Dedication
This book is dedicated to the life and memory of
Dr. Jerry Falwell
1933-2007
Dr. Falwell went home to be with the Lord this week and I thought it would be fitting to dedicate this volume to him. I had the opportunity to meet him several times and found him to be a very warm and gracious man. He was a positive encourager of people and very generous. He loved helping others.
Jerry, as he was lovingly called, had a passion to win people to Christ. He loved Jesus Christ and also loved people. Through his lifetime, he took strong national stands for godliness and Bible principles. When mocked or attacked by secular liberals for his stands, he graciously endured and continued to be kind, yet firm, toward those who were harsh. He willingly stuck out his neck for God and took the heat of opposition when others would not. The man had a lot of guts, if you please, and could teach us a thing or two about courage and boldness.
It was his desire to call our nation back to God and forsake sins like abortion, homosexuality, immorality, and pornography. He began his career as a pastor in 1956, when he founded Thomas Road Baptist Church. That same year, he also launched regular radio and television broadcasts and became a pioneer in religious broadcasting. Now with more than 22,000 members, Thomas Road Baptist Church has given birth to various organizations and outreaches such as Liberty University, Lynchburg Christian Academy, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary and Bible Institute, Elim Home for alcoholic men, the Liberty Godparent Home for unwed mothers, and numerous Christian missions programs.
Some of his harshest critics of his Biblical stands said that even though they did not agree with him, they found him to be a genuine, godly man who did not selfishly live for himself. They acknowledged he was “real” and lived what he preached. That’s a great testimony to have from your critics. Good race and good finish Dr. Falwell. You will be missed by many.
# Table of Contents

*Exodus Volume 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Verse Range</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Baby Steps of a Nation</td>
<td>15:1-22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Drinking at Bitter Wells</td>
<td>15:23-27</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Murmuring Mob</td>
<td>16:1-3</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Manna from Heaven</td>
<td>16:4-36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Waterless in the Wilderness</td>
<td>17:1-7</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Constant Conflict</td>
<td>17:8-16</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A Family Reunion</td>
<td>18:1-12</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Too Many Brands in the Fire</td>
<td>18:13-27</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>An Appointment with the Almighty</td>
<td>19:1-25</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The Ten Commandments and You</td>
<td>20:1-2</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The First Commandment</td>
<td>20:3</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>A Visit from God</td>
<td>20:4-6</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The Mercy of God</td>
<td>20:6</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Taking His Name in Vain</td>
<td>20:7</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sunday or Sabbath?</td>
<td>20:8-11</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Live Long and Prosper</td>
<td>20:12</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>A Matter of Life and Death</td>
<td>20:13</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Temptation</td>
<td>20:14</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The Scourge of a Marriage: Adultery</td>
<td>20:14</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Don’t Be a Crook</td>
<td>20:15</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The Tongue Commandment</td>
<td>20:16</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The Mother of All Sins: Covetousness</td>
<td>20:17</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Moses the Mediator</td>
<td>20:18-26</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>The Importance of the Tabernacle</td>
<td>25:1-40</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>The Tabernacle as a Type of Christ</td>
<td>25:1-40</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The Tabernacle as a Type of Christ: Part 2</td>
<td>25:1-40</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>The Ark of the Covenant</td>
<td>25:10-12</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37:1-9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>The Table of Shewbread</td>
<td>25:23-30</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37:10-16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>The Golden Candlestick</td>
<td>25:31-39</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37:17-24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The Veil</td>
<td>26:31-33</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>The Brazen Altar</td>
<td>27:1-8</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38:1-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>The Garments of the High Priest</td>
<td>28:1-43</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>The Altar of Incense or Golden Altar</td>
<td>30:1-10, 34, 37:25-29</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>The Laver</td>
<td>30:17-21</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>When the Cat’s Away the Mice will Play</td>
<td>32:1-6</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Struggling with Stiff-necked People</td>
<td>32:7-35</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>The Burden of Broken Friendship</td>
<td>33:1-11</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Show Me Thy Glory!</td>
<td>33:12-23</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Back to the Drawing Board</td>
<td>34:1-30</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bibliography**

Page 375

**INDEX ON EXODUS VOLUME 2**

Page 376

**BOOK ORDER LIST**

Page 379

This is the 23rd Book in the Treasure Series

First Printing: June, 2007

Verses come from the 1769 KJV
Chapter 1
The Baby Steps of a Nation
Exodus 15:1-22

A pastor owned a remarkable horse which would go only if the rider said, “Praise the Lord,” and would stop only if he said, “Amen.” The pastor decided to sell the horse, but when he explained the horse’s oddities to a prospective buyer, the buyer said, “That’s ridiculous. I’ve been raising horses all my life. I’ll make him go my way.” So he jumped on the horse and kicked him until he started to run. The horse went faster and faster. Worried, the buyer reined back and yelled, “Whoa boy,” but the horse would not stop. Suddenly the man saw they were galloping to the edge of a cliff. Desperately he yelled, “Amen!” The horse screeched to an immediate halt, just in time. Peering down over the edge of the steep cliff, the man wiped the perspiration from his brow and said, “Wow, praise the Lord!” That was the end of him.

This chapter is a chapter that doesn’t end with praise but begins with praise and a song. God’s people are praising the Lord, taking their first steps as a totally delivered nation. In fact, Exodus 15 is the first song of the Scriptures. It is a song of redemption and comes from the hearts of a redeemed people that has survived for thousands and thousands of years. How fitting that it is a song that glorifies God.

Two elements are found in redemption. We are redeemed by a purchase or ransom and by power. Redemption and ransom are different and distinct.

* Hosea 13:14- I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

A ransom is the payment of a price. Redemption is the deliverance of a person for whom the price was paid. As the Lamb of God, Jesus is our Purchaser; as the Lion of Judah, He is the powerful
emancipator that frees us from the bondage of sin. A ransom would be worthless if the person was not released. If there were no release, no freedom, there would be no song of praise. Christ paid the price for sin’s penalty by His death upon the cross and He is the one who has freed us from the bondage of sin. He took our place and paid our debt of death for our sins.

God’s people rejoice as they have been delivered from the bondage of the Egyptians on Passover night and the power of the Egyptians in the crossing of the Red Sea. Notice verse one.

Exodus 15:1

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

Now that they are saved, they sing. This is the same crowd that was griping a few hours earlier on the other side of the Red Sea and wanting to go back to Egypt. They aren’t griping now, are they? It is amazing what the power of God can do. While they were in bondage, there were no joyful strains upon the lips of the Hebrews. They sighed by reason of bondage. They cried and God heard their groaning. Now the sighing gives place to singing. Their groaning gives place to glee and praise.

A pastor was visiting some of his parishioners. He took his young daughter with him. As they visited an elderly couple, the man gave her a handful of peanuts. Expecting her to show a spirit of gratitude, the father asked his daughter, "Honey, what are you supposed to say?" Sincerely, and with her eyes fixed upon the man, she asked, "You got any more?" Thank God, this was not the attitude of the Lord’s people here. God’s people are no longer occupied with themselves, but with the Lord. What produced this change? It was the blood of the lamb and the power of the Lord. They saw, they believed, they sang.

* Psalm 106:12- Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.

True joy is the spontaneous over-flowing of a heart centered upon the Lord Jesus Christ. This kind of joy should be continuous.

* Philippians 4:4- Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

If our focus is on the Lord, our joy will be stable and steadfast. That’s the problem though. We tend to be forgetful or get distracted, and do not center our lives upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise and joy are essential elements of worship.
* Psalm 50:23- Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

* Hebrews 13:15 - By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

If you are filled with doubt and uncertainty about Heaven, how can you be joyful and thankful? Uncertainty and doubt beget fear and distrust, not gladness and adoration. How do we get this way? We become doubtful and uncertain when our lives are plagued by guilt from sinful living and when we fail to put into practice Bible principles of obedience, faith, trust, and godliness.

**There will be times where you will find yourself not in the mood to praise the Lord.** You won’t feel like it. When this happens, praise Him with your will and a determined heart. Verse one of Exodus 15 says, “I will sing unto the Lord.” How can a person rejoice when their life is full of difficulty? Notice Exodus 15:2.

**Exodus 15:2**

*The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.*

The Lord is MY strength, MY song, MY salvation.

* Psalm 37:39- But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord: he is their strength in the time of trouble.

* Psalm 46:1- God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Strength and songs are significant and inseparable. The joy of the Lord is our strength (Neh. 8:10). The joy of the Lord helps us in our service for Christ. We serve Him because we want to. If we lose our joy, our labor becomes a drudgery and we get into a rut. This is what happens to many pastors. This was David’s weakness after he sinned with Bathsheba.

* Psalm 51:12- Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Have you lost your joy? If so, deal with the cause.

In verse three through thirteen of Exodus 15, we find a review of the Red Sea incident and the defeat of the Egyptian army. Notice now verses fourteen through sixteen.
Exodus 15:14-16

The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. [15] Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. [16] Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased.

Others did hear and fear the Lord.

* Inhabitants of Palestina = Philistines
* Edom = Esau’s descendants
* Moab = Lot’s descendants
* Jethro heard = Exodus 18:10-11....And Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. [11] Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.
* Rahab in Jericho heard = Joshua 2:9-10... And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. [10] For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.
* The Gibeonites heard = Joshua 9:9... And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the Lord thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt,
* The Philistines heard hundreds of years later = 1 Samuel 4:8... Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

God has given them a great victory. It’s now time to move forward Verse 22 pulls the curtain to the start of their wilderness adventures, to the first baby steps of a totally free nation.
Exodus 15:22

So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

Here we find that there may be barren times in our lives. They journey for three days into the wilderness of Shur. Shur means “wall.” This area was a barren place where sandstorms were frequent and flocks most likely suffered and died on the journey. The first day of their march was probably very positive.

* The pillar of cloud was leading them forward.
* They have been rejoicing, singing Moses’ song.
* In their dust they leave the stiff, rotting corpses of their dead masters on the shores of the Red Sea. It was a new day. The thrill of freedom fills their hearts.

The second day was a little more trying for them. They turn from the sea into a labyrinth or maze of mountains lying over white limestone plains and sand dunes that were hot on the feet and dazzling to the eyes like a snow covered landscape is on a bright, sunny day. Their water skins probably still had water, but for most they were either out or very low.

On the third day, the journey was probably getting tiring or monotonous. Thirst scratches their arid throats and swollen tongues like sand paper on skin. Their lips were parched and chapped from the hot desert winds. The need for elusive water holes has put them in a desperate situation. Water-wise, they find themselves running into a brick wall in what I call the Wilderness of the Wall. Have you ever been there? Have you been in those situations where you are out of resources or strength and don’t know what to do next? Your back is against the wall. Life in the wilderness can be that way at times.

The wilderness is a picture of this present world. It is a place the traveler journeys from one place to another. It can be very harsh and barren at times. Only a mad man would want to make his final home in a totally barren and harsh wilderness. This world is a wilderness, a place which men and women journey from time to eternity. Faith in the Lord, however, makes the difference in the way which you and I regard and esteem this world.

Those folks without Christ are content to live here. They believe this is their final home. When death stalks them, they are desperate and
fear death for they have no hope of anything else. The godly Christian, on the other hand, has a different attitude.

* Hebrews 11:10 - For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

* Hebrews 11:13 - These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. As pilgrims, we are just passing through. Our citizenship is in Heaven (Philippians 3:20).

* Colossians 3:1-2... If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. [2] Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

**What are you living for? What are your priorities?** Are you prepared to meet the Lord? The new music teacher at the Junior High school had just organized a band. The principal decided that the band should give its first concert, but the music teacher was not certain that the band was ready. Just before the concert, the music teacher whispered to her nervous musicians, "If you're not sure of your part, just pretend to play." When the big moment arrived, she brought her baton down with a sweeping flourish and lo, nothing happened. The band gave forth with a resounding silence. Nobody was prepared. Are you prepared for the return of Christ or for your appointment with Him when you die?

* 1 John 3:2-3... Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. [3] And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

**The first steps are many times difficult and tedious, whether it is a baby’s first steps, the first day in school, or the first days of a new business.** They are difficult sometimes for new Christians too. Breaking sinful habits, withstanding ridicule and temptations can be very distressing. Israel’s first baby steps as a nation were difficult too. They were immediately faced with trials. They could find no water.

**The first insight from wilderness life we find here is there is nothing much that the world can offer the believer.** The pleasures of sin, and the attractions of the world cannot satisfy us. They leave us thirsty.

* Psalm 63:1 - O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;
* That which charmed us now repels us.
* That which delighted us now makes us groan.
* That which excited us now exhausts us.
* That which supposedly satisfied us now leaves us shallow. Only the Lord can truly satisfy our soul. Do you know Him? If so, are you walking with God each day?

* John 7:37 - In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. Do you have a hunger and thirst for the Lord in your life?
* Matthew 5:6 - Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
Chapter 2
Drinking at Bitter Wells
Exodus 15:23-27

I. THE BITTER WATERS 15:23

And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.

Robert Schalter tells of the disability claims department where he was employed. He said they used a form that did not always fit the situation, as evidenced by one applicant’s responses:

* Question 1: “When did your impairment first begin to affect you?”
* Answer: “When I fell off the loading dock.”
* Question 2: “At what point did your condition become severe enough to prevent you from doing your job?”
* Answer: “When I hit the ground.”

Well Beloved, God’s people are about to hit the ground like this guy. Like the white sail of a ship to castaways, floating upon an ocean or stranded upon a desert island, the Hebrews come to an oasis in the desert called Marah. They have traveled about 36 miles or 12 miles a day for three days.

“We are saved! We have found water! Yippee!” In haste, their dry, dusty, leather hands were cupped to shovel the water through their parched, cracked lips. Expecting refreshment, they experience disappointing regret, ruin, and rankness. The water was bitter, not fit to drink at all. This is the meaning of Marah. It means “bitter.” The Arabs today say that these waters are the worst in the region. They are bitter, brackish, and contain fresh and salt water. Drinking this water would create more thirst and weakness.

Their expectations, enthusiasm, and excitement are replaced with disappointment, discouragement, and distress. Beloved, life is full of Marah’s, those disappointing, distasteful, bitter times. An article related
the story about a man caught in a cement mixer. He drove one of those big cement trucks that mixes cement as it carries it to a construction site. This poor fellow was cleaning the cement mixer. He climbed down into it with a hose to wash out the remaining wet cement. Unfortunately, the hose caught a lever and pulled the mixer into the “ON” position. Suddenly this man found himself going around and around in the cement mixer with no way to get out because the buffeting was so violent. Fortunately, another workman saw the mixer turning and came over to shut it off. He was surprised to hear shouts coming from within the mixer. Finally, a wet, bruised, and battered man, covered with concrete, emerged from the mixer, probably another firm convert to Murphy’s law.

You may feel like this man in the cement mixer. You have been going round and round in circles. Your friends may have turned their backs on you in your time of need. Perhaps, your spouse, family, or business partner has disappointed you. Some may have chided you when you needed comfort. You may have had a favorite project that failed. Your anticipations or expectations may not have been realized. Maybe your children disappointed you or your marriage failed. There are many kinds of Marah’s in our lives that can make our lives go round and round it seems. The Bible gives a number of them.

* Marah’s in the Bible
1. The Bitterness of Death: Naomi
   * Ruth 1:20 - And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.
2. The Bitterness of Dearth: Hannah
   * 1 Samuel 1:6-10... And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb. [7] And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. [8] Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons? [9] So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord. [10] And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.
3. The Bitterness of Disease & Destruction: Job
   * Job 7:11- Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.
4. The Bitterness of Depression: The Psalmist
* Psalm 42:3 - My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?

5. The Bitterness of Danger: Mordecai
* Esther 4:1 - When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry;

God allowed all of these difficult times to show Himself strong to His own people. He wanted to bring out the best in them and show the best in Him. The Lord allows Marah's in your life for the same reason. Your disappointments are God's appointments for blessing. In fact, most of the Psalms were born in difficulty. Most of the Epistles were written in prisons. Most of the greatest thoughts of the greatest thinkers of all time had to pass through fiery trials.
* Bunyan wrote *Pilgrim's Progress* from jail.
* Florence Nightingale, too ill to move from her bed, reorganized the hospitals of England.
* Semi-paralyzed and under the constant menace of apoplexy, Pasteur was tireless in his attack on disease.
* During the greater part of his life, American historian Francis Parkman suffered so acutely that he could not work for more than five minutes at a time. He eyesight was so wretched that he could only scrawl only a few gigantic words on a manuscript, yet he contrived to write twenty magnificent volumes of history. All of these times of adversity led to blessing. God was about to bless His people and show His power and care.

II. THE BABBLING & BLAMING OF ISRAEL  15:24

*And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?*

Three days ago they were singing God's power and deliverance. That is reversed now. They have forgotten what the Lord has done in Egypt and at the Red Sea. Their faith falters, flounders, and fails at a critical time. The songs and praises are memories now, blanketed by bitter murmurings and complaints. The word "murmuring," is from the Hebrew word *luwn floon* and is a much stronger word than "to grumble" or "to complain." It is used almost exclusively in the wilderness wandering stories, to describe the rebellion
of the Israelites against God. They were not merely complaining – they were questioning God's and Moses’ abilities and motives. The action is something like a parliamentary vote of no confidence.

**God’s people had a bad habit of griping.** They did it at the Red Sea when they were cornered. They will do it again five more times in the Pentateuch.

* Exodus 16:2- And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:*

* Exodus 17:3- And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?*

* Numbers 14:2- And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!*

* Numbers 16:41- But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord.

* Deuteronomy 1:27- And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the Lord hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.

**The Israelites have suffered dissipation, disappointment, and now they suffer from distraction.** They are involved in the “Blame Game.” We tend to blame others for our Marah’s too. Their disappointment about the water broke their spirit and hopes. Our disappointments have the same effect upon us too.

* Proverbs 13:12- Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life. Have you experienced this kind of disappointment?*

The great joys and hopes we have, are turned into our greatest griefs and fears when we walk by sight and not by faith. Responding in faith to trials and disappointments is essential in growing spiritually and maturing in the Lord. God wants us to stop trusting “things” or what we can see and handle. Instead, He wants us to trust in Him whom we cannot see.

**Who is leading these folks?** It is the Lord, right? What they have done is taken their eyes off the Lord and focused upon Moses and their circumstances. This is the reason why they are murmuring. Since the Lord was leading them, their griping and complaining were in essence,
against the Lord. He has led them to suffer some discomfort and hardship for a season and for a purpose.

Left on a sinking ship were the captain and three sailors. The captain spoke first, "Men, this business about a captain going down with his ship is nonsense. There’s a three-man life raft on board, and I am going to be on it. To see who will come with me, I will ask each one of you a question. The one who can’t answer will stay behind. Here is the first question, ‘What unsinkable ship went down when it hit an iceberg?’" The first sailor answered, "The Titanic, sir." On the next question the captain asked, "How many people perished?" The second sailor said, "One thousand five hundred and seventeen, sir." The captain turned to the third sailor, looked sternly into his eyes, and with a slow firmness asked, "What were their names?"

Beloved, there are questions that we may have that we don’t know the answers. Why does God allow Marah’s or bitter times in our lives? Why does the Lord allow us to suffer? When we look through the Bible, we find that there are answers to these questions.

* **Reason 1- Our Marah’s are God’s way of Getting our Attention.**

  The cares of this world are God’s stiffest competition for our time, attention, and affection. They tend to choke out the Word of God and the inward voice of the Holy Spirit.

  * Jeremiah 35:14 - The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me.

  * Matthew 13:22- He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

  **Many times we are too busy for time with the Lord.** When we are faced with the bitter waters of Marah in our own lives, we are suddenly confronted with problems and pressures too big for us to handle. The Hebrews said to Moses, "What are we going to drink?" The question is addressed to the wrong person. It needs to be addressed to the Lord. Their attitude should be that of Psalm 25:1-2.

As we become thirstier and weaker, like the Hebrews, the invitation of the Lord Jesus Christ becomes more attractive.

*Matthew 11:28- Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

A. Notice His Encouragement. Jesus invites us to come to Him. The word “come” is from the Greek word deute {dyoo'-teh} which can be translated, “Come NOW!”

B. Notice Our Exhaustion. The word “labor” is from the word kopiao {kop-ee-ah'-o} which means “to grow weary, tired, exhausted (with toil or burdens or grief; to labor with wearisome effort.”

C. Notice the Ease He promises. I will give you rest, or refreshment and calm.

God’s ultimate purpose in getting our attention is to make us more like the Lord Jesus Christ. It is for this reason that our Marah’s are for our good.

* Romans 8:28- And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

* Reason 2- Our Bitter Wells are God’s Call for Self-Examination.

God requires that we search out, confess, and forsake every sin.

* Proverbs 28:13 - He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

God’s people were still walking by sight, not by faith. This relationship with the Lord was all new to them. Many of the people were idolatrous in Egypt. He knew what was going on in their hearts. Let me say that if things are not going well for you, it may be that you have dishonored your parents.

* Ephesians 6:2-3... Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) [3] That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. Is everything OK between you and your parents, if they are still alive?

If evil will not depart from your house, it is possible you have rewarded evil to those who did good to you.

* Proverbs 17:13- Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house. The word “evil” is from the Hebrew word ra’ {rah} which means “to treat badly, to give pain, misery, unhappiness, injury, or distress to others.”
* Reason 3- Our Wells of Bitterness are God’s Way of Conquering Pride in our Lives.

The bitter wells of contention, arguing, fighting, and feuding reveal pride in our lives.

* Proverbs 13:10- Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom. If you are in constant “battle mode” with your husband, wife, parents, or children, then there is definitely a pride-problem in your own life or in the lives of your family, and it needs to be dealt with.

The bitter wells of destruction and failure in relationships, projects, work, and responsibilities may be traced to a problem with pride in your life. If you fail, ask yourself, “Have I been prideful about something?”

* Proverbs 16:18- Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

The bitter wells of shame and disgrace are God’s means of humbling us and driving away our pride. A well-respected seminary professor was reflecting on his first, real preaching opportunity. He was young and self-confident, sure that he had a message that would shake up all these stuffy parishioners and prove how smart he was. He practically swaggered into the pulpit to start his sermon. After just a few minutes of trying, he realized that this was harder than it looked. He was doing a dismal job, and he knew it. After he had shared a few mumbled, incoherent thoughts with the congregation, he sat back down in total despair. At the end of the service, an older man in the congregation came up to him, shook his hand, and offered him some advice. "Young man, if you had gone up there the way you came down, you could have come down the way you went up."

* Proverbs 11:2- When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.

* Proverbs 29:23 - A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

* Luke 14:11- For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

*James 4:6-7...But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. [7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
* Reason 4- Our Marah's are Reminders of Our Weaknesses.

* 2 Corinthians 12:7-10... And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. [8] For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. [9] And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10] Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Trials have a way of humbling us, especially when we are helpless in solving them. Problems that deal with the hearts of people or their health leave us helpless because we cannot change the situation ourselves.

* Reason 5- Our Bitter Wells Motivate Us to Cry Out to God.

In a recent cartoon strip, ZIGGY is in open ski country. He is carrying a book and he is accompanied by his dog. He says to the dog, "We won't get lost hiking in the woods this time because I brought the cross-country skier trail guide book. As a matter of fact, Fuzz, this area here looks none too familiar. I better consult the guide. See, there are three methods of finding our way home. First, there's the 'Coin Flip' method. I think we'll skip that. Two is the Eeny-Meeny-Miney-Mo method! Uh...that doesn't sound too good. Ah, here we go!! Three is the auditory method. Sounds impressive, doesn't it? Let's see what it says to do. A) Get comfortable. B) Take a deep breath. C) Yell 'Help' as loud as you can!!"

God wants us to cry out to Him for help and He will respond to the cry of His children when they are suffering.

* Psalm 34:17- The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

Bitter wells motivate us to cry out to God in the right ways.

1. Cry with your voice-

* Psalm 3:4 - I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

2. Cry daily during your trial-

* Psalm 86:3- Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.
3. Cry out in humility-
   * Psalm 9:12* - When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

4. Cry with a pure heart-
   * Psalm 66:18* - If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

5. Cry out in praise-
   * Psalm 56:9-10* ... When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me. [10] In God will I praise his word: in the Lord will I praise his word.

* Reason 6- Bitter Wells are God’s Method of Purifying our Faith*

God uses our Marah’s, our bitter wells to test our faith in the Lord’s care of our lives.

* 1 Peter 1:6-7*... Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: [7] That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

* Deuteronomy 8:2* - And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

The Hebrews revealed that their faith was weak. They were focused on Moses, not on the Lord. Faith is essential for living the Christian life because God’s ways are opposite to the natural inclinations of men. Realize the bitter wells in your path will strengthen your faith and develop patience in your life.

*James 1:3* - Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

* Reason 7- God uses our Wells of Bitterness as a Way of Sifting our Friendships.*

Trials and suffering will always test friendships. It will reveal which friends are concerned about getting and which ones are concerned about giving and loving. Such is the case in the Hebrews’ treatment of Moses. They revealed a lack of intimacy, friendship, and respect for Moses.

* Proverbs 17:17* - A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. True friends love even in times of suffering and trials.
In Luke 15, we find that the prodigal son had friends as long as he had money. When his money was gone, his so-called “friends” were gone. The hearts of true friends are knit together like Jonathan and David. Jonathan stood with David to the end of his life. We have such a friend in the Lord Jesus Christ, who sticks closer than a brother.

* Reason 8- God uses our Marah’s to Prepare us to Comfort Others.
* 2 Corinthians 1:3-4... Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; [4] Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

God may have led you to the bitter waters of death, disease, desperation, disappointment, or the destruction of your possessions so that you might be a blessing and encouragement to others down the road. What the Lord teaches you, you can teach others.

You may have heard about a woman who rounded the street corner and came upon an accident victim lying on the sidewalk. Suddenly, she was grateful for the first-aid course she had recently completed at the local YWCA. "I was going for a walk today," she told her husband later, "and saw this poor man lying on the sidewalk in pretty bad condition."
"Then," she continued, "all my first-aid training came back to me, and I bent down and put my head between my knees to keep from fainting!"
Beloved, God uses our trials to prepare us for future ministry with others who go through trouble. Don’t put your head between your knees. Get out there and help them!

III. THE BESEECHING OF THE LORD 15:25

And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

A fellow was driving home one evening from work and was listening to the radio announcer suggest that his listeners surprise their wives. The announcer suggested, “Listen guys, when you arrive home for dinner this evening, instead of growling out, ‘When will dinner be ready?’ Why not surprise your wife with a little gift?” The man thought to himself and thought that was a pretty good idea. So he stopped at the store, purchased a box of candy and a beautiful bouquet of
flowers. Instead of driving into the garage, he went to the front door and rang the door bell. His wife opened the door, saw him standing there with a big smile on his face, holding out his gifts to his wife. Very crankily she shouted, “Listen, buster, the baby had colic today. The washing machine has broken down. The toilet overflowed in the bathroom. Junior and another boy got into a fight today at school and he was expelled and NOW, as I might have expected, you make my day perfect by coming home drunk! Thanks a lot!” Beloved, you may have days where you feel you cannot win. I am telling you that you can win. Victory will be determined by the way you respond to your trials and bitter waters.

The response to your trials will reveal your maturity. Each Christian responds to trials differently because each person is at a different level of maturity. Our trials reveal our heart, what we are, and why we need the Lord.

* If you are faced with surgery, your can respond in fear or in faith.
* If you are faced with financial loss, you can respond with chaos or with a confident dependence upon the Lord.
* If you are faced with death, you can collapse or put your security in the Lord Jesus Christ. Some Christians have learned the truths of Romans 8:28 and James 1:2-3.

* Romans 8:28- And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.
* James 1:2-3... My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; [3] Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

The Israelites and Moses are all facing the same trial with a big difference in responses. Moses cries out to God!

* Psalm 34:17- The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

This is one reason why the Lord leads us to bitter wells. He wants us to learn to cry out to Him and draw close to Him. As we learn to do this, we are going to grow and mature in Christ. God was waiting with a solution for Moses. The Lord “showed him” a tree. These words come from the Hebrew word yarah (yaw-raw') which means “to teach, instruct, or to shoot arrows.” When a teacher is instructing students, it is as if he was shooting arrows of truth to their heart. The word yarah helps to form the word Torah which means “instruction or law.” God’s people needed His law and instructions if they were going to enjoy His
provisions. We can learn from the Lord if we are teachable and willing to learn.

* Psalm 32:8- I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

* Proverbs 3:5-6...Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. [6] In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

God showed Moses a tree that would sweeten the bitter waters. Several plants are capable of sweetening bitter waters. Modern Arabs use the Barberry bush. In Florida, the Sassafras plant is used. In order to do any good, the tree had to be "cast into the waters." We find here another lesson about service. Before the tree could serve and be a blessing, God's plan for the tree was that it had to be cut down from its comfortable situation and cast into a bitter situation. It would be a painful and humbling experience for the tree to be cut down and cast into the bitter water, but all these things were necessary for the tree to serve God and be a blessing to mankind.

**Many folks' idea of service is much different than the plan for this tree.** They want comfort, convenience, and compliments, but the requirements for service are self-denial, sacrifice, and humility. Christ certainly knew the experience of this tree, and He instructed us in this plan for service.

* Matthew 16:24- Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

The Lord had to show Moses what to do and He has to show us too. Why? We are ignorant and blind to answers and need God to reveal to us the solution or the provision for our problem, and He will if we ask Him. The solution to the problem was right in front of him, but Moses needed wisdom. We do too.

* James 1:5- If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

**Moses got direction from the Lord.** The tree was the solution to the problem, but the tree would not have done any good unless it was thrown into the water. The instructions had to be obeyed. The same truth holds for us too. The instructions that God has given to us in His Word are of no value to us unless we apply them in our lives and put them into practice. Head knowledge does not save or change a person. It is heart knowledge, knowledge that has been implemented in a life that brings about change. Put the Bible into practice!
The healing of the bitter waters was a sign to Israel. It was proof of God’s ability and willingness to heal them and care for them spiritually and physically. The Lord led them to drink at bitter wells to show them that He can make our bitter waters sweet. He can turn our defeats into victories. For every burden and sorrow, a swift and sufficient cure and blessing are near.

For the sinner, his salvation is near in the person of Jesus Christ. God’s solution to the bitterness of our sinful lives was a tree on a hill called Calvary where the Son of God hung suspended between Heaven and earth to pay the price of sin for mankind. Because of what happened at Calvary, our bitter lives are sweetened when we put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for we are saved by His grace, delivered from the judgment of Hell, and have a retirement home in Heaven prepared by our Lord Himself. Sounds pretty good to me!

The praying of Moses reminds us again of the work of Jesus Christ. He is a type of Christ. As Moses was the intercessor between God and Israel, Jesus is our intercessor and our advocate. He prays for us.

