet desires to dwell among them, love and care for them! What this should produce in them as well as us is two fold:
4. First, we ought to desire to worship Him. You only worship that which is greater then your self. God is perfect and thus ought to hold the sole place of worship and honor in our lives.
5. Second, because He desires to make Himself know to us by loving and caring for us He ought to be loved for His love towards us.

God redeems us in order that He may have a relationship with us. That relationship must have both of these components from our perspective, worship and love. The idea of “dwelling” with someone brings to mind intimacy. When I asked Donna to marry me I was asking her to dwell with me or literally take up her “*permanent residence*” with me in which we would become one! The fact that the sanctuary was to be a portable structure tells us that God wants to be every where that they are. God wants to walk every where I walk, in light of the fact that He is Holy means that I should order my steps to be where He will go.

 In answer to the first question it is important to realize that God does not dwell in a building. He never said that He was going to **live** in the sanctuary, instead He said He would **dwell** between the cherubim on the mercy seat. Solomon expressed it this way in 1 Kings 8:27 “*Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built*!” **The sanctuary was not to be for God it was for them**! It was to be built specifically to meet the limitations they had in the relationship. It was a place where they could be with God and He could be with them. It was to be a place where worship and love could be expressed towards God, or if you will a place for His glory to dwell and His children to experience His love.

 So how does that relate to you and I? Well, from the standpoint of a building we realize that God will not live in the structure that we are building. We are the temples of God and He dwells in us. There is no reason as it pertains to God He does not require a building, but from our position we do. The building is not for God to live in, no it’s a place where we can comfortably worship and love Him together! It is there to facilitate service towards God, service towards each other and service towards our community! Home is not a place, it’s the Lord Himself. Yet with that said for all of us to get together to worship and love Him we need to have a place to accommodate us.

2.) Now to answer the second question: “*What does it matter what the building looks like*?” It is important to realize that all that Moses records about the details of the sanctuary came direct form God. Moses is told in verse 40 that he is to “*See to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain*.” As you read Rev. John describes in vivid detail the objects that are actually in heaven and they are the real things in which Moses saw and duplicated. We can read in Heb. 8:5 that the earthly sanctuary, “*serves as the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle.*” Further more in Heb. 9:11 we are told that, “*But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation*.” Then in verse 24 we are told that, “*For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*” It is apparent from the above verses that the earthly sanctuary was a copy of the heavenly one and that the true sanctuary is not made with hands and is not of this creation. I believe that as we look at the sanctuary you will see Jesus in fact we are told in John that Jesus was the “*Word made flesh AND dwelt (tabernacled) among us, and we beheld His glory..*” Jesus is the sanctuary; it is because of Him that we have fellowship with the Father. It is in Jesus, we are told in Col. 2:9, that *“dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;*.” Jesus said*, “If you have seen Me you have seen the Father*.”

# II.) Vs. 1-9 Where God guides He provides

Vs. 1-2 Now that we have answered these two questions another one comes to mind:

 “**How are they going to pay for this sanctuary**?”

Vs. 2 Answers this, they were to bring in an offering. Several things of note here.

1. Vs. 2a “*Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering*”: God instructs an offering not for a building but to Him! They were not giving to a specific need they were to give to God as an act of worship. If we are to be like God in character, then we are to give like He does. God gives willingly Himself to us, so He requires the same.
2. Vs. 2b “*From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering*.”: 2 Cor 9:7 tells us that “*God loves a cheerful giver*.” So the people were to give not out of constraint or arm-twisting but rather because God had given then a willing heart.

## What is at issue for all of us is the motivation of the heart in giving and here we are told that it was:

## To be to God not a need.

## To be from a heart that recognizes that all we have comes form Him. David recognized this in 1 Chron. 29:16 when he said, “*O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy name is from Your hand, and is all Your own*.”

This speaks to our motivation in giving and to whom they were giving. The offering did not belong to Moses or the elders, it belonged to God and it was for them. There was no mandatory amount demanded from each person, they were to give as their hearts were moved. Now what is amazing to me is to read ahead and see the heart of the nation here in Exodus 36 “*And they received from Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of making the sanctuary. So they continued bringing to him freewill offerings every morning. Then all the craftsmen who were doing all the work of* *the sanctuary came, each from the work he was doing, and they spoke to Moses, saying, "The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the LORD commanded us to do. "So Moses gave a commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, "Let neither man nor woman do any more work for the offering of the sanctuary." And the people were restrained from bringing, for the material they had was sufficient for all the work to be done; indeed, too much.”* Moses has to tell them to stop giving because they had given way too much! If you can not give to the Lord with a willing heart keep your money. Yet if you can not give with a willing heart then you have a heart problem. God provided the wealth and they wee moved by Him to give back to Him the things necessary to building the sanctuary.

Vs. 3-6 There several different kinds of material that was to be brought in by the willing hearts:

1. ***Precious metals***: Gold, silver and bronze. It has been estimated that more then a ton of gold was used and over three tons of silver. We are told in Exodus 30 that Moses collected ½ a shekel from every man of military age which was 20 years old. All of that was used in a tabernacle that was only 150 feet long by 75 feet wide. Most of the precious metals were used in the holy place that was only 45 feet by 15 feet.
2. ***Fabrics***: Blue, purple and scarlet dyed cloth as well as fine linen which had 152 threads per inch.
3. ***Animal skins***: Rams skins, goat hair which was like our felt, sea cow skin.
4. ***Woods***: Acacia wood which is harder then our oak and resistant to insects.
5. ***Olive oil and spices***: They collected these as well and we are told that it was for use in the sanctuary.
6. ***Precious stones***: Now this was for the breast plat that the priest would wear over his heart. Twelve stones that represented each of the 12 tribes.

Vs. 8-9 There were six special pieces of furniture that were associated with the tabernacle. And Moses was to make sure that He built them to the exact specifications that God had showed him. I think this speaks of order and that there is a way that we are to express our love and worship towards the Lord. The purpose of this again is that of fellowshipping with His people.

**Exodus 25:10-40**

**“That I Might Dwell Among Them (part b)”**

**I.) Intro.**

1. **Vs. 10-22 In the presence of His mercy**
2. **Vs. 23-30 The bread of life**
3. **Vs. 31-40 Shining light on the bread**

**Intro.**

We saw last week it was the responsibility of the nation to build the sanctuary. They were to build it from **willing hearts** as an exact duplicate of the vision that Moses had received from the Lord. The sanctuary was not to be the home of the Lord, it was to be where His presence would dwell in such away that man may receive more of Him and grow closer towards the Lord.

The future history of this structure is quite interesting. It started out mobile as God wanted them to realize that He was walking every where that they walked. After they entered the promised land they set it up as a semi-permanent structure for 14 years at Gilgal near where they had entered the land of promise. They then built a more permanent structure from stone at Shiloh where it remained for 369 years. From there, after the ark was captured by the Philistines, the ark was brought back by the Israelites to Nob and then to Gibeon where it remained for 57 years until a permanent temple was built on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

 This section records the precise dimensions of the six pieces of furniture that God had for the sanctuary. Why study all of this? It is apparent by reading Hebrews that these earthly items were duplicates of what is in heaven. In heaven all things reflect the nature and glory of God. By looking at these specific items we should be able to see the Lord more clearly. The question we keep asking ourselves is, “*Does our lives facilitate worship and love?*” To build something that does not facilitate our growth in Jesus is to waste time and money!

**II.) Vs. 10-22 In the presence of His mercy**

Vs.10-21 What is interesting is the order in which God gives the construction of these six pieces of furniture. The sanctuary is 150 feet by 30 feet and if you were to enter it you would first see the altar for the burnt offering and the laver. In the western end of the sanctuary you would see a 15 feet by 45 feet structure that was called the Holy Place. As you would go in side the first 30 feet of it you would see two pieces of furniture on the left, the golden lamp-stand and on the right the table of show bread. Directly in front you would see the altar of incense and behind it was a 4-inch thick curtain or veil which separated the Hole Place from the Most Holy Place which was 15 feet by 15 feet. As you went inside the Most Holy Place you would see the Ark of the Covenant. ***God does not give the vision of the sanctuary from mans entrance but from His***? God does **not** want Israel or man to think of their relationship to Him in terms of their approaching Him but rather in terms of Him approaching them! It is not what we have done to get close to God rather it is what He has done to get close to us! In fact, in verse 22 God tells Moses, “*And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony,..*” Clearly this Ark is the most important piece of furniture in the sanctuary! We are told the dimensions of the box were 3 feet 9 inches long, by 2 feet 3 inches wide, by 2 feet 3 inches high.

1. It is made out of two things “shittim wood”, which is a species of acacia wood and gold.
2. **acacia wood**: The species of acacia wood has some very interesting things about it. It is the only tree found in this desert area which means that it can survive in extremely dry regions. It is known to be incorruptible by insect or rot. In fact, when this section of scripture was first translated from Hebrew to Greek it was translated, “*incorruptible wood*”. It also has on its branches very long, sharp thrones. It is believed that the crown of thrones placed upon Jesus’ head was woven from this tree. Lastly the tree was known for its medicinal usage. At night if you pierce the tree sap oozes out of it and was used for its healing properties. Symbolically it doesn’t take much of an imagination to see that this wood used speaks of Jesus’ humanity.
3. **Gold**: It was overlaid with pure gold inside and out as well as 4 rings which were cast and placed on the top and bottom of the four corner so that it could be carried by attaching two pools also made out of acacia wood overlaid with gold. On top of the ark was a lid of pure gold, (verse 17-21) the same length and dimensions as the ark. There were two cherubim facing each other carved on the lid and their wings reaching forward towards each other. It has been estimated that that the mercy seat alone would have weighed about 750 pounds with a value today of around 3 ½ million dollars. This speaks of Jesus deity, how He is fully God. His incorruptible humanity is over laid with His divine nature. We read in Philippians 2:5-8 that Jesus was, “*the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross*.”

Vs. 15, 22 We are told that they were to place the testimony, which is the ten commandments that God would write with His own finger. Later on Moses would place a jar of manna, which showed Gods provision for the nation, as well as Aaron’s rod that budded, showing God’s fruitfulness, in the Ark as well.

We are told in verse 22 that from above the mercy seat between the two cherubim God would speak to Moses and through Moses to the people. Once a year the High Priest would enter into the Holy of Holies where the Ark was kept and poor over the mercy seat the atoning blood from the sacrifice. It is as if God was looking down from between the cherubim seeing the Ark and knowing mans sin because of the breaking of those ten commandments, yet upon the mercy seat blood has been poured to cover their sin, so that forgiveness is offered which brought fellowship between God and man. In Romans 3: 25 we read that, “*by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a* ***sacrifice of atonement****, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.*” Jesus is our mercy seat. He is the place as well as the means by which we have redemption. It is in Jesus that He will meet with us based upon His Son’s shed blood poured out upon His mercy seat. And the good news is that we don’t need to wait only once a year. No we can now, according to Heb. 10:19-20, “*have boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh*.”

**III.) Vs. 23-30 The bread of life**

Vs. 23-30 The second piece of furniture is the table of showbread or literally the “*bread of faces*” because the breads was to be eaten in the presence of God or before His face. Before we look at the material and dimensions of this table we need to look at what this showbread was all about. Bread of coarse is absolutely necessary for mans survival. **In that it was to be eaten in the presence of God it was to remind Israel that fellowship with God was just as necessary for them as was bread**. The bread consisted of 12 loaves, which corresponded with the 12 tribes of Israel. They were arranged upon the table in two rows of six each, with room left above and below each loaf. On either side of each row was a place to burn frankincense. The showbreads were to be replaced each week on the Sabbath in a ceremony involving 8 Priests. As one Priest slid out the bread another slid his in so that the table was never bare. They then took the bread to a table and ate it.

 Its dimensions were 36 inches long by, 18 inches wide by, 27 inches tall. Like the ark it was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold, which represents Jesus’ humanity and deity. It had a molding around the top of it to keep the bread from sliding off. It too had four rings of gold as well as acacia wood poles overlaid with gold so that it could be transported with out touching the table. There were dishes in which the bread was to be brought in, as well as utensils in which the bread was to made, all out of pure gold.

 The Ark speaks of Jesus as the **basis** (shed blood of Jesus) of fellowship with God. The ***table of showbread speaks of the substance of fellowship, His body*** as Heb. 10:5 reminds us that, “*when He (Jesus) came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me*.” Jesus said in John chapter six, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven*. *For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world*.”

 We have fellowship with God because we have partaken of Jesus. Remember what Jesus said to the lukewarm church of Laodicea, “*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*” Man what an invitation why not “*taste and see that the LORD is good*!”

**VI.) Vs. 31-40 Shining light on the bread**

Vs. 31-36 This Holy place was completely covered so the only light source would come from lamp stand. It was located across from the table of showbread so that it’s light shown right on the table with the bread. It was made out of pure gold with out any overlay. Its appearance was like that of the typical menorah that you see in Israel or in most Jewish homes today. Six branches three on the left and three on the right with one in the middle. The wicks came out of an almond blossom bowls, all of which were of one piece. Now the almond blossom was special in Israel as it is always the first tree to blossom in the springtime. Springtime is always a sign of new birth. The oil that was placed in these bowl was pure olive oil. In the old town of Jerusalem there is a recreation of this lampstand out of pure gold. It is around five feet tall and they have it incased in a specially protected glass. Remember the words of Jesus in John chapter 8 and 9, “*I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*” So clearly here Jesus is the golden lampstand. But there is something else we should look at concerning this lampstand.

In Rev. 4:5 we read John’s description of heaven and it says that, *“Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*” So then the lampstand in heaven is a sevenfold description of the Holy Spirit which we are given in Isa. 11:2 as it relates to the anointing that was on Jesus at His incarnation:

1. The Spirit of the LORD

2. The Spirit of wisdom

3. and understanding

4. The Spirit of counsel

1. and might
2. The Spirit of knowledge
3. and of the fear of the LORD.

In Zech. 4:1-6, Zechariah sees a vision in which the priests don’t have to go get the olive oil for the lampstand for the oil is coming directly from the olive trees themselves. The idea is that the Holy Spirit is the source of fuel for the light. Now in Matt. 5:14 Jesus said that we, “*are the light of the world*.” Then in Rev. 1:20 we read that the “*seven lampstands are the seven churches*.” So clearly the Holy Spirit in the church is illuminating a dark world. The lampstand was directly across from the table of showbread. Jesus said in John 15:26-27 that when the Holy Spirit, the “*Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning*.” Further more in John 14:26 Jesus tells us that, “*the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*” The Holy Spirit is at work in you and I illuminating Jesus the bread of life with the very words that He spoke. None of this were by accident. God wanted every thing to point to His Son.

**Exodus 26:1-37**

**“What’s behind the curtain?”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-14 Covered by His presence**

**III.) Vs. 15-30 An anchor of the soul**

**IV.) Vs. 31-37 Boldness to enter the Holiest**

**Intro.**

I have had the opportunity to travel to may countries and in my travels I like to go into churches to look at the architecture. You can tell a lot about those that worship there by the way they have decorated the inside of their church. I have seen the frescos of the ceilings often depicting a biblical seen. At one church by the Sea of Galilee I remember the altar which was nothing more then a bolder, where they claim Jesus stood. I suppose it is natural to decorate the inside of buildings in away that inspires worship. **Unfortunately, many times that which was to inspire worship actually becomes the object of worship**. There are some folks that quote Ex. 20:4-5 about making no graven image of any thing on heaven or earth to bow down to them as reason not to have any decorations in the church. Yet if you read Lev. 26:1 we read, “*You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a sacred pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I am the LORD your God*.” This passage makes it clear that what God forbids is not the making of representational art but rather the worship of it. The same God who told Moses to tell the people not to worship art, on the very same mountain told Moses exactly how to fashion the tabernacle in art that was clearly representing heaven and His presence. Four times in chapters 25-26 Moses was told to make every thing “*according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain*.” Clearly the idea was not man’s or Moses, the pattern came from God Himself! God caused Moses to see exactly what He wanted Moses to build in the tabernacle. God created such an environment in which man would experience all of Himself!