* Hebrews 7:25- Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

* 1 John 2:1- My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

* 1 Timothy 2:5- For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

IV. A BLUEPRINT FOR BLESSING 15:26

And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.

God wanted them to know that the Lord is the great Healer. He is Jehovah-Rapha...the Lord thy healer. He is the Great Physician. We see this over and again in the Bible.

* Naomi was healed by the love and care of Ruth.
* A barren Hannah gave birth to her son Samuel.
* Job’s health and prosperity were restored by the Lord.
God leads us to bitter wells to show that He is the healer of bitter waters. The Lord expects one thing from us....obedience. This is the blue print for His blessings. His promise was, “I will put none of these diseases upon you.”

**The Lord is no respecter of persons.** If Israel was rebellious like the Egyptians, they would suffer too. If we are rebellious and sinful, we will suffer. We will reap what is sown.

*Hebrews 12:5-6...And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: [6] For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

It is interesting to note that at Marah, God addressed Himself with a new name. It was not Elohim, but Jehovah-Ropheka. In difficult times, God reveals Himself in different ways. It’s in those times especially, when we are paying attention and depending upon Him.

* When we need **protection**, He is our **Shield**.
* When we need **correction and direction**, He is our **Shepherd**.
* When we suffer **exhaustion and depletion**, He is our **Supplier**.
* When we need **affection**, He is our **Serenity**.
* When we face **rejection and dejection**, He is our **Sustainer**.
* When we suffer from **infections**, He is our **Strength**.
* When we need **preservation**, He is our **Shelter**.
* When we suffer **agitation, apprehension, and dissatisfaction**, He is our **Satisfier**.

* **Colossians 2:10-** And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

* **Ephesians 3:20-** Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

V. THE BLESSINGS IN THE WILDERNESS  15:27

*And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.*

A man fell into a pit and he could not get out. The world offers different advice or points of view about this man’s pit.

* Buddah said, “Your pit is only a state of mind.”
* A Hindu said, “This pit is for purging you and making you more perfect.”
* Confucius said, “If you would have listened to me, you would have
never fallen into the pit in the first place.”
* A New Ager said, “Maybe you should network with some other pit dwellers.”
* A country inspector said, “Do you have a permit for that pit?”
* A realist said, “That is a pit.”
* An idealist said, “The world shouldn’t have pits.”
* An optimist said, “Things could be worse.”
* A pessimist said, “Things will get worse.”
* Jesus, seeing the man, took the man by the hand and lifted him out of the pit. Amen!

The Lord lifted the Israelites out of the pit...if you please. This verse is one of encouragement and hope. We face times of trial, of drinking at bitter wells, but we also enjoy times of blessings.

* Acts 3:19- Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

* Psalm 126:2- Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.

Life has a way of going from better to worse, to better again. Our lives go through cycles. We must learn, like Paul, to be abased and abound.

* Philippians 4:11- Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

At Elim, God’s people found themselves on soft grass under the shadows of tall trees, listening to the breeze sighing through the acacia trees and to babbling streams which flowed from a dozen cool springs. They are allowed to rest, be secure from their foes, be screened from heat, have their eyes soothed by scenery and their ears stroked with gentle sounds.

**Why does the Lord lead us to sweet springs?** He does it to recharge our batteries, refresh us and help us to go forward. Elim was not to be the final place of encampment. They were not to pull over and permanently park here. The time would come for them to move onward to better lands ahead. The Lord had rivers and lakes ahead for them. He had a land flowing with milk and honey, wheat and barley, vines, fig trees, and pomegranates. They would enjoy these things only if they would obey the Lord and go forward.
Beloved, God does not want us to permanently sit around and do nothing. He has victories for us to win and opportunities for serving Christ. There are people that need to be saved that we can tell about the Lord.

* 1 Corinthians 15:58- Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Your Elim’s may be your home, the house of God, or your prayer closet. They should be places of strengthening and encouragement to go out into the world and be an effective ambassador for Christ. Please note that the Elim’s of our journeys are not far from our Marah’s. Our Marah’s or bitter wells prepare us to enjoy and appreciate our Elim’s. When we think of Joseph, we find that his slavery and imprisonment prepared him for the blessing of being the Prime Minister of Egypt. Moses’ years in the wilderness prepared him to lead his people.

The story is told about a group of animals in the jungle who decided to have a football game. The problem was that no one could tackle the rhinoceros. Once he got a head of steam, he was unstoppable. When he received the opening kick-off, he rambled for a touchdown. The score was seven to nothing immediately. Somehow, they managed to keep the ball away from him the remainder of the first quarter.

At the beginning of the second quarter, the other team tied the score 7 to 7. The lion tried to warn the zebra on the kick-off not to kick it to the rhinoceros, but the zebra ignored the warning. The rhino caught the ball and there he was racing for the touchdown. Suddenly, out of nowhere, he was brought down with a vicious tackle. When the animals un-piled, it was discovered that a centipede had made the tackle. "That was fantastic!" congratulated the lion, "But where were you on the opening kick-off?" The centipede replied, "I was still putting on my shoes."

Beloved, if you have been drinking at bitter wells, keep trusting the Lord. He will make your bitter waters sweet. He takes the bad and turns it to good, and turns death into life. What you need to do is put on your spiritual shoes, obey the Lord’s Word and walk with God by faith. Go forward and get into the game if you please.
Chapter 3
The Murmuring Mob
Exodus 16:1-3

A group of students at Harvard once tried to fool the famous professor of zoology, Professor Agassiz. They took parts from a number of different bugs and with great skill attached them together to make a creation they were sure would baffle their teacher. On the chosen day they brought it to him and asked that he identify it. As he inspected it with great care, the students grew more and more sure they had tricked this genius. Finally, Professor Agassiz straightened up and said, "I have identified it." Scarcely able to control their amusement, they asked its name. Agassiz replied, "It is a humbug."

At the dawn of this chapter, we find Israel has left the Oasis of Elim. Their batteries are recharged. Their gas tanks are re-fueled in a matter of speaking. Their water supplies are restocked. They have come unto the wilderness of Sin and have again developed a "Humbug" attitude. They are not happy campers at all! Notice verses one and two.

I. A PEEVED PEOPLE 16:1-2

And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. [2] And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

God's people are not reading their manuals, "How to Win Friends and Influence People." They are not saying very nice things about Moses. Israel arrived in the Wilderness of Sin, the wilderness of the thorn, on the fifteenth day of the second month. They have been on the trail for one month. The newness of their freedom has
well worn off for sure as this multitude has been slugging it out in the nitty gritty desert of life. Who said life was easy anyway?

The Israelites are again a murmuring mob. They are griping and complaining against Moses and Aaron. What have these two guys done now to draw these complaints like a magnet draws steel? Verse three gives us a surface answer, but it is not the real root problem of these people.

II. THE PINING FOR THE FLESH POTS  16:3

*And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.*

The problem with the people is they are hungry. All that marching has stirred up their appetites. They are confronted with a second, intense trial in the wilderness, the first being the incident at Marah. Their supplies have evidently run out. What provisions they had when they left Egypt are now low or gone. It does not take long to deplete your goodies when you are feeding two to three million people.

As hunger gnaws at their tummies that growl like a bear, they dream of bread, meat, fish, vegetables, and Big Eddy’s Egyptian cheeseburgers (whoops). They are so hungry, they fear death and vent their anger upon Moses. Moses, you want to kill us! This is a classic statement of stupidity.

It was Thanksgiving Day and the town grouch was grumbling as usual. "Don't you have anything to be thankful for?" a neighbor asked. "Nope," he said. "Have you considered thanking God for turning your nose right side up? He could have put it upside down. Then when it rained you would have drowned and when you sneezed, you would have blown your thankless head off." The Israelites are the epitome of unthankfulness and ungratefulness. It would have served them right if they had blown their heads off when they sneezed. How dare they treat Moses this way after all that he has done and endured for them.

**God was allowing this trial in their lives to prove, to test, and to try them.** He was revealing what was in their hearts and trying to teach them important lessons. He does the same thing with us too. Hunger was their thorn in the flesh in the Wilderness of Sin. This trial was greater than the preceding one. They had to depend on God for their water
supply, but they still had provisions of their own they could see, handle, and taste. Now they must depend upon the Lord for everything.

The Lord allows our supplies to run low or out sometimes to test what manner of spirit we are made of and the strength of our faith. He does this to develop our faith and confidence. When I was 19, I went to Vermont for the summer to help a friend who had started a church. Day by day he depended upon the Lord for his needs. One day during this summer, the food ran out. There was nothing in the pantry to eat. Everything was gone and it was lunch time. It was around 12:30 p.m. when we began to pray for God’s provision of food. At 1:00 p.m. there was a knock at the door. It was the UPS man. He delivered a box to us. When we opened it, it was full of food. My mother had sent a care package days before, not knowing the needs we faced. God took care of our needs and strengthened our faith that day, showing us that He can take care of us and that He answers us before we even call upon Him.

* Isaiah 65:24- And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

* Philippians 4:19- But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Our extremities are God’s opportunities. With Elijah and the widow, He let the barrel of meal and cruise of oil run out before interposing His help. Samson lost his freedom, sight, serenity, and strength. God supplied him with strength again in response to his prayer to destroy his enemies.

You may know the story about the truck driver who was driving through a large city. There was nothing particularly unique about the driver or the truck except for one thing—-at every traffic light the driver would get out of the truck, take a baseball bat and beat on the side of the trailer at the back of the truck with all his might. Then he would jump back in the cab of his truck and drive on to the next light where he would repeat this ritual. A fellow following him in a car was puzzled by this bizarre behavior and asked him at one light why in the world he was beating on the side of the truck. "Oh," said the driver, "the answer is simple I have a two-ton truck and am carrying four tons of canaries in it. That means that I have to keep two tons of them in the air at all times."

You may be like this truck driver, worrying about your things, your “canaries.” Beloved, God wants us to learn, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Murmuring hurts God’s people. It hurts the ones who are murmured
against. It hurts the ones doing the murmuring. It has a poisoning effect upon people. For this reason we are admonished not to do it.

* Hebrews 12:15- Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

* Philippians 2:14- Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

This passage in Exodus reveals some of the elements of murmuring, griping, complaining, critical people. As we go through the different insights, examine yourself and ask yourself if you struggle with murmuring. If you do, then change!

* Insights on Murmuring

1. At the root of their murmuring was a distrust and unsubmissiveness toward God’s goodness, power, and will.

   The root meaning of the Hebrew word translated “murmur” in our text is "to show oneself obstinate, to be stubborn.” Murmuring is, therefore, a symptom of rebellion. Numbers 14 records a serious murmuring problem which brings out the rebellion aspect of murmuring very clearly. There the Israelites rebelled against the command to enter Canaan and wanted instead someone to replace Moses to lead them back to Egypt.

* Numbers 14:2-4... And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! [3] And wherfore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? [4] And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

   Here in Exodus 16, their complaint against Moses was a camouflaged complaint against the Lord Himself.

* Exodus 16:8- And Moses said, This shall be, when the Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.

   Do you distrust and doubt God’s care and will for your life? If you do, you will find it difficult to find joy and peace because you have chosen to bear your own burdens instead of giving them to the Lord.

* Matthew 11:28- Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.

2. Murmuring indicated they were forgetful and ungrateful for God’s previous blessings and provision.

* Psalm 106:7 - Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea.

* Psalm 106:13 - They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel:

The Lord protected His people. They were brought out of Egypt by a mighty hand. In our calamities, we tend to be discouraged and forget all the blessings of the past. This is why we are discouraged. We doubt and distrust God’s mercy sometimes. Our present situation seems to look hopeless. We tend to inflate or exaggerate our predicament. When we focus on the disadvantages of the present, we tend to miss the advantages of our situation and the fact that all things work together for good. Discontent magnifies what is past, and vilifies what is present without regard to truth or reason. None talk more absurdly than murmurers. If you exaggerate the advantages and ignore the disadvantages of a bad situation and then ignore the advantages and magnify the disadvantages of a good situation, you can make a bad situation sound good and a good situation sound bad.

God’s people didn’t forget about food, but they seem to have forgotten about the misery and pain of being slaves every day and the murder of their babies. We tend to forget about the pains of the old life until it is too late. Satan says, “Those were the good old days.” Were they that good? Does the Devil have you longing for the old life? Watch out! Demas made this mistake.

* 2 Timothy 4:10 - For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

3. Murmuring expresses itself in false accusations and undeserved reproaches.

Moses and Aaron are not to blame for their situation. God was doing the leading. They were only the mouth pieces for the Lord. Yet, people were murmuring against them. Murmurers are always complaining about being wounded by others and about others being mean to them, but when it comes to wounding others and being mean to others, few people can keep up with the murmurers.
4. Murmuring sidetracks us from effective solutions to our problems.

Gripping does not solve the problems of the heart, but praying will. When we pray, God will either remove the burden or give us strength to bear it. We don’t pray sometimes because it is easier to gripe. When we gripe and murmur, we inflame our problems and anger. We flush any peace that we might have and build fires of anger and stress in our soul. What do you usually do in your difficult circumstances?

Why did God allow these trials? Why did He allow their supplies to run out? One reason was the fact that the Lord was trying to teach them to be content with what they had when they had it. He does the same with us.

* I Timothy 6:6- But godliness with contentment is great gain.

What in the world is contentment? There are several thoughts.

A. Contentment is accepting whatever circumstance God has allowed in my life.

* Philippians 4:11-13... Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. [12] I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. [13] I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Most people seek contentment in things or possessions. When I say “most people,” this includes Christians. True contentment is found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is writing from prison, yet, he is still content. Life does not consist of what you possess. God is not impressed with our possessions or accomplishments; He is impressed with our obedience and faithfulness to Him.

* Luke 12:15- And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

* I Timothy 6:8- And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

Paul said in Philippians, he “learned” or “learned the secret” to being content. The learning indicates “learning by experience.” He learned to live above his circumstances by going through good and difficult circumstances.

The word “content” means “to be entirely self-sufficient or independent of external circumstances; to be self-sufficient or contained.”
This word was used to describe a country that supplied itself and had no need of imports. The word “content” is a description of the man whose resources are within him so that he does not have to depend upon substitutes without. Our sufficiency is in Jesus Christ who meets all our needs.

This word “content” was used by the Stoic school of philosophy and was one of their favorite ones. The highest aim of a Stoic was to be self-sufficient. He desired little and did not possess very many things. The Stoic would say, “I will be content by an act of my will.” Contentment was considered a human achievement, for Paul, however, it was a gift from God. It was part of God’s provision for his life. The Stoic was self-sufficient; Paul was God-sufficient. Satisfaction in the Lord is a great asset.

B. Contentment is an inner sufficiency that keeps us at peace in spite of our outward circumstances.

No matter how traumatic our life is going, the contented person has an inner strength and peace. Contentment is not escape from the battle, but rather an abiding peace and confidence in the midst of the battle.

Contentment was one of the highest Greek qualities. To the Greeks it meant you were sufficient in yourself. Christians made the word to mean a sufficiency in Jesus Christ. Contentment grows from our attitude toward God and living life His way according to His word.

C. Contentment is not apathy or foolishness. It is a quiet restfulness in the midst of changing events.

Godliness does not give financial gain all the time. Godliness itself is gain when it is accompanied with contentment. Godliness is a gain in itself because it has the promise of blessing now and in eternity (Psalm 1). Godliness does not come and go with the uncertainties of material wealth. Whether you are rich or poor you can still be a godly person.

D. Godliness with contentment is the wealth you have that is independent of your checkbook or possessions.

For many, contentment is rare and difficult to attain. Circumstances are frequently difficult and our hearts are unhealthily restless. We are too dependent upon this world and its fortunes influence us. Without contentment the most prosperous circumstances bring no joy or pleasure. With contentment the poorest circumstance can produce little distress.

E. Contentment is being satisfied with what God has provided for you.

* Hebrews 13:5 - Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be
content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

F. Contentment is found in making the Lord the Shepherd of your life.
* Psalm 23:1-2 - The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. [2] He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. True contentment is found in Jesus Christ. To have contentment in the Lord requires four decisions about the events and possessions of our lives.

1. We Must Direct-
   We must direct our focus on what God has already allowed us to have. This involves counting our blessings and being thankful to the Lord for each and all His gifts. Daniel Webster stated, “If you want to feel rich, just count all the things you have that money can’t buy.” Use God’s provisions wisely with a grateful heart. Use them for His glory and to help others in need. Jim Elliot said, “He is no fool who gives what he can’t keep to gain what he cannot lose.” When you die one day, you can’t take your possessions with you, but you can send them on ahead by giving to the Lord and others now.

2. We Must Disregard-
   We must disregard what we do not have in our possession. Men are rich in that they are God’s creation. Men are even richer in what they can do without. E. Stanley Jones tells about a poverty stricken man who had an unexpected guest stop in for the night. He escorted the guest to his humble accommodations in the hayloft of the barn and said, “If there is anything you want, let me know, and I will come and show you how to get along without it.”

   There is so much we think we need but really could do without. Contentment teaches us to do without. Our focus is not so much what we may secure, but what we are able to enjoy life without. As we begin to multiply our means, we begin to multiply our cares and sources of distraction and stress. We have more to worry about. That is why contentment is great gain for there is a lot of distress and distractions we can do without. Contentment sets our minds free from anxious cares. It prevents our straining after a false satisfaction. We are freed up mentally and emotionally to enjoy what really does matter and satisfy in our lives.

   A person who depends on material things for peace, assurance, happiness, or satisfaction will find he will never be satisfied. Material
things have a way of eventually losing their appeal. This is one of the reasons why selfish people are so miserable because the things they wanted so bad do not make them happy and they end up taking out their frustrations on other people. There is a third thing we must do to find contentment in Jesus Christ.

3. We Must Decide-

We must decide to refuse to covet after what other people possess. *The most important question in regard to our happiness is not, “What things do I possess?” The key question is “What possesses me?”* For some people, it is harder to know how to abound than to know how to suffer want. Wealth has a tendency to create a thirst for more and more leaving the prosperous person weary and never able to enjoy what he has been blessed with, but instead focusing on what someone else possesses. The “Keep up with the Jones’s” mentality has exhausted many a person emotionally, spiritually, and financially. There is a fourth thing we must do to find contentment in Christ.

4. We Must Deduce and Digest-

We must understand God’s principles of money or things, and contentment. We must understand...

A. The Source of Wealth-

Everything comes from God. He is our source of blessing.

*1 Chronicles 29:12-14 - Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. [13] Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. [14] But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.*

B. The Shallow Significance of Riches-

Money can’t buy love and happiness even though the world would make you think it can. When your life is on the line, riches lose all significance.

*Proverbs 11:4 - Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.*

*Matthew 16:26 - For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

C. The Shortness and Swiftness of Riches-

Riches do not last. Someone said, “I know money talks! It is
always telling me good-bye!” Riches can be fleeting, being spent, stolen, squandered, subverted from sight or lost.

* Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 - *He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity. [11] When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?*

**D. The Servanthood of Money**-
Money is a tool from God to be used to care for our families and to accomplish God’s work. It is to be used to help others who are in need. There is a great responsibility in using wealth wisely.

* 1 Timothy 6:17-19 - *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; [18] That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; [19] Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

**E. The Seeking of the Lord**-
We are to obey the Lord and put Him first in our lives rather than chasing after money. God wants to be first in our lives, not replaced with an idol of gold. When we seek the Lord first, He has His own way of providing our needs and making us content.

* Psalm 119:36-Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.*

* Proverbs 19:1 - *Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.*

**F. The Secret of Contentment**-
We are to realize the secret of true contentment. Paul reveals what the secret is in Philippians 4.

*Philippians 4:11-13-- Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. [12] I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. [13] I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

Contentment does not arrive by chance. It is not inherited, purchased or a product of discipline. It is learned as Paul stated. To be content with one’s circumstances is a thing to be desired. To be content with one’s self is a thing to be dreaded. If we become content with our
spiritual condition, our spiritual growth will be hindered and we will not be thirsty for righteousness and a close walk with God. Paul reveals that the source of contentment is found in the Lord Jesus Christ. He speaks of the conditions of contentment in 1 Timothy 6.

* 1 Timothy 6:8-And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

One helpful discipline in contentment involves distinguishing between NEEDS and WANTS. Advertising tries to make our wants sound like our needs. The yearning for material riches, as if they could satisfy the “soul” is condemned here. He is not condemning wealth. Some of the greatest men in Scripture were wealthy men like Abraham, Job, or King David. They controlled their wealth. It did not control them. Paul is stressing the importance of being grateful and content with food and clothing which are basic needs. If we lose them, we lose the ability to secure other things. A miser without food would starve to death counting his money. Henry David Thoreau reminded us that a man is wealthy in proportion to the number of things he can do without. Be content with food and raiment is what Paul admonishes.

Paul knew how to be “abased” or live on little or humble means. He knew how to “abound” which means “exceed, excel, overflow; to be fattened like an animal.” Paul trusted in Christ in times of poverty and plenty. It is believed Paul came from a wealthy family from the tribe of Benjamin. Being trained by Gamaliel would be considerably costly (Acts 22:3). When things are going poorly for Christians, some tend to whine, pine, or recline. They also gripe, grumble, or gossip as they blame others for their predicaments. Paul, however, learned the secret to being content.

When we realize that God is watching over us and is in control of our lives, it will help us to be content. God’s guidance is taught repeatedly in Scripture.

* Proverbs 16:9 - A man’s heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.

* Jeremiah 10:23- O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. Let me ask, “Are you content?”

Another purpose for the empty buckets of Israel was to develop an attitude of gratitude in His people. You appreciate more of what you have when you have done without. Gratefulness communicates to others, especially the Lord, the precise ways in which they have benefitted
your life and it looks for ways to honor them. Gratefulness acknowledges the fact that everything we have is the result of God or of others that have invested in our lives. In ourselves, we have nothing, are nothing, and what we do have we owe to the Lord and others. A grateful spirit will be motivated to express an attitude of indebtedness.

Pride on the other hand says, “I have achieved what God did for me.” The more we realize how indebted we are to God and deserve nothing but eternal judgment, the more grateful we will be for the way He benefits us.

Are you a grateful person? I have found that this is a huge weakness in many Christians, especially in pastors. Learn to be thankful to God and for what others have done for you. There are several ways you can express this.

1. List daily the ways that God benefits your life. Gratefulness involves daily alertness.
   * Lamentations 3:22-23... It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. [23] They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

2. Recall God’s help in a crisis.
   * Psalm 3:4 - I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.
   * Psalm 120:1- In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me.

3. Turn your gratefulness into a song. Write out a document of gratefulness to Him and make it your “life song” to the Lord.
   * Psalm 28:7 - The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

4. Give thanks even for the hardships of life.
   * Job 1:21- And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

5. Thank God when you are not thankful. Thanking Him is an act of obedience to His will.
   * 1 Thessalonians 5:18- In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.
   * Romans 8:28- And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. We will understand this verse as we see our trials develop maturity in our lives.

6. Tell the Lord how He has benefitted you.
   * Psalm 107:2a- Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, ......

If we can learn to be grateful, we can eliminate murmuring and griping from our tongues.
Chapter 4
Manna from Heaven
Exodus 16:4-36

In the last message, we found Israel had changed from a contented crowd to a murmuring mob. They were not happy campers at all. They were suffering from empty bellies, but also empty heads and hearts. Gratefulness gave way to griping. Contentment changed to criticizing and complaining. Instead of focusing on the blessings of God, they were blaming Moses for their circumstances. They failed and flopped in their faith in the Lord. They forgot all of His great works.

How does the Lord respond? How would you? If you protected someone, saved them, provided for all their needs and then they turned around and griped, complained, and forgot what you did for them, what would you do? Most people would say, “Forget you!” They would be hurt or angry. God, however, does not respond this way. On this occasion we find no severe words of reproof or punishment. Instead, we find a classic example of Romans 5:21.

* Romans 5:21- That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

God does not rain fire and brimstone down upon His people. No, He decided to bless them. Notice verse number four.

I. THE PROMISED PROVISIONS 16:4
Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

A. The Lord Pitied Them. God’s people were in great need and the Lord looked to their need.

* Philippians 4:19- But my God shall supply all your need according to
his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

B. The Lord Provided for Them. He did not provide for them because of their prayers because they offered none that we know of.

C. He was Patient with Them in the beginning of their way. At a later time, when they had been under training for a longer period, they were severely punished for similar offenses.

* Numbers 21:4-7 ... And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. [5] And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. [6] And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. [7] Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

God gave them merciful allowances in the beginning. He knew they were ignorant and in a difficult situation. He was giving them time to grow for He is longsuffering. Numbers 21 shows that the Lord does deal with our sin.

D. He was Proving Them. God was testing them to see if they would be faithful or not. This is why the Lord may allow tests in your life too in order to find out if you will obey Him. Some folks, unfortunately, spurn the favor of God and His blessings. They will not submit to Him or trust Him.

* Isaiah 26:10- Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Have you learned righteousness from God’s blessings or do you take credit for what He did?

God promised to rain bread from Heaven to provide for the needs of His people. As we journey through this wonderful chapter, we are going to find that it is a treasure chest full of jewels that reflect the glory and radiance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The manna or bread from Heaven is a wonderful type and picture of the living Word and the written Word of God. The manna is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Scriptures. Both of these are closely related because the Word of God points to the Son of God.

* Psalm 40:7- Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is
written of me,  
* John 5:39- Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.  

In Exodus 16:4, we find first of all that the manna was a supernatural gift.  
* It was not a product of earth.  
* It was not made by man.  
* It was not brought out of Egypt.  
* It came down from Heaven.  
* It was a miraculous gift from God, furnished by the Lord Himself.  

Beloved, God’s Word is given to us by divine inspiration. Its source is from Heaven. It is God’s gift to us.  
* 2 Peter 1:21- For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.  
* 2 Timothy 3:16- All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:  

The Bible is our spiritual food that we need to grow in our faith and relationship with Christ. We derive spiritual strength for service from the Word of God.  
* 1 Peter 2:2- As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:  
* Matthew 4:4- But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.  

Not only are the Scriptures God’s gift to us, but the Lord Jesus Christ is God the Father’s gift to the world. He is from Heaven and not from this earth. Through Christ we have eternal life.  
* John 3:16- For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.  
* Romans 6:23- For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.  

Jesus Christ is the Bread of Heaven.  
* John 6:31-35... Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. [32] Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. [33] For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth
life unto the world. [34] Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. [35] And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.
* John 6:47-51... Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. [48] I am that bread of life. [49] Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. [50] This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. [51] I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Secondly, the manna was given to them by God even when they were rebellious, murmuring, and complaining. God demonstrated His love, mercy, and grace while they were rebellious and ungrateful. He did this when He gave His Son to us to die for our sins.
* Romans 5:8- But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

The manna fell in the Wilderness of Sin. Nothing describes more perfectly the character of this world when Jesus came from Heaven to earth. A wilderness of sin was the world to Jesus. It was a wilderness, but what do we mean by the word “wilderness?”

A wilderness is a homeless place, not a place for condo’s, apartments, duplexes, or castles. A homeless place was this world to the Lord. There was no room in the inn at His birth in Bethlehem. There were few homes to lay His head during the days of His public ministry. His crucified body was placed in a borrowed tomb.

Notice in the third place that the bread from Heaven would not do for tomorrow. A new supply was needed for each day. Howard Hendricks spoke of his visit to Yellowstone National Park. He said, “If you’ve ever been to Yellowstone National Park, you were probably given a piece of paper by a ranger at the park entrance. On it in big letters was the warning Do Not Feed the Bears. You no sooner drive into the heart of the park, however, than you see people feeding the bears. When I first saw this I asked a ranger about it. ‘Sir,’ he answered, ‘you have only a small part of the picture.’ He described how the park service personnel in the fall and winter have to carry away the bodies of dead bears -- bears who have lost their ability to fend for food.” That's what's happening to us when it comes to our spiritual nourishment.

Your soul requires the same attention as your body. Spiritual
attention is just as important as physical attention. When you are spiritually weak, it affects you both physically and emotionally. Would a person be in good health if he ate only one big meal on Sunday? NO! So would a person be in good spiritual health if he drew strength from God’s Word only on Sunday at church? NO! We are to draw strength from the Lord and His Word daily. Our prayer should be that of Matthew 6:11.

* Matthew 6:11- Give us this day our daily bread.

Yesterday is gone. You need fresh spiritual food for today. Don’t make the mistake of living in the past. Take one day at a time and live for Christ today. Make today count for Him. It may be your last.

When Israel gathered the manna, what were they to do with it? Look at it? Were they to admire it? No, it was to be eaten for food. God’s Word has been provided for us to be our spiritual food. In all the correct eating of food, there are three important elements which include appropriation, mastication, and assimilation.

1. Appropriation-

This involves getting a portion of food for yourself and eating it. The spiritual manna of the Scriptures is exhaustless. All that we need for spiritual strength is at our disposal. We are to take God’s Word into our lives and hearts and make it our own. Faith personalizes the Scripture. Jesus is not only “the Savior,” He is to be MY Savior.

2. Mastication-

This involves chewing the food carefully and slowly. Many swallow quickly and eat hurriedly, leading to stomach pains. Christians make the same mistakes because they don’t use their spiritual teeth. The Bread of Life needs to be chewed or meditated upon. It needs to be read, read again, and pondered. This is where the strength comes from.

* Joshua 1:8- This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

* Psalm 1:1-2... Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. [2] But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Take a verse or passage at the beginning of the day and meditate upon it. Write it on paper and carry it with you though the day. Think about what it says. Pray over it and ask the Lord to show you insights
from it. Ponder the words separately. Ask questions prompted by the verse and write down your thoughts. At night when you lie down, continue to think about it as you go to sleep. Keep a pen, paper, and flashlight by your bed so if you awaken with an insight, you can write it down and go back to sleep. The most blessed truths I have gotten are the ones the Lord gave me in the middle of the night. Those insights have been recorded in the books we have written.

C. Assimilation-

This is when the food becomes a part of your body, giving it strength and health. Spiritual food that is taken into your soul will nourish your faith and supply strength for your daily walk and service for Christ. It will be a safeguard against the “germs” of temptation that assail us every day.

* Psalm 119:11- Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. The word “hid” is from the Hebrew word *tsaphan* (*tsaw-fan’*) which not only means to hide, but “to treasure, to store up or hide from discovery or theft.” We are to treat God’s Word like a wonderful treasure. It is to be valuable to us and we should do what we can to keep Satan from snatching it from our hearts.

* Mark 4:15- And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

We are to make the Bible a part of our lives and put it into practice daily. This book will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from this book. What you do with the Word of God will determine what God will do with you. The Agta people in the northern Philippines recognize this. They use the word "*madagat*" to describe the Word of God. "Madagat" can mean stinging, venomous, or potent. A poisonous snake is "madagat." On the other hand, doctors have discovered that the venom of some poisonous snakes make good medicine for heart patients.