**II.) Vs. 1-14 Covered by His presence**

Vs. 1-6 In looking at this section of scripture I want to paint a picture in your mind of a tent. Not one of those new dome tents but rather one of those old canvas ones. That is how this sanctuary looked from the outside. The tent if was made up of four different layers:

1. Vs. 1-6 Fine linen with a pattern of cherubim in blue, purple and scarlet yarn.
2. Vs. 7-13 A goat’s hair layer that was almost black in color that went over the fine linen being two cubits or three feet longer then the first layer.
3. Vs. 14 Then there was a layer of ram’s skin dyed red which would be like fine leather and provide some insulation.
4. Vs. 14 On the outside exposed to the elements was badger skin but would probably better be translated purpose or sea cow skin. The purpose of this layer was to make the sanctuary waterproof.

Again, realize that God describes this to Moses from the inside out. Most of the time you describe your house from the outside; yet here clearly God describes the sanctuary from the inside out. The point I’m making is that describing something from the inside and working out is always associated with intimacy. When God gives the vision of the sanctuary to Moses He starts with the inside. God is always most concerned with the inside of things and not the outside.

Isaiah 53:2 says concerning Jesus that, “*There is no beauty that we should desire Him*.” Based upon this verse we see that Jesus was not all that attractive on the outside, as far as physical features He was probably average. Yet to read the gospels is to realize that all of Israel desired an audience with Him. So what was the attraction? **Inward beauty**! Far to often I’m making the outside better looking instead of allowing His beauty to shine through me! we are the temple of the Holy Spirit and He has changed us from the inside and is working on our outside by way of our inward change. What is prized in the world is what we see from the outside and not what you see from the inside. Now if you are as fortunate as I am then you are married to a person who is as attractive on the outside as they are on the inside!

 There is a curious passage in Rom. 13:14 where Paul says to the believers in Rome, “*Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ*.” The N.K.J. uses the words “put on” instead of “clothe” but I think the N.I.V. renders it right when they use the word “clothe”. **We are to clothe ourselves in Jesus folks**. Yet when you read in Judges 6:34 about Gideon we are told that “*the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon*.” It is interesting to read the literal translation of this in Y.L.T., which reads, “*the Spirit of Jehovah hath clothed Gideon*.” In other words, the Holy Spirit clothed Himself in Gideon. To put these two verses together is to understand then how we are to present ourselves in the world. **We ought to allow the Holy Spirit to clothe Himself in us so that we will clothe ourselves in Jesus**.

Let’s take a specific look at each of these four layers:

1. Vs. 1-6 Fine linen with a pattern of cherubim in blue, purple and scarlet yarn. This was the bottom layer and the only way you could see the beauty of the design was if you were on the inside the tabernacle which was that little 15 feet by 45 feet structure which made up of the Holy Place and the most Holy place. This part of the tent or curtain was made up of ten curtains five on each side, (verse 3). They were joined together by a series of 50 loops of blue yarn coupled together with 50 gold loops, (verses 4-6). Put together this made one tent that was 42 feet by 60 feet, which would not only reach across the temple but also have some room to spare on the sides. The artistic design was that of cherubim made from incorporating blue, purple and scarlet yarn with fine white linen. As you would go into the Holy place you need to realize there was no light accept that of the golden lampstand on the left. As you would look up and around you would see these cherubim. The cherubim are always associated with the place where the Lord dwells and are worshiping Him. **This little room was to be heaven on earth**. ***God wanted them to realize that He had come down to dwell with them but in so doing He was taking them to where He was***. **God was coming down to where man was for the purpose to take Him to where He is**! Walking into this room realizing that God desired to fellowship with us but more then that to take us to where He is for all eternity. Jesus tells us in John 14:2-3, “*In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*”

2. Vs. 7-13 Here we are told that the 2nd set of curtains were to be a tent over the first ones which were the tabernacle or dwelling place. These were made of goat’s hair that was almost black in color that went over the fine linen being two cubits or six feet longer when put together then the first layer. There were made up of 11 panels five by themselves and six by themselves with the sixth hanging over the back of the tabernacle. They were put together again by 50 loops in the goat’s hair and this time by 50 loops made from bronze which is a metal associated with judgment. The effect this would have is two fold:

1. It would protect the inner curtain of linen. The goat was the animal used in the sin offering. In fact, at the time of the Passover the priest would confess the sins of Israel and and lead the goat away out into the wilderness at the same time they would take a lamb and sacrifice it. They called the goat the “*scape goat*”. If the goat did not return to the camp it meant that God accepted the sacrifice. The only time ever recorded that the goat came back was the year the Jesus became the true lamb of God, thus their sins were not forgiven because they did not put their trust in Him.
2. The 2nd thing this layer would do is make the inner layer completely invisible to the outside. Not only did it completely cover it but was made of dark goat hair which is like our felt meaning that no light was able to pass through it. Things in heaven are invisible to those who are not in fellowship with God. God did not want man to observe His beauty from a distance, form the outside of the tent. He wants us to see Him from the inside of the sanctuary!

Putting this together gives us a great picture of Jesus as He has taken our judgment upon Himself becoming our sacrifice for sins. Further more it is only through Him that we have access to heaven.

1. Vs. 14 Then there was a layer of ram’s skin dyed red which would be like fine leather and provide some insulation. This was what the roof was made out of and it was ram skin dyed red. When I think of this I think of the story of Isaac and Abraham as he took his 30-year-old son up to sacrifice him to the Lord God was testing Abraham’s devotion and love to Him above that of even his only son. In verse 7 of the 22nd chapter Genesis we read the words of Abraham to his son Isaac concerning where the sacrifice would come from, “*God will provide for Himself the lamb*.” Literally these words are, “*God will provide Himself a lamb”.* Just as Abraham was about to plunge the knife into Isaac he heard a rustle in a thicket near him and there was a ram stuck by the horns. The interesting part of the story is that this took place on a peak know today as Golgotha and of coarse is the same place where God offered up His son. You see the ram in the thicket was a type of Jesus so to is this covering of protection that is over the tent. We are covered & insulated from the effects of the world by the shed blood of Jesus.
2. 4. Vs. 14 Lastly on the outside exposed to the elements was badger skin but would probably better be translated porpoise, sea cow or seal skin. The purpose of this layer was to make the sanctuary waterproof. This was nothing but just plain old skin covering the tent. From the outside no one would know what beauty was on the inside. Yet it kept the tent dry as well as dark. When I think of this I think that this is often how the world looks at Jesus and Christianity. Imagine what this outside looked like after 40 years. We are not immune to the worlds elements are we? But without the protection of Christ our inside would look like or outside.

**Vs. 15-30 An anchor of the soul**

Vs. 15-30 Here we have the sides or the frame of the tent. The sides of the tent, was made up of 48 boards from acacia wood just as we saw in the making of the ark and the table of show bread and were overlaid with gold as well. The north and south side had 20 boards each and the back of the tabernacle, which was the western side, had six boards with two on the corners. They were to be joined together by a system of tabs with rings through which four bars would run through them. The boards did not touch the earth they were instead placed on a stand of silver, which was given by every male of military age and was called redemption money. The weight of each of the 48 bases of silver was around 264 pounds. Through the center of the boards was drilled a hole in which another bar, invisible, ran to further strengthen the framework. The boards were 15 feet high and 2 feet 3 inches wide, thus put altogether we get the visual picture of a structure that sides and back were 15 feet high the length of which was 45 feet and its width was15 feet. So what does this mean to you and I? The boards reminded us of the Lord’s incorruptible humanity overlaid with His deity. Silver is the metal associated with redemption and the fact that this frame rested upon the unstable earth speaks to me about the stability I have in Christ. I love the fact that every thing was held in place by these bars especial the invisible one. Unity with diversity and what is it that keeps the body of Christ together the bound of Jesus! Can you imagine the beauty of this as the golden lampstands light glistened off of the golden boards? Folk’s everything in heaven is reflective in nature, may we never forget that we to ought to be reflective of God’s glory!

**IV.) Vs. 31-37 Boldness to enter the Holiest**

Vs. 31-37 There were two barriers or doorways into this structure.

1. Vs. 31-33 The first separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. It was made up of fine linen, blue, purple and scarlet yarn with cherubim just like the first layer of the tabernacle. It was hung on four pillars made of acacia wood over laid with gold, set on silver sockets. Later on the Jews made the veil much thicker because they did not want any one but the high priest once a year to see inside the Most Holy Place. At the time of Jesus, the veil was four fingers thick or approximately 3 ¼ inches thick. Now spiritually speaking we are told in Mark 15:38 that at the time of Jesus death for the sins of the whole world, “*the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom*.” Further more we are told in Heb. 10:19-20 that this means that we can have “*boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh*.” So we get a great picture of what this veil means to us in that now we can enter into the presence of God through faith in Jesus. You could only enter into the Most Holy Place once a year and only if you were the high priest.
2. Vs. 34-35 reveal to us the arrangement of the furniture we have already discussed its location before but I want to show you that this furniture speaks to us today about three-fold foundation of our Christian life.
3. The altar of incense: This we are told in revelation is for the prayers of the saints, (you and I), thus it reminds us that as 1 Thess. 5:17 says we are to, “*pray without ceasing*.”
4. The table of showbread: This reminds us of need for fellowship and the breaking of bread with one another.
5. The golden lampstand: This reminds us of our need to receive illumination form the Word of God. Ps 119:105 tells us that “*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path*.”

Does this remind you of anything? How about in Acts 2:42 at the birth of the early church where we read the dynamics of the church “*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers*.”

Vs. 36-37 Now this was the screen door if you will to the 45 feet by 15 feet Holy place. It was again made of the same material and was hung from hooks upon 5 pillars of acacia wood again overlaid in gold with the foundation being bronze. Bronze is made by refining over and over again so this speaks of purity by way of trial. This was the only entrance into the Holy Place and we are reminded of Jesus words in John 10:9 “*I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture*.”

**Exodus 27:1-21**

**“Into His Courts”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-8 Sacrifice and offering**

**III.) Vs. 9-19 Coming to the Lord**

**IV.) Vs. 20-21 Led by the Spirit**

**Intro.**

God views the tabernacle form the inside out, just as He does us as well. It never ceases to amaze me that we always try to put our best foot forward. God is not impressed with what impresses us. In this chapter we move from the tabernacle to the courtyard and the items there. You will notice a change in the materials of construction from the gold and sliver to bronze. ***There is a phenomenon that is suggested by the change in material***. The further you move from inside of the tabernacle, which is gold the materials change to silver then bronze. The Holy place which was that 15 feet by 45 feet structure **emphasizes the person of Christ were as the court speaks of the work of Christ**. This is the natural progression, as we shall see. We see three specific things again they are from God’s perspective looking at the things closest to Him and moving outward. Between the tabernacle and the entrance to the Holy Place was the Bronze altar. Then the next thing we see is the court it’s self and lastly outside we see the oil to light the lamp. The more I think about this the more I see the work of the Holy Spirit. If you look at this from mans perspective in reverse order you will see what I mean. Oil for the lamp speaks of the Holy Spirit in this case leading us into a relationship to the Lord. As we bring the oil the Holy Spirit is guiding us into the court of the tabernacle. There is only one entrance and all that is seen as we approach is a pure white fence. Upon entering the gate, the first thing that we see is the bronze altar of sacrifice and before we can draw near to the Lord we realize that without the shedding of innocent blood we can not come any closer.

**II.) Vs. 1-8 Sacrifice and offering**

Vs. 1-2 In Hebrew the word “altar” has at its root the word, which means, “*killing place*”. Amazing how we have sanitized words like altar. To us an altar is a beautifully decorated table in a church. To the Jews it was a brass box that was covered with blood where an animal sacrifice was bound to for their sins. This was the largest of the seven pieces of furniture in the tabernacle. It was almost large enough to hold all the other pieces. According to the measurement which puts a cubit at around 18 inches, from the tip of the middle finger to that of the elbow. The brazen altar would have been 7 feet 6 inches square by 4 feet 6 inches high; it sort of looked like a big box.

 Again it was made out of acacia wood, which again speaks of Jesus as we have seen before. On top was four prongs or horns that reached out in each direction. The purpose of these we are told in Ps. 118:27 were to, “*Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.*” Back in 1968 they excavated a stone altar in the southern area of Israel near Arad with these same dimensions.

Vs. 3-5 To get a picture then you have to imagine a hollow box 7 feet 6 inches square with a height of 4 feet 6 inches and inside about ½ way down was a grate so that the ashes could fall through. This box would be setting up on a dirt mound with steps leading to it. All of the utensils were made out of bronze and they were used to make sure that the sacrifice was thoroughly burned and to pick up the ashes afterword.

Vs. 6-8 The last features of this brazen altar was like everything else in the tabernacle to make it portable. That meant that what took place on that altar was to be done no matter where the location was. So 2 ½ feet down on the inside was a bronze grate under which the priests were to keep a continual fire burning. The ashes of the burnt offering fell through the grate and both the ashes of the animal with that of the wood were collected and carried out side the camp.

 So what does all this picture? It’s early in the day and you start out from your tent as you leave the dark tents you see in the distance this beautiful white fence. It stands in stark contrast to all that is around it, this sea of humanity dwelling in the hopelessly drab black tents. You can see the rectangular structure above the fence line covered in a gray waterproof skin. As you move around this white fence which is about ½ a football field in length you notice that there is only one entrance. It is a beautifully decorated curtain and as you go in the first thing that you notice is this brazen altar. That’s right a “killing place” with smoke rising above. You have come to get close with God, you have come to behold His beauty in the Holy place. You have come to hang around the mercy seat but before you can go there you must stop at the “*killing place*” where an innocent animal is going to have its blood shed for you. Then it is going to have its entire flesh turned into ashes. You could not get any closer to God unless you stopped here first.

 **The way into the presence of God always starts where an innocent victim has died for a guilty sinner**. The Jew would not ever attempt their journey into the tabernacle apart from bringing an animal. The priest would be waiting at the gate to make sure that the animal was without spot or blemish. And seeing that he was the priest each day would wash the sacrifice then he would lay his hands upon its head thus transferring his guilt and sin to the sacrifice. Think now of Jesus at His baptism by John the Baptist. John had been baptizing all day the baptism of repentance. One by one men and women came into that water, as they did they came confessing their sin and John would place his hands on their heads as they went under the water. It was symbolic, as their confessed sins stayed in the water. Then at the end of the day came Jesus, He came up to John but there were no sins to confess and John hesitated, “*I have need to be baptized by You!*” he said. But Jesus reassured him saying, “*Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.*” John was acting as the priest and Jesus the perfect sacrifice as all of mans sins were transferred to Jesus. This same picture was repeated three years later at the cross. What is the cross but a killing place! Today we see folks warring crosses but how many of us understand that they are warring a “killing place” around their neck?

 Look again at the position of the brazen altar. It was not outside the gate; it was the first thing you saw as you came inside. Hebrews 11:6 reminds us that, “*without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*” We must come to God believing that He is, (*inside the fence*), before we see the brazen altar, (*the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*). According to Rom. 12:1-2 “*that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*.” Look at that cross again, for by it is the only access to the presence of the Lord. It has become popular to ware them, tattoo them, stick them on our cars, ware them on our clothing but it is a rare thing in deed to daily come to that “killing place”. Folk’s at the entrance of everyone of our relationships with God the Father stands a door way that is a cross, innocent blood was poured out there so that you could enter in. I pray we never lose the since of ah at the “killing place”.

**III.) Vs. 9-19 Coming to the Lord**

Vs. 9-15, 17-19 God instructs Moses to put up a courtyard of fine white linen. The area was 150 feet by 75 feet and 7 feet high. The pillars, which would hold up the white linen fence, were to be inner spaced about every 7 feet 5 inches. The bases of them were of bronze with a silver top and silver hooks to hang the white linen.

Vs. 16 There was only one gate as I said earlier but it was rather large being 30 feet. It was made up of the same blue, purple and scarlet yarn as we have seen through out. The fact that this fence was white reminds of the Holiness of God. Today people have trivialized a relationship with God. Everybody claims a relationship with God and all roads empty into the same pound. Yet Jesus did not say this instead He said in John 10:1, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.*” Christianity sits at the center of humanity like the tabernacle did amongst the Israelite camp. It is beautiful and inviting, it stands in stark contrast to the world and tents that were around it. Folks, make no mistake this courtyard served two purposes:

1. **It kept people out**: It was by its very nature designed to keep folks that were just seeking out of curiosity out. If a person wanted to come in some other way, then the One Way of the 30-foot gate then they were not going to get in. They could come by way of the gate and the gate was made more attractive then the rest of the courtyard so as to draw them. Jesus spoke of this in Matt. 7:22-23 where He says that, “*Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!*” You see to let people can in another way is to give them a false since of security. The courtyard was to make sure that they could not fool themselves into thinking that they could no God by some other way.
2. Second, it made sure that they came in trough the gate: Jesus said, “*narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it*.” God wanted them to realize that they had to come by way of the death of an innocent because of their sin and rebellion. It was because of the structure of these courts and the gate that the Psalmist wrote Psalm’s like, 84:2 “*My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.*” (84:10) “*For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.*” (Ps. 96:8) “*Give to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come into His courts*.”

So you can see the longing of the courts of God and they knew that the way in was by way of the gate and into the brazen alter to offer a sacrifice. But that was the end of it they could come no further. They sang songs of joy but all they could ever do is come into the courts. Yet, now because of Jesus, we can come all the way into His presence through a Living way. When I read these Psalms I realize that for these Jews the highest activity was worshiping God. Oh how they appreciated being able to come into His courts. Then I realize that for the most part I don’t ever think of the access that I now have to God. Where is my song of joy about being able to enter into the Most Holy place and sit at the right by the mercy seat every day? I must say that I am saddened by my attitude.

 Further more as we have discussed this tabernacle moved with them. God was showing them that we only come to Him because He first came to us. Jesus told us in Matt. 11:28-30 “*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light*.”

**IV.) Vs. 20-21 Led by the Spirit**

Vs. 20-21 Here we are told of where the oil for the golden lampstand was to come from. The priests were to attend to the lamps from mourning to night, as the light was never to go out. The oil was to be gathered from pressed olive oil and not beaten. If you go to a store to day you will see on the shelves different types of olive oil. There are the bottles that just say, “olive oil” on them. This is still pure olive oil but it still has water in it as well so the flavor is watered down and it won’t burn as well. Then there is virgin olive oil and it to has been pressed from green olives and they have gotten more of the water out of it. Lastly there is the bottles that say “*pure virgin olive oil*”, these are the most expensive because the water has been removed. The best oil is made from fruit gathered about November or December, when it has begun to change color but before it has become black. The berry in the more advanced state yields more oil, but it is of an inferior quality.

 The olive oil for the lampstand speaks of the Holy Spirit and speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit is to draw us to the cross of Christ. Further more in the life of every believer we are reminded of the Zechariah’s words, “*Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD*.” God never wants us to run out either. He has supplied us with a continual flow of the Holy Spirit so that Christ’s flame will burn brightly in our lives. He even trims our wicks so that we can be on fire. Paul reminds us that we now are, “*light in the Lord, so we ought to walk as children of light*.”

**Exodus 28:1-43**

**“Serving God and Man”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-4 Dressed for the occasion**

**III.) Vs. 5-39 Fitted for service**

**IV.) Vs. 40-43 Everyday clothes**

**Intro.**

Examining the uniforms of the soldiers of both the Continentals and British wore reveals the style of the warfare at that time did as clearly both armies were not trying to blend into their surroundings as they didn’t ware camouflage. Can you imagine today’s armies warring bright red uniforms to do battle? Prior to Desert Storm the U.S. Army had to redesign their uniforms to match the desert terrain instead of European or Asian.

 My Point? What a person wares ought to match their terrain! There are many people who work at jobs that the clothing they ware is designed to fit the job they perform. Here God gives Moses the specific design for the uniforms that the priest, as well as the High Priest, will ware before Him. And just like the furniture in the sanctuary represents Jesus so to will what the Priests are clothed in. When you get right down to it all our Christian experience is about worship. We even describe our Sunday mourning time as a “worship service”. But worship is what we are to do every minute of every day one person put it this way. “***To worship is to quicken the conscience by the Holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God***.” These priestly garments then were to establish a life style of worship!

**II.) Vs. 1-4 Dressed for the occasion**

In Exodus we have seen God’s design for the sanctuary, now we take an interesting break from this as God shows Moses the clothing and consecration of the Priests. This chapter and the next (28-29) depart from the logical progression of the furniture in the sanctuary. The last two pieces of furniture to be described are the bronze laver and the altar of incense (both described in Chp. 30). Why does God stop the logical progression?

God has been giving Moses a view of the tabernacle from inside out. Everything has been pointing to God coming to man so they have all dealt with the person and work of Christ. Now the last two pieces have to do with us coming to God. The altar of incense deals with prayer while the bronze laver was where the priests washed before going into the Holy of Holies thus it speaks of being without spot or blemish. In these two chapters the focus is man coming to God. How can sinful man come to a holy God? GRACE! Scripture tells us in Isa. 61:10 “*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness,*” Not only does God provide the means for salvation, “*the death of the Lamb of God*”, He provides the approach as well. Have you ever wanted to get some where? You have a place to stay when you get there but you can not get there? I want to come into the presence of God and He has provided a way for me to do so but more than that he has *clothed me with the garments of salvation and has covered me with the robe of righteousness”*

Vs. 1 We see whom it was that God was preparing to enter into His presence, Aaron and his four sons. Remember that Nadab (nay-dab) and Abihu (a-by-hu) are going to die during the 40 years of wondering for trying to worship God on their terms. So to will Aaron which will leave the two younger boys Eleazar (el-e-a-zar) and Iythamar (ith-a-mar). Of these two Eleazar (el-e-a-zar) and his descendants will become the High Priests and his younger brother Iythamar (ith-a-mar) and his descendants, we are told 38:21, will be in charge of taking care of the structure of the tabernacle.

 Only these four and their descendants were allowed into the sanctuary, other then the Levites this was it! Oh how thankful we can be now that all can enter into the presence of the Lord. With that said I want you to notice some thing about this Aaronic priesthood. The priesthood was not earned by merit neither was it something that you could get by way of degree. No, it could only be obtained through birthright. You had to be born into a priestly family. What this did was make sure that those that were priests had no room for ambition or self-glory for they were called into the priesthood by way of heritage. Hey folks nothing has changed for you or I today. 1 Peter 2:5 says that you and I are “*a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*.” That means that we have inherited this from new birth in Jesus Christ. That is what Paul reminds the Corinthians of in 1 Corin. 4:7 when he declares, “*what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it*?” There ought to be no boasting now for you or I about our service to the Lord for we have obtained it through a birthright!

Vs. 2 Here Moses is told to make special clothing for Aaron, as he will become the High Priest. We don’t have to wonder about the reason for the special clothing for God tells Moses the reason, “*for glory and beauty*”. This can also be rendered, “*dignity and honor*”. In the next verse we are told that the purpose of the priests was to serve the Lord and later on in the description of the clothing we realize that the priest was to serve the people. *But serving was* **NOT** *to be ugly or dull*. It is glorious and beautiful full of dignity and honor. It was heavenly so the garments ought to reflect this fact. To go through this chapter is to appreciate the beauty and color on the clothing of the High Priest. I mean these guys were warring bright clothes, makes you wonder where those religious folks got the idea that black stood for glory and beauty in clothing?

Vs. 3 In chapter 39 we are told the name of the two head craftsmen Bezalael (bez-a-lel) and his helper Oholiab (oh-o-lee-ab). God says that He has not only gifted these men but He has filled them with the spirit of wisdom. Further more we are told that the garments they are to make are to sanctify Aaron that he may serve the Lord. These cloths set Aaron apart for the work of serving the Lord. Four times in this chapter God tells Moses that the purpose of the priest was to serve the Lord. There is some real practical stuff here on servant-hood!

1. **Giftedness**: When God calls people He gifts them to what He has called them.
2. **Filled with the Spirit**: When He gifts them He also fills them with the Spirit so that they will be lead by the Spirit of wisdom.
3. **Sanctified**: When they are filled with the Spirit of wisdom they are set apart for service.
4. **Minister to the Lord**: Lastly all that are gifted, filled with the Spirit of wisdom and set apart for service need to realize that their primary service is a relationship to the living God. All of ministering to others comes from me sitting at the feet of the Lord!

When Jesus restored Peter He did not ask him if Peter loved the ministry neither did He ask Peter if he loved the people. No, He asked, “***Do you love me***!” Peter’s failure is that we love what we do for the Lord more then what He has done for us! Ministry flows out of our relationship with Jesus.

Vs. 4 There are three sets of clothes worn by the priests:

1. Clothes worn only by the High Priest.
2. Ordinary clothes worn by priests during the time they served in the tabernacle.
3. Special clothes worn by the High Priest during 10th day of the Jewish 7th month, which would be our September, October, which is Yom Kippur or the day of atonement. These clothes could only be worn once and then they were to be set aside and stored never to be worn again.

In this section we are only going to be looking at two sets.

1.) From verse 5-39 we are given the High Priests garments. In verse four God gives Moses 6 items of clothing then in verse 30 God tells Moses to add another piece to it. So there are seven pieces to the High Priests out fit. But he also wore the linen trousers of verse 42 along with the ordinary priests. His clothes could never be destroyed or torn at all. In fact, we read in Lev. 21:10 that the High Priest “*shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes*.” If they did he became of no use in service at the temple. This is an interesting fact in light of what we read in Matt. 26:65. This was at the trial Jesus right after He said, “*I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven*.” Then the high priest tore his clothes! God allowed this to show that the Aaronic priest-hood was of no further use.

2. The ordinary priest’s clothes are given in verse 40-43. If their clothes became dirty they could not be washed but instead were torn into small pieces and became the wicks on the golden lampstand. They could not be cleaned they were instead to be used to brighten a room. Folks, that is what we are! We ware the righteousness of Christ and we can not clean up His righteousness, no we are to allow it to burn the brightness of His glory!

**III.) Vs. 5-39 Fitted for service**

Vs. 5-14 The first thing we notice is that of the material, gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread woven in to fine white linen. The gold was not thread but finely beaten gold kind of like gold wire. This was made out of the best of the material and supplies that they had to offer! Which tells me that we are always to offer the best of what we have to the Lord. What we offer the Lord must never be the leftovers of out time, talent and treasures. Whenever you think of these clothes we are reminded to serve the Lord with the best of what you have not the leftovers!

Vs. 6-14 The ephod (e-fod) was an ornate apron like garment. It came down just below the waste and had a front and a back. They were attached at the shoulders by two straps which had two polished gemstones with the names of the 12 tribes engraved on them six on each shoulder. Verse 12 tells us that Aaron was to bear their names before the Lord. All of this was held together by a solid gold braided chain. **Whenever the High Priest wore this he was carrying the people on his shoulder before the Lord**. As beautiful as the ephod was the people never saw its beauty. In fact, what was the most precious part of the ephod was the polished jewels on his shoulders baring the names of the 12 tribes. ***He was not there before the Lord for himself. He was there to bare the most precious things to the Lord, the people***! It was the High Priest’s privilege to bare or carry the people before the Lord. That is our responsibility as well to bare each other before the Lord. Man does that not picture Jesus as well as He cares us before the Father! A good leader always carries the people on his shoulders.

Vs. 15-29 The breastplate, also called the breastplate of judgment, was a nine-inch square embroidered fabric like that of the ephod, that was doubled to make a pouch. It was worn over the ephod and over the heart of the High Priest. Fastened in the breastplate were four rows of three engraved stones each with a name of a different tribe of Israel. It was chained to the ephod so that it could never be loosened. The names were chained to the High Priest. In this way the people of God were forever linked to the heart of the High priest.

Each stone was unique and yet each was precious and they were in gold setting so they could never fall out. We are all unique yet of equal value to the Lord. Paul says in Rom that “*we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another*.” Neither can we be lost nor miss placed.

 It was not enough that the priest carried the burdens of the people before the Lord he also carried them over his heart. In other words, he did so in love. We have already seen that the priest had to have a heart for God but he need to have a heart for the people as well. Think of this for a moment linking this together with what we have already noticed in the ephod. God’s power towards us is always linked with His love towards us.

Now in this we see the twofold ministry of all of us, “***A heart for God and a heart for people***”. I pray that you always carry each other before the Lord that we never forget how precious each other are before God. Ministry must always be cared out from a heart of love towards God and His people.

Vs. 30 Here Moses is told to place two objects in the pouch the Urim (lights) and Thummim (perfection’s). These words were translated into the Greek as manifestation and truth. According to scripture not much is known about these objects but it is thought that they were two stones that were to provide away for determining God’s will. They would ask the High Priest a question and he would then reach into the breastplate of judgment and pull out a stone. Sort of like a yes or no answer. Obviously this is obsolete today as we have the Word of God, but when you consider that most Christian’s use to make decisions, their feelings, these would be superior.

 Now the location of these two objects ought to reveal a powerful truth to us seeing that Jesus is our Great High Priest. The will of God for you and I is always near the heart of God. So if you are not sure of the direction God may be leading always draw near to His heart. Remember what Ps. 37:4 says? “*Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.*”

Vs. 31-35 Under the ephod was a seamless blue robe with an opening for the head it came to around the shins. On the hem of the blue robe was alternating embroidered pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and then a gold bell. The fact that it was seamless speaks of integrity. The pomegranate is a fruit that it’s seed floats in liquid. This speaks of the need for us to be fruitful for the Lord. The bells were to be a witness to the other priest’s that the High Priest was still faithfully serving on behalf of the people. A long as they heard the bell’s jingling they knew everything was alright. The idea is that of fruitfulness and faithfulness both of which Jesus was and we are to be as well. Folk’s you can not be fruitful in service unless you are faithful.

Vs. 36-38 Moses was told about the turban, which was a wound headpiece. On the forehead was an engraved plate of pure gold, which said “***Holiness to the Lord***”. Notice that it was to be placed on the forehead, which speaks of the mind. We are told in 1 Corn. 2:16 that we ought to have “*the mind of Christ*” and what this speaks to me is that of proper motivation in service, which is always that God would be seen through our actions and life style as Holy. Peter reminds us that we are to “*Be holy, for (God) I am holy*.” The most important thing we are to be before the Lord is Holy. In fact, if you want to be happy be Holy!

**IV.) Vs. 40-43 Everyday clothes**

Vs. 40-43 These garments were for the everyday priest’s. They were of fine linen and were also under the blue robe of the High Priest. The main point of these is that they were to cover their nakedness. Being that they were of linen they would have to be quite comfortable. Now what this speaks to me is twofold:

1. God does not want our nakedness or flesh in service to Him or His people.
2. God does not want us to sweat in the energy of our own strength in our service as well.

The purpose of these clothes was so that we can serve before the Lord and carry His people before Him. I pray that you will find ways to do just that this week.