The Word of God is "*madagat*." If we disregard it, it is like the bite of a poisonous snake, but if we live by it, it gives us life just like the medicine used by heart patients.
II. THE PREPARATIONS FOR WORSHIP 16:5-6

And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. [6] And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt:

On the sixth day, God would provide His people twice as much manna compared to the other days. As we will see later, His provision was to help them prepare for the Sabbath day of worship. Worship is important to the Lord and proper worship demands preparation. Many folks do not enjoy church or get much out of church because they are unprepared when they attend. Some are so exhausted from staying up late the night before that they cannot concentrate on the sermon. Prepare your heart for worship.

*2 Chronicles 12:14- And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord.*

III. THE PREACHING AGAINST SIN 16:7-9

And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord; for that he heareth your murmurings against the Lord: and what are we, that ye murmur against us? [8] And Moses said, This shall be, when the Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord. [9] And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the Lord: for he hath heard your murmurings.

Moses addressed the issue of their murmuring, “God hears your griping! He will provide meat and bread but rest assured, your griping is against Him, not us.” The Lord was doing the leading and the providing. When the Lord provides, you will understand that He is the Lord.
IV. THE PROVISION FOR ISRAEL  16:10-15, 31

And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. [11] And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, [12] I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God. [13] And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. [14] And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. [15] And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. [31] And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

In verse number ten, we find that in the fourth place, the glory of the Lord was linked with the giving of the manna. This is the first time we read of the appearing of the glory of the Lord in Scripture. What a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ. It was not until the Son of God, the Bread of Life, became incarnate, God in the flesh, was the glory of the Lord fully revealed to mankind.

*John 1:14- And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

*2 Corinthians 4:6- For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

In the Living Manna, the glory of the Lord was revealed. Jesus Christ was our object lesson in understanding God and who He is. Because of the Lord Jesus Christ, we learn what true love is all about. We learn forgiveness, kindness, true joy and peace, patience, sacrifice, humility, and serving others. Jesus lived these traits before us to teach us.

God promised them flesh and bread until their hearts were content. That night quails came and covered the camp. The quail regularly migrates from Syria and Arabia in autumn, and winters in the interior of
Africa. In the spring, it returns northward in immense masses. When quail approach the coast after a long flight over the Red Sea, they are often so exhausted that they fall to the ground and are easily taken by hand or killed with sticks. Their flesh is regarded as a great delicacy.

God in His mercy provided meat for them at this particular time. Down the road, they will gripe, complain, and lust after flesh again. In Numbers 11, God promised one month of quail until it would come out of their nostrils as they vomited it up and loathed it. A plague would break out among the people. For this reason, we should be careful for what we pray for!

Notice in the fifth place, that the manna came right to where the people were encamped. There was no long journey across the wilderness. It was right at hand and was readily accessible. Beloved, God's Word is accessible to us. The Lord Jesus Christ is accessible. He is ready, willing, and waiting to save us, forgive us, cleanse us, and speak to us through His Word which is His love letter to us.

Because the manna was outside the tents, they had to do something with it. Accessibility leads to responsibility and obligation. They were either to gather the manna or trample it. We are in the same position as the Israelites. God has given us access to Him, but also to His Word. To whom much is given, much is required.

We have a responsibility to know His Word, know the Lord, and proclaim His message. Ignorance is no excuse for us! We will gather it unto our souls or else we will trample Him and His Word under foot by our apathy, neglect, and indifference. Get into the Book! We will be held accountable. One of the great ironies of our day that I have observed is that most Bible conferences or Preaching conferences I have attended, there has been very little Bible preaching. Most messages are philosophical or motivational speeches. Yuk! Will someone please preach the Word?!

The Bible is actually a beautiful "love letter" from God, and the writer of Psalm 119 admonishes us to delight in its message and to meditate upon its contents. How sad that many Christians neglect it!! Sadder still that countless lost souls have never opened the Book at all.

When Elizabeth Barrett became the wife of Robert Browning, her parents disowned her because they disapproved of the marriage. The daughter, however, wrote almost every week, telling them that she loved them and longed for reconciliation. After 10 years she received a huge box in the mail that contained all the notes she had sent. Not one had
been opened! Although these "love letters" have become an invaluable part of classical English literature, it's really pathetic to think that they were never read by Elizabeth Barrett's parents. Had they looked at just one, the broken relationship with their daughter might have been healed.

All of us are alienated from God because of sin, but He has provided a way of reconciliation. In the Bible He tells about it, and also expresses His earnest longing for fellowship with us. If you are a born-again child of God, how precious His love message from Heaven ought to be to you! Are you reading it often? If you are not a Christian and pay no attention to the Bible, you're no different from Elizabeth Barrett's parents. You're cheating yourself, and someday you'll stand before God condemned and lost forever. Then you'll wish you had opened and read His "love letter" to you. Why not do it right now?

A sixth feature of the manna was the fact that it was gathered in the morning. Beloved, start your day with the Word and time with the Lord before other matters cloud your mind.

* Matthew 6:33-But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

George Washington’s secretary, Robert Lewis, wrote that it was the President’s custom to go to his library at 4:00 in the morning for his devotions. He concluded each day with Bible reading and prayer.

A seventh element of the manna was the fact that it was small in size.

* Numbers 11:7- And the manna was as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium.

A small pea in our culture comes about as close as anything to describing the size of manna. The size reminds us that things do not have to be big and large to be of great value. The sum total of God’s revealed truth is in a wonderful book which can be carried in your pocket or a purse. It has over 793,000 words, 3 ½ million letters, 1189 chapters, and 66 books. God’s Word may be a small volume, but it has all that we need:

1. To teach us about Salvation
2. To Sustain us daily and give us Strength
3. To give us Stability
4. To know the Source of Life and Creation

Manna was round, reminding us that God’s original Word, that was given to us through His prophets and apostles, is perfect, complete, entire, and eternal like a circle.
**1 Peter 1:23-** Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

According to Exodus 16:13-14, it looks like the manna was given in the night, in the darkness, which is again another reminder of the fact that Christ came to us and died for us while we were in spiritual darkness.

**Romans 5:8-** But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

**An eighth element about manna was the fact that it was a free gift from God (vs. 15).** There was no charge. It was not earned or won like a prize. The manna was freely given by God’s grace and love. In the same manner, Jesus was freely given to us. His salvation is free if we will by faith put our trust in Him.

The land of Persia was once ruled by a wise and beloved Shah who cared greatly for his people and desired only what was best for them. One day he disguised himself as a poor man and went to visit the public baths. The water for the baths was heated by a furnace in the cellar, so the Shah made his way to the dark place to sit with the man who tended the fire. The two men shared the coarse food, and the Shah befriended him in his loneliness. Day after day the ruler went to visit the man. The worker became attached to this stranger because he "came where he was". One day the Shah revealed his true identity, and he expected the man to ask him for a gift. Instead, he looked long into his leader's face and with love and wonder in his voice said, "You left your palace and your glory to sit with me in this dark place, to eat my coarse food, and to care about what happens to me. On others you may bestow rich gifts, but to me you have given yourself!"

As we think of what our Lord has done for us, we can echo that fire tender's sentiments. Oh, what a step our Lord took -- from Heaven to the heckles of the earth, from the worship of angels to the wrath of cruel men, from glory place to the gory place, Christ gave Himself to us.

**John 3:16-** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

**Romans 6:23-** For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**2 Corinthians 9:15-** Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

**The ninth fact that we will take note of about the manna was the fact that it was white.** It was called “manna” which means “What is it?” The fact that it was white would make it easy to see. God is practical and
His Word is practical. He wants us to understand His truth and put it into practice. The fact that it was white in color also speaks of the spotless purity of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word.

* 2 Corinthians 5:21 - For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

* Hebrews 4:15 - For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

* 1 Peter 2:22- Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

* Psalm 119:140 - Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.

The tenth trait of the manna that we will address is the fact that the manna was sweet to the taste (vs. 31). The Lord Jesus Christ is the honey that sweetens our bitter sorrows. It is a source of sweetness for our famished soul.

* Psalm 104:34 - My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.

* Psalm 119:103 - How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

* Psalm 19:9-10... The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. [10] More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

A man in Kansas City was severely injured in an explosion. Evangelist Robert L. Summer tells about him in his book The Wonder of the Word of God. The victim's face was badly disfigured, and he lost his eyesight as well as both hands. He was just a new Christian, and one of his greatest disappointments was that he could no longer read the Bible. Then he heard about a lady in England who read braille with her lips. Hoping to do the same, he sent for some books of the Bible in braille. Much to his dismay, however, he discovered that the nerve endings in his lips had been destroyed by the explosion. One day, as he brought one of the braille pages to his lips, his tongue happened to touch a few of the raised characters and he could feel them. Like a flash he thought, I can read the Bible using my tongue. At the time Robert Sumner wrote his book, the man had "read" through the entire Bible four times. Beloved, we have no excuse for not taking the time to read or listen to the Word of God.
V. THE PRESCRIPTION FOR MEALS  16:16-18, 36

This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. [17] And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. [18] And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. [36] Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.

Manna was everywhere! Mrs. Moses’ Book on 1001 Ways to Cook Manna was a best seller. Every man was to gather the manna for his meals. Each man was personally responsible for himself and his household. Beloved, receiving Christ as your Savior is your responsibility. As fathers, we are to tell our children about Christ and make sure that the whole family goes to church.

An omer of manna was to be gathered for every one of the two to two and a half million souls. An omer is approximately six pints. Others say it is about two quarts. Based on six pints, they would gather 12 million pints of manna a day which equaled around 9 million pounds. For a one day supply, they would need enough manna to fill ten trains with thirty railroad cars. Each car can carry fifteen tons. Millions of tons of manna were gathered each year for 40 years. This was no problem for God. He’s rich! God was demonstrating the truth of Ephesians 3:20.

* Ephesians 3:20- Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

* Philippians 4:19- But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Some folks gathered more and some less. Every man gathered according to his own appetite. Let me ask, “How strong is your appetite for the Lord and for His Word?” Do you hunger to know God’s Word and fellowship with the Lord or do you have little or no appetite? Notice the challenge of Peter.

* I Peter 2:2- As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

The reason why some have little appetite for the Bread of Heaven is because they are feeding on something else such as popularity, prestige, possessions, position, or power. Some folks have no appetite because they are spiritually sick. Are you?
VI. THE PIG-HEADEDNESS OF THE PEOPLE 16:19-21

And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. [20] Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. [21] And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

None of the manna was to be left until morning. This was the command of the Lord. The composition of the manna would inspire the Israelites to make haste about collecting their manna each day. Delay would mean a deficient amount collected. God's gifts never promote sloth. What was gathered was to be used.

Beloved, there is always a crowd that think their way is better than God's way. They feel they don't have to obey the rules or follow His instructions. The folks that were stubborn or pig-headed kept the manna until morning in an attempt to hoard it. The result was it bred worms and stank. When we disobey the Lord, guess what? We end up stinking up our lives too! Some probably thought, "If I gather a bunch today, I won't have to work as hard tomorrow. Maybe I can sell the extra manna." Some may have thought there would not be enough the next day. Their attitudes bring forth several important lessons.

A. What was gathered was to be used. We are to use what God has given to us. We are to apply Bible truth in our life and put it into practice. We are to live out the Word and share it with others. Christians are not to hoard the truths of Scripture or Jesus Christ. Tell others about the Lord!

B. What was gathered yesterday is now in the past. We are to gather new bread today. Don't live in the past.

* Matthew 6:11 - Give us this day our daily bread.

New opportunities for service to the Lord and others present themselves almost every day. Don't waste them.

C. Learn to trust the Lord's care one day at a time. Trust His care for you.

* Proverbs 3:5-6... Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. [6] In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

D. The manna was to be gathered early or else it would melt in the sun. Opportunities for blessings are lost when we delay to act or do nothing at all. If they delayed in gathering the manna, they would lose it.
If you delay in trusting in Christ for your salvation, you will be lost forever in Hell if you die without Him. Now is the day to be saved!

* 2 Corinthians 6:2 - (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

* Isaiah 55:6- Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

We are also reminded again to walk with God in the morning. Seek the Lord also early in your life.

* Ecclesiastes 12:1- Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

VII. THE PRIORITY OF THE SABBATH  16:22-26

And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. [23] And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. [24] And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. [25] And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the Lord: to day ye shall not find it in the field. [26] Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.

God provided a double portion of manna for His people on the sixth day so they could rest and worship Him on the Sabbath day. What they prepared was preserved on this day. It did not rot or stink because they were following God’s directions. What a truth! When we follow God’s directions in our own lives, our lives will not rot or stink in spite of any trials that we might encounter in our lives. God compensated His people for obeying Him and He will abundantly bless you too. When a church obeys God’s instructions, He will bless that church. When a businessman obeys God’s instructions, He will bless the business. When a Christian puts God first, especially in his finances, he will bless that Christian and care for him.

If the Lord went to all this trouble for them to worship Him on the
day of rest and worship, don’t you think we should do what we can to
attend church on Sunday. Shouldn’t church be a priority to us? I think
so! Beloved, if church is not important to Christians, then why should it
be important to someone who is lost?

VIII. THE PERSISTENT RESISTANCE  16:27

_And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the
seventh day for to gather, and they found none._

Moses told them, “Don’t go into the fields tomorrow. You
won’t find anything out there.” Some evidently believed,
“He’s crazy! He doesn’t know what he is talking about. We know more
than Moses!” These folks went out on the Sabbath to gather manna, but
found none.

I never cease to be amazed at the people who think they know more
than God. Beloved, when we disobey God’s instructions and do our own
thing, we too, will come up empty.

IX. THE PERTURBED REBUKE  16:28-30

_And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my
commandments and my laws? [29] See, for that the Lord hath given
you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of
two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his
place on the seventh day. [30] So the people rested on the seventh day._

God’s rebuke revealed how He feels when we will not obey
Him. When we are rebellious and disobedient, He is not
happy at all. We are to make up our mind to do what is right and follow
the Lord.

X. THE POT OF MANNA  16:32-35

_And Moses said, This is the thing which the Lord commandeth, Fill
an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the
bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you
forth from the land of Egypt. [33] And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a
pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the
Lord, to be kept for your generations. [34] As the Lord commanded
Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. [35] And
the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a
land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

The Hebrews put some manna in a special jar as a reminder of the way God provided for them in the wilderness. The pot was laid before the Lord with the Testimony which was two tables of stones containing the Ten Commandments. Eventually the pot of manna, the tables of stones, and Aaron’s rod were put into the Ark of the Covenant.

* The Tables of Stone: They are a reminder of their sin of the golden calf. The law of God demanded death for sin.
* The Pot of Manna: This was a reminder of their murmuring unbelief in the desert.
* Aaron’s rod: This was a reminder of the rebellion and pride of Korah against Moses. The blood that was applied to the mercy seat of the Ark atoned for their sin.

The manna lasted until Canaan was reached. This reminds us again of the inexhaustible supply of God for His people. The manna was despised by those who were not the Lord’s people.

* Numbers 11:4-6... And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? [5] We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: [6] But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.

The manna of His Word is not acceptable to the unsaved today.

* 1 Corinthians 2:14- But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

May we not mimic the world’s attitude, but show our gratitude daily for what the Lord has done for us.

* He descended that we might ascend (John 6:38, 14:3).
* He became poor that we might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9, James 2:5).
* He was born that we might be born again (John 1:14, 3:2,7).
* He had no home that we might have a home in Heaven (Matt.8:20)
* He was hungry that we might be fed (Matt. 4:2; John 6:50).
* He was thirsty that we might be satisfied (John 19:26).
* He was stripped that we might be clothed (Matt. 27:28; Galatians 3:27).
* He was sad that we might become glad (Isaiah 53:3; Philippians 4:4).
* He was bound that we might go free (Matt. 27:2; John 8:32-36).
* He was made sin that we might be made righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21).
* He died that we might live (John 5:24, 25).
* He came down that we might be caught up (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).
Chapter 5

Waterless in the Wilderness

Exodus 17:1-7

Have you ever had times when one thing after another goes wrong. Consider this story of a bricklayer who had a very bad day and was filing a claim with his insurance company. Here is what he said: "I am writing in response to your request for additional information. In block number 3 of the accident reporting form, I put, "Poor Planning", as the cause of my accident. You said in your letter that I should explain more fully, and I trust that the following details will be sufficient:

I am a bricklayer by trade. On the day of the accident, I was working alone on the roof of a ten-story building. When I completed my work, I discovered I had about 500 pounds of bricks left over. Rather than carry them down by hand, I decided to lower them to the ground in a barrel by using a pulley which, fortunately, was attached to the side of the building at the tenth floor.

Securing the rope at ground level, I went to the roof, loaded the 500 pounds of bricks, then went back down to the ground and untied the rope, holding it tightly to insure a slow descent of the 500 pounds of bricks. (You will note in block 11 of the accident reporting form that I weigh 135 pounds). Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rapid rate up the side of the building. In the vicinity of the fifth floor, I met the barrel coming down. This explains the fractured skull and broken collarbone.

I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were two knuckles deep into the pulley. Fortunately, by this time I had regained my presence of mind and was able to hold tightly to
the rope in spite of my pain. At approximately this same time, however, the barrel of bricks hit the ground, and the bottom fell out of the barrel.

Devoid of the weight of the bricks, the barrel now weighed approximately 30 pounds. I refer you again to my weight in block number 11 of the accident reporting form. As you might imagine, I began a rapid descent down the side of the building. In the vicinity of the fifth floor, I met that barrel coming up again! This accounts for the two fractured ankles and lacerations of my legs and lower body.

The second encounter with the barrel slowed me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell into the pile of bricks, and fortunately, only three vertebrae were cracked. I am sorry to report, however, that as I lay there on the bricks -- in pain and unable to stand -- watching the empty barrel ten stories above me -- I again lost my presence of mind -- I LET GO OF THE ROPE!” Ouch! Beloved, this poor guy definitely had a bad day.

Israel was going to be faced with a bad day too in the wilderness. Since their departure from Egypt, the Hebrews have faced several trials. They needed to learn that their extremities were God’s opportunities.

* A Blocking Sea was parted.
* Bitter water as purified.
* Bread from Heaven was provided for their hunger.

God has enrolled His people into the School of Hard Knocks to knock off the rough edges in their lives. Their classes are in Faith 101, and Trials & Tribulations 401. So far, they are not making very good grades. They are not learning their lessons well. Are you? God’s people are faced again with another assignment, another trial and problem. They are running on empty.

* 1 Corinthians 10:11- Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. God has for us some lessons here. Notice verse one.

I. THE INVENTORY OF WATER 17:1

And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink.

You know it's going to be a bad day when you wake up in a hospital in traction and your insurance agent tells you that
your accident policy covers falling off the roof, but not hitting the ground. You know it’s a bad day when....

* You wake up face down on the pavement.
* You call suicide prevention and they put you on hold.
* You see a 60 Minutes news team waiting in your office.
* Your twin sister forgets your birthday.
* Your horn goes off accidentally and remains stuck as you follow a Hell’s Angels motorcycle gang on the highway.

The nation of Israel senses a bad day. They are out of water. They are waterless in the wilderness. This trial is more severe than the bitter waters of Marah. They have no water at all now. The last drops in their water skins were exhausted. The scouting reports were dry and bleak. Why was the Lord leading them through one trial and problem after another? The reason is the same as why He does this with you.

God allows us to be waterless in the wilderness. He was trying to teach them lessons in faith and trust. He does this with us too. The Lord allows the trial so we will grow and mature, not just endure. Learning and growing are not easy things to do. It requires that we have a teachable spirit and humility. Our pride and “Know it All” attitude get in the way of learning.

**If we fail to learn the lessons of our trials, the Lord leads us to face more trials until we develop the character that God wants us to have and purge the sinfulness from our lives.**

* If you have problems with people, the Lord may want to teach you lessons in patience, forgiveness, loving the unlovely, and overcoming anger and bitterness.
* If you have problems with money, He may be trying to teach you lessons in faith, trust, dependence upon God, and in tithing.
* If you have problems with your health, lessons in prayer and the fact that the Lord is our healer may need to be learned.
* If you have problems with failure, the Lord may be trying to help you overcome pride, develop humility, patience, and learn the importance of organization and hard work.

*James 1:3-4... Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. [4] But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

Dr. A.T. Pierson once wrote, "In a paper mill what a contrast between the heap of filthy rags at one end and the pure and spotless white paper at the other! What a trial the rags go through before they emerge in
this new form! Torn to pieces and ground to pulp, bleached with chloride of lime 'til all stains are removed, washed over and over; submitted to another bleaching by the action of chlorine and alum; washed again, 'til the pulp is white as cream or snowflakes! Caught upon a wire cylinder, after the severe shaking by the Fourdrinier process which crosses the fibers and gives compactness and firmness to the fabric; and then passed between and around the hot surfaces which makes the paper smooth and even -- how like the Divine discipline by which our filthiness is cleansed away; how like the tribulation out of which all come up who have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb!"

As a baker prepares pies, bread, cakes, or cookies, God was preparing His people for the sweetness of His blessings. When the baker prepares to cook, he will pound the dough, knead it, roll it out flat and cut it. It is interesting to note that before the Hebrews arrived at Rephidim they went to Dophkah, then Alush, and then Rephidim.

* Numbers 33:11-14 ...And they removed from the Red sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin. [12] And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah. [13] And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush. [14] And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink.

Notice the meaning of these three places. They remind us of the deeds of a baker as he prepares his bread. In this case, a Divine Baker.

* Dophkah= to knock or beat
* Alush= to knead as dough
* Rephidim= to spread out, to rest or support

God wanted Rephidim to be a place of rest and resting in His care. Beloved true rest comes from within and it is a gift from the Lord.

* Matthew 11:28- Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Do you know this rest? If you are waterless in the wilderness, then learn to wait and rest on the Lord.

II. THE INDIGNATION OF ISRAEL  17:2-3

*Therefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the Lord? [3] And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?
Hunger tears away at one organ of the body, the stomach. Thirst, however, grips the whole being. It affects the brain and burns and rages like fever in the blood. Every nerve throbs with acute suffering. The words “I thirst” were the only expression of physical suffering from the Lord on the cross. The Hebrews here cried for water but none was to be found. The desert sands said, “There’s none here!” The jagged cliffs of majestic mountains cried, “We are all out!” The brazen skies said, “We don’t have any either!”

The heads of the Hebrews were inflamed with irrationality. Their hearts were flaming with fury against Moses. Their hands were clutching stones, ready to be hurled like fast balls at any moment. Their circumstances were in control of them and emotionally they were out of control. They were suffering a panic attack and a temper tantrum at the same time and they chided Moses.

The word “chide” is from the Hebrew word *riyḥ* (reeh). This word forms the basis of the name "Meribah." The word means "strive, quarrel, be in contention" and even "litigation." The translation "chide" does not appear to capture the magnitude of what is being done here. The people have a legal dispute – they are contending with Moses as if bringing a lawsuit. After all they have seen the Lord do, they are without excuse for their behavior.

God’s people have seen the plagues of Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, the pillar of cloud and fire, the purification of bitter waters, and the provision of manna. Still they are perplexed, pessimistic, paganistic, and peevish. They questioned, “Is the Lord among us?” (vs.7). They were suffering from doubt of God’s presence, providence, and promises.

Beloved, when our passion and anger are uncontrolled and in control of us, we can be guilty of awesome absurdities, acting like mad men, and attack verbally and physically our dearest friends or loved ones. The solution to our problem is in Proverbs 15.

* Proverbs 15:1- A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. We are in desperate need of the Holy Spirit’s help in gaining self control.

* Proverbs 16:32- He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

* Proverbs 25:28- He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

* James 3:2- For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in
word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

Notice that the people blame Moses and complain to Him, but God was doing the leading. Moses reminded them they were tempting the Lord with their attitudes. Ingratitude, griping, and a lack of faith provoke the Lord.

* Psalm 78:56 - Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:
* Psalm 78:19- Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?
* Psalm 106: 13-14... They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel: [14] But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.

When you are waterless in wilderness, do you blame others for your problems or do you cry out to God? Men have a spiritual thirst for pardon, holiness, and salvation. Learning won't satisfy this thirst. Riches or pleasure won't satisfy it either. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can quench the longing in your heart.

* John 4:14- But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

III. THE INTERCESSION OF MOSES 17:4

And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.

Moses demonstrated great patience and restraint. How did he do this and why?

* Love for the people.
* Leaning upon the Lord.
* He Learned to be content.

Moses is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ in this situation for he does not revile back at the people.

* 1 Peter 2:23- Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

The people threatened to stone Moses. This is the first time stoning is mentioned in the Bible. Stoning was the last stage of rejection of a leader in Israel. These folks were stoned.

* David at Ziglag
* Adoram at Shechem
* Jesus (John 10:31). I believe they may have thrown rocks at the Lord
during the crucifixion process. This was a common custom of that day.
* Stephen (Acts 7:58)
* Paul (Acts 14:19)

Moses in this situation responded properly to the problem. He
called out to God for directions. Moses has been learning to trust God
and will continue to need to learn. May we learn the same lessons as he
learned. Beloved, remember the Lord will not allow anything in your life
that you cannot handle.

* 1 Corinthians 10:13- There hath no temptation taken you but such as
is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be
tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a
way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Warren Wiersbe put it this way, “When God permits His children
to go through the furnace of affliction, He keeps His eye on the clock and
His hand on the thermostat.” An old seaman said, "In fierce storms we
can do but one thing. There is only one way (to survive); we must put the
ship in a certain position and keep her there." Commenting on this idea,
Richard Fuller wrote: “This, Christian, is what you must do. Sometimes,
like Paul, you can see neither sun nor stars, and no small tempest lies on
you. Reason cannot help you. Past experiences give you no light. Only
a single course is left. You must stay upon the Lord; and come what may
-- winds, waves, cross seas, thunder, lightning, frowning rocks, roaring
breakers -- no matter what, you must lash yourself to the helm and hold
fast your confidence in God's faithfulness and His everlasting love in
Christ Jesus.” Christ is to be the pilot of our lives.

Beloved, if you are waterless in the wilderness, running on empty,
or on the verge of a panic attack, the Lord has allowed this in your life to
teach you that He can supply your every need no matter what
circumstances you are in right now.

IV. THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR BLESSING  17:5-6

And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take
with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smetest
the river, take in thine hand, and go. [6] Behold, I will stand before
thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and
there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses
did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.
God told Moses to take His rod and smite the rock in Horeb and water would come forth from the rock. This water came forth in abundance.

* Psalm 78:15-16... He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. [16] He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.

* Psalm 114:8- Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.

The Lord was demonstrating again that in the greatest of difficulties, He can open the fountains of blessing and provision where we least expect it. He makes a way in the wilderness and He will make a way for you if you are scared, lost, or confused. Horeb means "barren or desolate," a fitting picture of men without Christ. Yet, the Lord can bring forth life in a barren, empty life.

* Isaiah 43:19-20... Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. [20] The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.

God was also demonstrating His grace to these people again. The Bible says, "Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds." These folks griped and complained. In essence, they were rebelling against the Lord, yet, He provided for them anyway. Jesus did this for us when He died on the cross.

* Romans 5:8 - But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

God’s provision for sinful man was the Lord Jesus Christ. This is seen here in this chapter. The smitten rock is a picture of our Lord when He was crucified.

* I Corinthians 10:1-4... Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; [2] And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; [3] And did all eat the same spiritual meat; [4] And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

* Psalm 78:35- And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer.

* Psalm 95:1- O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful
noise to the rock of our salvation.

Christ is not only the Rock, He is the smitten rock.

* Isaiah 53:5 - But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

* He was smitten by His own, whom He came to redeem.
* He was smitten in His spirit by deep ingratitude, bitter taunts, and the weight of our sins.
* He was smitten in His body by power and suffering. From the crown of thorns in His punctured brow, from the lacerating nails in His hands and feet, from the cat of nine tails that cut into His back, side, and chest, from the agonizing death of crucifixion, Jesus was smitten for us. He had to be smitten in order that we might have the living water of eternal life.

* John 4:14- But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

* John 7:38- He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Jesus is the smitten rock from which flows ....

* the springs that save,
* the streams that satisfy,
* the fountain that fills us with joy unspeakable,
* the river that redeems and revives us.

Don’t try to quench your thirst from the mud puddles of this world. Those puddles will leave you meager, messed up, misled, and melancholy. This carnal world says, “You don’t need God.” Yes, you do beloved! This world promises, “Money will satisfy you!” No, it won’t for you can never have enough. The world claims, “Free sex is the way to live!” Immorality is not free, however. In fact, it is very expensive. If you throw away your purity as a virgin, you will never get it back. The price of venereal disease, guilt, an unwanted pregnancy, a ruined future, broken relationships, and the chastisement or judgment of God is a heavy, costly burden to bear. This world will deceive you by telling you to get what you want, but they fail to tell you that you will lose what you had. Sin will enslave your life.

A little brother and sister went to spend the summer with their grandparents. One day the grandfather made the little boy a slingshot. He said, “Now be careful with this son, and never shoot rocks at people or animals.” “OK, Grandpa,” he solemnly promised. He spent the next
few days firing rocks at trees, cans, and other make-believe antagonists.

Then one morning he saw far across the pond his grandma’s pet duck. Not really aiming, he let fly a rock. It arched through the air and hit the duck squarely in the head. The little boy, fearing the wrath of his grandparent’s, desperately searched for a place to hide the dead duck. Finding the perfect place, he hid the duck under the pile of firewood near the barn. As he stood up congratulating himself on his cover-up scheme, he noticed his sister watching him from the front porch, “Lunch is ready brotherrrrrrrr.” She drew out the word “brother” ever so sweetly and sarcastically. The brother’s spirit fell for he knew that she saw everything.

All through lunch he was silent. His food sat in his stomach like lead. He waited for his sister to expose his crime. She smiled and sat silently eating her sandwich. Then the grandmother spoke up, “Sally, will you help me with the dishes?” “I’d be happy to do that Grandma,” she replied, “but Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen today. Didn’t you Johnny?” Johnny was considering whether to protest or not, but she leaned toward him and whispered as she left the room, “Remember the duck!” Johnny sat there in grim silence, realizing bad days were ahead.

The rest of the week was a nightmare for Johnny. He skipped a fishing trip so he could help make supper, and then he graciously let his sister lick the fudge pan. After many days of doing his sister’s chores, he could take it no longer. “Grandma,” he tearfully confessed, “I didn’t mean to, but I killed your duck.” “I know Johnny,” she gave him a hug, “I was standing at the window. I saw the whole thing. Because I love you, I forgave you, but I had to wait until you were ready to come to me and ask forgiveness. I wondered how long you’d let your sister keep you a slave.” Beloved, sin will enslave you. Your only hope is in the redemption of Jesus Christ. He will break the shackles of your sin.

**Jesus Christ is the smitten Rock that satisfies our thirst.** In Him we see the diamonds of deity, the opal of obedience to His Father’s will, the sapphire of His saving grace, the polished marble of meekness and manliness, the ruby of redemption, the limestone of His love, and the granite of godliness and goodness. He is the Rock of all ages. Just as the rock had to be smitten to bring forth life-giving water, Christ had to be smitten on Calvary to bring forth life for us.