**Exodus 29:1-46**

**“Set apart to serve”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-3 What I’ve done for them**

**III.) Vs. 4-9 Washed, clothed and anointed**

**VI.) Vs. 10-21 Forgiven, dedicated and marked**

**V.) Vs. 22-37 A life of celebration**

**VI.) Vs. 38-46 A life of service**

**Intro.**

The 29th chapter of Exodus is God’s instructions for the ordination of His servants at the tabernacle. Again notice how exact God is in what He tells Moses to do in ordaining the Priests. As we read this chapter Moses becomes a type of Jesus as He, through the ordination ceremony equips Aaron and his sons for service. My first reaction to this is to think of the awesome privilege it is to serve and what promises I would be making to the Lord, as I was about to serve Him. If you have ever gone to a dedication serve, then you know that those that come forward do so promising to do better. But in this dedication service though the priests come forward it is God who does everything for the priests. This fact is clearly seen in this chapter by counting the 43 times the words, “*You shall do to*” appear. These words speak of what God was having Moses to do on behalf of Him to Aaron and his sons. God is telling Moses that he has already done everything necessary for the priests to serve. This ordination was to remind them that they stand before God and the people not based upon what they have done or will ever do but rather on what God has done.

**II.) Vs. 1-3 What I’ve done for them**

Vs. 1-3 The ceremony that was to be carried out was quite elaborate and took a week to complete. In Lev. Chapter eight we see it mentioned again but here we are told of the purpose, “*to hallow them for ministering to Me as priests*.” The ingredients that were to be provided for the service were, one young bull, two rams without blemish, unleavened breads and cakes.

 The priest’s primary responsibility was to serve the Lord and the way in which he did so was to recognize that his whole life was set apart for that purpose. What we fail to realize ourselves is that you and I are called to the same thing. Our calling is to serve the Lord, now the location of where you do that may be different. We are far too much inclined to think of Pastors as the only ones who have a call on their lives but we all have a call to serve the Lord.

 The over view of this ceremony.

1. 28:1 Aaron and his sons were “*taken*” from among the nation.
2. 29:4 They were “*brought*” to the door of the tabernacle.
3. 29:4 They were “*washed*” there at the door.
4. 29:5-9 They were “*clothed*” with the garments described in chapter 28.
5. 29:7, 21 They were “*anointed*” with oil and blood.
6. 29:10-14 They were “*forgiven*” by the sacrifice of the bull upon the altar.
7. 29:15-22 They were “*dedicated*” by the sacrificing of the two rams.
8. 29:23-28 Their hands were “*filled*” and they were “*fed*”.

The outcome of all of this was that in verse 44 God declares them as been set apart. In all of the weeklong ceremony they did absolutely nothing! Not once will you read in this passage of Aaron and his sons **doing** anything rather it is all being **done** to them. ***They were called to serve but before they ever serve they are shown the basis of their service, what the Lord has done***!

This flies in the face of all the normal thinking that Pastors or leaders have done something to get to where they are. The consecration of you and I, has nothing to do with what we have done. It has everything to do with us appropriating what God has done. All that we do is rest upon the finished work of Christ. Titus 3:5-6 (N.L.T.) says, “*He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us because of what Jesus Christ our Savior did*.” Not once do we read that they promised anything, instead they went through a ceremony that was designed to show them that they were to serve the Lord and the nation based upon what God had done for them! Folks, what ever else you will discover about this ceremony do not forget this point, ***we never come to God based upon what we do, who we are, or what we promise in the future. No we come to Him empty, just as we are and allow him to do everything. It is only in this that we are set apart for service***!

**III.) Vs. 4-9 Washed, clothed & anointed**

As I look at this I see six distinct aspects of this ordination and all of them point to what Christ has done for us as well as remind us of how we should respond towards the Lord and others.

Vs. 4 Remember that this was a public ceremony and the location of this took place at the door of the tabernacle, so it took place before they entered on behalf of the people.

1. **Vs. 4 They were striped down and washed!** Now when you take a bath or shower you do so because you are dirty and the water takes away the dirt. In the Bible sin is depicted as dirt or defilement. In 1 Cor. 6:11 we read that “*now our sins have been washed away, and you have been set apart for God. You have been made right with God because of what the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God have done for you*.” When Aaron and his sons were washed all over it was symbolic of the complete cleansing of the Lord. It is interesting to note that this was only done once at the priest’s ordination after this they need only to wash their hands and feet. Remember the words of Jesus to Peter at his reluctance at having Jesus wash his feet? Jesus said this, “*A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you are clean*.” Once Jesus has cleansed us all that we need to make sure of is what we do (our hands) and where we go (our feet) are washed through the word of God. What response would you have in being stripped down and bathed by someone else in front of thousands of people? In a word, “humbling”! Think about that for a moment and it makes since, God wanted these priests to remember two things before they went in to serve in the tabernacle.
2. They were washed from sin. Not by themselves but rather by the work of another!
3. They were not cleansed from sin from by their own goodness. No they were laid naked before one who knows them completely, so they ought to always be humble as they go into the tabernacle.

Oh may we never forget the truths of this in our lives! Folks, we are no better then anyone else in fact we know our own unworthiness better then anyone else, thus we ought to serve each other not through, “*selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself*.” We stand, before the Lord as cleansed sinners, so our attitude ought to always be one of humility!

**2. Vs. 5-6, 8-9 They were clothed**: Now notice here two things:

1. They did not clothe themselves they were instead clothed by Moses. We are told in 2 Cor. 5:21 that God made Jesus “*who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*.” You see God has clothed us in Christ.
2. The clothes they wore were not their own! They were the clothes designed by God. So not only do we not dress ourselves we are not dressed in our own clothes or righteousness. If we did it would be filthy rags.

When you do some good work for the Lord you can say, I did not do this God did and further more what was good was not mine but rather His! Clothes speak of the character of the believer and what is good about us has everything to do with what He has done. Paul admonishes the believers of this fact in Phil. 4:8 when he says; “*Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things*.”

**3.) Vs.7, 21 They were anointed**: They were anointed with two things, the oil and the blood. Further more they were anointed with the same two items that tabernacle was anointed with. Thus the servant was forever linked with the place of service.

1. Vs.7 The oil: In chapter 30:23-25 we are told of what the anointing oil was to be made out of, “myrrh, cinnamon, cane, cassia and olive oil”. This would have been very fragrant oil. It was poured over the head so that it dripped off of the beard and onto the breastplate with the engraved stones of the tribes of the nation. Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and we read in 2 Cor. 2:14 that, “*God always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.*” That *through us* is the work of the Holy Spirit in your life diffusing the knowledge of Jesus every where we go specifically those whom God has called us to serve.
2. Vs. 21 The blood: What makes this interesting is where the blood was to be placed on the priests, right ear, thumb of their right hand and the big toe of their right foot. God was giving them three vivid pictures of what He was anointing through the blood of the innocent ram. He was setting apart “***who they listen too***, ***what they put their hands to work on***, and ***where they were to walk***.” God wanted to remind them that they must always ***listen to His word, do His work, and walk in His way***.

**IV.) Vs. 10-21 Forgiven, dedicated and marked**

**4.) Vs. 10-14 They new they were forgiven of the past presence and future through the death of an innocent victim**. Here we are told of a bull being offered as a sin offering on their behalf. This is the first time we read of Aaron and his sons doing anything, they were to place their hands on the head of the bull thus identifying themselves with the innocent victim. In fact, they would repeat two more times with the rams. The animals had to be chosen from the best that they had to offer and they had to be in the prime of their lives. They then symbolically transferred their sin to the bull, this would be repeated each day for a week, (verse 36-37). It was like saying, “*I have failed to give you my best, so this animal is dying for my failure*.”

We too need to realize that we fail and based upon His shed blood are forgiven. When they placed their hands on that bull confessing their sins the bull was going to die because of their failure. Then they would see it butchered before their eyes, blood placed upon the altar. The flesh of the animal was taken outside the camp and burned. For the next seven days the same thing would take place. I’m a failure and my failure has cost the life of the only begotten Son that’s the only basis of forgiveness today!

**5.) Vs. 15-21 They were completely dedicated to the Lord through the death of another**. Here we see that the animal was completely offered to the Lord. This is a picture of total surrender but again it is of another’s surrender on our behalf. Again our complete dedication to the Lord is because His Son has completely dedicated Himself to us! It is interesting that the burning of these animals was not seen as destruction but rather a sweet aroma before the Lord.

**V.) Vs. 22-37 A life of celebration**

**6.) Vs. 22-37 They were fed while they had empty hands**. The last thing they had to do they has to eat that which had given its life for their nourishment. Notice first that they came in with empty hands, that is to say that they had nothing to offer and what they had to offer first came from the Lord. So they would offer it back to the Lord in thanksgiving. Once it was waived before the Lord the fat, two kidneys and the right thigh was placed upon the altar and burnt while the priests sat down and ate the meal before the Lord. In a way they were sharing a meal with the Lord so fellowship was being provided by way of what another had given. You and I enjoy fellowship with God because of what His Son has sacrificed. For a week all of this was repeated, the tabernacle became home for the priests as they ate with the Lord each day and each day saw the animals sacrificed for their failure.

**VI.) Vs. 38-46 A life of service**

Vs. 38-43 During the weeklong ordination the priests stayed in the tabernacle, (Lev. 9:33-36). When the week ended they were put right into service. There service was to offer two lambs a day one in the mourning and one in the evening. So everyday started and ended with the Lord recognizing that it was because of the death of an innocent lamb that their sins were forgiven. In placing flour, oil, wine and grain they were recognizing that their sustenance came through the Lords provision and sacrifice. We to need to see that all of everyday belong to the Lord as He has provided all that we need to sustain our lives!

Vs. 44-46 God leaves no doubt as to His acceptance of their service as they applied His provisions! Folks, the work has all been done by Him all we have to do is apply it to our lives. The reasons for setting us apart is so “***I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God***.” Also He wants them to realize that He has been faithful so they can continue to trust in Him. May we continue to praise the Lord for all that He has done for us!

**Exodus 30:1-38**

**“Come let us worship”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-10 Prayer like incense**

**III.) Vs. 11-16 Only the redeemed**

**IV.) Vs. 17-21 Washed in the Word**

**V.) Vs. 22-38 The sent of the anointed**

**Intro.**

We have just finished looking at the clothing and ordination of the priests, now we come back to the last two pieces of furniture in the tabernacle. Again it is from God’s perspective. First we will look at that which is closest to the Ark, the altar of incense or the golden altar. Then we shall move outward and look at the bronze laver, which was located in the courtyard. What a beautiful chapter this is as we see what it takes to enter into worship of the Lord. Everything in this chapter prepares the priest for worship. Much like how people prepare themselves for a special occasion, the priest daily prepared himself for worship.

 We live in a culture that now sees fit to have a casual day for work but still I think dressing nice does create in **some** an attitude that says, “***What I’m going to do is important enough for me to take the time to get ready for it*!**” So how about it do you have the right mindset when you come to worship the Lord? Or do you come in late and wait for the worship team to jumpstart your heart in a right attitude? This section gives us some clues on what will produce the right heart for worship.

**II.) Vs. 1-10 Prayer like incense**

Vs. 1-6 Here we are given the dimensions, materials and location for the altar of incense or the Golden altar. You will remember that there were two altars in the tabernacle. Both were made of acacia wood but that is where their similarities ended. The Brazen Altar was overlaid with bronze hence the name Brazen Altar. It was much larger then the Altar of incense, which was, overlaid with gold, hence its name “Golden altar”. Their locations were different as well; the brazen altar was in the courtyard just before the bronze laver and to the right after door into the tabernacle. It was the first thing that you would see as you entered the tabernacle. The golden altar was inside the holy place right in front of the curtain on the most holy place. It was the last thing you would see before you entered the most holy place with the ark of the covenant.

 The dimensions of the altar of incense was 18 inches square by 3 feet high which made it the tallest piece of furniture in the holy place. It had a golden border or crown around it with four corners that were raised called horns. It was built to move like the other pieces of furniture with gold rings and poles overlaid with gold that would be placed into it.

Vs. 7-10 Moses is told how Aaron and those that would follow him as high priest were to use the altar of incense. They were to go in twice a day and burn incense on it. Moses is told specifically that nothing but the prescribed incense was to be burned on it ever. The high priest would go into the temple in the mourning and evening to trim the wicks or to light the golden lampstand. One of the other priest would have first gone to the brazen altar where the sacrifice for sins had taken place and take some coals from there. Then he would take them into the holy place and put them on the altar of incense. The incense was made up of 11 ingredients and divided into separate portions by weight for each day of the year. 1 ¼ pound was burned each day, half in the morning and half at night. He would gently sprinkle the altar with the incense then go about his business. Once a year on the day of atonement the high priest would sprinkle some of the blood of the sacrifice upon the horns of the altar on incense.

 So what does all of this have to do with my worship of the Lord? In Psalm 141:2 David says “*Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice*.” Then we read in Rev. 5:8 in heaven that there are, “*golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints*.” Then of coarse there is that passage of scripture dealing with Zacharias the father of John the Baptist. Who we are told in Luke chapter one “*was, serving as priest before God*” and it was his turn to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. Outside we are told that whole multitudes of the people were praying because it was the hour of incense. For four hundred years there had been no prophet of the Lord in Israel and Zacharias and Elizabeth were well passed childbearing age. But in answer to prayer an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. To tell him that God had heard and was about to grant him as well as the nation the answer to their prayers. **It’s simple this altar is always associated with prayer**! In fact, later on they revered to this as a prayer time known as the “***hour of incense***”.

 So what is it that we need to have to as we get ready to enter into worship of the Lord? **A PRAYFULL HEART**! Now again look at the facts that I have just presented above about this altar and you will see what a prayerful heart will look like.

1. When was the incense to burned? Why twice a day, in the mourning and evening. It is good practice to start your day and end your day with prayer. But more then this it speaks of a continual attitude of prayer.
2. Where did the fire come from? Why it came form the bronze alter of sacrifice. The fire that kindled the flame of prayer came from an innocent sacrifice on behalf of our sins! Wow, can you imagine this as we prepare our hearts for worship? Sitting down before the Lord in prayer recognizing that it is because He has laid down His life that we are even here!
3. What about the blood stained altar? Well this reminds me that “*the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*.” (Heb. 10:10) Everyday they would see that they were there because of the final act of another on their behalf. They were reminded of the atoning work of the blood of an innocent lamb and so are we of the Lamb of God that once for all took away my sins.
4. What about the fact that only special incense could be burned there? Well this reminds us of the fact you can not come to God in prayer offering what ever you want. A fact brought home by the truth of 1 Tim. 2:1 and Phil. 4:6 where we are told that prayer is to be made up of, “*supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks*”. Notice as well that no animals were ever to be sacrificed here. Why? Well prayer is not where we atone for our sins; it is where Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins is enjoyed. We don’t save ourselves through prayer, we pray because we are saved by Jesus’ death upon the cross.

The high priest was inside a closed room where smoke filled the air. Have you ever been in a room where people have been smoking? The smell of incense stayed on the clothing of the high priest, it was in his hair as well. You could tell that the high priest had been in the presence of the Lord. Why you could smell it on him! The fragrance of prayer was all over him. How about it? As you came here this morning to worship before the Lord is there the fragrance of prayer all over you? Or were you late because you were watching too much T.V. and missed most of the songs. Folks, if we had spiritual noses what would we smell on you?