*Hebrews 9:22- And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*
In Numbers 20, a similar incident happened again. Almost 40 years later at Kadesh, the people were out of water again.

A. The Clamor of the People 20:1-5
   1. They Quarreled with Moses vs. 1-3
   2. They Questioned Moses vs. 4-5
   3. They Quit believing God vs. 5
B. The Cry to the Lord 20:6
C. The Counsel of the Lord 20:7-8
D. The Consequences of Disobedience 20:10-12

In his anger, Moses smote the rock twice instead of speaking to it. He is not allowed to enter the Promised Land. A comparison of these two chapters reveals interesting insights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exodus 17</th>
<th>Numbers 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. At the start of the journey.</td>
<td>1. At the close of their journey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. They murmur at Moses.</td>
<td>2. They murmur at Moses and Aaron.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Moses was told to smite the rock.</td>
<td>3. He was to speak to the rock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Moses was strong in faith and had self control.</td>
<td>4. Moses fails momentarily in faith and loses self control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Moses goes forward.</td>
<td>5. Moses does not go forward into the Promised Land.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why was Moses to speak to the rock in Numbers 20? Why was he disciplined severely and not allowed into the Promised Land? Remember that the rock is a picture of Jesus Christ. Moses was to speak to the rock because it had been already smitten. Jesus needed only to die once for the sins of the world. His work was complete on the cross.

* John 19:30 - When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.
* Romans 6:9-10 - Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. [10] For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.
* Hebrews 9:26 - For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.
* Hebrews 9:28 - So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without
sin unto salvation.

* Hebrews 10:10- By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Jesus arose from the grave and ascended to Heaven after His resurrection. He is at the right hand of His Father and dwells on high.

* Hebrews 10:12- But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

The resurrected picture of the ascension of Christ is seen in the words for “rock” in these two chapters. In Exodus 17, the word “rock” means “boulder” but in Numbers 20, a different word for “rock” is used. It means “a lofty, elevated rock.” Thank God we serve a living, risen, elevated Savior. Because He is alive, we can “go on.” This was God’s message to Moses in verse five. Go on! This is His message throughout the entire Bible. God forward for Christ.

* 1 Corinthians 15:58- Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

V. IMMORTALIZING THE PLACE 17:7

And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?

A new name was given to remember not the mercy of God’s provisions, but the sin of the murmuring of God’s people. The name “Massah” means “temptation.” They tempted God. The name “Meribah” means “strife or quarreling.” They chided with Moses. A remembrance of their sin was kept to warn future generations to take heed, not to make the same mistake. Sin leaves a blot upon the sinner. Cleansing is found in Christ alone.

* 1 John 1:7- But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Because of His love for us, we can have peace knowing that when we are waterless in the wilderness, He will care for us in the most unexpected ways.
Chapter 6
The Constant Conflict
Exodus 17:8-16

Have you ever been in a difficult situation or trial, and wondered what God was trying to do in your life or teach you? We can respond one out of two ways when we find ourselves in this predicament.

1. Trust the Lord

* Proverbs 3:5-6... Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. [6] In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

2. Be Troubled, doubtful, distressed, or angry.

The faith meter is running low for the Lord’s people and their “anger” thermometer is boiling over. There was no water at Rephidim. Israel wonders if the Lord is among them.

Beloved, when our circumstances overwhelm us, we put ourselves in a situation where we begin to weaken in our faith and in our trust in the Lord. We begin to wonder, “Where is God? Does He really care about me or not?” We begin to question His concern, care, and will for us. When this happens, we become as vulnerable as an injured animal on the African prairie. The prime target of lion, tigers, hyenas, and prairie dogs are the weak and injured animals. We become a prime target too when we are spiritually weak.

* 1 Peter 5:8 - Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: The context of this passage in 1 Peter deals with trials and overcoming circumstances. Satan knows this is one of his effective weapons. God’s counsel is found in verses 7,9-10.

* 1 Peter 5:7 - Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.
* 1 Peter 5:9-10. Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 
[10] But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

In Exodus 17, God’s people are weak, so Satan raises up his people to do his work. Notice verse eight.

I. THE CONFLICT 17:8-13
Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. [10] So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. [11] And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. [12] But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. [13] And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

The Amalekites attack God’s people in the wilderness. The attack occurred about two months after the Exodus, toward the end of May or early in June, when the Bedouins leave the lower plains in order to find pasture for their flocks on the cooler heights. The approach of the Israelites to Sinai would of course attract notice, and no cause of warfare is more common than a dispute for the right of pasturage. The Amalekites were at that time the most powerful race in the Peninsula. Here they took their position as the chief of the pagans. They were also the first among the pagans who attacked God’s people. This is the first attack out of Egypt and it will contain significant lessons for us as Christians. This attack was a despicable, unforgettable attack, much like the one at Pearl Harbor or the Alamo in Texas.

* 1 Samuel 15:2-3 ... Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. [3] Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.
* Deuteronomy 25:17-19... Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; [18] How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. [19] Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.

The Amalekites attacked the hindmost people. These were the ones who were elderly, weak, sick, pregnant, or faint. They were the ones farthest from the leader. This is a reminder that if we are going to have spiritual victory and strength, we need to stay close to our master and leader, the Lord Jesus Christ.

* John 15:4-5...Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. [5] I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

* Isaiah 40:31-But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Who are the Amalekites? Why are they attacking? They are attacking because a new source of water has been discovered. In the desert wilderness, if you drill a well, then you can claim the right to the land in that region. They want the water and are protecting their land and grazing areas.

Who are these people? Actually, the Amalekites are related to God’s people. The Amalekites are descendants of Esau. The Israelites are descendants of Esau’s brother, Jacob. So these people who are attacking them are related. The Amalekites become a constant enemy of Israel. King Saul, years later, would lose his throne because he spared King Agag of the Amalekites, disobeying God’s instructions. His disobedience later became a problem for Israel in Persia. A descendant of Agag was a man named Haman who schemed to destroy all the Jews and Mordecai because Mordecai would not bow to Haman.

This conflict between Israel and Amalek is a type or picture of the inward battle that Christians face every day. It is the battle between our flesh and the Spirit of God. Amalek means “a people that exhausts or consumes.” The Amalekites are a picture of the sinful desires
of our flesh that consume, destroy, and exhaust us like a person trying to free themselves from the bondage of a rope.

* Proverbs 11:3- The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.
* Proverbs 5:22- His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.
* Isaiah 5:18 - Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope:

Our flesh and the Holy Spirit are in constant conflict.

* Galatians 5:17- For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

When we trust Christ as our Savior, our flesh still continues to tug away at us. Our flesh contends with our new nature which is holy and pure. These two natures are in constant conflict. Paul described his despair over this conflict.

* Romans 7:24-25 ... O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? [25] I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

The custom of the torture of ancient tyrants was to tie the dead body to a person, back to back. This tactic was especially used to punish murderers. The living man was strapped with a dead body on his back. For the murderer, it was the body of the person he killed. It was rotting, putrid, corruptible, swarming with flies and maggots. The living man had to drag it everywhere. Such is the case of the believer. We have a new life in Christ, but we still drag our fleshly desires around with us.

Beloved, our flesh will always oppose us, but need not oppress us. It will ever conflict, but need not conquer. It will constantly harass and hassle, but need not hinder or harness us because of the power of the Holy Spirit who indwells every believer. Through the Holy Spirit we can get victory over our flesh.

* Philippians 3:3- For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

* Romans 13:14- But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

* 1 Corinthians 9:27- But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I
myself should be a castaway.

Joshua was chosen to lead the attack. This is the first mention of Joshua in the Bible. We find him battling for the Lord. In fact, he was one of the greatest military generals whoever lived. Moses was on top of the hill viewing the battle and praying for victory. As long as his hands were uplifted in prayer and steadied, the Hebrews prevailed in battle. We are reminded here of the fact that there is power in prayer, but it is also very hard work. Praying is intense and is one of our most effective weapons in spiritual warfare.

The word “steady” is from the Hebrew word 'emunah (em-oo-naw'). This word can also be translated “steadfast or faithful.” Beloved, when we are faithful to the Lord, we will be victorious Christians. God honors our faithfulness to Him. Quitting accomplishes nothing. We are also reminded that we will have victory with the help of the Lord and His Word. It is interesting to note that Joshua is the Old Testament name for Jesus. The “edge of the sword” is a wonderful reminder of the Word of God. Our help is in the Lord and His Word.

* Hebrews 4:12- For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
* Psalm 119:11- Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.
* Ephesians 6:17- And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Another insight from this passage is the fact that Moses’ hands were weak and heavy, yet the battle was won. What a reminder of the fact that our strength is made perfect in weakness.

* 2 Corinthians 12:9- And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

It is likely that the Hur mentioned here is the same man mentioned 1 Chronicles 2:19, who appears from the chronology in that chapter to have been the son of Caleb, the son of Ezron, the son of Pharez, the son of Judah. The rabbins and Josephus say he was the brother-in-law of Moses, having married his sister Miriam. He was a person in whom Moses put much confidence; for he left him conjoint governor of the people with Aaron, when he went to confer with God on the mount,
(Exodus 24:14). His grandson Bezaleel was the chief director in the work of the Tabernacle.

II. THE CHRONICLES  17:14

And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

Moses was to write down the incident for a memorial. This event was not to be forgotten. It is a good practice to write down in a journal the blessings of God and answers to our prayers, lest we forget what God has done for us.

III. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ALTAR  17:15-16

And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi: [16] For he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

Moses built an altar and called it Jehovah-nissi. The word “nissi” means “something lifted up or seen afar off; a banner.” Jehovah-nissi means “the Lord our banner.” The banner or flag was a rallying point and gave direction during a battle. They were used to signal the army and communicate with commanders. It was also used for identification in the camp. Different tribes and families had certain banners.

Beloved, the Lord is our banner. Jesus Christ is to be our rallying point. We are to be identified with Him as His ambassadors and be lifting Him up in our lives by pointing others to Him. We are to be in communication with Him, seeking His direction in prayer, heeding His Word, and the leading of His Spirit. Our directions are to come from God. His promise is to guide us if we will follow Him. He is our source of strength and victory.

* Psalm 32:8- I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.
* Proverbs 3:6- In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
* Romans 8:37- Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Is the Lord the banner of your life? In 1936 a radio broadcast was
transmitted to America from England. Just before the voice of King Edward VIII was to be heard, someone stumbled over a wire in the control room of WJZ (now WABC, New York) and snapped the only line of communication between the two great countries. The engineers were frantic. Then, with only a few moments remaining before air time a quick-thinking apprentice grasped the two broken ends of the wire and bridged the gap. Seconds later the King addressed the nation. In a real sense, his words were being transmitted through the body of that man! Beloved, God wants to use us to get His message across to a lost and dying world. Are you lifting up the Lord in your life?
Chapter 7
A Family Reunion
Exodus 18:1-12

Moses was a tremendous man of God. He was a man of great faith. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were also men of faith and love for God. They were men of faith, yet, they were not super humans or gods. There were no t-shirts with a big “S” on the front that they wore under their robes. They had their faults and weaknesses just like us. Day by day, problems afflicted their lives too. One problem all of these men faced was the fact they had problems and conflicts in their homes.

Does serving God mean that my home will be perfect? Unfortunately, the answer is “No.” Satan targets the home of God’s servants. He can give any pastor fits through his family. I thank God for my beautiful, loving, supportive wife and my seven great kids. They have been a blessing to me. Some men, however, suffer from a different situation in their home. Moses was a man of great faith, yet, it seems that he had a problem in his marriage. Let’s take a look.

I. THE REUNION 18:1-7

When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses’ father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt; [2] Then Jethro, Moses' father in law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, [3] And her two sons; of which the name of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land; [4] And the name of the other was Eliezer; for the God of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh: [5] And Jethro, Moses' father in law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God: [6] And he said unto Moses, I thy father in law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her. [7] And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent.
Jethro is called the father-in-law. Some scholars contend he was actually the brother-in-law for the Hebrew word can be translated this way too. He heard what God had done and returned the wife of Moses, Zipporah, and Moses’ two sons Gershom and Eliezer. Verse two indicates that Moses sent them back to Jethro. Why? It could have been because of the dangers and burdens of Egypt. It could have also been over the fact that she was angry over God’s demands.

*Exodus 4:24-25... And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him. [25] Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me.* If this was the problem, it was a problem that Moses did not need in Egypt.

Jethro seems to be a close friend to Moses. They spent forty years together. When they meet, they kiss and embrace one another. No mention is made of Moses kissing or embracing his wife and kids. Jethro knows that the wife’s place is with her husband and the children should be with their father. God wants families together and staying together in unity. That is His ideal plan. He does not want the parents divided, destroyed, or divorced. That is Satan’s plan for the home. Unfortunately, multitudes of Christians have followed his blueprint. If you let him, Satan will destroy your home by working through you and your loved ones. The best defense of your home is for all to put Christ first in their lives.

**Zipporah was bitter because in her heart she was rebellious toward God and Moses.** A nervous bride asked her pastor for help in dealing with anxiety about the wedding service. The pastor answered with a sure fire formula. "As you come through the door, keep your eyes down," he advised her. "DON'T LOOK AROUND AT THE PEOPLE. Keep your gaze fixed upon the aisle down which you will walk. When you are about half way down the aisle, raise your eyes just a bit until you can see the altar and keep your gaze fixed there until you are nearly to the front, and then lift your gaze just the slightest bit until you see him--him who is your beloved."

The day of the wedding came. The church was full. The *Wedding March* began to play. The doors opened and there stood the beautiful young bride looking remarkably composed. People did wonder, however, as she passed them about her muttering determinately under her breath, "Aisle, altar, him. Aisle, altar, him." Many young brides marry with the
intention that "I'll alter him." Unfortunately, it rarely works. Women who set out to change their husbands find they create conflict in their marriage. Men do not like to be hen-pecked or dominated by women. That is the way God made them.

**Rebellion toward God and His Word will ruin your home.** You can count on it. The best thing you can do is obey His plan for your lives. *Ephesians 5:20-23... Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; [21] Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. [22] Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*

*Ephesians 5:25- Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*  
*Ephesians 5:28- So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.*  
*Titus 2:5- To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.*

**Your spouse ought to be your best friend.** He or she ought to be number one in your life, outside of the Lord. If you put your children, before your spouse, you are making a mistake. That may sound weird, but the truth of the matter is that many homes are ruined because the kids came before the couple. When the kids grow up and leave the nest, the couple has nothing in common. The husband and wife are strangers. This is a big problem.

Do not neglect your dating and love life with your husband or wife. Gentlemen, get a babysitter and take your wife out on a date regularly. Keep the sexual passion and affection flaming hot in your marriage. Let nothing, not even the kids, come between you and your husband or wife. You love the kids, but you married your spouse until death. If the relationship with your spouse falls apart, your home falls apart and so does your ministry if you are a preacher. Every couple would do well to remember that in the word "wedding", the "we" comes before the "I.” Marriage is a “we” relationship that requires the effort of both husband and wife to make it work.

**If you are griping and complaining all the time at your spouse, shut you big mouth.** You are not solving any problems or helping your home. Don’t be like the new groom that grumbled at dinner, "Why can’t you make bread like my mother does?” Answered the young bride, “Why
can't you make dough like my father does?" In our divorce saturated society, there is a huge need for revival of romance in the home. Honey's and Hubbies need revival in huggin', smoochin', dating, I love you's, patience, forgiveness, and caring for one another. If you will keep doing, after you get married, what you did before you got married in order to get married, there is a good chance you will not ever get unmarried.

Jethro brings Zipporah back to Moses. She has a new opportunity for repentance and devotion to her husband. Zipporah may still be bitter, embarrassed, or hesitant. The sons were most likely grown men. Moses was with Jethro for 40 years. Did these guys want to see their Dad? Did they miss him? Those are good questions. Think of the changes they saw when they arrived in the camp.

1. A New Flock: Moses has gone from shepherding sheep to shepherding a nation.

*Psalm 77:20 -Thou ledest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

2. A New Master: He was no longer Jethro's shepherd, but Jehovah's shepherd.

3. New Relatives: They meet a new uncle and aunt they have never met before, Aaron and Miriam.

When a person trusts in Christ, he too, belongs to:

* A New Flock: From children of darkness to children of light.
* A New Master: From Satan to Jesus
* New Relatives: Christians are brothers and sisters in Christ.

When we look at the names of Moses' sons, we are reminded of what takes place in our lives before we were saved and then after we trust Christ as our Savior.

A. Gershom= Banishment. Gershom reminds us of our breach with God because of our sins. Because we are sinners, our fellowship with God is broken. All men are sinners.

*Romans 3:23- For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*
*Isaiah 59:2- But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*

B. Eliezer = My God is my Help. Eliezer points to the fact that the Lord is our help and our Savior. Gershom embalms memories of loneliness for Moses. Eliezer shows a change in Moses' attitude. He acknowledges the fact that the Lord has helped him through difficult times. Gershom recalls his trials, and Eliezer recalls his mercies. Gershom caused him to remember his afflictions, but Eliezer caused him to focus on God's
assistance. The first acknowledges the burdens and the second son acknowledges His blessings.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our Eliezer, our helper when we are hindered, harassed, hurting, hopeless, or hollow on the inside.

* Isaiah 41:10- Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

* Psalm 46:1- God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. George Mueller said, “If the Lord fails me at this time, it will be the first time.” Beloved God makes no mistakes. If you think He does, then you are mistaken.

II. THE REVIEW OF BURDENS AND BLESSINGS 18:8

And Moses told his father in law all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the Lord delivered them.

Moses shared his travail with Jethro. The word “travail” means “weariness.” Whether it was burdens or blessings, God was the focus of the conversation. More of our own personal conversations should be Christ-centered instead of earthly centered.

III. THE REJOICING 18:9-12

And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. [10] And Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. [11] Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them. [12] And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father in law before God.

When God is praised among His people, rejoicing is a natural by-product. Perhaps, there is a lesson here. Maybe you would have more joy in your life if you would express your praise and gratitude to the Lord more often and put Him first in your life in all matters.
* Psalm 16:11 - Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.
* Nehemiah 8:10 - Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

Billy Sunday said, “If you have no joy in your religion, there’s a leak in your Christianity somewhere.” When someone once asked William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, his great secret to joy and happiness, he replied, “I never say ‘No’ to the Lord.” Does the Lord hear “No” from you repeatedly? Beloved, joy comes not from having much to live on but from having much to live for. Live for Christ!

The review of God’s work leads to rejoicing and a strengthened faith. Jethro blesses the Lord. I believe he is a believer in Jehovah by his response and actions in giving a burnt offering to the Lord. This is not impossible. He was a descendant of Abraham through Midian. Jethro said in verse 11, “Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods.” The widow of Zarephath said the same thing (1 Kings 17:24) after Elijah brought her son back to life. Namaan the Syrian said this after he was healed of leprosy (2 Kings 5:15).

God overcame those who dealt proudly. The army of Egypt was in a sense, the country’s pride and boast. Pharaoh was the epitome of pride and the Lord humbled him.
* Psalm 10:2 - The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.
* Psalm 73:6 - Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.

God does have a way of exalting Himself by destroying His enemies in what they consider to be their points of strength. He warns of the destructiveness of pride.
* Proverbs 11:2 - When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.
* Proverbs 16:18 - Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Consider these examples of people who fell because of the pride they had from their strengths in their lives.

**A. Pride in Strength:** David overcame the strong and mighty Goliath who was proud of his strength. (1 Samuel 17)
B. Pride in Speed: Asahel, the one swift like a deer, was overtaken and killed. (2 Samuel 2)

C. Pride in Smarts: David’s counselor, Ahithophel, was proud of his wisdom. He conspired with Absalom to destroy King David. He is befooled and ends up hanging himself.

* 2 Samuel 17:14- And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom.

D. Pride in the Splendor of Beauty: Absalom, the fairest, is deformed and destroyed. (2 Samuel 18)

E. Pride in Schemes: Haman, in his thirst for revenge against Mordecai and the Jews, was hung on gallows prepared for Mordecai.

F. Pride as a Sovereign: Pharaoh found out the hard way who the true God was and that the Lord is all powerful.

* Exodus 5:2- And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.

* 1 Corinthians 1:19- For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

Beloved, when we get proud, we are on a path to problems, punishment, and perplexing situations because proud people won’t listen, won’t apologize, won’t accept instruction, and they won’t get right with God or others. D. L. Moody said, “God sends no one away empty except those who are full of themselves.” Beloved, be alert to your pride.
Chapter 8

Too Many Brands in the Fire

Exodus 18:13-27

Do you ever find yourself putting too many brands in the fire? In other words, do you have some much to do or have you committed yourself to so many projects that you can’t get anything finished or do the task effectively? Is it because you are the type of person who feels you have to do everything yourself or you have difficulty in saying “No” to other people who ask favors of you? In this portion, this issue is addressed and a solution is proposed to this kind of problem. Let’s dig in.

I. THE CONCERN OF JETHRO 18:13-18

And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. [14] And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? [15] And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God: [16] When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws. [17] And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. [18] Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.

The people have confidence in the decisions of Moses. They believed they were right, just, and wise. Let me stop for a
moment and ask, “Are your decision right, just, and wise or do you find yourself making one mistake and blunder after another?” Some may ask, “How in the world do I get wisdom? I want it, but how do I get it? How can I avoid making stupid decisions or mistakes?” The Bible gives us some basic principles.

1. Have the right kind of relationship with the Lord.
   * James 1:5 - If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.
   * Job 28:28- And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

2. Have good relationships with the right kind of people.
   * Proverbs 13:20- He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

3. Have a right relationship with Scripture.
   * 2 Timothy 3:15- And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

4. Have a proper perspective of what true wisdom is and where you get it. We are not to base our life or decisions on soap operas, network news broadcasts, television talk show hosts, unbelieving psychiatrists, unsaved guidance counselors at school, or friends at work. Much of what you hear from these sources is not wisdom at all, but foolishness.
   * 1 Corinthians 3:19- For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

When we look at Moses at this juncture, we find that from morning to evening, Moses judged the people and listened to their disputes. Jethro observed what was taking place and was alarmed, “What are you doing Moses? Why are you doing this alone?” Jethro was concerned about the health of Moses and the health and attitude of the people. All day long, they had to wait for a ruling because Moses was the only one handling the disputes. This system for handling problems seemed very inefficient to Jethro. Down the road in the future, delay in justice arising from similar reasons, was one of the causes of Absalom’s revolt against King David (2 Samuel 15). Was Jethro giving Moses good advice? This is debated among Bible scholars.

Jethro asked Moses what he was doing and Moses answered his question, “The people come to inquire of God. They want to know God’s will for their lives and the solution to their problems. Those folks who come to me are seeking God’s guidance.” By the way, do you seek God’s
will and guidance in your own life? Our prayer and attitude should be that of the psalmist.

* Psalm 27:11 - Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.
* Psalm 143:10 - Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

God promises to guide those folks who are obedient to Him.

1. He will guide us in making decisions.
* Psalm 25:9 - The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

2. He will guide us by wise counsel.
* Psalm 73:24 - Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

3. He will guide us by a still, small voice.
* Isaiah 30:21 - And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying. This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.
* John 16:13 - Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself: but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

4. He will guide us in the midst of confusion and uncertainty.
* Isaiah 42:16 - And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

5. He will guide us unto the end of life.
* Psalm 48:14 - For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.

Moses gave the people solutions to their problems from what the Lord had taught him. His answers came from God. We are to solve our problems with the Word of God too.

* Psalm 119:105 - Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
* Psalm 119:130 - The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

Jethro offered constructive criticism to Moses, “This is not good.” You will “wear away.” The Hebrew text reads, “Fading, you will fade away or wasting you will wear away.” “Moses, you will not be able to keep this up alone. You’ve got too many brands in the fire.” Some
contend that Moses should not listen to Jethro. God would take care of Moses. I personally feel Jethro’s advice makes a lot of sense. We are talking about 2 1/2 to 3 million people here. That’s a lot of problems, especially when you are dealing with people who get irritable and cranky traveling through the wilderness.

Beloved, when you get too many brands in the fire, you do tend to fade in strength and then fade away. You burn out. I have seen so many Christians and pastors through the years just poop out. They got out of church or the ministry because they could not control their schedule or manage their time wisely. Now they are accomplishing nothing for God and wasting their opportunities to be used of Him.

There are many ministries I would love to have in my own church, but I know my limitations. I can’t do it all and don’t even try. What I try to do is have the ministries that the Lord wants for me and my church and do those ministries well. I work my head off. If God supplies people in the future that can be used to start new ministries, then praise the Lord.

It is better to do a few tasks well than to do a lot in a sloppy or ineffective fashion. Let me also say that as a pastor you do not have to have the same ministries as other pastors or churches, and if you don’t, your church is NOT a crummy church. Every church is different. Don’t be intimidated or pressured to have a ministry that others have when the Lord is not leading you. Pastor, do what the Lord wants you to do with the people He has given to you. Follow His leading and work hard to the best of your ability. This is what honors and glorifies Christ.

II. THE COUNSEL 18:19-23

Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: [20] And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. [21] Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: [22] And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge; so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. [23] If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.
Jethro counsels Moses to continue to be a mediator and teach the people God’s way and Word. We need to learn His ways and Word too. This is one of the key purposes of the local church. We are to learn the Word of God and do the work of God. Jethro’s counsel was to delegate authority to others in judging the people while Moses remained a mediator between the people and God. Minor responsibilities were to be given to good men. These men were to have the following traits, many which are similar to the requirements for leadership in the church. As Christians, we should strive to have these character traits in our own lives.

A. Teachable Men (vs. 20)

A teacher is not there just to acquaint you with the tools of your trade; a teacher is a tool of your trade, no matter what that trade is. You never stop needing teachers. The need to learn never ceases. The great musicians never stop taking lessons, never stop trying to improve. The great concert pianist, Arthur Rubinstein, used to say that if he missed a day of practice, he noticed it in the quality of his performance. If he missed two days, the critics noticed. And if he missed three days, the audience noticed.

Good leaders must first be teachable. In fact, if a person cannot obey, they will have difficulty giving commands. Men who claim to know-it-all usually make foolish mistakes and tend to be very harsh with their followers, who in turn, will resent their leadership. For this reason we should study and desire wisdom and instruction in order to be the best Christians and the best leaders we can be.

* Proverbs 1:7- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

B. Able Men (vs. 21)

The words “able men” refer to men who are respected, influential, powerful people, looked up to by the community as leaders, and those who will have the needs of the community in mind.

C. Have a Fear of God (vs. 21)

What does it mean to fear God? Here are some of God’s thoughts.

* Proverbs 1:7- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

* Proverbs 8:13 -The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

* Proverbs 9:10- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and
the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

* Proverbs 14:26-27... In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. [27] The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.
* Proverbs 15:33- The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honor is humility.
* Proverbs 10:27 - The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.
* Proverbs 16:6- By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.
* Proverbs 22:4 - By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honor, and life.
* Proverbs 15:16 - Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.

D. Men of Truth (vs. 21)

If truth is not embraced, then lies and deception will flirt with you to gain your attention. Their sweet songs will be a great source of temptation because of your willingness to listen. If you decisively demand truth and integrity, you alleviate the stress created by deception and lies. They are immediately shunned. God says we are to desire and rejoice in the truth.

* Psalm 51:6- Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

What does it mean to “desire” truth? This word comes from the Hebrew word chaphets {khaw-fates} which means “to delight or take pleasure in, to bend down as if to carefully examine something.” Like a little boy bending over to look at bugs, we need to have the same curiosity for the Word of God.

* 1 Corinthians 13:6- Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

The word for “rejoiceth” in the truth is a shade different from the first word for “rejoiceth.” Rejoiceth in truth is from the Greek word sugchairo {soong-kah'-ee-ro} which means “to rejoice with someone, take part in another's joy; to congratulate.” We are to rejoice in the truth together, especially when it comes to the truth of God’s Word. For this reason, worship at church becomes vital for our growth and development in Christian growth and in our relationships with other believers. Build your friendships over the joy that comes from the Word of God and the person of Jesus Christ. Share what you learn from Scripture with one another. Be a person who has a passion to learn truth.
* John 4:24- God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.
* John 17:17- Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

E. Haters of Covetousness (vs. 21)

Bribery of judges will distort justice, which in turn will create big problems. Bribery is a problem because of greed and covetousness which we as believers are to avoid at all costs.
* Hebrews 13:5- Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.
* Psalm 119:36 -Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.
* Proverbs 28:16- The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor: but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.

Beloved, no man is rich enough to buy back his past. Don’t waste your life on the pursuit of the worthless. What we do not possess, poisons what we have. Our urge to acquire things is due less to the passion to possess them than to the vanity of feeling superior to those who envy our possession of them. Beware of the deception of envy and greed.

IV. THE COMPLIANCE OF MOSES  18:24-27

So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said. [25] And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. [26] And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves. [27] And Moses let his father in law depart; and he went his way into his own land.

Moses took Jethro’s advice and divided the leaders into groups of ten, fifty, one hundred, and thousands. We assume he got God’s OK, though it is not mentioned. As great as Moses was, he was teachable and listened to Jethro. He did not get offended. He seemed grateful that he had someone come to him to help him. He implements the plan.
* Proverbs 9:8-9 ...Reprove not a scorners, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. [9] Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.
* Proverbs 11:14- Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.

Moses realized he had too many brands in the fire. Do you find yourself with this same dilemma? Why not sit down and prioritize your life or schedule. Cut out the unimportant things from your schedule and give attention to those things that really matter. Whatever you do, do not cut the Lord or important spiritual events from your schedule.

Jethro departs and returns to his own land. It is interesting to note that we see no more mention of Zipporah.
Chapter 9
An Appointment with the Almighty
Exodus 19:1-25

Why did God go to all the trouble to bring Israel out of the land of Egypt? What is so special about these people? What is God’s plan and purpose for this nation? This chapter gives the answers and it prepares us for one of the best well-known and exciting episodes of Scripture... the gift of the Ten Commandments.

I. THE ARRIVAL AT MT. SINAI 19:1-2

In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. [2] For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.

God’s people arrive at Mt. Sinai. How long did it take? What does the phrase “same day” mean? By the phrase “the same day,” the first day of the month is intended. The Hebrew word for month, chodesh, is the word for a new moon, which is with the Jews the first day of the month. From the departure out of Egypt to their arrival at Sinai was forty-five days. They came out the fifteenth day of the first month and arrived on the first of the third month, which is a total of forty-five days. So it is around June and July and very hot. Israel remains here for nearly one year.

* Numbers 10:11-12: And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony. [12] And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the
wilderness of Paran.

It is here at Mt. Sinai, that the Lord met with Moses at the burning bush. This is the place God fulfilled His promise of Exodus 3:12.

*Exodus 3:12- And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.*

At this place, God would give His people the Ten Commandments. According to Jewish records, the giving of these commandments was fifty days after the Passover. This was the same day as Pentecost in the New Testament. At Sinai, God would give His gift of His commands to His people to guide them. At Pentecost, He would give them His gift of the Holy Spirit to guide believers.

This place was of absolute solitude. It was a location where God’s people could get alone with God and have no distractions. Do you have a time and place where you can get alone with God? It will do wonders for your fears, frustrations, frantic attacks, and flustered feelings.

**Where is this place?** It was located in the land of Midian. Mt. Sinai is in the Arabian Peninsula.

1. The translators of the Septuagint thought Midian was on the east side of the Gulf of Aqaba which is the right branch of the Red Sea. This is the Gulf of Aqaba.
2. The Jewish philosopher, Philo, stated that Midian was east of the Sinai Peninsula and south of Palestine.
3. Josephus said that Mt. Sinai was the highest mountain near the city of Madian.
4. Ptolemy discovered Madian, and it was excavated outside the modern city of Al-Bad near Saudi Arabia’s northwest coast. Fifteen miles east of the town stands the tallest mountain, over 8000 feet, called **Jabal al Lawz**. The top of this mountain appears scorched with fire. It has a blackened appearance.
5. There is a large man-made altar at the base in accordance with Exodus 32:5 where Israel made a golden calf in the absence of Moses. Upon this altar are many hieroglyphics, some which represent Apis bulls from Egypt.
6. In this area there is a plain of ten thousand acres which could easily accommodate the Israelites.
7. Galatians 4:25, Paul located Mt. Sinai in Arabia. *For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.*
Israel abode here for eleven months where they found a season of rest, received the law of God, ratified God’s covenant with God, and recharged their physical and spiritual batteries. Times like these are needed in the life of the Christian.

*Galatians 1:17-18... Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. [18] Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. Paul went to Arabia for three years to get alone with God and to prepare for what the Lord had for him.

* Mark 6:31- And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. Jesus and the disciples took time to refresh themselves. Times of rest are needed, but the time will come to get back in the race and go forward.

* Deuteronomy 1:6- The Lord our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount:

* Psalm 73:28 - But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works. The words “draw near” have the idea of going forward.

II. THE ASCENT OF MOSES 19:3-6

A. The Contrast vs. 3

And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

Moses went up the mountain and the Lord called unto him. The house of Jacob and children of Israel are a contrast showing what God has done for His people. The house of Jacob shows their humble beginnings and the children of Israel reveal what they have become... a nation. God blessed and prospered His people, honoring and exalting them. The Lord is working in our own lives too.

*Philippians 2:13- For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

*1 Thessalonians 2:13-For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.
B. The Care of God vs. 4

Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

God in His grace cared for and delivered His people, bearing them on eagle’s wings. We too, are saved by His grace. By His grace, we learn to grow and walk with God. The eagle is a symbol of deity in Scripture, admired for its wings and ability to soar high. When the eaglets are almost full grown, they weigh as much as the parents, but are fat and flabby. The mother exercises and teaches them to fly by flapping the wings. She entices them with food a short distance from the nest. When they go for the food, they fall and flap their wings. The mother swoops underneath them and catches them on her wings. She will drop them to get them to flap their wings again, and then she catches them. The Golden Eagle of Israel is 3 ½ feet long and has a nine foot wing span. They are large birds.

The eaglets illustrate three aspects of freedom: freedom from (they are out of the nest, which to us is redemption); freedom in (they are at home in the air, which to us is maturity), and freedom to (they can fulfill their purpose in life, which to us is ministry). True freedom means that we are delivered from doing the bad, we are able to do the good, and we are accomplishing God’s will on the earth. God was teaching His people how to walk on their own. He is now ready to take them to a newer level of maturity that they will attain by obedience to His Word.

C. The Compliance vs. 5-6

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: [6] And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

This was God’s plan and purpose for His people. God gave us His law to reveal that we are sinners.

*Galatians 3:19- Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made: and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. His law was given temporarily, until the Seed (Jesus) should come. The law pointed to Christ and our need for Him.
* Galatians 3:24- Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The school master was not a school teacher, but a slave in the home. He was a servant that took care of children. They clothed, washed, cared for, and disciplined the child. The Greek word is paidagogos which means “a child conductor, one who takes the child by the hand and leads him to school.” In the same manner, the law takes us by the hand to the cross of Calvary. It says, “You need a Savior. You are a sinner. You need to be saved.” Salvation is in the Lord Jesus Christ. You are saved by God’s grace, not by keeping the law because no one can keep it. Christ was the only one who did.

* The law demands, but grace gives.
* The law says, “Do,” but grace says, “Believe.”
* The law threatens, pronouncing a curse, but grace entreats, pronouncing a blessing.
* The law condemns the very best of men, but God’s grace saves the worst of men. Thank God for His wonderful grace and mercy.

If God’s people would obey the Lord they would become a peculiar treasure. The word “treasure” comes from the Hebrew word cegullah {seg-oal-law'} which means “extremely valuable property.” It comes from an unused Hebrew root which means “to shut up.” Valuable possessions were locked away and safeguarded. God’s people belonged to Him and they were considered to be very valuable. They are the Lord’s jewels.

* Malachi 3:16-17... Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. [17] And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

* Psalm 135:4- For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.

The Lord’s people were to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. His original plan was for all the tribes to be priestly. They were all to draw near to God directly in prayer and praise, approaching God freely. They were to be examples, instructors, and prophets, but they corrupted His plan by disobedience at Kadesh and the Golden Calf incident. The descendants of Levi became the priestly tribe, representing what the entire nation should have been.
Israel corrupted God's plan, but with the coming of Christ, and His death and resurrection, God's plan was extended again to all believers who can freely approach Him. Peculiar treasure, kingdom of priests, a holy nation, all of these things are extended to us in the Lord Jesus Christ. Believers are His treasures, priests, and people.

* 1 Peter 2:9- But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

III. THE ANSWER OF GOD'S PEOPLE 19:7-8

And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. [8] And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.

God's people promised to obey. The natural man thinks that he can please God, but he can't. The law was given to control the old fleshly nature, but it cannot be controlled. For 1500 years they demonstrated they could not keep the law.

* Romans 8:6-7....For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. [7] Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

IV. THE ADMONITION OF THE LORD 19:9-13

And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the Lord. [10] And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, [11] And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. [12] And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: [13] There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.
God veiled His glory in a thick cloud, for man could not bear the brightness of His glory. In the burning bush, the fire was His shroud. In the person of Christ, the cloud was removed, the veil of fire was removed and we got to see God in His glory.

* John 1:14 - And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Moses was to get the people physically and spiritually ready to meet the Lord. The people were to sanctify themselves for an appointment with the Lord. They were to wash their clothes and abstain from sexual relations with their wives for their appointment with God. On the third day, the Lord would come down in their sight.

The number three is predominant in this chapter. Three in the Bible is the number of manifestation. God is about to give a wonderful manifestation of Himself. They have already seen His power in Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, the pillar of cloud, the provisions of manna and water, and now they are about to behold His princely majesty. To teach them of His holiness, they were to set up a boundary around the mountain. It would mean death to any animal or person that touched it by arrows or stoning.

Beloved, access to the Lord is no longer barred if you know Jesus Christ as your Savior. We can rejoice because of this truth.

* Ephesians 2:18 - For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

* Ephesians 3:11-12....According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: [12] In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

* Hebrews 4:16 - Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

V. THE APPOINTMENT WITH GOD 19:14-17

And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. [15] And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives. [16] And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. [17] And Moses brought forth the people out of
the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

VI. THE APPEARANCE AT MT. SINAI 19:18
And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

VII. THE AUDIENCE WITH GOD 19:19-25
And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. [20] And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. [21] And the Lord said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish. [22] And let the priests also, which come near to the Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them. [23] And Moses said unto the Lord, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargest us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. [24] And the Lord said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the Lord, lest he break forth upon them. [25] So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

We are going to have an appointment with the Lord one day. Are you ready for it? Do you know Christ as your Savior? If not, put your faith in Him now. If you have done this, live your life for Him.

* 2 Corinthians 5:10 - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.
* Romans 14:12 - So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.
Chapter 10

The Ten Commandments & You

Exodus 20:1-2

I love the story about the Sunday School teacher who was trying to teach the Ten Commandments to her young students. She thought it would be most helpful if she used some concrete illustrations. “Early one Saturday morning Johnny’s parents were going shopping,” she read to them. “They asked Johnny to wash the dishes while they were gone. When they returned, however, Johnny was watching cartoons and the dishes still were unwashed.” In one accord the class responded, “Honor thy Father and Mother!” “Good,” said the teacher.

“Ann went shopping with her mother but when no one was looking, she slipped a candy bar into her pocket.” Again, the class was quick: “Thou shalt not steal!” “Great,” said the teacher. “Andy was a cruel little boy and had a bad temper. He got angry with his little sister one day and, grabbing her pet kitten, he threatened to pull its tail off.” Now this was a much tougher example. Everyone was real quiet for a moment but then one little fellow brightened up and shouted, “What God hath joined together let no man put asunder!”

Exodus 20 contains the most well-known verses of the Bible, yet the most controversial too. The Ten Commandments contain God’s moral laws. Hollywood movies have been based on this passage. Yet, our public school systems and federal court buildings feel threatened by their display in our schools and court buildings and have ordered that they be removed lest our young people some how become emotionally unstable from their display.
The implications of these actions are that the Ten Commandments are not important, we do not need them, there are no absolutes, guidelines, or rules. The result of such thinking is every man does that which is right in his own eyes. We are our own gods. When the Ten Commandments are thrown out, then the command “Thou shalt have no other gods” is also thrown out. Our schools are now faced with young people who are their own authority and rebel against school, civil, and parental authority. Thousands of teachers in this nation require medical attention each month from student-inflicted injuries.

Parents are also pulling out their hair because their children do not honor or respect them. You may have heard about the mother who was laboring in the kitchen, preparing a special recipe for supper. Her little boy was giving her fits—running in and out of the kitchen and ignoring his mother’s threats and warnings. When he finally knocked the special dish off the table, his mother grabbed a broom and started after him. When he crawled under the house, she decided to let her husband take care of the boy. When he arrived home from work, she yelled, “Go discipline your son! Do something about your son!” The father crawled under the house looking around, until he saw two bright eyes peering around a pillar, and heard a soft voice say, “Dad, is she after you too?”

A recent survey of married couples was taken. The question was asked, “If you had to do it all over again, would you do it the same?” The consensus was they would marry their spouse, but 70% would not have children at all. That’s a red flag for sure. Even though our kids are tax deductible, they can also be very taxing. Looks to me that the command, “Thou shalt honor thy father and mother” is very important. People who scoff the Ten Commandments, but want their kids to obey them, in essence are shooting themselves in the foot.

Throw out the Ten Commandments and you throw out “Thou shall not murder.” Young people are no longer worried about failing a test, they are worried if they will live through the day at school. A half a million kids say they are afraid most of the time at school. There are three million victims of in-school crimes each month. Children have become vicious, cold-blooded killers. Human life no longer has value to them. Murders by children tripled in the 1990’s. Planned Parenthood has counseled teen girls to abort their babies. Unwed pregnant girls are killing their babies, believing the lie that it is a glob of tissue, not a human being. They are told that abortion is a woman’s right to the privacy of her own body, not the truth that it is murder. No wonder
people have a cheap view of human life.

**Throw out the Ten Commandments and you throw out “Thou shall not commit adultery.”** Our children are becoming parents while they are still children. Virginity and abstinence are mocked in our schools. School systems teach teenagers, “You don’t have to wait until you are married. Go ahead and jump in bed as long as you have protection and wear our official, school-approved condoms supplied by the school. Condoms don’t protect you. They offer no protection against disease and pregnancies. They break. They offer no protection from the guilt of immorality, shame, and losing your virginity. They offer no protection from the change in attitude from chastity to loose, immoral living. They offer no protection from the chastisement and judgment of God.

*Revelation 21:8- But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

With the removal of the Ten Commandments, we have seen a dramatic rise in robbery and theft among our young people as they covet the things of others. There are 2 1/2 million robberies each month in our schools. Every 22 seconds, someone in the USA is beaten, stabbed, robbed, raped, or killed.

**God and His Word are not good enough for our kids in school, yet our legislatures will open their sessions in prayer.** I’m glad they do, but they are inconsistent. Our government displays “In God We Trust” on our currency. If someone is seriously hurt on a football field, a moment of silence is not going to help the player, but a moment of prayer will. There is a lot of inconsistency. The best thing that America can do is let the Lord back into our schools and honor His Word. Teach His commands. Acknowledge God as the Creator of men. If we will stop telling our kids they came from monkeys, maybe they will stop acting like them.

Since we have kicked God, His Word and prayer out of the schools, SAT scores have dropped drastically from 1960 scores. Problems have changed from talking, chewing gum, running in the halls, littering, dress code violations to rape, robbery, assault, bombings, arson, vandalism, extortion, drug addiction, gang warfare, pregnancies, suicide, and murder. We as a nation, are paying a price for despising and rejecting God’s laws.

* 2 Chronicles 36:16- But they mocked the messengers of God, and
despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

* Isaiah 5:24- Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

God gave the Ten Commandments for a reason. They are rules for conduct in religion, worship, reverence, time, authority, life, purity, property, our tongue, and contentment. The first four commands deal with our relationship with God, the last six deal with our relationships with men and women. These ten are ten of 613 commands. There are also ceremonial, religious, dietary, health, and civil laws. These Ten Commandments were written in men’s hearts, even before they were given at Sinai. Murder, adultery, stealing, and lying prick the conscience that protests against these sins.

* Romans 2:14-15. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: [15] Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;

God gave us His law as an expression of His LOVE toward us.

* Deuteronomy 33:1-4 .... And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. [2] And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. [3] Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. [4] Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.

These Ten Commandments have never been repealed. They were written on stone by the finger of God, indicating their permanency and importance. Jesus came to fulfill these commands.

* Matthew 5:17-19... Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. [18] For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. [19] Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
* Romans 3:31 - Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

The fourth commandment concerning the Sabbath is a ceremonial law. It was nailed to the cross according to Colossians 2:14-17. Now we worship the Lord on the first day of the week. The other nine commandments are repeated in one form or another in the New Testament. God did not give these Ten Commandments so the Israelites could attain righteousness by keeping them. Salvation is through faith in the Lord. Keeping the Ten Commandments, if you could, cannot get you to Heaven.

* Romans 3:20- Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

* Galatians 2:16- Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Galatians 3:11- But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

* Romans 4:3- For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

* Romans 4:20-22...He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: [21] And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. [22] And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

* Romans 5:1- Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

If keeping the Ten Commandments saved someone, then what purpose would be served by Jesus dying on the cross? The answer would be “None.”

* Galatians 2:21- I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

* Differences Between the Law and the Gospel

1. The Law requires that we worship God as Creator. The Gospel teaches us to worship God through the Lord Jesus Christ. We have access to God the Father through His son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our High Priest and mediator.

* 1 Timothy 2:5- For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;
* Hebrews 4:14-16... Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. [15] For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. * Hebrews 7:25- Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

2. The Law requires obedience, but it gives no strength to obey. The Gospel, on the other hand, gives strength to obey the Lord. The grace of God gives faith and strength to obey Him. It makes us serve God with delight.

* Romans 7:22 - For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

3. The Ten Commandments are glass or a mirror to show us our sins so that we are forced to flee to Christ to satisfy our guilt and save us from God’s wrath. They reveal that we come short of God’s standard of holiness and righteousness.

* Galatians 3:19-20- Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. [20] Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

* Galatians 3:24- Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. The Law is a guide for us to holy living.

4. As a believer in Jesus Christ, we are free from the curse and condemning power of the Law.

* Galatians 3:13- Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

   King James I of England is responsible for the term “whipping boy.” In the 17th century, the king was considered sacred. No one was allowed to touch him or his children. James’ son, Charles, was a brat, but no one could spank him. Another boy, William Murray, was picked to be his playmate and a whipping boy for the king’s son. Every time Charles misbehaved, William was punished. In the same manner, Jesus became the whipping boy for mankind. He took upon Himself the sins of the world. The wrath of God was upon Him. He took our place on the cross and paid our sin debt. Our responsibility is to accept His payment by
faith and trust in Him for eternal life.
* 1 Peter 3:18- For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

Train engineer Anthony Falzo noticed two young boys playing on the railroad track in front of the 200-ton diesel he was operating. Even though the train was moving at only 20 miles per hour, Falzo knew the brakes would not stop it in time. He sounded the horn, but the boys did not move. He ran out on the catwalk and tried to shout a warning. Finally, when the train was about ten feet from the boys, Falzo jumped off and grabbed them. Todd, age 3, and his 18-month-old brother, Scott, were unhurt as the engineer placed his body over the boys while the train passed over them. Three cars rolled over the trio, slicing the back of Falzo’s insulated vest. Falzo said, “I thought, ‘What’s the worst thing that can happen to me? My back will get scraped. I just didn’t want the kids to get hurt.’” Our Lord did so much more as He gave His life a ransom for the world. He was the Just One that gave His life for the unjust.

**We are not under the condemning power of the Law as Christians. We are, however, under its commanding power.** It is to be our guide in godly living as Christians.
* Romans 3:31- Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Obeying God’s Law gives us an opportunity to demonstrate our love and obedience to the Lord. Love for God is expressed by obedience to His will and Word.
* Psalm 40:8 - I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.
* John 14:15- If ye love me, keep my commandments.
* John 14:21- He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.
* Deuteronomy 27:9-10... And Moses and the priests the Levites spake unto all Israel, saying, Take heed, and hearken, O Israel; this day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God. [10] Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day.
* What are to be the Ingredients of our Obedience?
1. We are to obey enthusiastically, cheerfully and willingly.
   * Isaiah 1:19 - If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:
2. Our obedience is to be energetic, devout and fervent.
   * Romans 12:11 - Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord: Obedience without fervency is like a sacrifice without fire. God deserves the best of our affections.
3. Our obedience it to be extensive, reaching to all His commands.
4. Our obedience is to be endless, consistent and constant.
   * Psalm 106:3 - Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.
   * James 1:25 - But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.
5. Our obedience is to encompass and embrace all of our heart.
   * Deuteronomy 26:16 - This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.
6. It is to be our engagement, duty and number one priority.
   * Acts 5:29 - Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

   If you truly love the Lord in your life, there will be visible signs that are evident in your actions and attitude.

* Signs of an Obedient Spirit
1. Our desire will be a desire for the Lord.
   * Isaiah 26:8 - Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.
   * Psalm 42:1-2 ... As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. [2] My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?
2. You cannot find true, lasting contentment in anything without Him in your life. He is the health of our life. The story is told of a college professor who visited the Fiji Islands. Being agnostic, he critically remarked to an elderly chief, "You're a great leader, but it's a pity you've been taken in by those foreign missionaries. They only want to get rich through you. No one believes the Bible anymore. People are
tired of the threadbare story of Christ dying on a cross for the sins of mankind. They know better now. I'm sorry you've been so foolish as to accept their story." The old chief's eyes flashed as he answered, "See that great rock over there? On it we smashed the heads of our victims. Notice the furnace next to it? In that oven we formerly roasted the bodies of our enemies. If it hadn't been for those good missionaries and the love of Jesus that changed us from cannibals into Christians, you'd never leave this place alive! You'd better thank the Lord for the Gospel; otherwise we'd already be feasting on you. If it weren't for the Bible, you'd now be our supper! Thank God these cannibals found satisfaction, joy, and peace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

* Psalm 43:5- Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

3. You will hate that which hurts your fellowship with God. You will hate your sin.

* Psalm 119:104- Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

* Psalm 119:113- I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love.

* Psalm 119:128- Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.

4. You will grieve over the things that grieve God.

* Psalm 119:136- Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.

5. You will praise the Lord in order to point others to Him.

* Psalm 9:11 - Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.

* Isaiah 42:12 - Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands.

6. You cannot bear to be out of fellowship with God. It will bother you if you are not close to the Lord.

* John 20:13- And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

7. You will be willing to suffer for Him. Family members in Guiana kidnapped the wife of a tribal man because he left Islam to become a Christian. The man pleaded unsuccessfully for her release then returned home to pray. Days later, the kidnappers returned the man's wife and said they, too wanted to become Christians. The Christian Missionary
As we open the curtain on Exodus 20, we are introduced to the Lawgiver of the Law. Notice verse one.

And God spake all these words, saying,

God is the lawgiver. There were two requirements of a lawgiver.

A. Wisdom- It is needed to make wise laws. God has a monopoly on wisdom.

* Proverbs 3:19-The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.
* Daniel 2:20- Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:
* Romans 11:33 - O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!
* 1 Corinthians 1:25- Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

B. Authority- A lawgiver must have a stamp of authority to enforce laws. God has all the authority He needs.

* Job 42:2- I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.
* Psalm 115:3- But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.
* Psalm 62:11- God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.

Notice the phase, “all these words.” These are God’s words, not man’s. They are perfect and give us direction.

* Psalm 19:7- The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
* Proverbs 6:23 - For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light;
and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

A man was out walking in the desert when a voice said to him, "Pick up some pebbles and put them in your pocket, and tomorrow you will be both sorry and glad." The man obeyed. He stooped down and picked up a handful of pebbles and put them in his pocket. The next morning he reached into his pocket and found diamonds and rubies and emeralds. And he was both glad and sorry. Glad that he had taken some -- sorry that he hadn't taken more. And so it is with God's word. Notice now verse two.

I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

God identified Himself. He reminded them of His power, protection, and past. I brought you out of Egypt and slavery.
* Remember when the water was turned to blood? That was my work!
* Remember the flies, mosquitos, frogs, and dying cattle, that was my work!
* Remember the boils on the Egyptians, thunder, the hailstorms in Egypt, the locust that covered the land, the three days of darkness, and the death of the first born in Egypt? That was my work.
* Remember the parting of the Red Sea and the dry path you crossed? How about the destruction of the Egyptian army? That was my work!
* Remember the pillar of cloud that cooled you in the day and warmed your desert nights, that too was my work.
* Remember the manna that was provided for you for your hunger and the wrath that came from the smitten rock at Rephidim when your mouths felt like cotton, that was also my work.

I brought you out of Egypt and have some things to say to you now. I have some guidelines and rules to lay down. If you want to please me, then obey me! If you want to demonstrate your love to the Lord today, then obey Him. He has not changed on this issue.
* John 14:15 - If ye love me, keep my commandments.
Chapter 11

The First Commandment

Exodus 20:3
Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

God gave us His Ten Commandments to show us His holiness and righteousness and the sinfulness and weakness of mankind. God’s law was to lead us to Christ and to be a blueprint for godly living. In Exodus 20:3, we are given the first of the Ten Commandments. The same principle is found in the New Testament.

* Mark 12:29-30... And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: [30] And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. Let’s take a close look at the first commandment.

I. CONSIDER ITS POSITION

It is the first command and thus, must be very important and critical in our relationship with others and with God. It is listed first because it is the foundation of all true religion. If we do not worship our Lord, we worship in vain. We have nothing and accomplish nothing.

* John 15:5- I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

If the Lord is not first in our life, then we are wasting our life on trivial, meaningless things and pursuits. When God is first, your life can be productive and useful, whether you are a janitor, teacher, doctor, mailman, salesman, etc.

This command is first because this is the bait that Satan used to lure Eve into sin. It is a very effective trap that men continue to fall in today.

* Genesis 3:4-5... And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not
surely die: [5] For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. The desire to be a god destroyed mankind’s fellowship with the Lord.

* Romans 5:12- Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

This command is also first because everything must begin with God or it will eventually fail, whether it is your business, your church, or your marriage. The number one is the number of unity, primacy, and beginning. If we are to have unity with the Lord, then He must be the Lord of our life. “Put God first!” is the voice of Scripture.

* Genesis 1:1- In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. God was in the beginning.

* Matthew 6:33- But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Seek Him first.

* Luke 2:49- And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business? These are the first recorded words of Jesus when He was twelve years old. His Father’s business was vital in His life. His last words were about 21 years later, “It is finished!” What was finished? It was His Father’s business.

* Matthew 22:37- Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first command in the New Testament. Love Him! God first, God first, God first is the repeated message.

* Numbers 3:13- Because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the Lord. The first born are God’s.

* Deuteronomy 26:2- That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there. The first fruit of the harvest is God’s. Again, God is to be first! The Lord is to be:

* the head of the home
* the chief of the church, our choices, and children,
* the leader of our love and loyalties,
* paramount in our plans and priorities,
* supreme in our service and sacrifices,
* the ruler in our relationships with others.

God must be first. He doesn’t want to be second. He doesn’t want to be in a tie for first. No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (Matthew 6:24)

Do you want to be a good mother? Put God first in your life. This is why Hannah was a great mother.

* 1 Samuel 1:10 - And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore. In her agony, Hannah knew where to take her burden.

* 1 Samuel 1:11- And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. She makes important vows to the Lord.

* 1 Samuel 1:24- And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh: and the child was young. She keeps her promise to God.

II. CONSIDER THE PRINCIPLES

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

God is to be OUR God. He becomes your God when you invite Jesus Christ into your life to be your Savior.

* Titus 2:13- Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;
* 1 John 5:20- And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

A. To have God to be a God to us is to acknowledge Him as God. In other words, “Lord, you are my God.”

* Psalm 96:5- For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.
* 1 Corinthians 8:4- As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing
in the world, and that there is none other God but one.

B. To have God as our God is to choose Him.

* Joshua 24:15... And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Having the Lord is not a matter of chance, but choice. Before we choose Him, there must be knowledge of Him. The purpose of our missionaries is to preach the Word and give the knowledge about God to those who are lost. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

C. To have God as our God is to give Him adoration. Adoration involves the worship of Him.

* Psalm 29:2- Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
* Isaiah 42:8- I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

D. To have God as our God is to fear Him.

* Deuteronomy 28:58-59... If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; [59] Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.

We are to have a reverence and respect for Him. We should not want to disappoint Him by sinful living. He should be the focus of our life.

* Psalm 4:4- Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.
* Psalm 25:15 - Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.
* Psalm 16:8 - I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

E. Having God as our God is also to trust Him.

* Psalm 141:8- But mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.

Trusting the Lord involves relying upon His power as Creator and to commit our chief treasure, our soul, to Him.

* Psalm 31:5- Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.
* Psalm 62:8- Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

F. Having God as our God is to love and obey Him.

The Bible says, “Thou shall not have no other gods BEFORE ME.” This means “before my face or in my sight.” Secretly bowing to idols is still seen by the Lord.

* Deuteronomy 27:15- Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.

Serving false gods or joining idols with the worship of the Lord is wrong. Doing this was considered as “forsaking the Lord.”

* Deuteronomy 27:15- Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.

* 2 Kings 17:33- They feared the Lord, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.

In the Roman Empire, you could worship any god you wished, as long as you offered incense to Caesar’s idol and acknowledged him as God. The Christians would not compromise with this demand and many were martyred for Christ.

III. THE PORTFOLIO OF OTHER GODS

What other gods are there? There are more idolaters than you think. That which controls our heart becomes a god to us. When you trust in riches, they become a god. You may find comfort from riches, but not confidence. It is foolish to trust in riches for they are deceitful. Gold and glitter blind the eyes. Covetousness makes a god of money and things.

* Matthew 13:22- He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

* Ephesians 5:5- For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

When you trust in the arm of your flesh, your might and schemes, they become a god. The Syrians trusted in their army and it withered.
* 1 Kings 20:27- And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.

* 1 Kings 20:29- And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day.

What we make our trust, God makes our shame if it is not in Him. Our security turns to insecurity, our confidence turns to confusion. If you trust in your schemes, plans, wisdom or abilities, and leave God out of these things, don't be shocked if you fail. We are challenged to not trust in these things.

* Jeremiah 9:23-24... Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: [24] But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

Trusting in your civility or goodness makes it a god. Men may be washed, but not changed. Your life might be civil, but sin still reigns in your heart. To trust in your goodness for Heaven is to trust in a spider's web.

* Isaiah 64:6-But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

* Matthew 7:21-23- Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. [22] Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

* Ephesians 2:8-9... For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: [9] Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Some folks idolize pleasure to the point that they neglect the Lord in their lives. Pleasure is all they live for. It becomes a god in their lives.

* 2 Timothy 3:4-5... Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; [5] Having a form of godliness, but denying the
power thereof: from such turn away.

In the country of Sardinia, there is a herb-like balm, that if anyone eats too much of it, he will die of laughing. The lust for abundant pleasure at any cost will destroy your life and your soul.

* Proverbs 21:17- He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

* Luke 8:14- And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

Uncontrolled appetites can become a god to a person. This need has been the downfall of many mighty men and women. Food, booze, sex, all of which delight the flesh, can become idols in a person’s life.

* Philippians 3:18-19... (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: [19] Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

If you are not careful, a person can become a god in your life. When we put others before the Lord, they become gods to us. This can refer to a wife, husband, child, friend, boy or girl friend. When our relationship with a person hurts our walk with God, then we have made that person more important than the Lord. How many folks have gotten out of church after they got married, had a baby, or started dating someone? The answer is “Many.” God says, “Thou shall not have no other gods before me.”
Chapter 12
A Visit from God
Exodus 20:4-6

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: [5] Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; [6] And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

I. Thou Shalt Not Make Unto Thee Any Graven Image 20:4

This principle is also found in the New Testament.

*1 Corinthians 10:14- Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

In the first commandment, God makes it clear that worshiping a false god is forbidden. Here, worshiping the true God in a false manner is forbidden. The first has to do with the object of worship. The second has to do with the manner of worship. God forbids the worship, bowing, and praying to idols. Image worship is forbidden.

Our infinite God is not to be represented by the finite. The living God is not to be represented by that which is without life. The Maker of all things is not represented by that which is made by Him. To make a true image of God is impossible. God is a spirit. He is invisible.

*John 4:24- God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

God’s uniqueness requires unique devotion. To worship God by an image is both absurd and unlawful. It is ludicrous and absurd for the work to be better and praised over the workmen. Image worship is against the practice of the saints of old. In Daniel 2, when Nebuchadnezzar erected a golden image for worship, all but three bowed
down to it. Shadrach, Meshech, and Abendigo would not bend, bow, budge, or burn. In Judges, Gideon destroyed the pagan altars. King Josiah destroyed the groves and images in 2 Kings 23:6. When Roman oppressors thrust images upon Christians, they chose to die rather than corrupt themselves by idolatry. If they worshiped the image of Nero, they could worship any god they wished, including Jesus.

Do we have problems with image worship today? Yes, the Roman Catholic church is filled with idols of Mary, Jesus nailed to a cross, saints of history such as Peter, and angels such as Michael and Gabriel. To countenance its image worship, the Roman Catholic Church has left the whole of this second commandment out of the Ten Commandments, and thus, lost one whole commandment out of the ten. However, to keep up the number they have divided the tenth commandment into two commands. This is totally contrary to the faith of God’s people and to the acknowledgment of that truth which is according to godliness.