**III.) Vs. 11-16 Only the redeemed**

Vs. 11-12 Another aspect of preparing your heart for worship comes to us by way of a practice described in these verses. Every year in the month of Adar which is our February and March every Jewish male 20 years and up had to pay a half of a shekel of pure silver (5 ¾ grams). It was mandatory that they paid it and it had to be paid in full. If need be they were to sell one of their garments to get the money which was for the two lambs that were sacrificed daily for the sins of the people. In so giving they were taking ownership of their sins even though they did not place their hands upon the lambs. It did not matter whether you were rich or poor the price was always the same.

 The key to understanding this practice is found in the text its self. If you count the times that the words “*number or numbered*” appear in these verse you will find that five times in six verses, we read that these men were to be numbered. Simply put this was a census. This ransom money was connected with a census taken each year. But what was being counted was not the men 20 years and up but rather the half shekel. ***What was important was not how many people but rather how many took ownership in their redemption***! David caused a plague to break out among the nation when he took a census apart from the ransom money. Think of it this way you don’t count things that you don’t own! When you count things you are saying, “***These are mine and I am assigning them a number to show that they are mine***.”

Vs. 13-16 Now we are told that this was atonement money, (verse 16), which was a flat tax that showed that all were equal in God’s sight and all were in need of redemption. You could not get in on the money of others even if they were in your own house.

 This relate to us about our hearts in worship, as it speaks to the fact that as we go before the Lord in worship we need to realize that we are owned by ransom of Jesus Christ. It does not matter how big or how little your sins are His one price is for all. Now, the Lord owns me and I take ownership of this truth. There is no such thing as “public worship” of God apart from us taking part in owning up to the fact that we are sinners who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus. We are not our own we belong to Jesus.

**IV.) Vs. 17-21 Washed in the Word**

Vs. 17-21 The last piece of furniture that we are to look at is unlike the rest as no dimensions are given. We know that it was made of bronze and specifically we are told in chapter 38:8 that the bronze that was used to make it came, “*from the bronze mirrors of the serving women.*” This act of washing was ceremonial in nature and it started the moment the priests came into the tabernacle, it was repeated each time they came in and out of the Holy Place in to the courtyard.

What a great thing to see that these women gave up their own appearance so that God’s priests could be prepared to worship. Are we more concerned with how we appear before men then we are the Lord?

In scripture we have another beautiful picture of what this washing was all about. The Bible speaks of drinking water as a picture of the Holy Spirit. Yet when water is mentioned as washing us it speaks of the Word of God. Psalm 119:9 says*, “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word*.” Or in John 15:3 where Jesus says, “*You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you*.” And of coarse there is that familiar passage in Eph. 5:25-27 where husbands are admonished to treat their wives as Christ treat us, “*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*” To further add to this James 1:22-24 reveres to the Word of God this way “*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.*” This speak to our heart in the area of being prepared to worship as we need to washed by the Word of God. It is the Word that cleanses us daily. I find it interesting that most of the time we use worship to set up the time for the teaching of the Word. Now that is the structure we use here, but when you think about it really it is the word that ought to set up our time to worship. As we look into the mirror of the word of God what reflection do we see? If we see ourselves then we need to by washed so that we are prepared to worship!

**V.) Vs. 22-38 The sent of the anointed**

Vs. 22-33 Now we are going to conclude with the last thing necessary to be prepared to worship. So far we have seen:

* We need to be *prepared by prayer*
* We need to be *remembering our redemption*
* We need to be *washed by the Word*
* And lastly we need to be *altered by anointing*

This oil was to be used for anointing the priests as well as consecrating everything that was used in worship. It was never to be imitated neither was it to be used for everyday things. And it was especially not to be used to poor on the flesh to cover up the smell. In other words, ***it was never to be used to glorify the flesh.*** The Oil for anointing speaks of the Holy Spirit. We see that we are not cover the weirdness of our flesh by saying that id the Holy Spirit. Neither is the Holy Spirit ever to be imitated. A lot of what is called worship to day has nothing to do with what we have studied so far. There is a lot of hyper emotionalism all under the cloak of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. All they are is at best fleshly imitations and now matter how much they try they never smell the same!

Vs. 34-38 The same is true of the making of the incense. God did want the sweetness of prayer to be mixed up with human effort and energy. Notice that it was to be salted which always speaks of purity in scripture. Far too much of what the Church calls worship and prayer is nothing more then human effort and energy trying to maintain a level of emotion. we can not fake worship or prayer it comes about through proper preparation of prayer, as we reflect on our redemption, meditate on the Word of God. It is then that the Holy Spirit well anoint us with the fragrance of Him self which well come back to the Lord in a heart of sweet prayer of devotion. This can not be faked neither should it be taken lightly!

**Exodus 31:1-18**

**“Looking for a few good men”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-11 Called, filled and equipped**

**III.) Vs. 12-17 At rest in the presence of God**

**IV.) Vs. 18 Obedient to the Word of God**

**Intro.**

One of the greatest mysteries in all the world is the fact that God uses humans to accomplish His work. It does not matter what the work is He still will call, equip and put to work people to accomplish His will. But what exactly are the things necessary to ready one’s self for God’s work? That is what we shall look at this morning. You may not feel as though you have any part in God’s plan or work. You may not be one of these two men mentioned in this passage. Let me remind you that only two men are mentioned in this passage but it is obvious that they were not going to be the only ones doing the construction. In fact, we read in chapter 35:10 that “*all who were skilled among them*” were to come and make all the Lord commanded. All had a part to play in God’s plan.

**II.) Vs. 1-11 Called, filled and equipped**

Vs. 1-6 For 40 days Moses has been on top of the mountain receiving the instructions for the tabernacle. Material had been collected but there was one thing missing. Who are the ones to carry out God’s plans? A look at these two characters will call us to see that **God does three things for the servant that He uses for His work:**

1. Vs. 2 **He calls them by name:** Just as the plans were heavenly and not from Moses or committee so to were those that would be called to complete the work. Do you see those words, “*See, I have called by name*?” This tells us that **God Himself had personally selected** those fellows for the work. If you will they were hand picked! So what does that have to do with us? We have been hand picked to be here for this work! I look out at you all in amazement at the quality of people God has placed here. It is no accident that you are here at this time in this body of believers. God has called us here. Now the way He called us and what He called us to may be very different from one another but He still got you here.
2. Vs. 3 **He fills them with His Spirit**: There was a supernatural enabling upon them to do the work which they were called to. It is interesting that God saw this work as just as spiritual as He did the priesthood. No matter what God has called you to, the greatest single need we all have is to be filled with His Spirit to do the work. We are even told specifically what God’s Spirit and power in their lives was for, “wisdom, understanding and knowledge.” That is “**how to use properly that which He has gifted you with**!” God not only gave them the skill to do the work He gave them the power to do so in wisdom, understanding and knowledge. There is no amount of learning that can substitute for the anointing of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. There is no way I can do what some of you do, I’m not called or empowered by the Spirit of God the way you are.
3. Vs. 3b-5 **He equips them for the manor of work**: Listed here was six different areas these guys were to be equipped in. This is if you will **the training and experience to do the work of God**. Now don’t think for a minute that this has to do solely with going to Bible school. All of our lives experiences are training for the Lord’s work. Who knows what it is in life that is equipping you for the work that God has for you? Notice that this was for, “all manner of workmanship”. You may be stuck in some hole in the wall place learning something that you don’t think has to do with anything God could ever use, but the truth is that God’s equipping you through the situations and the circumstances you find yourself in now. So do yourself a favor and **stay in school**! I can not tell you all the stuff God has used to equip me for that which He has called and empowered me to do.

**God never establishes a work that He does not first call, fill with His Spirit and equip to accomplish the task**. So they were, “**personally selected, empowered to use properly that which He has gifted and trained to do the work of God.**

We are given the two names of the men as:

1. Vs. 2-5 **Bez-a-lel**: His name means, “***In the shadow of God***”. When this phrase is used it always speaks of the intimacy and protection of God. We are further told that he was the son of Uri, which means “light”, so he was the *son of light*. His grandfather’s name is given as Hur, which means “free or liberty”. So he was the *son of liberty*. You will remember Hur is the guy that came along in Exodus 17 to help hold up Moses arms while Joshua fought the Amalekites. Lastly we are told that he was from the tribe of Judah which means, “praise”. It is an interesting fact that as the nation would break camp Judah would always lead them out. I make this observation of character based upon these names: The successful servant in one that:
2. Has the greatest since of security in the Lord.
3. Sees that who he is, is only realized in the light of God.
4. That what he does is only accomplished in his surrender of his will freely to the Lord.
5. And lastly that it is in the above that he will ultimately find the greatest joy & praise.
6. Vs. 6 **O-ho-lee-ab**: His name means, “***tent of his father***”. His fathers name is A-his-a-mek, which means “my brother helps”. We are told that they are of the tribe of Dan which means judge. Another interesting side note is that the tribe of Dan always brought up the rear as the nation broke camp. So again the name of this fellow tells us about the character of the servant of the Lord.
7. He needs to be found always in the tent of the Father.
8. He needs to have heart that always helps his brother.
9. Lastly, he needs to see that what he does comes about through the judgment of another in his place.

Vs. 7-11 We have already gone through this list of items that was found in the tabernacle, but what does it have to do with these two fellows? I suggest:

1. Notice that their calling, empowering and equipping was all centered around Gods plan, not theirs. What if Bez-a-lel and O-ho-lee-ab did not want to do what they had been gifted to do? What if they wanted to dress in the robes of a high priest instead? They would not have been following what God had gifted them to do. It is God’s decision on who and how He gifts His people. The only question is what are we going to do with the gifts He has blessed you with? What ever God has equipped us to do that is what we ought to be doing but you should be doing so to glorify Him not your self. The bottom line is that since the gift is from the Lord then is ought to be used for the Lord! Obedience to what God had already called them empowered them and equipped them to was their only responsible response. Some folks want to do something that God has not gifted them for. And no amount of schooling will make them what God has not called them too. So how do you know if you are called, well it will probably will not be your evaluation that determines that but rather you will see God creating the opportunities for you. Don’t despise the days of small things, instead allow the Lord to raise you up!
2. God had a clear vision and plan for these guys. Now the timing of this in comparison to when they actually started the work we are not told. Perhaps they felt the leading of the Lord months are years before and they had to wait for the Lord to bring it to pass. A lot of times we feel as though the Lord has no since of timing. But the truth is His way is perfect. I shudder to think what would have happened if twelve years ago I would have tried to do what we are now. I was not ready no matter how much I thought I was. No I was being equipped for the work. What I’m going through now is further equipping me for what He has for me next. You can not skip grades in God’s plan for you it is right on target!

**III.) Vs. 12-17 At rest in the presence of God**

Vs. 12-17 At first glance this section does not seem to belong with what we have just studied. Now in keeping with the context that of the calling of the man or woman of God for the work of God, we have just seen that the man of God must be called, anointed and equipped for the work. Here we shall see that he is also to be a person who is at rest in the Lord. God has already spoken at length on the subject of the Sabbath in chapter 16. It is clear here that just like circumcision was a sign of God’s covenant with Abraham the keeping of the Sabbath was to be a sign for the nation of Israel of the covenant they were making now along with Moses. Notice that it says very plainly that this sign was, “to the children of Israel.” No where does it say that it was for the Church. Still there are those who seek to put all under this law today. I think it is a good thing if you wish to observe a day of rest on Saturday, but you can not make it a law. Those that do need to read this section here carefully as verse 14 says that if they do not do so then they are to be put to death. Any orthodox Jew well tell you that there are certain things you just can not do such as use electricity or have a fire. What does this have to do with the calling of the servant to the work of God? The Sabbath we read in the N.T. was only a shadow and the substance is Christ. Hebrews 4:9-11 tells that “*There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God;*

*for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.*

*Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest*,” Those that are called, empowered and equipped will accomplish their work for the Lord as they rest in His work through them.

 There is another point to this as well. The servant of the Lord won’t be found striving to make things happen. **It is interesting to me to see that right after God tells Moses He has a few good men in mind for the work, He goes right back and reminds them that the work is never to be bigger then their relationship to them**! They are to rest in their relationship to the Lord, they are not work in **ORDER** to have a relationship with the Lord, no, they are to work **BECAUSE** they have a relationship with the Lord.

 I caution all of us never to allow the work of God to supersede our relationship with Him. God forbid we start saying things by our actions like, “*I don’t have time to read your word and pray today Lord I have to go down and work*!” One last thought here as well, just because we may be doing the work of the Lord does not mean that we can disobey the will of the Lord. These guys were still expected to do the work of the Lord in away that pleased Him. Simply put the ends does not justify the means!

 Look at the words of verse 12, “*And the Lord spoke to Moses*”. Then in verse 17 it says, “*in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed*.” It is the Lord telling Moses of the story of the first Sabbath back in Gen. 2:2-3 but here God adds some intriguing insight that is not found in Gen. 2:2-3. You will not find the words, “*and was refreshed*” in the account in Genesis. God says that the resting brought refreshment! The word means a “breath of fresh air”. I believe that the Lord is showing that resting in Him while we work will bring us refreshment and joy! I don’t believe that words like, “*I’m so tired wore out because I’ve working for the Lord have any merit*!” If we are working as we are at rest in Him then it’s pure refreshment! When we get burned out it is because we are making the work bigger then His work on our behalf or we are doing in our own strength!

**IV.) Vs. 18 Obedient to the Word of God**

Vs. 18 the last thing necessary to accomplish God’s work is found right here in the last verse. God, writes down His words by His own hand. If we are going to accomplish the work of God, it will come about as we obey the Word of God. We often say that something is not written in stone, well this is! Notice that we are told that the finger of God wrote these stone. In chapter 32:15-16 we are told that they were written on both sides at any rate when ever you read that God wrote something down with His finger the response is always the same, silence! If you want to be a servant of the Lord, then obey the Word of the Lord. There can be no arguing with Him and His ways, just silence.

**Exodus 32:1-14**

**“Coming down the mountain (part a)”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-6 A crises of faith**

**III.) Vs. 7-14 Change your heart through prayer**

**Intro.**

This chapter requires a brief time line so we can understand what is taking place. Israel has been out of Egypt for around a year. During that year they have seen the miracles hand of God guiding them:

* When their backs were against the Red Sea, He parted it.
* When they had no food or water He provided it.
* When they had an enemy He dealt with them.
* Finally, He brought them to this camp sight right in front of Mount Sinai and spoke to them.

God told them that out of all the nations and peoples of the earth He chose them as His special treasure. God even revealed His glory to them, then He told them how to maintain a right relationship with Him. The leadership got to sit down and have a dinner with the Lord present. It is in the 24 chapter where the events of this chapter are born. God tells Moses to come back up the mountain so that He can give the people the tablets of stone and the pattern for the tabernacle. God says that the purpose was so that He could dwell among them! As Moses and Joshua ascend the mountain the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire upon the mountain. So they knew as long as the fire was upon the mountain the Lord was there with Moses. From chapter 24 through 31 Moses is on the mountain with the Lord. The trouble with mountain top experiences is that sooner or later you will have to come down and Moses is about to come down into the biggest mess he could have ever imagined.

**II.) Vs. 1-6 A crises of faith**

Vs. 1 The events of chapters 32-34 happen at some of the same time as the events of chapters 24-31. It is while Moses is hanging out with the Lord that the people gather together before Aaron. Not much time had passed before they approach Aaron. I say this because it took time to collect the gold, decide on what animal to make and then fashion the idol. It had to be less then 40 days! How could a people who had only a few days prior seen the glory of the Lord make such an about face? They had heard the conditions to maintain fellowship and clearly one of them was, “*You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.*” What happened in such a short time that caused them to so totally forsake God? Did they have some sort of amnesia? What in the world would have caused the leadership and specifically Aaron to go along with this?

 Could it be possible that what ever caused these folks to forsake God are the same things that we are prone to ourselves? I would like to look at this section with an eye to why I at times have a crises of faith. In so doing it will be necessary to look at all of the parties involved, from the ordinary person all the way up to Aaron.

1. Vs. 1 “*When they* ***SAW*** *that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain*”: This crisis started at the point in time when they started determining their situation based upon what they SAW rather then God’s word. They were walking by sight and not by faith! Simply put they lost faith in God’s provision and promise because of the passage of time. They panicked when what God had told them would happen did not happen according to their time frame. The word “*delayed*” here is an interesting one. Though it is rightly translated “delayed” here it is most often translated “ashamed”. What this suggests to me is that they equated Moses delay as shame against them. When some one you know does not talk to you, you think they are mad at you or that they think they are to good for you. When we get our eyes off of the Lord and the truth we are prone to miss understanding. And miss understanding leads us into making wrong decisions based on erroneous feelings. This crises of faith, was based upon insecurity. They were using their situations and circumstances to interpret who God was instead of the other way around.
2. Vs. 1 “*They gathered TOGETHER to Aaron, and said to him*”: This crisis gained momentum when they got together and talked about it. Impatience gave into fear. This led them to begin to outwardly questioning their situation. Soon it was not just one person feeling insecure it was a mob. They then in one accord approach Aaron with one voice to make their demand. Further more the words, “*gathered together*” are more accurately rendered “*gathered together* ***against***”. This was no passive collection of a few men it was a mob of angry people who were being moved along by their feelings and emotions. This is further brought out in their demand. “*Come, make us gods*..”, is literally “*Get up, and make us gods*..” **They were not making a suggestion they were making a demand** and Aaron felt that if he did not do something it may have cost him his life. Having our feelings guide us is a dangerous thing, but sharing those feelings with others was caused this rebellion. “*Moses, what Moses, we need help and we need it now pal, so here is what you are going to do!*” Notice that they made this decision on what they did not know, (*we do not know what has become of him*), instead of what they did know, “*that God would never leave them or forsake them*.”
3. Vs. 2-4a Here we have recorded Aaron’s response to their demand. He gave them what they wanted! The crisis of faith escalated when leadership caved in to what the people wanted instead of what God’s word said. There are many churches today that start out by going around to the community and asking what they want in a church. If the pastor or leadership give into the demands of people soon they will be building a golden calf. Aaron has stopped being a leader and started being a politician!

I find that all too often it is easier for me to trust what I see then what God’s word says. My attitude towards the Lord is, “*What have you done for me lately*” attitude! Both of which leads me down a slippery slope to trusting things rather then God.

Vs. 4b-6 Once they went down this road all restraints were off. Once we move away from trusting God to following our feelings all bets are off. Look at these verses and see what they are doing:

1. Vs. 4b They make a “gold baby bull” and proclaim to the nation, “*Here He is the one the only God who did all those miracles in Egypt.*” Now think about it, how could something Aaron just made by his own hands be a god that delivered them? Religion is just blain dumb! Why is it people will pay 10 bucks a minute for a goofy woman with a fake accent to flip cards over and tell them what they want to hear, but they can’t trust God? Did they not just watch Aaron working on the idol? Did they not just take off their gold earrings for the material? “*Hey Aaron, how’s the god coming along we are all ready to worship it, you might want to fix his ear it’s a little crooked*!” I’ve come to the conclusion that it’s just way too much work this following my feelings instead of trusting God’s word!
2. Vs. 5 Next, Aaron is building an altar for it. The dumb little gold idol has an altar, but not only that there is a special day just to worship it. This is what was to give meaning, hope, purpose and direction to their lives. And it is something that they themselves have created. **So what gives meaning, hope, purpose and direction to your lives**?
3. Vs. 6 They were eager to worship the gods of their own creation. In fact, they were ready to spend the money to do so, it says that they brought burnt offerings and peace offerings. Amazing how we have no problem spending our time and money on the things we want to worship. Look at the phrase, “*sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.*” The word “play” means to caress and is suggesting that they had an orgy. Paul uses this story in 1 Cor. 10:6-8 as an example of immorality. Folks, if you follow feeling you will soon be worshipping at the altar of pleasure where all that matters, is how you feel! These people who had just experienced the true God were now having an orgy in front of a golden calf.

Their pleasure was only temporal though, that’s always the problem with worshiping things it never lasts long.

**III.) Vs. 7-14 Change your heart through prayer**

Vs. 7 The first thing that I realize in reading this verse is that the secret thing that I may be worshiping is not so secret after all. The Lord knows what you are into, in fact He is the one the tells Moses. Moses is just enjoying the time he is spending with the Lord when the Lord says, “*Hey Moses we have a problem*!” Notice the way God tells Moses, “*For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.*” This kind of reminds me what we parent’s do, “*Honey, have you seen what* ***your*** *boy did?*” But when they do good we say, “*Honey have you seen what* ***my*** *boy did*?” God already knew what kind of people they were and yet He still called them His special treasure. So why does He tell Moses that they are his people and problem? I think this is for Moses benefit, they never stopped being God’s people even though they broke the relationship. God is allowing Moses to identify with them as well as care for them. A good leader must always have God’s heart towards His people. With that said God does not wink at their rebellion in fact here He gives Moses a three-fold description of their sin.

1. Vs. 7 **Corrupted themselves**: God describes **WHAT** they did. He use the past tense to describe this, “they have” corrupted themselves. Their sin has caused a decay it’s already happened, they are rotten. Poor Moses, he is up in the mountain fellowshipping with God when all of the sudden God says, “*You better hurry up and get down the hill your kids have thrown a big party and tore up the house*!” Now the way God tells Moses anticipates Moses skepticism. Look at those words, “*the ones that you brought out of Egypt.*” You see, if you told me something that one of my little angels did I would naturally say, “*You must be mistaken because my child would never do that*!”
2. Vs. 8 **Turned aside quickly**: This has to do with **HOW** and **WHEN** they did it, **QUICKLY**! Again I’m thinking as a parent and you tell me one of my angels have done this and I think, “*Well, ok but there must have been some circumstances that caused this!*” No, they did it right away! They wasted no time in their behavior, they jumped on the chance. I can just see Moses as a typical parent, “*God I just don’t understand I read them the rules, I had qualified people watching them*.” There is only one other question I would ask as a parent, WHY?
3. Vs. 9 **Stiff-necked people**: There you have the reason why, they are rebellious by nature. Notice that God says, “*I have seen this people, and indeed*..”, in other words “*Moses, guess what your kids act like sinners because that is what they are*!” They are rebellious by nature as well as choice. Look at the three-fold description of their sin, they “**have**” corrupted themselves, they “**have**” turned aside. These are both in the past tense and describe their action of sin. But when you get to the reason for the action God says, “it **IS** a stiff-necked people”. That’s in the present tense and tells us that what they have been doing is a result of what they are. This is not a new thing, they did while they were in Egypt, and they did as they left Egypt and to no surprise they are doing it now.

**Folks, you can not reform the flesh**! No amount of miraculous encounters, education, experience or even threats will have any lasting effect upon the flesh. That may surprise Moses but God is not at all surprised. Guess what that light show on the mountain, the food from heaven, the word of God and even their intellectual agreement to truth had no effect upon their heart! So what will change them from rebellious sinner to worshipping saints?

Vs. 10 Before I answer this take a step back from this passage and realize that God is all knowing and if He wanted to wipe out Israel and start over He did not need to get Moses permission. The words, “Let Me alone” suggest that God’s desire is to give the people a chance to repent. God is inviting Moses to through intercession to see hearts change.

 All of this leads me to see what will change a sinner to a saint. Look at God’s words here, “*consume them*” that is destroy them. You change a sinner to a saint by DEATH! You can’t reform them, they got to die and be made new! You see the rest of the words, “*and I will make of you a great nation*”? There is only one thing that can permanently change a sinner to a saint death and rebirth!

Vs. 11 And how can that be accomplished? Well, look at what Moses does here, he prays! More then that he makes his appeal on three things:

1. Vs. 11 **The Lord’s Love**: Moses uses the words, “Your and You” in describing God’s action towards them. In other word’s Moses says, “You rescued the people from the Egyptians with great power, which clearly shows that you love them!” Moses knows even though the people had forgotten what great lengths God went through to deliver His people. So Moses is realizing that God would not destroy those that so clearly loves.
2. Vs. 12 **The Lord’s reputation**: Moses realizes that God will always be consistent to His character. So if God were to wipe out the Israelites then it would cause the Egyptians to think of God as evil.
3. Vs. 13 **The Lord is faithful**: God had made a promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, (Israel), so he realizes that God always keeps His promises.

What would have happened if the Jews would have remembered these same truths concerning the Lord that Moses now does? Well they would have never of made an idol! Moses uses what he knows to be true about the Lord to interpret the situation.

Vs. 14 This is what we call anthropomorphic (man centered) language. Moses is describing the actions of God as they appear to him. Moses prayer did not change God, for God already knew that the people would repent of their sins. What changed was the heart of Moses and the heart of the people.

 Oh that you and I would simple trust the Lords love, character and faithfulness in our live instead of the silly little idols that we place there instead. Next week we will take up the lame excuse of Aaron as well as Moses prayer.

**Exodus 32:15-35**

**“Coming down the mountain (part b)”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 15-29 Standing on the Word or dancing before a bull**

**III.) Vs. 30-35 My life for theirs**

**Intro.**

Right up there with the mystery of God using people to share the truth of who He is to a world that so desperately needs to know Him, is the patience He has with us. I don’t know about you but people try my patience! The trouble with us people is that we act like, people! I marvel at the Lord’s grace in spite of me. This chapter began with a description of Israel’s activities while Moses was up on the Mountain with the Lord. We saw that the people demanded that Aaron fashion a god to their liking. In Deuteronomy just before the nation enters the land of promises some forty years later after a whole generation dies in the wilderness, Moses again gathers the nation together as he goes over the law and why they failed. It is interesting to read the 9th chapter as Moses retells the events (verses 8-21). Clearly Moses wanted them to know that it was not, “*Because of their righteousness that the LORD had brought them in to the land*”. Further more Moses says, “*understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people*.” He then goes on to retell the events of this chapter. When you compare the two passages you will realize that though they tell the same details they do so in two different orders. Which leads me to believe that, one is topical and the other one chronological. In Deut. the tablets are smashed then Moses intercedes for Israel, then again for Aaron, lastly Moses destroys the idol and goes back up the mountain to intercede for another 40 days and nights. Logically it would appear that the Deut. passage is chronological and the Exodus passage is more dealing with topics.

1. Verses 15-20 Moses deals with the nation.
2. Verses 21-24 he deals with Aaron his brother.
3. Verses 25-29 the Levites come forward.
4. Verses 30-35 Moses intercedes for the nation.

It would appear to me that Moses in giving this story in Exodus topically, painting a picture for all to see and not just retelling a story. Last week we saw a nation who had personally experienced the presence of God rebel. We saw how an angry mob turned a leader into a lying politician. This chapter reveals how will God deal with them and how He will use Moses to turn them back towards the Lord.

**II.) Vs. 15-29 Standing on the Word or dancing before a bull**

Vs. 15-18 Here we see what Moses did.

1. Vs. 15 **He turned and went down the Mountain**: Now don’t laugh, that was a big step of faith. God has just told him that the nation as turned their backs on Him and it’s a real mess down the hill. The first thing we see Moses do is **take responsibility**, it’s his problem, not just theirs.
2. Vs. 15 **He took the Word of God as his standard**: Moses did not go down the hill alone, he took the word of God with him. Moses knew that whatever the problem was the Word was the answer.
3. Vs. 16 **He trusted in the work of God**: He recognized that just as the Word of God was God’s work so also was the changing of the nation. Look at how Moses focuses in how the details of the tablets by saying, “*the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God.*” ***No matter what he faced God was still in control***.

Vs. 17-18 Remember now that Moses was not a good speaker; further more we are told that he was the meekest man on the earth. Joshua had gone with Moses but had not gone all the way up the hill. So when Moses comes to where Joshua had been camped Joshua can hear the noise of the over 2 million people and thinks it’s the Amalekites warring against the Israelites. The people were making so much noise that you can not hear what the person sitting next to you was saying even if they are yelling at the top of their lungs. This is what Joshua heard in the valley below. Moses had already been told what was going on with the nation as he tells Joshua that it was the sound of a party not a war. Although I’m not sure that Joshua was all that wrong with his assessment in saying that it was a war, for clearly there was a spiritual battle going on. There were several hundred thousand people complete out of control in their partying before a golden calf. It is into this scene that Moses comes. I’m impressed with Moses in the very fact that he confronts a rebellious nation of two million with only two stone tablets and Joshua.

1. Vs. 19 **He draws near and saw**: He cared enough to get close even to the ugliness of their sin. There are a lot of Christians who would prefer to sit a good distance away from the ugliness of a sinful world and hurl insults at those that are in rebellion to God’s word. But that is not what Moses did. No, he drew near and saw for himself what they were doing. I kind of think that what Moses did was see what was going on enough to understand what was at the root of their actions.
2. Vs. 19 **He got angry and showed why he was angry**: It never tells us that Moses was angry until he sees what they were doing for himself. It is only after this that Moses reactions matches that of the Lord’s. What angered the Lord angered Moses. I think that we Christians are far to tolerant of sin, ours as well as others. I think that sin ought to anger us, I’m not saying that we should hate sinners, but we must hate sin, because it destroys in human lives.
3. As Moses threw down the stone commandments we see that it destroys fellowship with the living God. I hate the fact that sin has destroyed people for all eternity. In Deut. 9:17 Moses tells us that he, “*took the two tablets and threw them out of my two hands and broke them* ***before your eyes****.*” Moses confronted the nation with both their sin as well as the consequences of their sin. You will recall that the covenant contained all that was necessary for the people to receive all the blessings of a relationship with the Lord. But all those promises were contingent upon them being obedient to the commandments. All that governed their well being was just shattered before theirs eyes. It would be like the president before all the nation taking up the constitution and the bill of rights and tore them up. By doing that act he would be declaring that all the rights and laws that ensure everyone the opportunity to pursue life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness was now null and void. Moses says this is the effect of what you have done, you rejected God and He has rejected you in the state you are now in.
4. Vs. 20 **He took the bull by the horns**: Moses takes the golden calf and turns it into veal hamburger. They had been partying to their golden calf, no doubt drinking toasts to him, now they were literally drinking him. Here is the second reason why we should be angry at sin: It separates fellowship between people. The people were divided from each other. Sin always has that effect on others it divides.

Moses ground up the golden calf for three reasons:

1. To show them the futility of worshipping something that could be destroyed so easily.
2. To completely get rid of the idol. Moses ground it up as he tells us in Deut. “*it very small, until it was as fine as dust*.”
3. To make them have immediate consequences for their rebellion. To much of the time we don’t have immediate consequences for our sin these folks did.
4. Vs. 21 **He address the lack of leadership**: Moses recognizes that thought the plan to do this did originate with his brother Aaron, he allowed it to take place and took the lead in it’s making. Moses rebuked Aaron to his face, but just like the Israelites we are told that though, “*the LORD was very angry with Aaron and would have destroyed him; Moses prayed for him*.” Anger at the sin, calling it what it is yet at the same time compassion for the sinner!

Vs. 22-24 Aaron’s offers three excuses that are very familiar to all of us:

1. Vs. 22 “*Do not let the anger of my lord become hot*”: Calm down **it’s not as bad as you think**! Moses had just called it a “so great a sin”, and Aaron’s first response back is, “*It’s not as bad as you are making it out to be*!” When we blow it we always seek to minimize our sin, don’t we?
2. Vs. 22-23 “*You know the people, that they are set on evil*”: **It’s their fault, boys will be boys,** Moses! Aaron is using the sins of other to cover his own sin. “*Hey, you think what I did was bad, why I’m far better them most!*” And to a point Aaron is right but the problem is Aaron used the sin of others as an opportunity to sin him self instead of standing up for what was right. This is always a bad argument because if you knew that they are bent towards evil why did you go along with them?
3. Vs. 24 “*I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out*.”: ***It just happened***, Moses like a miracle! Aaron emphasized the sins of others while minimizing his own responsibility. We were already told on verse four that Aaron fashioned it with an engraving tool and now he lies and says that it was all just an accident.