The verse is found in every manuscript of the Hebrew Pentateuch that has ever yet been discovered. It is in all the ancient versions, Samaritan, Chaldee, Syriac, Septuagint, Vulgate, Coptic, and Arabic; also in the Persian, and in all modern versions. There is not one word of the whole verse lacking in the many hundreds of manuscripts collected by Kennicott and De Rossi. We also find that Mother Earth is worshiped in our day. Hindu’s worship cows. Satan is also worshiped by multitudes. God says idolatry is forbidden.

* Isaiah 42:8- I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

What about the brazen serpent Moses made? Was that wrong? Who gave the command to make it? God did.

* Numbers 21:8- And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

God had a special purpose for the brazen serpent. It was not for worship, but for the healing of rebellious people bitten by snakes. Later in history, when Israel looked upon it with too much reverence and began to burn incense, Hezekiah defaced it and called it Nehushtan which means “only a piece of brass.”

* 2 Kings 18:4- He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to
II. I Am a Jealous God   20:5b

The first reason why we are not to worship graven images is the Lord is a jealous God.

* Exodus 34:14- For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: The word “jealous” also means “to be zealous.” The Arabic word means “to be intensely red.” In a good sense, God is jealous for His people.

* Zechariah 1:14- So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.

  God’s people are His delight or Hephzibah.

* Isaiah 62:4 - Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

  They are the apple of His eye.

* Zechariah 2:8- For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.

  He jealously protects His people.

* Isaiah 42:13 - The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.

  In a serious sense, God is jealous of His people when they worship other gods. His holiness cannot bear a false rival. He demands to be first and the glory that belongs only to Him. We are the same. A husband or wife does not want to be a rival of another man or woman. Adultery enrages a husband or wife. Idolatry is spiritual adultery. God is angered by idolatry and will avenge it.

* Psalm 78:58-59... For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. [59] When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel:

  When we allow something other than the Lord to control our devotion and love, it angers Him. That which we allow to get us out of church and hurts our walk with God becomes our god.
III. Visiting the Iniquity of the Fathers Upon the Children to the Third and Fourth Generation 20:5c

This is the second reason against image worship...the visitation of God. The day of visitation is a day of judgment. The phrase “visiting iniquity” means “to punish iniquity.” Sin makes God visit. Sin is the reason why God visits with sickness and poverty.

* Psalm 89:31-32...If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; [32] Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

Sin twists the cords which pinch us. It creates our troubles. It is the gall in our cup and the gravel in our bread. Sin is the Trojan horse that we invite into our life and destroys us from within. One special sin that God visits or punishes is idolatry.

For Israel’s idolatry, they suffered the rout of their armies, the slaughter of their priests, the capture of the Ark, and the conquering and captivity of the nation. In history, when images were erected in Constantinople, the chief seat of the Eastern empire, it was taken by the Turks and many were cruelly massacred. The Turks paraded through the streets with the crucifix, throwing dirt upon it and shouting, “This is the god of the Christians.” At a place called Epoletuim, 350 perished by an earthquake while offering sacrifices to idols. Idolatry brought misery on the eastern churches. God removed these candlesticks from Asia.

Idolatrous people are enemies, not only to their own souls, but also to their children. God will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation. What does this mean? It is repeated several times (Ex. 34:6-7; Numbers 14:18; Deut. 5:9).

What is iniquity? Let’s answer that first. Is it sin? Actually God distinguishes sin from iniquity.

* Psalm 51:2- Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.
* Psalm 51:5- Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.
* Psalm 51:9- Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

A clue to the definition of iniquity is found in Matthew 7.

* Matthew 7:21-23... Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. [22] Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord,
have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

When we do these things in our own will, instead of according to God’s will, they are iniquity. **Iniquity is doing my own will even though it may be something that is good. Iniquity is going our own way, doing our own thing, disobeying God’s will.**

* Isaiah 53:5-6... But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. [6] All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

When Saul disobeyed the Lord in not destroying the Amalekites and saving the best animals for sacrifice, Samuel rebuked him.

* 1 Samuel 15:22-23... And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. [23] For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

**How are children affected by the iniquity of their fathers and forefathers?** Even though children are not responsible or guilty for their father’s iniquity, they are influenced and affected by it.

* Deuteronomy 24:16- The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

Sons and remote descendants inherit the consequences of their fathers’ sins, in disease, poverty, captivity, with all the influences of bad example and evil communications. The deception that Abraham practiced was picked up by his son and grandson. With each generation, the deception increased.

* Genesis 20:2- And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

* Genesis 26:7 - And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon.

* Genesis 27:32- And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And
he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau.

David’s iniquity and lust for women affected Solomon and his grandson Reheboam.

* 1 Kings 11:1-3... But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; [2] Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. [3] And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.

* 2 Chronicles 11:21- And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters.)

* 2 Chronicles 12:1- And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him.

What a father does in moderation, his kids may do in excess or extremes. Our kids amplify our weaknesses and compromises. The crack in the door that we give to sin, our children will open completely. The Bible stresses the importance of acknowledging the iniquities of forefathers.

* Nehemiah 9:2- And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.

* Daniel 9:16- O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

By acknowledging the iniquities of the fathers, children agree with God that they are wrong and are able to deal with them in a Scriptural manner by building disciplines to avoid repeating them.

* Four Steps in Dealing with the Iniquities of Forefathers

1. Identify the precise iniquity that has been passed. It may be an independent spirit, willfulness, stubbornness, lack of self control, pride, deception, self gratification, greed, a coveting spirit, anger, unfaithfulness, drunkenness, lustfulness, etc. God says, “Let a man
examine himself."

2. **Acknowledge your sin and forefather’s iniquities.** Don’t excuse them. Agree with God. This is what “confess” means.

* Jeremiah 14:20- We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee.

3. **Reclaim lost ground and yield yourself to God.** When we sin, we give Satan ground in our soul. He can get a grip in our lives if we let him.

* Romans 6:19- I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

* Ephesians 4:27- Neither give place to the devil.

4. **Cast down Satan’s stronghold in your mind.**

* 2 Corinthians 10:4-5... (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) [5] Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

God’s Word is an effective weapon in getting victory over sin in our lives if we will use it. *Aqaba* in 1917, seemed impregnable. Any enemy vessel approaching the port would have to face the battery of huge naval guns above the town. Behind Aqaba in every direction lay barren, waterless, inhospitable desert. To the east lay the deadly "anvil of the sun." The Turks believed Aqaba to be safe from any attack, but they were wrong. Lawrence of Arabia led a force of irregular Arab cavalry across the "anvil of the sun," which was scorching miles of barren desert. Together, they rallied support among the local people. On July 6, 1917, the Arab forces swept into Aqaba from the north, from the blind side.

A climactic moment of the magnificent film *Lawrence of Arabia* is the long, panning shot of the Arabs on their camels and horses, with Lawrence at their head, galloping past the gigantic naval guns that are completely powerless to stop them. The guns were facing in the wrong direction. Aqaba fell, and the Turkish hold on Palestine was broken, to be replaced by the British mandate and eventually by the State of Israel. The Turks failed to defend Aqaba because they made two mistakes. They did not know their enemy, and they did not have the right weapons. We must be careful not to make the same mistakes. Ephesians 6:12 makes it very clear that Satan and his forces are our enemy. Stand for Christ!
Chapter 13
The Mercy of God
Exodus 20:6

And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

God punishes and judges sin, but He also shows mercy to those who love and obey Him. The Old Testament speaks four times more about God’s mercy than the New Testament. God’s mercy is a desperately needed gift of God’s redemptive work on behalf of sinners. The word “mercy” is from the Hebrew word hesed which means “mercy, love, loving kindness.” Mercy is compassion in action. It is meeting the needs of others, giving a helping hand, and showing compassion.

I. MERCY AND FORGIVENESS COMPARED

Mercy is not to be confused with forgiveness. They have much in common, but are distinct.

* Titus 3:5 - Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

God’s forgiveness of our sin flows from His mercy. Mercy is bigger than forgiveness because God is merciful to us even when we do not sin. God’s mercy does not just forgive our transgression, but it reaches to all our weaknesses and needs. God’s mercy to His children never ceases. It never takes a break, never rests, and never goes on vacation.

* Lamentations 3:22- It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. Life without the mercy of God would be unbearable.

God’s mercy is like a cluster of diamonds to those impoverished by sin. It’s like a garden of flowers to those whose lives have been damaged by the torment of sin. It’s like a huge tree, casting shadows in the terrific noonday heat of a summer’s day. It provides refreshment to
a weary soul. God’s mercy is like a palace of many glories, a wayside well to a thirsty traveler, an oasis in the desert, a fire dispelling chills, a balm and bandage for the wounded and healing medicine for the sick.

The mercy of God makes the Lord compassionate, though we are corrupt and forgiving of our faults and foulness. He pardons our profaneness and is tolerant of our trespasses. Our God is a merciful God! He is not cruel, callous, rigid, ruthless, savage and stony hearted. He loves the world.

II. MERCY AND LOVE COMPARED

Mercy and love are not to be confused. They too, are distinct. Forgiveness flows out of mercy and mercy flows out of love.

* Ephesians 2:4-5 ... But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, [5] Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Just as mercy is more than forgiveness, love is more than mercy. Why? Love still loves, even when there is no wrong to forgive or need to meet. Mercy is the doctor but love is the friend. Mercy acts because of a need. Love acts because of affection, whether there is a need or not. Mercy is reserved for times of trouble. Love is always constant. There can be no true mercy apart from love, but there can be true love apart from mercy because love does love all the time whether in good times or bad.

III. MERCY AND GRACE COMPARED

Grace and mercy are not to be confused together. They have a close relationship, yet, are different.

* Mercy has to do with pain, misery, distress, and the consequences of sin. Grace deals with the sin itself.
* Mercy deals with the symptoms of sin and grace deals with the cause or root problem.
* Mercy offers relief from punishment. Grace offers pardon from the crime. In a medical sense, mercy eliminates the pain while grace cures the disease.
* Mercy removes the guilt and penalty of sin while grace imputes the righteousness of Christ.
* Mercy saves from the peril of Hell while grace imparts a new nature to us.
* Mercy relates to the negative while grace relates to the positive.
* Mercy rescues from punishment. Grace transforms us into the likeness of Christ.

When the Good Samaritan bound the wounds of the beaten man, he showed mercy. When he paid for the lodging until he was well, he showed grace. In the matter of our salvation, because of the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s mercy says, “No Hell.” I don’t get what I do deserve. God’s grace says, “You have a home in Heaven, an inheritance in Christ, and everlasting life.” I do get what I don’t deserve. God is not obligated to save sinners, but He chooses to do so when we put our faith in Christ. His mercy says, “I pity you,” and His grace says, “I pardon you.”

IV. MERCY AND JUSTICE

How does mercy compare to justice? Justice gives exactly what is deserved. Mercy gives less punishment and more help than what is deserved. This brings us to a question, “How can God be just and be merciful at the same time?” If God is completely just, how could He ever not punish sin totally? If He is merciful, then will He nullify His justice then?

The fact is God does NOT show mercy without punishing sin. Sin is dealt with by the Lord. For God to offer mercy without punishment would cancel His justice. To cancel justice is to cancel mercy. God cannot merely overlook sin because it leaves sin untouched, unhampered, and unforgiven. To ignore sin, to pretend it is not there, is to deny the truth. God cannot deny truth because He is truth. He is the author of truth. Mercy and truth cannot be separated.

* Psalm 85:10 - Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

In every true act of mercy someone pays a price. Why? To be truly merciful is to bear the load for someone else. Sin demands punishment and death. This is the truth of justice.

* Romans 6:23a- For the wages of sin is death;....

* John 3:18- He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
* Revelation 20:14-15... And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. [15] And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

God dealt with this truth in His mercy. How? He did it by sending His Son Jesus to pay the price for us, to bear the load of our sin, to rescue us from the punishment of sin, and to remove our guilt. God in His mercy paid the price for sin.

* 1 Corinthians 6:20- For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

* John 3:16 - For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Mercy and justice meet together in Jesus Christ.

If you reject Jesus Christ, you bear the load of your sin and pay the price.

* Romans 6:23a- For the wages of sin is death; ....

* Revelation 21:8- But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Relying on good works or upon God to overlook your sin will not save you from Hell because God does not ignore sin and justice. It was upon the cross that Jesus satisfied God’s justice. Trusting in Christ opens the flood gates of God’s mercy because in Christ sin is dealt with properly and paid in full. Jesus Christ was Mercy Incarnate.

The more Jesus showed mercy, the more He exposed the unmercifulness of the Jewish religious leaders. The more mercy He showed, the more determined they were to get rid of Him. In mercy, Jesus healed the sick, restored the crippled, gave sight to the blind, gave sound to the ears of the deaf and life to those who were dead. In mercy, prostitutes, tax collectors, thieves, and drunkards were forgiven and loved by Him. He wept with the sorrowing and gave companionship to the lonely. Yet, His mercy cut the conscience, uncovered the heart, unveiled the hypocrisy, and unearthed the hardness of the scribes and Pharisees. They were not inclined to show any mercy because it is not characteristic of the proud, the self righteous, and the judgmental.

A popular Roman philosopher called “mercy” the disease of the soul. He considered mercy as the supreme sign of weakness, not strength. Mercy was a sign that you did not have what it takes to be a real man or Roman. The Romans glorified manly courage, strict justice,
firm discipline, and absolute power. Mercy was considered a weakness and looked down upon.

In Roman history, the father had the right of *patria opisthas*.* He could decide whether the baby would live or die. When the newborn was held up to the father, he would put his thumb up for life and down for death. Death was usually immediate by drowning. Husbands could also kill their wives and masters could kill their slaves. Such merciless attitudes are horrifying. How uncivilized and barbaric they were. Yes, it was barbaric, but not any different from the slaughter taking place in abortion clinics at a rate of 2 million a year just in the USA alone.

**A society that despises mercy is a society that glorifies brutality.** Brutality is so glorified in Hollywood that our children have become blood thirsty killers. Teenage killers stalk our nation’s neighborhoods and schools. Life is cheap. Kids have been known to kill others for their tennis shoes.

Our selfish society tells us, “Grab all that you can while you can get it.” God says, “Give all that you can.” The true character of mercy is giving. Giving compassion, help, time, forgiveness, money, and ourselves to Christ honors the Lord. The ultimate outcome of God’s mercy was the cross. In the crucifixion of Jesus, two merciless systems, a merciless government and religion united to kill Him. Rome and Judaism joined to destroy the Prince of Mercy. Even in death, He was merciful. Jesus’ closing words from the cross were words of mercy.

*Luke 23:34-* Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.
*Luke 23:43-* And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

**What are the Properties of God’s Mercy?**

**A. God’s Mercy is Free and Spontaneous**

If merit earns mercy, then it actually destroys mercy. Nothing can deserve mercy or force it. We can’t deserve or focus mercy because of our enmity with God. We may force God to punish us because of our sin, but He is not forced to love us.

*Hosea 14:4-* I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.
*Ephesians 1:4-* According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:
* Romans 3:24 - Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: If God should shew mercy only to those who deserved it, He must shew mercy to none.

B. God’s Mercy is Powerful
1. His mercy changed David.
   * Psalm 51:1- Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.
2. Jonah knew God was merciful.
   * Jonah 4:2 - And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.
3. Paul’s life was changed by God’s mercy.
   * 1 Timothy 1:13- Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.
   * 1 Timothy 1:16- Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

C. God’s Mercy is Superabundant
* Psalm 86:5- For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.
* Ephesians 2:4- But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

God’s mercy is abundant in goodness and truth. The vial of God’s wrath drops like a leaky faucet, but His fountain of mercy flows like a roaring waterfall. God has mercy of all dimensions. He has a depth of mercy that reaches as low as sinners. He has a height of mercy reaching above the clouds. The Lord has mercy for all seasons. For the night He gives sleep, even a song in the night. He has mercy for the day too.

* Psalm 42:8-Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.
* Lamentations 3:22-23... It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. [23] They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.
D. The Mercy of God is Abiding

Twenty-six times in Psalm 136, every verse, says, “His mercy endureth forever.” Psalm 103 is the “Mercy Psalm.”

1. God Manifests His Mercy 103:8-10

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. [9] He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. [10] He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

Elizabeth I, England’s most famous queen, had a special favorite among her noble courtiers, the Earl of Essex. One day, Elizabeth gave to him her ring as an indication of her affection and promised him that if he ever was accused of a crime, he only needed to send the ring to her, and she would at once grant him an audience that he might plead his case. The day came when he needed that ring because he was accused of conspiracy and high treason. He was executed, because the ring was never presented to Elizabeth. She allowed her favorite to die.

Years passed and one day, the Countess of Nottingham, a relative but no friend to the earl, lay dying herself. She sent a message to Elizabeth, asking Queen Elizabeth to come to her. She had a confession she had to make to the queen if she was to die in peace. Elizabeth arrived at her deathbed and the countess produced the ring. Essex had given the ring to the countess with an urgent request that it be taken straight to Elizabeth, but the Countess of Nottingham betrayed his trust.

In her last moments, she sought the forgiveness of the queen. At the site of the ring, Elizabeth was furious with rage. She seized the dying countess in her bed and shook her until her teeth rattled and screamed, “God may forgive you, madam, but I never shall!” Beloved, thank God for His mercy. He abundantly shows it to us when we seek His forgiveness.

2. God Measures His Mercy 103:11-12

For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. [12] As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

3. God Multiplies His Mercy 103: 13-18

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. [14] For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. [15] As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. [16] For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. [17] But the mercy of the Lord is
from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; [18] To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

* The Ways that God Shows Us His Mercy

1. **God shows His mercy by supplying our needs:** health, food, water, air.
2. **He does it by preventing many evils that could harm us.**
   * Psalm 3:3- But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.
3. **He delivers us from a harmful path.**
   * 2 Timothy 4:17- Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.
4. **In mercy, He guides and directs us.**
   * Psalm 37:23- The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.
   * Psalm 73:24- Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.
   * Psalm 31:3- For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.
5. **In mercy, He corrects us.**
   * Hebrews 12:10- For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.
6. **In mercy, He pardons and sanctifies us.**
   * Micah 7:18- Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.
   * Leviticus 20:8- And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the Lord which sanctify you.
7. **Because of His mercy, He answers our prayers.**
   * Psalm 4:1- Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.
   * Psalm 66:20- Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

God may delay an answer, but not deny an answer. If He does not
turn away His prayer, He doesn’t turn away His mercy either.
* He shows His mercy in saving us when we seek His forgiveness.
* Titus 3:5- Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;
* Isaiah 55:7- Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Do you want God’s mercy? If so, then ask for it.
* Psalm 85:7 - Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.
* Psalm 25:16 - Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.
Chapter 14
Taking His Name in Vain

Exodus 20:7

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

The New Testament counterpart of this verse is dealt initially in the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9.

* Matthew 6:9 - After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

There are several areas of Exodus 20:7 that we will address for our instruction and consideration. We will look at the name, the vain, the shame.

I. THE NAME

In Bible days, the name of a person was considered very important. In fact, to give a name was the function of one in authority and demonstrated power. For example, God demonstrated His authority in naming us “man” and “woman.” Adam demonstrated authority in naming God’s creation, the plants and animals. Your name is considered important because it contains several key elements about you.

A. It Indicates Identity

Your name identifies you. It tells who you are. Have you ever met someone with the exact same name as your name?

B. It Speaks of Integrity or Character

The character or actions of the person are linked with the name. Can you think of individuals who have a bad name? Can you think of folks with a good name? God wants us to have a good name and place
value upon having a good name. Your example and testimony are valuable.

* Proverbs 22:1- A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold.

C. It Speaks of Influence or Authority

You authorize a document when you sign your name.

D. It Speaks of Intimacy

When you know a person’s name, you are already on a different level in the relationship and fellowship with that person.

E. It Speaks of Importance

When Linda married me, I gave her my name, indicating she was important to me. I would provide, protect, pamper, and have passion for her. The Bible indicates God is very concerned about His name and how it is used. He does not like it profaned or used in vain.

* Leviticus 20:3 - And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name.

* Leviticus 24:16- And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death.

When God’s name is associated with weakness, indifference, or injustice, then it is followed by irreverence and the iniquity of mankind. God is jealous for His name just like you are concerned about your name and how it is used. His name is special.

1. It will endure forever.

* Psalm 72:17- His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

2. It is great.

* Psalm 76:1- In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel.

3. It is holy and revered.

* Psalm 111:9 - He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.

4. It is eternal.

* Isaiah 63:16- Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.
5. There is security in His name.
* Proverbs 18:10 - The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.
* John 17:11-12 - And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. [12] While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

* Our Relationship With God’s Name
1. Sing Praises to His Name:
* Psalm 9:2 - I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.

2. Give Glory and Exalt His Name:
* Psalm 29:2 - Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
* Psalm 34:3 - O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.

3. Trust in His Name:
* Psalm 33:21 - For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.

4. We are to Wait on His Name:
* Psalm 52:9 - I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints.

5. We are to Love His Name:
* Psalm 69:36 - The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein.

6. Seek His Name:
* Psalm 83:16 - Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O Lord.

7. Revere His Name
* Psalm 86:11 - Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.

8. Rejoice in His Name:
* Psalm 89:16 - In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.

9. Pray or Call Upon His Name:
* Psalm 99:6 - Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among
them that call upon his name; they called upon the Lord, and he answered them.

*John 14:13-14 - And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. [14] If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

10. Give Thanks unto His Name:
*Psalm 122:4- Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.

11. Gather Together in His Name:
*Matthew 18:20 - For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

12. Be Willing to Suffer Shame for His Name’s Sake
*Acts 5:41- And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

13. Baptize in His Name:
*Acts 10:48 - And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

14. We are Saved through His Name:
*Psalm 54:1- Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.
*Acts 2:21- And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
*Acts 4:12- Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. He is all things to all men, supplying every need that we have in our lives. He is all things to all men, supplying every need we have if we will let Him.

* To the Architect- He is the Chief Cornerstone
* To the Artist- He is the Altogether Lovely One that gives beauty to our lives.
* To the Astronomer- He is the Bright and Morning Star and the sun of Righteousness that brings light into our darkness.
* To the Baker- He is the Bread of Life that satisfies our hunger.
* To the Builder- He is the Sure Foundation that gives us stability.
* To the Carpenter- He is the Door that gives us security and opens up opportunities to serve Him.
* To the Defendant- He is the Righteous Judge who knows and sees all.
* To the Doctor- He is the Great Physician that heals our sickness and sorrows.
Chapter 14...Taking His Name in Vain....20:7

* To the Electrician- He is the Light of the World.
* To the Farmer- He is the Sower and Lord of the Harvest, bearing fruit in our lives.
* To the Fireman- He is the Water of Life that quenches the thirst created by life.
* To the Fisherman- He is the Calmer of the Seas and the One who used the waves for sidewalks.
* To the Florist- He is the Lily of the Valley and the Rose of Sharon that bring fragrance into our lives when our circumstances stink.
* To the Geologist- He is the Rock of Ages
* To the Historian- He is the Ancient of Days and Master of Time.
* To the Juror- He is the Faithful and True Witness
* To the Lawyer- He is the Advocate and Mediator, ever at our side.
* To the Merchant- He is the Pearl of Great Price
* To the Reporter- He is Good Tidings of Great Joy
* To the Pharmacist- He is the Balm of Gilead that heals a sin-sick soul.
* To the Philosopher- He is the Wisdom of God that gives us discernment to make the right choices and decisions.
* To the Printer- He is the Word, the Alpha and Omega.
* To the Publisher- He is the Author
* To the Cowboy- He is the Owner of cattle on a thousand hills.
* To Kings and Queens- He is King of kings and Lord of lords.
* To the Scientist- He is the Creator of all things.
* To the Shepherd- He is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.
* To the Sailor- He is the Anchor of the Soul
* To the Soldier- He is the Captain of our Salvation and Shield
* To the Student- He is the Truth
* To the Traveler- He is the Narrow Way
* To the United Nations- He is Peace
* To the Zoologist- He is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah

II. THAT WHICH IS VAIN

The words “in vain” mean “to misuse or for no purpose.”
God’s enemies take His name in vain.

*Psalm 139:20- For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain.*
There is no one member of the body that breaks forth more in dishonoring God’s name that our tongue.

*James 3:8-* But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

**Our tongue has the ability to praise or profane, adore or abuse, bless or blaspheme, magnify or malign, sing or scorn, revere or reproach, respect or ridicule God’s holy name.** There are many things that torment and irritate us.

* The filthy fly that uses our butter for his landing strip or our milk for his swimming pool is irritating.
* The mouse or rat that gnaws inside our walls or cabinets, robbing us of sleep and destroying our food is frustrating.
* The drips of a leaky water faucet in the middle of the night, dropping our comfort into the chasm of its irritable persistence is a torment indeed.
* An aching tooth, pounding every nerve with its invisible fist of pain or the throbbing earache which refuses to remove its home from our head is excruciating.
* The mischievous mosquito, whose solo flight holds a hum that harasses like the whine of a Scottish bagpipe and whose bite irritates as he fills his maw with our blood is a terrible and dangerous nuisance. After taking our blood, he ungratefully may give us a hypodermic of malaria or swamp fever.

* Nothing, however, can compare to the torment and problems caused by our tongue. James says it’s a fire, full of deadly poison, an unruly evil, a world of iniquity, defiling the whole body, and no man can tame it.

*Job 5:21-* Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.

*Psalm 52:2-* Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp raser, working deceitfully.

*Proverbs 18:21-* Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof. Beloved, our tongues are not to use God’s name in vain.

*How Does a Person take God’s Name in Vain?*

There are a number of ways God’s name is taken in vain. We may do it not only by our speech, but also by our actions.

1. **When we speak irreverently of His name, we take it in vain.** God is not the old man upstairs. Our attitude is to be one of respect and reverence like Moses or David.
* Deuteronomy 28:58-59... If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; [59] Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.

* Psalm 50:1- The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.

2. When we profess God’s name, but do not live answerably to it, we take His name in vain.

* Titus 1:16- They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

When our profession of faith is contradicted by evil actions, when religious talk is contradicted by our carnal walk, we take His name in vain because we make use of His name only to abuse what we claim. Nathan rebuked David and Nehemiah rebuked the nobles of Jerusalem because of their sin and inconsistency.

* 2 Samuel 12:14- Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

* Nehemiah 5:9- Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?

In Romans chapter two, Paul addressed this problem again.

* Romans 2:23-24 ... Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? [24] For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

When the heathen saw the hypocritical Jews, who professed to be God’s people, behave in a blatantly scandalous manner, it made them speak evil of God. The Lord’s name was dishonored. This same problem exists today when Christians live carnal lives. We are to protect God’s reputation by the way we live. We are His ambassadors.

* 2 Corinthians 5:20- Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

We are to live our lives in such a way as believers that we do not offend God or others by our behavior or attitudes. Our conscience is to be clear in this matter. This is what Paul stressed to us.
* Acts 24:16- And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. The words "void of offense" come from the Greek word **aproskopos** which means "having nothing to strike against or stumble over." It was used to describe a smooth road or path. There should be nothing in our lives which would cause others to spiritually stumble.

* 2 Corinthians 1:12- For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

* 1 Peter 3:16 - Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

Those who claim to be Christians, but persistently live in sin, give evidence that they are taking the name of God in vain. When the Lord's name is ridiculed by our inconsistency and sin, the unbeliever feels he has no reason to repent of his sins and turn to Christ for his salvation because the Christian he is watching is living the same kind of life that he is living. There is a third way we take God's name in vain.

3. **When we worship with our lips, but not with our heart, we take His name in vain.** God cries out for our heart.

* Proverbs 23:26 - My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

The heart is the incense that perfumes our holy things. It is the jewel of God's delight. God prefers this jewel to be cracked and broken, soft and tender, not hard, smooth and sparkling. He wants a heart that is yielded to Him.

* Psalm 51:17- The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

* Psalm 34:18- The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

A yielded heart is like the soothing song of the turtledove. When we seem to worship God and withdraw our heart from Him, we mock, hurt, and take God's name in vain.

* Matthew 15:8-9... This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. [9] But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.
* James 1:26- If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.

Those who are hypocritical take God’s name in vain by the way that they live. Hypocrites live a lie.

* Ezekiel 33:31- And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

4. We take God’s name in vain when we use His name in idle discourse or in a minced manner. We should not be saying things like golly, gosh, Jesus or God in an irreverent manner or as an expression of frustration or anger.

5. When we pray to the Lord, but do not believe Him, we take His name in vain. Our faith in the Lord honors Him, but our doubt dishonors Him.

* Romans 4:20- He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

When we pray, but do not mix our prayers with faith, we take His name in vain. Some say, “I’ll pray, but it won’t go any good.” This kind of doubt and disbelief dishonors God. It equates Him with an idol that has ears, but hears not, or with a liar who makes promises but doesn’t keep them.

* 1 John 5:10 - He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

Many call upon the Lord, but do not believe in Him. They ask for God’s pardon, but their unbelief whispers, “Your sins are too great to be forgiven.” They ask for provision, but their doubt says, “He won’t supply or provide for you.” They ask for peace, but their distrust murmurs, “He won’t solve the problem.” God tells us to trust in Him.

* Psalm 25:11- For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity: for it is great.

* Philippians 4:19- But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

* Philippians 4:13-I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. To pray and not believe is to take His name in vain.

God instructs us on how to pray to Him.

* John 14:13-14... And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. [14] If ye shall ask any
thing in my name, I will do it.
* John 15:16- Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and
ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit
should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he
may give it you.

6. When we profane or abuse God’s Word, we take His name in vain.
   The Word of God is profaned when profane people or preachers
meddle with it or do not obey it.
* 1 Timothy 6:1- Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their
own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine
be not blasphemed.
* Titus 2:5- To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to
their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.
   To hear a wicked, worldly man who openly wallows in sin, talk of
God or the things of God, it is revolting and offensive. It mocks God’s
name. When the Word of God is on the lips of a drunkard, it is like a
pearl that is hung upon a pig, a sapphire on a skunk, or a ruby on a rat.
When a preacher is profane, immoral, and a drunkard, he takes God’s
name in vain in a number of ways.

A. He Casts Doubt Upon God’s Word.
   He does this by speaking scornfully of God’s Word. I have seen
preachers on television that smoke cigars and cuss while they preach. It
is a joke! They did not stay on television for long.
* 2 Peter 3:4 - And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since
the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the
beginning of the creation.

B. He Devalues God’s Word.
   He does this by mocking and making fun of the Scriptures. God,
however, will not be mocked. He also devalues God’s Word by his
example. His life is preaching that godliness and purity are not important
for the Christian, when the Lord stresses it is very important. People are
watching our lives. For this reason, we are to be godly examples.
* Galatians 6:7- Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a
man soweth, that shall he also reap.
* 1 Peter 1:15-16... But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy
in all manner of conversation; [16] Because it is written, Be ye holy; for
I am holy.
* 2 Corinthians 3:2- Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and
read of all men:
* 1 Timothy 4:12- Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

C. He Defends his Sin and Distorts the Truth.

He uses the Word of God to justify his sin by twisting the Scriptures and taking them out of context.