Vs. 25-29 These verse stand in stark contrasts to Aaron feeble excuses. First off Moses places the responsibility squarely on the leadership. These guys had not been restrained at all by Aaron and what Moses saw was a orgy of sorts all centered around the worship of an idol. Buried in this verse is something real interesting. You see we often don’t think that our sins have any lasting consequences. Neither do we think that we ever have a problem with a particular sin. Notice verse 25 Moses says that, “*Aaron had not restrained them****, to their shame among their enemies.*”** I’m not sure when Moses sat down to write Exodus but clearly he saw the correlation between what took place here and what the enemy would use later in their lives to cause them to stumble. In Numbers 25 which was only a few years later as Israel was still wondering in the wilderness we are told that, “*the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.*” It’s clear that Israel’s enemies were watching what took place here. The King of the Moabites realized that Israel was powerful so he hired Balaam to curse the nation. The problem was that every time Balaam started to pronounce a cure a blessing came out. Finally, we are told in Num. 31:15-16 that “*these women caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD*.” This incident here in Exodus is where Balaam got his idea.

Vs. 26-29 Unlike Aaron Moses draws a line in the sand by his standing on the Word of God. We are not told who other then the Levites came with Moses but no doubt some did. But there were many that sided against the Lord as well. Moses and Aaron were from the tribe of Levi, so these people came over. To many this seems a bit harsh as 3000 were killed by the Levites. But these were the ones who were no doubt the most riotous and were endangering the lives of all by their actions. They not only did not side with Moses or repent, they were still actively pursuing evil. Picture a riot where the police and authorities try to stop the crowd and instead they just become more violent that was the case here. One last word here about Aaron as he watched what happened to 3000 men because he simply refused to restrain the people. I’ve tried to put myself into Aaron’s shoes. I use to think that Aaron got off rather lightly as he clearly had a large part in this whole sinful action of the nation, but you know what I think if I was Aaron I would have rather of died then to live with what I had done. As a Pastor I have made many mistakes and some of them have caused people to not walk with the Lord, I have to live with that every day. Sin has consequences to others!

**III.) Vs. 30-35 My life for theirs**

Vs. 30 Moses tells the folks that what they had done may have lasting effects. No where does he ever minimize the seriousness of their sin, but he does emphasize the truth that God is able to forgive. I find the balance of these two truths very difficult in life. We are totally depraved and we must never under estimate out sin. We ought to always take our failures and sins seriously, but at the same time we have a great Lord who reminds us in 1 John 1:9 “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*.”

Vs. 31 I get the feeling here that Moses is more aware of their sin then they are. As Moses again intercedes for the people he is overwhelmed with what they have done against so great a God. I get the feeling that like all parents who learn of the bad behavior of their child that Moses is broken hearted. Oh that we to would be broken hearted over the sins of other enough to intercede for them.

Vs. 32 Moses is more then just broken hearted he comes to the Lord as the only basis of hope. Only the Lord can forgive. Did you notice that little dash after the word sin in verse 32 right before the words, “But if not?” Well that is placed there to indicate that Moses paused for some time after he said, “*Yet now, if You will forgive their sin****-***” Moses waited upon the Lord for a response and none came forward as far as forgiveness. It is then that Moses went on to say, “*if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.*” We are not sure what “book” this is. It could be that this is the book of life that is mentioned in scripture that records the names of all those that will be in heaven. Or it could be that it is the book of the living meaning that if God was going to wipe out all of the Israelites as they deserved then Moses wanted to be taken as well. At any rate Moses clearly has identified with the people. Moses was willing to die for the people or at very least die with the people!

Vs. 33 God’s answer is that each will live and die based upon their own actions. Now as good as Moses heart was he was not the right person to make that statement, there would come another who could make that statement and do more then that. For He would be the Lamb of God that would take away the sins of the world! As Caiaphas, the high priest would say about the death of Jesus, “*it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish*.”

Vs. 34-35 God forgave the nation as a whole but those that did not repent would be judged. God would not reject the nation as His “Angel” shall go before them. The Lord is faithful even when we are not. We are not told what or when this plague took place. Neither are we ever told that any died of this plague, but clearly the nation understood what would happen to them if they forsook God. Yet, they would do it again, just like us!

**Exodus 33:1-23**

**“Presents without presence?”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-11 A promise without His presence**

**III.) Vs. 12-17 The presence of His grace**

**IV.) Vs. 18-23 The glory of His goodness**

**Intro.**

It is interesting how often we look for **something** to give us a better perspective instead of **Someone**! We all seek to hide our frustrations and disappointments in things; as we substitute presents for presence! When I was a kid and I got in trouble I was always concerned with what the consequences of my actions were going to be. How many weeks with out seeing my friends or not watching T.V. was it going to cost me? Now there were times when I had done something really bad and I was expecting not to see day light for months when I got off rather lightly. We are prone to think of the consequences of our actions in terms of what it costs us outwardly, the loss of pleasure, possessions etc. Here in Exodus we see that the worship of the golden calf did not cost them a thing outwardly but inwardly they were going to pay a far greater price!

**II.) Vs. 1-11 A promise without His presence**

Vs.1-3 We have all probably faced a scene like this in our life if you have siblings. You were horsing around doing something that you were told that you were not suppose to do, warned repeatedly but you went ahead anyway. You’ve been caught red handed and hauled off into a back room. Time goes by and when you come out everyone wants to know, “What happened?” How much trouble are you in for disobedience? Now in my back ground there are few times that I can remember that I did not get what was coming to me, but that’s not the case with Israel. Israel has fashioned an idol and began to worship it like the heathens do and God caught them in the act. Three thousand of their countrymen were into it so much that they refused to stop and rioted; costing them their lives. They were all forced to drink their god and there was some sort of plague but still that seems to be awful light punishment. We know that God is angry with them because of their sin for in 32:10 that He says, “*let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you (Moses) a great nation*.” Further more even after Moses intercession God says, “*Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book*.” And again He says, “*in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin.*” Yet, before this chapter we read, *“go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you.*” If I was God I would say, “*You know what? You don’t want me then I’m not going to bless you like I was*!” I bet you could hear a pin drop as they waited to find out what their punishment was going to be. We are told here in these three verse what their punishment was **NOT** going include.

1. Vs. 1 ***I’m still going to keep My promise that I made to your forefathers***: These guys had proven to be unworthy of God’s blessings by their actions, but God says here that He is still going to do what He promised. God keeps His promises not based upon our faithfulness but rather on the basis of His! Their disobedience and rebellion had no effect on God’s promise. If I was Moses, I would have looked at God a little funny here. “*So God what are you going to do to them*?” “Wait a minute I was with you right up to the point where you said that you were going fulfill your promise.
2. Vs. 2a “And I will send My Angel before you”: I’m still going to make sure that My power and strength will lead you. God is going to keep His promise and even do so by His power and strength. The messenger of the Lord is going to still guide them to the promise land. It’s not as if I would say to my child, “*Yeh, were still going to the park but your going to have to get there by yourself and pay your own way*!” No, God says, “*Were still going and I’m taking you and paying for it My self!*” Now wait a minute here I think God is being far to hard on these guys don’t you?
3. Vs. 2b-3a I’m still going to protect you and make sure that you have a great time once you are their: God says that He is still going to protect them and that the land of promise is still going to the greatest earthly blessing they could have ever imagined.

***So far it does not look like their actions has changed any of the benefits of the relationship with God***. “So what’s the deterrent for doing this again and again?” We might think as Aaron did in verse 22, “*It’s not as bad as you think*!” That would all be true if it were not for the words, “*I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people*.” The Lord is saying here, “***You are going as I promised and I’ll make sure you get there and have a great time but I’m not going to hang out with you on the way or once we get there***!” God does not take away His promise, power, or protection but He does say that His presence won’t be with them. How about you respond if God said, “*I will give you all the benefits of a relationship but I won’t be around?*” This is kind of like some of the divorces that I’ve heard about. Now if you go back to their sin it was impatience at Moses delay. They wanted gods to go before them; they wanted the benefits of a relationship with God without His presence. So God gives them just what they asked for. If you have ever lost a loved one I’m sure that you would agree with me that you would gladly give back everything they ever gave you to have one more minute with them! What it cost them was intimacy with God who called them His special treasure. Ask any child what they would rather have a parent in the house or all the trappings with out the parent?

Vs. 4-7 ***How they respond will indicate whether they love the Lord or whether they only love what the Lord gives them***! I’m not so sure we can tell by our actions at times. As long as we are getting what we think we deserve we are singing, “I love you Lord and I left my voice!” But what happens when we don’t get what we think we deserve? Do we still sing this praise?

 Look at their response to these words:

1. Vs. 4 **They mourned**: They understood that ***the promises of God are empty with out the presence of God***! The first thing that they did was act as if God had been lost to them. There is probably not a day that goes by that you miss the relationship that you had with your departed loved one. How about your relationship with God? Does your heart ache, or do you not care as long as you still get all the stuff you wanted?
2. Vs. 4b-6 **They repented**: Suddenly no one was into decorating their flesh. It is an interesting thing as these ornaments were no doubt some of the earrings that they had given to make their idol. We know through archeology that these earrings and other ornaments had stamped on them pictures of different idols. There was a genuine repentance as they no longer wanted to identify themselves with idols. There was that kind of action that says, “*I don’t want any of this stuff of the world if it means I can’t be with you*!” Oh to God I pray that we too would come to this in our lives!
3. Vs. 7 **They sought the Lord**: It is interesting to me that what caused them to go towards idols, the absence of Moses, they now have to deal with every single day as they have to go out to him. Any amount of the Lord was better then none at all. **They began to value His presence more then His presents**! God’s plan for the tabernacle was that He was going to dwell among them, now He was outside the camp.

Vs. 8-11 Did they ever understand what they had throne away? Well I think we can see in these verses that they did. We are not told but we know that this is not the tabernacle but rather just a tent, perhaps Moses, out side the camp. Every day they would watch Moses go out to hang out with the Lord and they would stand at their tent doors until Moses went inside. Can you imagine having that kind of fellowship with the Lord? The depth of intimacy Moses had with the Lord could be theirs as well, but they had loved what He gave them more then His presence. You see Moses did not need a fancy building or anything else He just wanted to spend time with the Lord. They watched as the visible presence of the Lord upon the tent where Moses was. In verse 9 -11 we are told they talked as best friends free and openly is the meaning of “*face to face*”.

 As Moses went into fellowship with the Lord the Israelites worshiped God. Moses relationship with the Lord encouraged the nation to have a relationship with as well. One last closing thought on this section, look at Joshua. We are told that he did not depart from the tent where Moses was at! Oh that is what I want to be like! I want to be so into hanging out with God that I don’t want to go anywhere else. As I looked at this section of scripture personally I’ve realized that my maturity with the Lord is best measured by how I love Him, not how long I’ve gone to church. And on that basis I’ve got a lot of growing up to do!

**III.) Vs. 12-17 The presence of His grace**

 Vs. 12-13 I love this prayer of Moses on behalf of the people. Moses had already been assured that God was going to keep His promises to the nation, but Moses wants more for the nation then this. He again wants the people to have a relationship with the Lord. “*Oh Lord don’t just bless them and give them what they want, come and dwell among them*.”

Vs. 14-15 God says, “*Moses My presence is going with YOU, and I’m going to give YOU rest*.” It’s all based upon grace and God honors Moses relationship with Him, but notice that in verse 15 Moses uses the word US, instead of the YOU that God used. Moses says, “*Unless you’re with us I don’t want to go at all*!” “*I don’t care about all the stuff that you promised for it is nothing with out You there to enjoy it with*!”

Vs. 16-17 “*In fact no other nation will know you love us if it is not the presence of you in our lives!*” It is not what God blesses us with that reveals the presence of God in our lives it is only being in constant contact with Him that separates us from the world. God says that He will restore the relationship with Israel based upon Moses prayer and the relationship that He has with him. Indirectly God is showing us what separates us from the world is the presence of His grace in our lives! Do you want to go anywhere the Lord’s grace and presence is not? What if you could go there and still have all you want but not with His presence and grace? This to me becomes a great source of prayer, “*Lord I only want to go where you are and where I can experience more of you*.” Even if that means that I don’t get all that I want when I want it. My prayer is that all of us will want a deeper relationship with the Lord and you know what that is what He wants as well.

**IV.) Vs. 18-23 The glory of His goodness**

Vs. 18-20 As deep as Moses relationship was he still wanted more! A deeper relationship with the Lord is the one thing we can be greedy for! Moses asks God to reveal more of Who he is to him. Specifically, he asks to see His glory. I believe that in these verse before us God is going to reveal how we can grow in our relationship with Him. Clearly God does not mean for Moses to see Him face to face as verse 20 points out that no man can do so and live. Moses asks to see more of the Lord and the Lord shows Moses how to do that. In verse 19 which is God’s reply to Moses request He gives three things reveal God’s glory.

1. **Goodness**: Before a person can see the glory of God they have to realize that God is good all the time and not just when He does what we want Him to. God can not any more separate Himself from His goodness then we can from our heart. God by His very nature is good. When you think about it that is why the Israelites struggled and made the idol, as they were not convinced of God’s goodness. When Moses delayed his returning they thought that God was not going to fulfill His promise. Had they realized that God is god they would have waited for Him to do what He is by very nature Goodness! God is very different then you and I, we are good some of the times but God is always good He is never not good. You will see the glory of God when you recognize this truth.
2. **Character**: God says to Moses you want to see my glory it is found in my name. Proclaiming one’s name always meant declaring one’s character. So God is saying that you will understand His glory as you grow in your understanding of His character. Again Israel struggled with God because they did not grow in their understanding of Who He is.
3. **Sovereign Will**: Lastly, God reveals that to Moses that he will see His glory when he realizes that God has a sovereign will that will never be altered. God’s purposes and plans can not ever be altered.

All of these cause us to see His glory. Simply put it is when we take the time to meditate on the Lord that we see more of Him. What a great thing for Moses to want, more of the Lord.

Vs. 21-23 So God hides Moses in the cleft of a rock and reveal the “afterglow” of the Lord’s glory for that is all He could handle. We too have been hidden in the “rock” which is Christ and it is in Him that we are told in John 1:14 that “*we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*.”

 This verse that Augustus Toplady drew the inspiration to write the hymn “Rock of Ages”. **When the world sees you and God’s goodness towards you, His character in you and His will guiding you then they will God’s glory on you**! So Moses is shown not only how to grow closer to Himself but how others will do the same!

**Exodus 34:1-35**

**“Back together again”**

**Outline:**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-9 The nature of forgiveness**

**III.) Vs. 10-28 You’re the love of My life**

**IV.) Vs. 29-35 Basking in His love**

**Intro.**

Israel has been caught in the act of spiritual adultery after God had proposed. She has repented of her failure and has recognized her sins but what will God do? Will God let Israel back into a relationship? Will that relationship be the one that He promised it would be? Amazed as we are at Israel sin I am even more amazed at God’s response in light of it!

**II.) Vs. 1-9 The nature of forgiveness**

Vs. 1-4 Moses had thrown down the first set of tablets in chapter 32:19 when he drew near the Israelites and saw them worshiping at the golden calf. It does not seem that this was against God in as much as it represented what Israel had done spiritually by breaking God’s law. But what will God’s response be to their failure and repentance?