7. We take His name in vain by swearing or by perjury.

* Leviticus 19:12- And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord.

Perjury is calling God to witness a lie. The perjurer is a thief. He robs the innocent of his right to justice, for he perverts justice. He causes the jury to pass a false sentence. New Testament Christians are not to swear any oaths, especially to lodges or secret societies. There is nothing wrong, however, in promising to tell the truth in a court of law.

* Matthew 5:34- But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

* James 5:12- But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

8. We take His name in vain when we prefix God’s name to any wicked action.

To do an evil work in the name of God is to take His name in vain. In the New Testament, Jewish unbelievers murdered Christians in the name of God. Absalom’s pretense to pay his vow was only to cover his treason.

* 2 Samuel 15:7- And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord, in Hebron.

* 2 Samuel 15:10- But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

9. We take His name in vain when we speak evil of God.

Israel did this in the wilderness.

* Numbers 21:5 - And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.
We speak evil of the Lord when we murmur against His will, feeling He has dealt harshly with us or is not treating us fairly. Bitterness grips us because things do not go our way. Our murmuring accuses God’s justice. It springs from bitterness, pride, and discontent. It is a sin that God cannot bear.

*Numbers 14:27- How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me.*

We have examined the name, that which is vain, and now we look at the shame.

**III. THE SHAME**

Those who take His name in vain He will not hold guiltless.

*Matthew 12:36-37... But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. [37] For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

Are you taking God’s name in vain? Are you ruining your influence for Christ? Whether or not you are a boxing fan, names like Muhammad Ali, George Foreman, Sugar Ray Leonard, or Mike Tyson conjure up images of big-fisted gladiators. C.D. Blalock is not as well known, but his feat in the boxing ring should not be forgotten.

In the 1930’s, Blalock stepped on to the canvass to wage war against another, but no opponent was needed that day. In one of the strangest moments in boxing history, Blalock took a swing at his rival, but ended up hitting himself. His punch missed the intended target and collided with his own face. He staggered and then fell down for the count. He became the only prizefighter to score a knockout against himself.

Sometimes our Christian influence suffers the same fate. We have been called to fight against the darkness of Satan, but due to an uncontrolled temper, unchecked sexual passions, materialistic pursuits, greed, jealousy, or any other destructive habits, WE knock out our Christian influence and testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ. This was a great fear of Paul and his attitude is a challenge to us all to have self control lest we be disqualified and knocked out of our race for Christ or hindered in serving the Lord. Paul maintained self control over his body so he would not be disqualified from serving Christ (1 Cor. 9:27). May God help us not to take His name in vain.
Chapter 15

Sunday or Sabbath?

Exodus 20:8-11

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. [9] Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: [10] But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: [11] For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

In this chapter, we will answer several questions that Christians have asked through the centuries.

* Are Christians to observe the Sabbath day?
* Is Sunday the Christian Sabbath now?
* Are Christians commanded to observe Sunday?

What does the word “Sabbath” mean? In some languages it means “seventh.” Saturday was the Old Testament Sabbath day beginning on Friday night at 6:00 p.m. and ending on Saturday at 6:00 p.m. In the Hebrew language, Sabbath means “cessation or rest.” The Jewish Sabbath was not a day of worship in God’s original plan. It was for physical rest. God gave this pattern in the “Creation Week” as He created the world in six days and rested on the seventh.

There is no record that God ever spoke to Adam, Eve, Noah, or Abraham about the Sabbath. There is no record that any of them observed it or heard of it. The first time it is mentioned is in Exodus 16.

* Exodus 16:23-26... And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that
which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. [24] And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. [25] And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the Lord: to day ye shall not find it in the field. [26] Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.

The people were gathering manna. On the seventh day they were to rest which was a new concept for Israel. At Mount Sinai, the Sabbath was made a part of the Mosaic law and was part of their ceremonial laws. It was for rest. In the Old Testament, worship went on in the Tabernacle and Temple every day of the week. In the period between the testaments, the custom of meeting in the synagogue arose, but not by divine command. There are no Bible commands for synagogue worship.

The Jewish Sabbath was given as a special sign to Israel, not Gentiles. It was part of the covenant between Israel and God.

* Ezekiel 20:12 - Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.

A study of Scripture also reveals the Sabbath is an Old Testament, not a New Testament command. In the entire New Testament, there is not a single command to observe the Sabbath. All of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament except this command.

In the Old Testament, there were a number of restrictions concerning the Sabbath day.
1. Work was prohibited, but few specifics were given.
2. No fire was to be kindled and fuel was not to be gathered. Burdens were not to be carried. Business was not to be transacted.
3. A person was not to travel farther than 300 feet or 100 yards. The Sabbath became a crushing burden on the people. It was a symbol of bondage. How did this happen? Men implemented rules and regulations upon the people that God never intended. Men have a tendency to oppress people under their authority and desire to control them with oppressive regulations. The result is misery and resentment.

In the New Testament, of all the sins mentioned, Sabbath-breaking is never once mentioned as a sin. Jesus did not command His disciples to keep the Sabbath. He was called into question about this and was hated for this. Notice Matthew 12.
*Matthew 12:1-8... At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. [2] But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. [3] But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; [4] How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? [5] Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? [6] But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. [7] But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. [8] For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

A. The Problem 12:1-2
1. The key words are “disciple” and “hungry.”
2. It was legal for them to eat the corn.
3. It was not stealing.

*Deuteronomy 23:25- When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour’s standing corn.*

4. The Pharisees were upset because it was the Sabbath.

B. The Pattern 12:3-8
1. Jesus used David as an example when he was fleeing Saul.
2. Jesus also used the priests as examples.
3. Hosea is referred to as an example too.

C. The Principles
1. The lesson or message that Jesus was trying to get across to the Pharisees was if a hungry king and his men ate the shewbread of the Temple, bread which was only for the priests, an act that was permitted and not condemned by the Lord, then it was OK for the disciples to eat corn on the Sabbath.
2. Jesus was showing the spirit of the law. Human needs took a priority over ceremonial regulations.
3. God is more concerned about meeting people’s needs than ceremony. The priorities of the Pharisees were confused.
4. The Sabbath was instituted by God for man’s benefit and refreshment. It was to be a blessing, not a burden.
5. The Lord is the Master of the Sabbath. He has authority over its use.
When we look through the New Testament, we also find that the apostles did not teach the churches to observe the Sabbath. The council at Jerusalem did not mention it (Acts 15). The book of Hebrews and James were both written to dispersed Israel and the Sabbath is not mentioned. Paul never intimates that Christians are to observe it.

**New Testament Christians are warned against keeping the Sabbath.**

* Colossians 2:14-17.... Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross: [15] And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. [16] Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: [17] Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

1. The Sabbath was a shadow of things to come, the Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, we now have the real thing and the shadow is reality. It is fulfilled.

2. The Sabbath was part of ceremonial law, like the sacrifices, and it was fulfilled in Christ. Jesus Christ is our Sabbath. He is our rest and peace.

Sunday is not the Christian Sabbath. There are no records anywhere that state that the Sabbath changed from Saturday to Sunday. New Testament Christians have NO COMMAND from God to abstain from labor on any certain day, nor any command to meet for worship on any given day.

If this is so, should Christians observe Sunday as a day of worship? We should NOT observe Sunday as a legalistic Sabbath, be we do very well to observe the Lord's day voluntarily for our own good as a day of worshiping the Lord and fellowship with other Christians. The Bible commands us to meet together for worship.

* Hebrews 10:25- Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

**Why Do We Worship on Sunday?**

Christians have chosen Sunday to worship because of several reasons.

1. Jesus arose on the first day of the week.

* John 20:1- The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away
from the sepulchre.

2. Jesus appeared to ten disciples on the first day of the week.

* John 20:19 - Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

3. The promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost which was on the first day of the week.

* Leviticus 23:16 - Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord.

4. The first Gospel message on the death and resurrection of Christ was preached by Peter on Sunday.

* Acts 2:14 - But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

5. The first New Testament church was started on Sunday with three thousand people getting saved.

* Acts 2:41 - Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

6. At Troas, Christians worshiped on Sunday.

* Acts 20:7 - And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

7. Contributions for the Lord’s work were taken on the first day of the week.

* 1 Corinthians 16:1-2... Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. [2] Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

8. The Lord revealed the Revelation to the Apostle John on the first day of the week, the Lord’s day.

* Revelation 1:10- I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,
* Contrasting the Sabbath Day and the Lords’ Day

When we compare the Sabbath day with the Lord’s day, we find some interesting contrasts.

A. The Sabbath was a memorial of Creation; the Lord’s day remembered His redemption.
B. The Sabbath reminds us that God’s work of creation is great; the Lord’s day shows us that God’s work of redemption is greater.
C. The Sabbath shows the great wisdom of God in making us; the Lord’s day shows His miraculous wisdom in saving us.
D. It cost more for God to redeem us than to create us. Creation involved speaking a word. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created (Psalm 148:5). Redemption, however, involved shedding blood. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: (1 Peter 1:19). In creation, we have life in Adam. In redemption, we have life in Jesus Christ. In creation, God gave us ourselves. In redemption, He gave us Himself.

Christians ought to observe Sunday in a way in which the Lord is pleased. Sunday is a great day to worship the Lord and rest. If you work seven days a week, you will physically and spiritually weaken yourself. As much as possible, keep Sunday special. Let it be the Lord’s day in your life.
Chapter 16
Live Long and Prosper

Exodus 20:12

A classic example of indoctrination is the sinking of the Titanic, a tragedy that sent 1,516 people to a cold, watery grave in 1912. "Locked-in thinking" is what destroyed their lives. They were locked-in because they followed the crowd. They lacked the capacity for independent thinking.

Three days after this beautiful, "unsinkable" ship departed from Queenstown, a message was received that warned of icebergs in the path of the ship. The wireless operator, however, ignored the warning. He had been told the ship was unsinkable, so why should he bother to pass the message onto the captain? Hours later, another cable came with the same message. The wireless operator heard it, but failed to write it down. A third message came. This time the operator wrote the message down, handed it to the captain. The captain read the message without comment, turned it over to the managing director of the White Star Line. He read it and threw the message in the wastebasket on the bridge.

An hour later, a fourth warning was received. This time the captain said, "Tell the people on lookout to watch for icebergs." This was the only precaution that was taken by the ship. The Titanic steamed ahead, full speed, 22 knots, into the darkness of the night.

At 9:30 p.m. a fifth warning was received, but there was still no slow down in speed. At 11:30 that night, the crackling sound of another ship was heard in the radio room, "Hey, this is the Californian. I don’t know about you, but boy, we are really locked in with an ice field out here." The Titanic’s radio operator shouted, "Shut up! You’re jamming my airways," and then cut him off. Ten minutes later the lookout screamed, "Iceberg ahead!" It was too late, however, for nothing could be done to avert disaster. The mammoth ship slammed the iceberg,
which ripped a gash 300 feet long into its hull. All sixteen watertight compartments were immediately sealed off and everyone said, “We will be all right. The ship is unsinkable.” One bulkhead gave way, then another, and the ship was doomed.

Meanwhile, passengers were told the ship was in danger and they should head for the lifeboats, but never in the whole cruise had the passengers been assigned to a lifeboat. Why should they be assigned one anyway? This boat was unsinkable. When the announcement was made for the passengers to go to the lifeboats, many passengers refused to obey the order. They firmly believed the ship was unsinkable. Testimony revealed later that the lifeboats could have handled 500 more passengers. Many of these folks died because they suffered from “locked-in” thinking.

Many young people today go through life thinking their ship, their life if you please, is unsinkable. They too, suffer from locked-in thinking.

* It’s my life and I can do what I want.
* My parents don’t know anything. They don’t understand me or the problems I face.
* I’ll be happier when I am out on my own and free from my parent’s rules, standards, and regulations.
* My parents are to blame for all my problems and unhappiness. They owe me!

It’s this kind of thinking that is turning adolescents into addicts and abductors, kids into killers and criminals, dependents into drunkards and delinquents, relatives into runaways and robbers, and precious ones into perverts and prostitutes. With all of this as a background, we now address the fifth commandment in Exodus 20:12. Notice the reverence as it states, “Honor thy father and mother.” The reason and result of doing so is “thy days will be long upon the land.” This same command is repeated in the New Testament.

* Ephesians 6:1-3.... Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. [2] Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) [3] That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

This fifth commandment was said to be the first one listed on the second tablet. The first table dealt with our right relationship with God and the second one dealt with our right relationship with men and women. A person cannot be right with others unless he first gets right
with God. A person also cannot be right with God if he does not treat other people right. They are interdependent on one another.

The Scriptures stress over and over again the importance of having a right relationship with our parents. Usually, if the relationship with parents is not right, the relationship with God isn’t either. The exceptions would be if the issue of following Jesus Christ caused the breach between the two.

* Ways of Honoring Your Parents
There are several ways we can show honor to our mom and dad.

A. Show Reverence for Your Parents-
* Leviticus 19:3- Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the Lord your God. We are to have an inward reverence for our parents.

Outwardly, we can show reverence for our parents by our words and gestures when we speak to them and of them. They are not the “old man” or the “old lady.” They are to be spoken of with honor.
* Proverbs 31:28a- Her children arise up, and call her blessed; ..... 

B. Honor Parents by Careful Obedience
* Colossians 3:20- Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

Obedience to parents is demonstrated in several ways.

1. Listen to their Counsel-
* Proverbs 1:8- My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:
* Proverbs 13:1- A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorners heareth not rebuke.
* Proverbs 23:22- Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.

2. Comply with the Commands of Your Parents-
A child should be the echo of his parents. When the father speaks the child should echo back in obedience. God promised Israel that if they would honor their parents, their days would be long in the land.
* Deuteronomy 5:16- Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

One reason God’s people were taken away from their land into Babylonian captivity is because they dishonored their parents.
* Ezekiel 22:7 -In thee have they set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee
have they vexed the fatherless and the widow. The word “light” is from
the Hebrew word  qalal  {kaw-lal'}  which means “to be of little worth or
insignificant, to slight, to treat with contempt or to curse.”
* Ezekiel 22:15- And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse
thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee. The
result of their contempt for their parents was captivity.

C. We Honor our Parents by Listening and Loving them.
* Proverbs 23:22 - Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise
not thy mother when she is old.

Did you know that the idea for Mother's Day was born in a small
Methodist church in Grafton, West Virginia? It was 1876 and the nation
still mourned the Civil War dead. While teaching a Memorial Day lesson,
Mrs. Anna Reeves Jarvis thought of mothers who had lost their sons. She
prayed that one day there could be a "Memorial Day" for mothers. The
prayer made a deep impression on one of Mrs. Jarvis's eleven children.
Young Anna had seen her mother's efforts to hold the war-split
community and church together.

As she grew into adulthood, the younger woman kept Mrs. Jarvis'
dream in her heart. On the day of her mother's death, Anna was
determined to establish Mother's Day in her honor. On May 12, 1907, a
local observance was held which later spread to Philadelphia. By 1910,
Mother's Day was celebrated in forty-five states, Puerto Rico, Hawaii,
Canada, and Mexico. Elated, Miss Jarvis told a friend, "Where it will end
must be left for the future to tell. That it will circle the globe now seems
certain." On May 8, 1914, President Wilson designated the second
Sunday in May as Mother's Day "for displaying the American flag and
for the public expression of love and reverence for the mothers of the
country."

D. We Honor our Parents by Choosing to be Wise and not Foolish.
* Proverbs 10:1- A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is
the heaviness of his mother.
* Proverbs 15:20- A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man
despiseth his mother.
* Proverbs 17:21- He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the
father of a fool hath no joy.
* Proverbs 17:25- A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to
her that bare him.
* Proverbs 23:24- The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and
he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.
E. We Honor our Parents by Using Wisdom in What we Say
* Proverbs 23:16 - Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.

F. We Honor them by Caring for them when they are Weak.
Joseph cherished his father in his old age. Young storks by an instinct of nature, bring meat to older ones when by reason of age they are not able to fly. The memory of Aeneas was honored for carrying his aged father out of Troy when the city was on fire.

Children who are ashamed of their parents when they are old and fallen into decay, dishonor themselves and their parents. Leeches are those children that give them stones when their parents ask for bread.

In the final hours of Jesus, He took great care of his mother's welfare. On the cross, he charged John to take care of her.
* John 19:26-27 ....When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! [27] Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

* How are Parents Dishonored?
Don't dishonor your parents. How is this done?

1. By Stubbornness
* Deuteronomy 21:20- And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard.

2. By Lack of Respect
* Deuteronomy 27:16- Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

3. By Deaising your Mother
* Proverbs 15:20- A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

4. By Cursing Your Father
* Proverbs 30:11- There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.

5. By Strife in the Household
* Micah 7:6- For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.

6. By Disobedience
* 2 Timothy 3:2- For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous,
boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

When we look through the Bible, we find examples of children that were blessed because of their obedience and troubled by their disobedience. The Rechabites are an example of obedience to their parents. Notice Jeremiah 35.

* The Rechabites
A. The Command to Jeremiah
* Jeremiah 35:1-2... The word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, [2] Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink.
B. The Cups of Compromise
* Jeremiah 35:3-5... Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniah, and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites: [4] And I brought them into the house of the Lord, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was by the chamber of the princes, which was above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door: [5] And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine.
C. The Control of the Rechabites
* Jeremiah 35:6- But they said, We will drink no wine: ....
D. The Compliance to Jonadab
* Jeremiah 35:6-11... But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever: [7] Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers. [8] Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters; [9] Nor to build houses for us to dwell in: neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed: [10] But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us. [11] But it came to pass, when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians: so we dwell at Jerusalem.
Jonadab helped King Jehu remove Baal from Israel (2 Kings 10). The luxuries of the palace siphoned Jehu’s zeal for the Lord. To protect his children from idolatry, Jonadab kept his children away from wine. He kept them out of the cities and free from the luxuries of this world. For 200 years the Rechabites obeyed Jonadab’s instructions.

E. The Criterion

* Jeremiah 35:14- The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me. The Rechabites were an example to the nation of Israel of obedience.

F. The Compensation

* Jeremiah 35:18-19... And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you: [19] Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.

Because they had little possessions, they were free to move about and were spared from both the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. When the Northern kingdom collapsed in 722 B.C. from the Assyrian invasion, the Rechabites moved south to Judah. When Babylon invaded in 586 B.C., the Rechabites moved again. Because of their obedience to their parents, because they honored their father’s command, the Rechabites lived in freedom and peace on the land of their birth while their countrymen were living in the slave camps in foreign countries.

Several verses are given to warn children of the consequences of not honoring and obeying their parents.

* Proverbs 30:17- The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

* Deuteronomy 21:18-If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them:

* Deuteronomy 21:20-21... And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. [21] And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you;
and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

We also find classic examples of children that dishonored their parents and severely paid the price for doing so. The sons of Eli are an example of disobedience.

* **The Sons of Eli**

The first example we will examine of disobedient and dishonoring sons were Eli’s sons.

**A. They Rejected the Lord**

* 1 Samuel 2:12- Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord.

**B. They Revered Belial as God....**They were sons of Belial.

**C. The Robbed the offerings of the Lord**

* 1 Samuel 2:14-17... And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. [15] Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. [16] And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force. [17] Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.

Eli’s sons took more of the sacrifice than their allotted portion. They took the meat before the fat had been burned as a sacrifice to the Lord.

* Leviticus 3:3- And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire unto the Lord; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards,

* Leviticus 3:5- And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is upon the wood that is on the fire: it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord.

**D. They Rode Rough-shod over the People**

* 1 Samuel 2:16- And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force.
E. They Were Reprobate in their Behavior
* 1 Samuel 2:22- Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

F. They Repulsed God’s People
* 1 Samuel 2:17- Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.
* 1 Samuel 2:24- Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord’s people to transgress.

G. They Resisted the Rebuke of their Father
* 1 Samuel 2:22-25.... Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel: and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. [23] And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. [24] Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord’s people to transgress. [25] If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them.
* Proverbs 20:20- Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.

Eli was warned that his sons would die.
* 1 Samuel 2:34- And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.
* 1 Samuel 3:12-13... In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. [13] For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

Eli’s sons were killed. Their lives were cut short.
* 1 Samuel 4:11- And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

* Samson

Another example of a disobedient son was Samson.

A. He was Apathetic to the Cautions of His Parents
* Judges 14:2- And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines:
now therefore get her for me to wife.

B. He Abused His Parent's Instructions

The command is given in Judges 13:4.

* Judges 13:4- Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing:
1. He touched unclean things.
* Judges 14:8-9 ... And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. [9] And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.
2. He was in the vineyards where he did not belong.
* Judges 14:5 - Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him.

C. He had an Appetite for Sensual Women

* Judges 16:1- Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her.
* Proverbs 29:3- Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance.
* Proverbs 28:7 - Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.

   Samson lost several things because of his disobedience.
   1. His Sight- Judges 16:21
   2. His Might- Judges 16:20
   3. His Flight (freedom)- Judges 16:21
   4. His Life- Judges 16:30

* Absalom

Absalom dishonored his parents and his life was cut short.

A. The Conspiracy

* 2 Samuel 13:28-29... Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous and be valiant. [29] And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled.
B. Calling it Quits
* 2 Samuel 13:37-38 ...But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day. [38] So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years. Absalom ran away from home and stayed with his pagan grandfather.

C. The Combustion of His Temper and Property of Others
2 Samuel 14:31- Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto his house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?

D. His Covetousness
* 2 Samuel 15:4 - Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! He craved his own way and subverted authority.

E. His Chicanery and Counterfeit Devotion
* 2 Samuel 15:8-10 ... For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the Lord shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord. [9] And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron. [10] But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron. In the name of God he does evil work, treason, and rebellion.

F. Contradiction
* 2 Samuel 15:12- And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom. He led a revolt against his own father.
* Proverbs 19:26- He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.

G. He Commits Adultery
* 2 Samuel 16:22- So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.
* Proverbs 28:24- Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer.

H. The Cessation of His Life
* 2 Samuel 18:14- Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. Joab used Absalom for a dart board. Hanging from an oak tree, he was not fit to
tread upon earth or enter into Heaven.

Paul gives a command and warning in Ephesians.

* Ephesians 6:2-3... Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) [3] That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. When we fail to honor our parents, things will not go well for us and our life can be shortened.

Long life is a blessing.

* Psalm 128:6- Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel. Why is long life a blessing?
1. We have time to repent if we have not done so.
2. We have more time to serve the Lord.
3. We have more time to enjoy our relationships with others. Obedience spins out the thread of life and sweetens your life, “That it may be well with thee.” May the Lord help us all to properly honor our parents and to live long and prosper.
Chapter 17
A Matter of Life and Death

Exodus 20:13
Thou shalt not kill.

This verse with four words is a powerful command from God and one that is most needed. It is a matter of life and death. Exploring this command is like exploring the wondrous depth of the oceans or the planets of the universe. Its applications are immense, imperative, and important.

The command, “Thou shalt not kill,” answers some of the topics and questions that we are facing right now. Questions which deal with self defense, hunting, going to war, abortion, suicide, euthanasia, and capital punishment are affected by this command.

The command, “Thou shalt not kill” is actually rendered “Thou shall not murder.” The Hebrew language possesses seven words for killing. The word ratsach (raw-tsakh') appears in forty verses of the Old Testament. This word is used to signify pre-meditated murder. In this country alone, 29 people are murdered every hour. This means around 700 a day or around 25,000 people per year are murdered in this country. This, however, does not include the babies that are murdered in abortion mills.

The first person born into this world was a murderer and man has been plagued ever since with this sin and crime. Murder is a God-affronting sin. It tears away at God’s image or His creation.

*Genesis 9:6 - Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.*

Murder is a crying sin. Three sins cry out to God.

1. Oppression

*Psalm 12:5 - For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the
needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.
2. Sodomy
* Genesis 18:20-21. And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; [21] I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.
* Leviticus 18:22- Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.
* Leviticus 20:13- If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.
3. Bloodshed
* Genesis 4:9-10. And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? [10] And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

David committed adultery with Bathsheba, but he cries out to God for his sin of murder.
* Psalm 51:14- Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

Murder is a diabolical sin. It is an act in the shadow of Satan himself.
* John 8:44 - Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Murder is a cursed sin.
* Deuteronomy 27:24-25...Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly. And all the people shall say, Amen. [25] Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen.
* Genesis 4:11- And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

Murder is a wrath-procuring sin. It beckons the revenge and retaliation of others.
* Psalm 55:23- But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.
Murders in the Bible were committed in a number of ways.
1. With Hands- Joab killed Abner.
2. With the Tongue- The command was given to put others to death. The Jews falsely accused Jesus Christ.
3. With the Pen- David wrote the command to Joab to allow Uriah to be killed.
   * 2 Samuel 11:15- And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.
   * 1 Kings 21:9-10... And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: [10] And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.
5. By Consenting to Another’s Death- Saul consented to the death of Stephen.
   * Acts 22:20 - And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

As Christians, we are to guard ourselves from sins that lead to murder. What are the sins we should be on the “look out” for?

A. Uncontrolled Anger

   Anger boils in the veins and can lead to murder.
   * Genesis 49:6 - O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall.

B. Envy

1. Joseph’s brothers envied him.
   * Genesis 37:20- Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.
2. Envy and murder are cousins.
   * Galatians 5:21- Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
3. Envy begins with discontent against God and ends in injury against man.
4. Cain was discontented with God and killed Abel.
* Genesis 4:6- And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?
* Genesis 4:8- And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

5. Envy will not quench its thirst without blood.

* Proverbs 27:4- Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?

C. Hatred

Hatred is the vermin which lives upon blood.

* Ezekiel 35:5-6- Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end: [6] Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord God, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee: sith thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee. The word “sith” means “since.”
* 1 John 3:15- Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. This verse stresses the importance of your thought life. God looks at our sins differently than the way we do.

“Thou shall not kill” concerns the conduct of the individual. Killing by an individual person is an act of personal vengeance or retaliation that is prohibited.

* Matthew 19:18- He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness.
* Romans 13:9- For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
* 1 Peter 4:15- But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

Killing by a nation, such as in war or in executing criminals was permissible.

* Deuteronomy 7:2- And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: The Canaanites were to be smitten. This verse and Exodus 20:13 were both written by
Moses. Both of them are commands of God and are written to the same people. The difference between Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 7 is the command in Exodus 20 is written to individuals and Deuteronomy 7 is written to a nation.

All murder is killing, but all killing is not murder. Numbers 35 speaks of killing a man unawares, in error, by accident, or unknowingly. Cities of refuge were established for the man to seek refuge until the truth could be found. We do recognize there are degrees of guilt: first, second, and third degree murder. Killing by an individual may be intentional and still not be murder.

*Exodus 22:2- If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. If a thief breaks into a house, a person is not to be punished for defending his family, himself, or his property.

Killing an animal for food is not murder.

*Genesis 9:3- Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

All killing cannot be considered as murder because it would mean that God would be one and we know that is not true at all. Does the Lord ever take life? Yes, He takes life in judgment for sin.
1. In Genesis 38, He took the lives of two sons of Judah.
2. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before God.
3. The earth swallowed Korah, Nathan, and Abiram for rebellion.
4. Uzziah touched the Ark and was smitten.
5. In one night, 185,000 Assyrians were smitten.
6. He slew the firstborn in Egypt and Pharaoh’s army.
7. He smote King Herod for presumption and pride.
8. Annanias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit and were smitten.

Does God ever authorize human government to take life? Does God approve of capital punishment of criminals? Yes! Human government is ordained by God.

*Daniel 2:37-38... Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. [38] And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

*Daniel 2:21- And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:
God raised up the Pharaoh of Egypt, Cyrus, and Pilate.

* Romans 9:17- For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

* Isaiah 44:28- That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

* John 19:10-11... Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? [11] Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

* Romans 13:1-6.... Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. [2] Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. [3] For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: [4] For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. [5] Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. [6] For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

God is the giver of life and has the right to take life in judgment. God delegated the right to government for maintenance of social order based upon righteousness. Those who want to abolish capital punishment are individuals who assume to be wiser, more loving, and more merciful than God Himself. They are more concerned about the criminal than the victim.

**Disregard for the Word of God encourages or creates more bloodshed.** Men lose the fear of killing and respect for authority when strict laws are not passed or swiftly and severely executed. Mercy for cold-blooded killers is cruelty to the community, a travesty and a joke.

Henry VIII once pardoned a murderer who in turn, went out and killed someone else. When a second plea for mercy was made to the king, Henry answered, “No, he killed the first man, but I killed the second. I will kill no more. He must be executed!”
God authorizes government to execute capital punishment.
* Leviticus 24:17- And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death.
* Numbers 35:16 - And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.
* Deuteronomy 19:11-12... But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities: [12] Then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die.

In the Old Testament, the death penalty was implemented for murder, adultery, incest, sodomy, rape, witchcraft, blasphemy, false doctrine, and rebellion toward parents. To execute a criminal under government authority was not considered as murder when the criminal was truly guilty.

God’s two attitudes toward killing is seen in David’s life. As king, David was a representative of government, an instrument in God’s hand to bring judgment on nations. As an individual, when David ordered the death of Uriah, God charged him with murder.

What about war? Should nations ever declare war? Yes, there are times when it is necessary. The Bible reveals that war is a judgment of God upon nations, especially when a nation is evil and wicked.
* Ezekiel 14:21- For thus saith the Lord God; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?

When Israel rebelled against God, Assyria was the tool of God’s judgment.
* Isaiah 10:5- O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.
* Judges 3:12- And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord.
* Jeremiah 25:31- A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord.

War is caused by two key reasons.
1. The sinfulfulness of men.
2. The wrath and judgment of God.
If there were no sin in the world, there would be no war. War is the consequence of sin. The first child born into the world was a murderer. Ever since this incident, the feet of men have been swift to shed blood. It is interesting to note that the first man to reject substitutionary blood was the first to shed human blood. Cain rejected a blood sacrifice to the Lord. As long as nations reject the blood atonement of Jesus Christ, the blood of mankind will continue to flow.

**Does God enjoy war?** No, He hates it, but He uses it. War is God’s judgment upon sin. Some claim that war is wrong because Jesus said, “Love your enemies.” How can you love your enemies and go to war with them?

* The answer is the same way a father who loves his children but he spanks them when they are bad.
* It is the same way a doctor, who loves his patient, but operates, causing pain and bloodshed for his good.
* It is the same way a police officer can love and care about a criminal, and yet, arrest him.
* It is the same way Paul loved Peter, yet rebuked him.
* It is the same way Jesus sends unrepentant souls to Hell whom He loves and for whom He died on the cross.

**Do you realize that when Jesus returns to this earth, He will declare war?** He will do that which the Jewish zealots wanted Him to do when He was here the first time.