 Well God issues a renewal of the former covenant. What is important to realize is that this “new old covenant” offers no reduction of commandments neither is there any addition. What this tells us is that God will forgive the people of their sins without reduction of the standards or an addition to them. They failed the test but God does not make the test easier or harder. He simply reissues the agreement even though the people rejected Him He has not rejected them.

God does not forgive like we do! We forgive verbally but we hold a different standard up to the person who broke our trust. We either lesson it or make it more difficult, but not God. In Rom. 7:7 Paul asks a rhetorical question “*Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law*.” The problem is not the law it is what it has to work with our flesh! This is further emphasized by the fact that the first covenant in Exodus 19:8 was followed by the statements of the people as they said, “*All that the Lord has spoken we will do!*” This time the Lord did not give the people any opportunity to make this promise. One last difference stands out to me as well, that is there is a lack of emphasis on the lack of blessings upon failure. The blessings and benefits are still conditional but the “IF YOU WILL OBEY” is not recorded. All of this leads me to believe that God was showing them as well as us that our failure lies in our trying to obtain righteousness based upon our self effort rather then trusting in God and has nature. What God changes is their involvement not His! He tells them that He loves them. I’ve got to tell you I marvel at this! And as the ones who commit spiritual adultery God’s love and grace should always amaze us. So God not only forgives them He forever defines the meaning of forgiveness by treating them just as He did before they sinned!

Vs. 5-9 In verse 4 we see Moses Going back up the hill with two stones and in answer to his prayer to know the Lord better He passes before Moses and declares His name. Whenever God state’s His name He is declaring His character. So God in doing this shows us that He forgives based upon His character and not ours! So often we here things like, “*Old so and so is a good guy you should forgive him*!” It is hard to forgive some one who has wronged you no matter how good they are now and in the future! God does not forgive based upon any good in the future or any promise made in the present. **He forgives based upon His character**. That gives us hope and a reason to repent!

## Vs. 6 God reveals Himself to Moses and us in a sevenfold description of His character. Notice that first He establishes that He is, “*The LORD, the LORD God*”, in other words He is the same God who appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

## **Merciful**: This is the first time in the Bible where this word is used and in means “full of compassion”. It is word that does not just mean to feel another’s pain, rather it means to feel another’s pain and do something about it! God is full of this “love in action”.

## **Gracious**: The root of this word means to “*bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior*.” God gives us what we don’t deserve forgiveness and blessing. The word stands as the undeserved free gift of the Love of God!

## **Longsuffering**: He is patient and waits for our repentance. If you will God does not have a short fuse but rather a long one. He is not looking for the opportunity to whack you; He is waiting for the opportunity to bestow His grace upon you!

## **Abounding in goodness**: These next to attributes start out with the word “*abounding*” God’s not merely adequate in goodness He is abounding. I mean there is so much goodness in Him it’s flowing out every where.

## **Abounding in truth**: He is faithful and right. God loves truth and He is only truth. God’s words and deeds are one.

## Vs.7 **Keeping mercy for thousands**: Although sin has long lasting effects so to does His mercy. God’s supply of mercy just continues on, He will never say, “*I just gave out My thousandth piece of mercy I’m sorry I’m all out*!”

## **Forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin**: God covers both inward sins and outward sins. Literally they mean:

## **iniquity:** Bending or twisting of God’s will or purpose. If we repent God will forgive us bending or twisting His will or purpose.

## **Transgression:** This word is often translated “*rebellion*” and describes an open revolt against God’s word.

## **Sin:** This is the most common word and it means to miss the mark of what God has for us.

## God would have you know, that His character is one that we can draw near to. Don’t allow the enemy to rip you off twice! If you blow it in your relationship with the Lord repent He is waiting for you!

## Vs. 7b People struggle with this verse quite a bit, but what God is declaring here is that He will by now means clear the guilty. If His love and forgiveness is rejected, He will judge and if those descendants continue to reject Him then they too will be judged. Just because God is loving, gracious and merciful does not mean that He is not Holy and righteous. God’s righteousness and love are displayed in His Son dying for our sin!

## Vs. 8-9 So how does Moses respond to God’s revelation of His nature? Well he worships Him. Notice it says that he made haste! In other words, Moses wasted no time in worshiping the Lord.

## Also look at verse 9 here as Moses after hearing the nature of the Lord uses first person pronouns in describing the sin of the nation. He does not say “*they*” but rather “*we, our and us*” If our standard is towards our fellow man as far as goodness goes then we can at some time say, they and them. But our standard is God therefore we are all sinners in need of God bestowing His character on us. May I just suggest to you that all of us are in desperate need of a fresh glimpse of His character. If you do happen to have that realization two things will take place:

## You will realize how great God is.

## You will realize how much a sinner you are.

## **III.) Vs. 10-28 You’re the love of My life**

Vs. 10-11 Here is what God again promises to do on their behalf. This is His covenant and they are invited to join, but there will be no negotiations.

1. Do marvels: All the nations will see God at work in them. His plan is to use them to reach the nations. Either the great things would be blessings upon them so that others would want to know the Lord. Or they would be a curse so that others would fear the Lord.
2. I am driving out: God promises what they could not do on their own.

Vs. 12-14 So God says, “*I’m going to make the benefits of My covenant just like before. I will still perform miracles, keep my promise to drive out the inhabitants of the land*.” But

You need to make sure that you separate yourself from what they worship, from how they govern themselves even from any form of society.

 So God says that He is a jealous God, meaning that He will have no rivals for their affection. You see God does not want to have to share Israel or us with others, He wants us all to Himself. But in so doing it is for our benefit

Vs. 15-28 Just like before in chapter 24 Moses went up on the Mountain for the Lord to give him again the covenant in fact what is recorded is just a repetition of what we have already seen. So in repeating this God is saying, “*I love just like before*!” Like a husband who renews his vows of love and faithfulness to his wife God reaffirms His love to Israel!

 God makes this covenant new and fresh by reestablishing it with them. Man think of this despite Israel sin and rebellion the Lord still wants to have a relationship with them. So to with us no matter where you are with Him He still wants us to come back to Him in fact that is His very nature! These verses form a love letter of God for His special treasure Israel and it is al based upon His nature and not theirs.

**IV.) Vs. 29-35 Basking in His love**

Vs. 29-35 The result of God revealing more of who He is to Moses is God rubs off on him. Is that not cool or what? When we draw near to the Lord we are always changed more into Him. But that kind of closeness to the Lord freaks out the nation. Hey, not everyone wants hang around people have been changed more into the Lord. Perhaps they saw their sin a little more easily? Now look here as well that he removed his veil when he went into the presence of the Lord but when he went out to speak to the people he would put it on. Now Paul tells us that this was so that the people would not see that the glory was fading. You see, God’s presence in our lives fades if we are not constantly in His presence. It’s because we have this thing called the flesh and Moses didn’t want them to see that He had to be in constant presence of the Lord for the glory of God to be visible. There can be no mask of spirituality that we ware, you know? We have to be in consistent fellowship with the Lord if you want Him to rub off on you.

**Exodus Chp. 35-40**

**“No Spectators”**

1. **Intro**

**II.) Chp. 35-39 Time to build**

**III.) Chp. 40 Filled with Gods glory**

**I.) Intro**

How do you all feel about your family history? It seems to me that the older I get the more interest I have in my ancestors. My Grandmother did quite a bit of research into her family’s history and I like to read about what they were like. Looking at your family history is looking at life’s journey. How families traveled from one part of the country to another, what led them to make such a decision? I wonder if the Lord tarries in a few hundred years what my relatives will have to say about my decisions? I wonder if they will look over the years of my life and see in my direction the move of the Holy Spirit and a changed and broken heart?

 Through out this book we have been privileged to see Israel’s spiritual journey. In the first 18 chapters we saw their bondage and deliverance from Egypt, the call of Moses and their escape to Mt. Sinai. Then in chapters 19-24 we saw the initiation of God’s covenant with His people and their growing understanding of who God is. In chapters 25-31 God gave Moses the specific design for the construction of the tabernacle where He would dwell in their midst. In chapters 32-34 we are told what the people did while Moses was up on the Mountain with the Lord, they rebelled and how the Lord received them after their failure. We are at the end of their spiritual journey as recorded in the book of Exodus.

**II.) Chp. 35-39 Time to build**

**Chapter 35**:

Surveying the last 5 chapters there is a lot of it that repeats the specific plans of the tabernacle, the difference being that in these chapters they actually build it. The key to understanding this section is to be found in two simple words:

1. **All**: repeated 71 times in five chapters.
2. **Every**: repeated 6 times in five chapters.

When you see these two words they are revering to the action of a nation of around 2 million and the fact that they were uniform in their decision to follow the Lord. In light of their recent rebellion, what caused a nation of 2 million such a change of heart? Simply put a little over 40 days earlier the nation was unrestrained in their worship of the golden calf and now they are equally passionate in their decision to follow the Lord. What brought about such a sweeping change of heart?

1. Was it the power of God? No they had already seen that in their deliverance.
2. Was it the knowledge of God? No again they had already experienced this along they way.

Remember they had failed before the Lord in spite of God’s demonstration of power and guidance. Clearly these did not keep them from following after worthless idols. So what has happened that has changed their hearts as seen in their actions? The only thing that has happened is that God has personally revealed His love and grace towards them.

 They had come to understand their own sin nature and God’s love of them because of His character, (34:6). Paul says this in his letter to Titus where he says, “*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.*” It is the grace of God that leads us to say no to ungodliness! It was the revelation of God’s grace that changed their lives from Idol worshipers to God worshipers.

 To further illustrate this point, look at the first three verses of chapter 35. Here God reestablishes the Sabbath day prior to calling them to the work of the Lord. Clearly God wants them to rest in Him before they are to work for Him! **Before God outlines the work that is to be done FOR the Lord, He wants them to understand the rest that is to be only found IN the Lord**! It is as if the Lord is saying, “As *you are so loved so work, and not you work so you will be loved*!” ***The difference is motivation from obligation to that of privilege***. God’s work and call in our lives always begins from a place of resting in Him and His work. And what is His work? It is His amazing grace not because of us but rather in spite of us! And what did the grace of God do in the people? Well according to verse 21 it produced two things in the Israelites.

1. Vs. 21 ***Stirred hearts***:
2. Vs. 21 ***Willing spirit***:

Both words, “*hearts and spirits*” refer to inward things: **So the outward change of action was form an inward change of heart.** This is not something that they did rather it was a work of the word of God that changed their hearts. And the change of heart moved them to action!

Moses in verse 5 makes a suggestion, “*Take from among you an offering to the LORD. Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to the LORD*”. The grace of God was going to motivate the people to a willing heart. Moses did not have some fancy fund raising technique. In fact, verse 20 tells us that Moses stated the need told them that only those who have “*willing hearts*” should give then the people departed from his presence. No high pressure sales system no, “*God has told me today that there are 5 of you out there today that are going to give $5000 to our building fund*!” Where are those contests pitting the people against each other or putting people on the spot to give to the building? It is simply not there. Instead what we see is that **Moses trusted that God would do the work in the hearts of His people**. There was no set amount, people brought what ever their stirred heart and willing spirit dictated and that was every thing from gold and silver to goat’s hair and olive oil! No one was excluded from giving to the Lord (every man & woman) and what was the most important thing in the giving was a willing heart! Further more they realized that they were not giving to Moses or even the tabernacle. No they realized that they were giving unto the Lord, (verse 21).

Look at verses 22-29 here and see the response to the grace of God, it blows my mind. In fact, Moses appoints two general contractors to over see the work of building and these guys were gifted and empowered by God for the work which God had called them. No amount of money can make me do what I do here at Calvary Chapel, I do what I do because He has called me and I will do it until He tells me to stop! ***Ministry is not a career choice it’s is a calling***! A careful look at these guys will show you that their man job was to teach others how to do what God had called them to do! You need to realize that this heart change was seen in three ways:

1. 35:22-29 **They gave** of the resources for the construction.
2. 35:10, 36:1-4, 8 **They serve** together in building the tabernacle.
3. 39:1 **They obeyed**. 15 times we read that the Israelites did, “as the LORD had commanded Moses.”

The “***stirred heart and willing spirit***” produced a life style that was seen their giving, serving and obedience to what the Lord had said to do. “***When the church’s response to His grace is with a stirred heart and a willing spirit it will be seen in the way they give serve and obey***!”

**Chapter 36:**

Vs. 4-7 So the people bring so much that they have to be restrained. Wow! Willing hearts that have been transformed by the grace of God will always give more then enough for the work to which He has called them. I love the integrity of Moses here as well when they had enough he told them the to stop. What is the difference between how these folks responded and how we do? I think it is the growth that they had in the grace of God! You can always tell people that don’t understand God’s abundant grace for they we be the ones that do not give!

Vs. 8-38 They start building the curtains, boards, pillars and veils. You know what is interesting is that God gave Moses the design of the tabernacle from the inside out and they build it from the outside in! You see that is how we always see things is it not from the outside in? We are always concerned with the How God is going to make it work, where God is always concerned with the inward heart! Oh that we would learn this lesson in our own lives!

**Chapter 37**:

They start building the furniture that went inside the tabernacle, but this time they start with the Most Holy Place and work out! When you come into the presence of the Lord you need to start with His mercy and they do.

**Chapter 38:**

Again they work going to the outer court. Look for a moment at verse 8, “*He made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting*.” The bronze laver was for the cleansing of the priests as they offered the sacrifices. These women had gotten these mirrors from the Egyptian women as they left Egypt. They were made up of highly polished brass so that the women could see their reflections in them. The Holy Spirit sees fit to tells us to the degree that the grace of God had changed these folks, why even the ladies were setting aside their vanity for the work of the Lord. **They gave up the appearance of their own reflection for the appearance of Gods reflection**! These ladies were setting aside the most precious thing they had for the building of the tabernacle. How about it? What is the most precious thing you own? Would you be so moved by the grace of God to set it aside for His work? Here are these serving ladies

Vs. 9-20 The court with it’s pillars and linen fence is built.

Vs. 21-31 Then an inventory of the materials used is taken. Now if you added it all up it would weigh over 19,000 pounds and be worth over $13 million. That was a lot to manage and clearly God had entrusted Moses with a huge responsibility.

**Chapter 39**:

Vs. 1-31 Finally the priestly garments are made again all to the specifications given to Moses.

Vs. 32-43 So they bring all the work of building to Moses and he inspects it. So Moses was a leader who had the vision of God and ultimately it was his responsibility to make sure that the work of the Lord was done according to the Word of the Lord by was of the Spirit of the Lord. That is what it means to be in leadership folks. Notice what Moses does here in 39:43, He bless them! They were told that they were appreciated in the Lord for their labor towards the work of the Lord. It is not one mans work it is all of our work the Lord will bless you equally for you service towards him with a willing heart! Simple obedience to the Lord motivated by the grace of God built the tabernacle!

**III.) Chp. 40 Filled with Gods glory**

Vs. 1 “On the first day of the month tells us that it had been about a year since they had been out of Egypt. Wow what a year!

Vs. 2-33 They assemble the tabernacle to anoint Aaron as High priest and his sons as priests and they are ready for the dedication service. Notice that it says in verse 33 that “*Moses finished the work*.” Folk’s, that is our job today, we are to build the Church of Jesus Christ and one-day when we are in His presence we will hear the words of the Lord, “*Well done good and faithful servant*!” Until then we are not finished with the work. So we are to do it together with a willing heart that has simply responded to the grace of God in our lives. And as we do that will produce a stirred heart and a willing spirit. And God will fill this church that is not made with human hands with His glory and He will abide in us in such away as to guide us through the rest of the journey of life.