* Revelation 19:11-15... And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. [12] His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. [13] And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. [14] And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. [15] And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

In His first coming, Jesus became the Redeemer through His death on the cross at the hands of His enemies. At His second coming, He will become the Ruler of this world through the death of His enemies.

If you fought in wars like WW2, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Iraq, etc., you are not a murderer. You were fighting under the authority
of the United States of America. You were fighting to set men free from tyranny or overthrow tyrants. You have nothing to be ashamed of.

* The Issue of Suicide

What about killing yourself? Is suicide wrong? The current thought of today is there is nothing wrong with suicide or mercy killing according to 49% of Americans surveyed by the Chicago based National Opinion Research Council. This percent is up sharply from the 39% in 1977. The results of today’s attitude is 31,000 people kill themselves every year in the United States. This is close to 36 an hour or 860 a day. Suicide is the eighth cause of death in this nation.

Of the teenagers surveyed, one-third said they seriously considered killing themselves and have made plans to do so. Attempts were actually made by 14% of them. These attitudes have led to a tripling in suicides over the last 35 years among teens 15-19 years of age. Suicide is now the second leading cause of death among our kids. God help us!

At the time of this writing, God was kicked out of our schools about 37 years ago. The Bible and prayer were banned in our public schools leaving our kids without hope, stability, and the truth. The result of this imposition on our freedom has been catastrophic. Our kids are killing themselves and one another in our schools, sometimes on a massive scale.

Our educators are still scratching their heads wondering where they went wrong and what to do to solve the problem. When you leave God out of the solution, you have NO SOLUTION AT ALL! Jesus is the source of life! He is the LIVING WATER! The stagnant polluted pools of humanism and evolution have left our generation anemic, hopeless, violent, barbaric, beast-like, and focused on destruction instead of construction. Should we be surprised? After all, they are being taught they come from apes. Why should we be surprised when they mate like apes and kill like apes? Public educators need to wake up!

Why do people attempt or commit suicide? There are a number of reasons.

1. HOPE For Attention

A fellow was found with a rope around his wrist, strung from a light fixture. His buddy cut him down and said, “What in the world are you doing?” The fellow said, “I am committing suicide!” The buddy told him, “If you really want to commit suicide you will have to put the rope around your neck!” The fellow answered, “I tried the rope around my neck but it was choking me!” Some people are trying to get attention
when they attempt suicide. In fact, many after an attempt admit they did not want to commit suicide in the first place. They are in their own way crying out for help and are wishing to be rescued. Dorothy Parker put it this way..."Razors pain you, rivers are damp, acids stain you, and drugs cause cramps. Guns aren't lawful, nooses give, gas smells awful, you might as well live." Unfortunately, some people just don't want to live anymore.

2. HURT

* 2 Samuel 17:23- And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

Some folks are hurt by broken relationships or disappointments. They feel they can't go on in life without a certain person. For many people, December is a very depressing month. A high percentage of suicides each year take place in December during the Christmas and New Year seasons.

In San Francisco, the beautiful Golden Gate Bridge is the final point for many people. Since the bridge opened in 1937, there have been nearly 1000 confirmed suicides. The bridge accounts for ten percent of all suicides in San Francisco. What is interesting is the side the people jump from. Reports indicate that almost every person has jumped off looking at the city instead of the ocean. The final gaze at the city seems to indicate that each one was taking one last look for hope. Folks, suicide is not a temporary solution to a permanent problem; it is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

People are not only hurt by broken relationships, but they are also hurt by words. One woman who committed suicide left an unfinished note that simply said, "They said....." She never completed her final thought, but whatever they said was painful enough to take her own life! Words can be deadly beloved and also life giving.

* Proverbs 25:11- A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

* Proverbs 18:21- Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

3. HEALTH

Health problems are a third reason for suicide. Some struggle with a disease or suffer from pain and decide to just end it all. They cannot bear the suffering anymore. Job struggled with these feelings.
* Job 3:20-26... Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; [21] Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; [22] Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave? [23] Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in? [24] For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters. [25] For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. [26] I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

The “End it All” belief has become very popular in the USA. Recently a book about assisted suicide for the dying became #1 on the Best Seller List. It sold out of the book stores. It was filled with detailed instructions on how to kill yourself. A euthanasia society, called the Hemlock Society, felt it was the right time for a responsible suicide manual. There is no such creature as a responsible suicide manual. In 1975, forty-one percent of those surveyed felt the terminally ill had the right to die. By 1998 the percentage increased to 66%.

4. HABITS of Sin

The guilt and depression from sinful living lead people to the brink of death. Their reasoning is “What’s the use! I’ve ruined my life!” Many times this cycle begins in this fashion....

* Ungratefulness- to God, to parents, and to others.
* Stubbornness and Rebellion- The person becomes defiant and hard.
* Wrong Crowd- The person seeks support in his sin. His conscience is working on him and he must find a way to ease his guilt. He looks for other rebels to give him support.
* Sensuality- The person has loose morals and the heart gets harder. They commit moral suicide by getting involved in immorality. Police reports indicate that the suicide rate among prostitutes is 45 times greater than someone who is not a prostitute. Sexual freedom does not exist outside of marriage. Sexual liberation is a camouflaged ploy by Satan to bind you and destroy your entire being physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.
* Guilt from sinful living.
* Depression- The person looks at the shadow of darkness in his life and does not like what he sees, what he remembers, what he has become, and where he is heading.
* Suicidal tendencies- I’ll End It All Syndrome hits hard.
The United States is oozing with material abundance and money, yet, we are flooded with depression too. Studies indicate that the average thirty-year-old American man is ten times more likely to be depressed than his father and twenty times more depressed than his grandfather. At any given time in the USA, fifteen to twenty million people suffer from depression. Of these folks, 15% will commit suicide eventually.

5. HOLLOWNESS (That feeling of Worthlessness & Emptiness)

* Ecclesiastes 2:17- Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Some people attempt suicide to test a person’s care and affection for them or they are attempting to establish communication with them. Other folks feel no good at all and no use to anyone. They just want to get out of the way and not be a burden to anyone anymore. George Eastman, founder of Eastman Kodak left these words on his suicide note, “My work is done, why wait?” Ralph Barton, a cartoonist, wrote on his suicide note, “I have had few difficulties, many friends, great successes; I have gone from house to house, visited great countries of the world, but I am fed up with inventing devices to fill up 24 hours of the day.”

6. HOPELESSNESS

* Judges 16:29-30 ... And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. [30] And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.

Suicidal people maximize their problems and minimize their achievements. Minor setbacks are considered as major ones. They also put unrealistic expectations upon themselves.

I believe the teen suicide rate is up because of the hopelessness they face. The schools did not help them when they removed the Bible and prayer and replaced it with teaching that “man is God.” Kids are reasoning, “If man is God and I have these overwhelming problems I can’t solve, then I am sunk! What’s the use in going on?” Many of them have decided not to go on and end it all.

Can a Christian get depressed and suicidal? You better believe they can! Have you ever heard of the hymn “There is a Fountain Filled With Blood?” It was written by a man named William Cowper who was a poet
and like a voluntary assistant to John Newton, the author of Amazing Grace. Cowper had in his past heard some heretical preaching that convinced him he was not saved or among God’s elect. He felt he could not be saved and that God had rejected him forever. He became deeply depressed and tried to kill himself by slashing himself with a knife. Fortunately, he failed in his attempt and through Bible counseling and love from John Newton, he was able to understand the truth and go on with his life.

The Lord Jesus Christ can rebuild your life and give you hope when you are hopeless.
* Psalm 71:5- For thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth.
* Psalm 31:24- Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.

For your despair from hurt and health problems, the Lord can and will give you PEACE.
* Matthew 11:28- Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
* 2 Corinthians 12:9- And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
* Ephesians 2:14- For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;
* Philippians 4:7- And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

For your guilt from sinful habits and addictions, the Lord can give you hope and give you strength to meet your need.
* John 8:32- And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
* Psalm 27:1- The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
* Psalm 29:11- The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.
* Psalm 46:1- God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Are you struggling with hollowness, feelings of emptiness and worthlessness? The Lord Jesus Christ can satisfy your soul.
* Philippians 4:19- But my God shall supply all your need according to
his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.
* Psalm 107:9- For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

God’s people have so much to live for. Everything we need mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually is found in Jesus Christ. Is it wrong to commit suicide? You better believe it’s wrong. God makes it very clear suicide is wrong. Why?
1. It goes contrary to the natural instinct of self-preservation.
2. It is doing our own will, not God’s will. It is doing what is right in our own lives.
3. It is an act of cowardice in avoiding the suffering that God has allowed to mold you and make you and others around you like Christ.
4. It is prohibited by the commandment “Thou Shall Not Murder or Kill.” When the jailer was going to kill himself, Paul cried out to him (Philippians 16:28).
5. It is the result of impatience. We are to endure affliction and not get ahead of God. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing (James 1:3,4).
6. It is harmful to others. Suicide sets a bad example for others to follow and do the same thing. When Saul fell on his sword, the armor bearer did the same thing. Suicide hurts the ones you leave behind the most. They are the ones who suffer for your selfish actions.
7. It is condemned by the example of good men who have suffered.

* The Issue of Euthanasia

What about euthanasia? Is it wrong? Some may ask, “What is it?” This word is formed by two words, eu + thanatos= good death or happy death. Euthanasia is the act of painlessly ending the life of a person for reasons of mercy. Its roots are found in the abortion movement that has cheapened human life. If the unborn are not important, then what prevents the long born, well born, from being important? This is what is being decided today and it will affect your Mom and Dad, and especially our young people in the future.

If euthanasia becomes law, like abortion on demand, then the state and politicians may eventually decide when life is no longer worth living. Those who are hopeless or useless would be eliminated. That trend exists now when parents are informed that the baby in the womb is deformed or will have a handicap or Down Syndrome. Mothers are asked if they
want to abort their baby that has these conditions.

Let's get this into our thick heads folks, just because a child or person has a handicap of Down Syndrome, deafness, blindness, lameness, mental retardation, etc., it does not make them hopeless, useless, or cheap. If euthanasia becomes a national law, in time, society will begin to determine who should live and die. Tremendous pressure is put on the elderly that have a terminal illness. A former governor of a western state several years ago told elderly people it was their duty to die and stop draining the resources of the government such as Social Security and Medicaid. For the elderly, the right to die will change to a duty to die.

If mentally incompetent folks are put to death, who determines this? If it is humanistic psychologists, then Christians may be the first to go. When you see euthanasia becoming popular, you see the fulfillment of the dream of Adolf Hitler who gassed the imperfect, the handicapped, or those who were the wrong color or race.

Dr. Ruth Russell of Western Maryland College authored the book *Freedom to Die*. She advocates the passage of euthanasia laws, laws which now exist in 25 states. The law she proposes would provide for the death of the patient where there is no reasonable chance of significant recovery, usefulness, or happiness. My question are, "What is significant? When we talk about useful, useful to whom? Whose definition of happiness are we going to use?"

**What are the consequences of a "Right to Suicide" philosophy?**

If we accept a "right to suicide" philosophy, we would create a legal presumption of sanity which would prevent appropriate mental health treatment. If suicide and doctor assisted suicide become legal rights of people, then the presumption that people attempting suicide are deranged and in need of mental medical attention would be reversed. A person seeking suicide would be legally entitled to be left alone to kill himself without help or intervention. Doctors have stated that some attempts at suicide are challenges to see if anyone cares about the person. If the nation creates a "right to suicide" and makes it legal for doctors to help kill people, the message that is perceived by a suicide attempter is not likely to be, "We respect your wishes," but rather, "we don't care if you do live or die."

**What a person believes about euthanasia is determined by his view of the sanctity of human life.** God's point of view and the humanistic secular view of life are not the same at all. What does God's
Word say about life and death.
* Deuteronomy 30:19...choose life.
* In Job 33...Elihu reminds Job how God often brings a person back from the point of death to a healthy life. Verses 19-22 speak of suffering and verses 24-30 speak of saving power.
* Psalm 68:20...David, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit states the issues having to do with death are in the hands of the Lord.
* Matthew 9:12...This verse indicates the doctor has his place of service to help prolong life.
* Psalm 103:3...Some want to kill those who are diseased. This verse indicates the Lord heals all diseases. He can heal if He wants to.
* Psalm 118:18...This verse points out that the Lord can chasten and has the power over death. The power of death is to be God’s, not ours.
* Philippians 2:27....Epaphroditus was on his death bed, suffering, and God raised him up.

In 2 Samuel 1:14, we find the Amalekite spoke the words of a true believer in euthanasia. He said he observed that Saul was dying so he went ahead and killed him off. David’s response to the Amalekites story of mercy killing was one of OUTRAGE! David not only put the fellow to death, but he accused him of assassinating the king.

**The Bible not only teaches that it is God who determines the issues regarding death, but those who are seriously sick and suffering in the Bible desired not to die, but to get well and recover by the hand of God.** Think for a moment, if Job believed in euthanasia we would not have a book of Job. His wife told him to curse God and die. I’m glad he didn’t listen to her. Job would have missed out on God’s miraculous blessings and healing of his life and all the vital lessons He wanted Job and us to learn. Job acknowledged that God would bring him to death at His appointed time. God was in control of his life, not Job.
* Job 7:1- Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?
* Job 14:5- Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;
* Job 30:23- For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.

When you or another are in extreme pain, you may feel you’re better off dead. You may feel it would be best to be injected with a deadly poison or starved to death. This is the rationale of many today just as long as you don’t use tax dollars. In April, 1997, the Senate voted 99-0
that tax dollars were not to be used for suicide purposes.

Here is a question, "Who knows when a person is better off dead than alive?" Paul indicated the importance of life, though he desired death. Life was more important because of the needs of others (Philippians 1:21-24). Who knows at what point the possibility of a healing miracle has finally passed. One miracle might be around the corner. You just don’t know what the Lord is going to do. Hezekiah was sick unto death but the Lord healed him (Isaiah 38:1-5). Who knows the tolerance limits of suffering? We don’t know where the line is, but God does.

* Romans 14:7,8- For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

If I choose euthanasia for myself, I limit God’s use of my circumstances. I limit a limitless God! If I choose euthanasia for anyone else, I have assumed the responsibility of another’s soul, a responsibility that Biblically is not mine. Death should be presumed to be an enemy until God presents it as a friend. The alternatives for the Christian to mercy killing are:

1. Wait for God to provide healing or take you home to glory.
2. Depend on God’s grace to help you through your suffering. *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me* (2 Corinthians 12:9).

There are lessons to be learned through suffering which are valuable to the sufferer and to others who watch their life. There are lessons in patience, faith, compassion, mercy, and waiting on God that need to be learned. One doctor said that many of his dying patients grow in leaps and bounds in their character and finish all the unfinished business in their life. Many resolve old disputes, mend broken relationships, and come to appreciate all the blessings of their life, especially people who have really been a blessing. Euthanasia robs a person of these lessons and blessings and it robs other people who would be touched by a changed person on his death bed.

God’s way out of extreme physical suffering is never mercy killing. Active euthanasia cannot be justified for it is murder. What about someone in extreme pain? Some contend that the only way to alleviate
pain is to eliminate the patient. The better response to patients in pain is not to kill them, but to make sure that the medicine and technology available to control pain is used more widely and completely.

According to a 1992 manual produced by the Washington Medical Association, *Pain Management and Care of the Terminal Patient*, "adequate interventions exist to control pain in 90-99% of patients." When the pain is taken care of, the desire to die diminishes in patients. The key is controlling the pain. Pain has been controlled by morphine, radiation therapy, nerve blocks, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

Another technological advance is the availability of a 72 hour patch made by Alza Corporation which releases controlled amounts of the opioid fentanyl through the skin. It allows the patient to sleep through the night. Time released morphines are available. Some doctors fear morphine addiction in the patient. Research shows that only .04% of patients treated with morphine become addicted.

Some have asked, "Are we obligated to keep someone alive by machines?" If the person is brain dead, they are dead. You are not obligated to keep them on life support. Just make sure the person is truly brain dead. If the person is in a coma, wait. Don't be hasty to pull the plug. There are, no doubt, cases where through prayer, careful consultation, and medical advice that the measures being used to keep a dying body functioning should be discontinued and thus allow God to take the person in death. A good doctor will know how to distinguish between prolonging life and prolonging the act of dying. Each case is different. It is not all cut and dry. There is nothing wrong in getting a second opinion about pulling the plug on life support machines. Initiating death and giving drugs to kill a person is wrong.

* The Issue of Abortion

What about abortion? What does the Bible say about this issue? When does life begin according to the Scriptures? This is the crucial question which everything hinges upon. In this section we will see what God says about this issue.

A. The Child in the Womb is Considered a Life and Known by God.

* Psalm 139:13-16... For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. [14] I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. [15] My substance was not hid from thee, when
I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. [16] Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. Notice key statements.

* My reigns (vs.13)= the innermost being or mind.
* Covered me in my mother’s womb (vs. 13)= to knit together.
* I am fearfully and wonderfully made (vs. 14)
* Substance (vs. 15)= frame
* Made in secret (vs. 15)
* Wrought (vs.15)= woven together. A DNA strand looks woven together.

These verses describe a PERSON in the womb, not a non-person.
* Job 10:8-12... Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me. [9] Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again? [10] Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? [11] Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. [12] Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit. Job indicates he was not something, but someone.
* Isaiah 49:1- Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The Lord hath CALLED ME FROM THE WOMB; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. Isaiah was called from the womb.
* Jeremiah 1:5- Before I formed thee in the belly I KNEW THEE; and BEFORE thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Jeremiah was still inside his mother but God considered him a person, not a tissue, a blob, or a product of conception. He was a person.
* Genesis 25:22,23- And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

Esau and Jacob struggled within Rebekah. They are called “children” while they are still inside the womb. Why? Because a baby in the womb is a child. Life begins at conception, not birth. Man reproduces after his kind (Genesis 1:24,25). Men and women reproduce
people, not non-people.

* Luke 1:41, 44- And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the BABE LEAPED in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the BABE LEAPED in my womb for joy.

* **Babe**= Greek word is brephos= it means “child” while it is still in the womb. This word is used in describing Jesus too.

* Luke 2:12, 16- And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

* **Babe**= Same word as above only it describes a child out of the womb. The point is this, a baby is a baby whether in or out of the womb.

**B. Children Are a Blessing and a Gift From God**

* **Psalm 127:3**- Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

**C. What Does the Bible Say About Killing Children Born or Unborn?**

* **Exodus 20:13**- Thou shalt not kill. We are not to murder someone.

* **Exodus 21:22-25**- If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. [23] And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, [24] Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, [25] Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

* **Child**= Hebrew is yeled. This usually refers to a young child or teenager. Here it is used of an unborn child. The unborn child is viewed as much, human, as the mother and equal in status. There were severe consequences for the death of an unborn child. If the pregnant woman was hit by a blow and she delivered prematurely, compensation was paid. The penalty was in proportion of the injury. It was known as the law of retaliation....eye for eye, tooth, hand, foot, life, etc. Unintentional life taking was usually not a capital offense, but with the unborn it was. Abortion is clearly wrong. Life for life could not be imposed unless the baby was considered a person.

**D. The Bible Condemns the Shedding of Innocent Blood**

* **Deuteronomy 19:10**- That innocent blood be not shed in thy land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and so blood be upon thee.
*Proverbs 6:17- A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,
* Isaiah 1:15- And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

E. Killing an Innocent Child Was a Heinous Offense.
* Deuteronomy 12:31- Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.

* Leviticus 20:1-5... And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, [2] Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones. [3] And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name. [4] And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not: [5] Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people.

1. Giving of the seed to Molech was infanticide. Abortion is like modern Molech Worship. Molech or Chemosh was a large idol, half man and half bull with a hollow abdomen. He was the sex god. A fire burned in the hollow belly till the abdomen glowed with heat. Dancing and sexual activity took place in front of the god and it continued until the child was thrown into the heated cavity. The shrieks and cries created more mass hysteria. The burnt remains were removed from the other side on the following day. "How terrible," you say? Abortion is terrible too. The saline solution that is used burns the baby in the womb.

2. Notice the punishment God describes in this passage.
* Vs. 2- He shall be surely put to death.
* Vs. 3- He will set his face against that man and cut off (executed) from his people.
* Vs. 4- God is against those who hide their eyes from this sin.
* Vs. 5- He will set His face against that man and his followers.
F. God’s Prophets Warned of Judgement upon the Nation that Sacrificed its Children.

* Psalm 106:37-41.... Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, [38] And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. [39] Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions. [40] Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. [41] And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them.

* Ezekiel 16:20,21,36-38... Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them? Thus saith the Lord God; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; [37] Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. [38] And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy.

Righteousness exalteth a nation and sin is a reproach to any people. America is losing her glory because of her sinfulness and thirst for shedding innocent blood.

Excuses and arguments are offered by pro-choice movements and the media. **How do we answer these arguments? How do we debate the deceptions?** Let’s take some of them one by one and provide some answers.

* Deception #1.... Every Person Has the Right to Choose. It Would be Unfair to Restrict a Woman’s Choice by Prohibiting Abortion.

If every person has a right to choose, then does every teenage boy have a right to rape any girl in his school or neighborhood, if that is his choice? After all, it’s his body and neither you nor I have the right to tell him what to do with his body based on this reasoning. He is free to choose and it is none of our business what choice he makes... or is it? We have no rights to impose our morals upon him. Whether I like the
choice or not, he should have the freedom of choice if we believe the logic of choice. The response to this thinking is the raping of an innocent teenage girl would ignore her rights. EXACTLY! Abortion violates the rights of the little baby that cannot defend itself.

It is not always a virtue to be "pro-choice." Think about this... the laws against false advertising restrict a business man's right to free speech. If his choice is not restricted, we could be swindled, deceived, and cheated. Laws against discrimination infringe on the freedom of choice of those who would treat minorities unfairly. **When other's rights are at stake, particularly when lives are at stake, any decent society must restrict an individual's freedom of choice!** We have laws against nudity in public, public urination, prostitution, drugs, etc., because they harm society.

Most of America is not pro-choice when it comes to murder, rape, kidnaping, armed robbery, and child abuse. When we oppose the right to choose rape or child abuse, we are not opposing something that is right, but something that is very wrong. **To be "pro-choice" about someone's right to kill is to be anti-choice about someone else's right to live.**

When we hear the term "pro-choice," we must ask the question, "What choice are we talking about?" The right to choose what? Since life begins at conception, do you think people should have the right to choose to kill innocent children if they want to? Will you kill to get your own way?

**People who are "pro-choice" about abortion are often not pro-choice about other issues with less at stake.** Many folks who are pro-choice about abortion support laws requiring people to wear seat belts, forbidding drunk driving, even smoking in public places. Their excuse is drunk driving and tobacco smoke hurt people....so does abortion! Seat belts save lives. When lives are at stake, the freedom to choose is legitimately restricted by society. The choice to abort should be restricted because the life of the baby and the mother are at stake.

Everyone is pro-choice when it comes to the choices prior to pregnancy and after birth. People are free to abstain from sex, use birth control, or do neither. After birth, a mother can choose to keep her child or give the child up for adoption. The choice I oppose is the one that takes the life of an innocent little baby. I also oppose the choice for people having sex outside the marriage relationship because it is condemned by God Himself. God says it is wrong, so it is wrong.
The pro-choice position always overlooks the victims right to choose.
* Women do not choose rape and children do not choose abuse.
* The Negro race did not choose slavery.
* The Jews did not choose the ovens of Germany.
* Babies do not choose abortion.

True freedom is limited and restricted. Unlimited freedom becomes anarchy. I am free to live, but not free to say you cannot.

* Deception #2... Abortion Is a Decision Between a Woman and Her Doctor. It is No Other Person’s Business. Everyone Has a Constitutional Right to Privacy.

Did you know there is nothing constitutional about the right to privacy, because the right is nowhere found in the Constitution of the United States. It was declared by the Supreme Court in 1973, as a right higher than an unborn child’s right to live. Is privacy a right? Yes, but society recognizes that some rights are higher than others. Does one person’s right to privacy outweigh another person’s right to live? No!

What would you think of a man who defended wife beating on the grounds that “What I do in the privacy of my home is no one’s business but mine.” You would say that guy is crazy. If the wife filed charges the police would tell that guy, “You are under arrest.” Abortion advocates preach, “We thought what we did in our bedrooms was nobody else’s business.” Their primary argument for abortion is the right to privacy. The truth is, however, abortion isn’t done in the bedroom. Even if it was, child killing in a bedroom would be no different than child-killing in the streets or abortion clinics. The issue is not sex, it is whether an innocent baby deserves to live or die. The right of privacy does not give us liberty to rob in private, rape, steal, abuse people, or murder in private whether it is a child, adult, or an unborn child.

We do not have the right to do what is wrong. We do not have the right to steal bread from the mouths of the innocent, and we do not have the right to steal life from the womb of the mother with an unborn child. We are not going to remain a free people if we insist on using our freedom to be a corrupt and licentious people. We will not remain free if we grant ourselves the right to destroy the rights of others. This is what the abortion movement is doing.

The freedoms we hold demand responsibility and self discipline. When we become irresponsible with our liberty and lose self control, we in essence are destroying the foundation that our freedom was built upon,
the foundation of respect for others and self control of our passions and choices. Our direction leads downward into a moral spiral of destruction as life is cheapened and the lives of others are of no concern to us. We become concerned only with ourselves and if someone gets in our way or is hurt by our freedom of choice, that is of no concern to us. This attitude will destroy any society and will lead to anarchy, chaos, confusion, lawlessness, and tyranny.

* Deception #3.... Every Woman Has a Right to Control Her Own Body and do What She Wishes With It.

Abortion assures that 750,000 to one million females each year in the United States do not have control over their own bodies. This is the number of girl babies killed in America each year by abortion. If abortion is a woman’s right issue, what about the nearly 25 million females at the time of this writing who have been killed from abortion since it was legalized. These females were denied the right to choose and the right to control their body. They were denied the right to have life. If they could come back, they would not support the horrors of abortion.

* Issue #4... Should Abortion Be Allowed When the Mother’s Life is Endangered or Threatened by Pregnancy or Childbirth?

The answer to this question is it is an extremely rare case when abortion is required to save the mother’s life. While he was U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. C. Everett Koop stated publicly that in 38 years as a pediatric surgeon, he was never aware of a single situation in which a pre-born child’s life had to be taken in order to save the life of the mother. In reality, an abortion endangers the life of the mother more than the baby. Dr. Koop said that the use of this argument to justify abortion is a “smoke screen.” Dr. Joseph Donnelly of Margaret Hague Hospital of New Jersey said from 1947-1961 there were 115,000 babies born. No abortions were needed. He stated that abortion is never necessary to save the life of the mother. Medical advances have made the danger of pregnancy almost non-existent. Dr. Landrum Shettes says that less than 1 % of all abortions are performed to save the mother’s life...it is almost non-existent. If there is a problem they induce labor or perform a C-section.

In ectopic pregnancy, the child develops outside the uterus. He has no hope of survival and may have to be removed to save the mother. If both lives are threatened, doctors will try to save one. The Right to Life Committee consistently has maintained that while abortion be banned, the exception would be if the mother’s life was truly in danger.
* Issue #5... What About a Woman Whose Unborn Baby is Diagnosed as Deformed or Handicapped?

Realize the doctor’s diagnosis is sometimes wrong. I have personally heard of several cases where the doctors messed up. Recently on the news a woman was diagnosed with a tumor and the tumor turned out to be a baby. If there is deformity, many times it is minor. A cleft lip or palate is easily correctable now. Yet, many couples would rather abort than risk minor deformities.

We have become a society intolerant of imperfection. Would you kill a child with a physical defect after birth? Of course not and neither should you before birth. In John 9:3, we found that defective eyes were allowed in order that the works of God be displayed. The problem today is abortionist are trying to play God. It is significant that there has not been a single organization of parents of mentally retarded parents that has ever endorsed abortion. Retarded children are human too. They are as loving and loyal as normal children.

Handicapped children are not social liabilities and bright normal people are not always social assets. Many years ago two babies were delivered by the same doctor in Braunau, Austria. One was a fine, healthy boy with a strong cry. The parents were very proud and happy. The other baby was a girl, but her parents were sad because she had Down’s syndrome. The progress of these two was followed for the next fifty years. The girl grew up, living at home, and was finally destined to be the one who nursed her mother through a very long and lingering illness after a stroke. The boy grew up into a man and eventually died in a bunker in Berlin. His name was Adolph Hitler.

A blind dog is still a dog. A senile woman is still a woman. A handicapped child is still a child. A person’s nature or worth are not changed by a handicap. Our society has a double standard when it comes to handicapped kids. On one hand we provide special parking, ramps, and elevators for the handicapped. We are touched by telethons, March of Dimes, United Way advertisements. We sponsor Special Olympics to cheer Down Syndrome competitors that in many ways know more about love and the value of another person than we do. But when some in the medical community hear a woman is carrying one of these very children, they tell her to kill it before it is born! What a contradiction! What hypocrisy!

Do you realize if we abort children on the basis of their handicaps, that this jeopardizes the right of born people who are
already handicapped. Suppose you have a child that becomes blind, deaf, or paraplegic? Raising the child would be expensive, stressful, and difficult. For these reasons, should we execute this child? Would you do this? If not, why not? You know this child don’t you! Killing an unborn child because you don’t know the child yet, or have not held it does not reduce the loss of this child or change the value of the child.

Nazi Germany was tyrannical because of its cold disregard for human life. That unconcern surfaced in Hitler’s execution of 275,000 handicapped people before he began killing the Jews. When we look at what Hitler did, we must realize that as a nation we have become what we considered wicked, tyrannical, and evil.

Abortions based on probable handicaps rob the world of unique people who would significantly contribute to society. One day a medical school teacher gave his class a case study to determine whether or not to advise the mother to have an abortion. Here were the facts of the case.
1. The father had syphilis and the mother had tuberculosis.
2. Of the four children already born, the first was blind.
3. The second died.
4. The third was deaf and dumb.
5. The fourth child had tuberculosis.

The teacher asked, “What counsel are you going to give this mother?” One student gave what seemed was the obvious answer to them: “I would tell the mother to get an abortion.” The teacher responded, “Congratulations... you have just killed Beethoven.”

* Issue #6.... What About a Woman Who is Pregnant Due to Rape or Incest?

The Guttmacher Institute says that 16,000 abortions per year are due to rape or incest, which amounts to less than 1% of all abortions. Pregnancy due to rape is very rare. Studies reveal as few as one in one thousand. The reason is a high percentage of women are exposed to emotional trauma and will not ovulate when this happens. Rape acts as a type of birth control. Dr. J. Kuchera did a study for the Journal of American Medical Association. In one thousand cases that were treated medically after rape, there were zero pregnancies.

Rape is not a key issue in the abortion debate. Fearful young women will sometimes attribute their pregnancies to rape to gain sympathy and avoid the condemnation of immoral behavior. A young woman called “Roe” in the Roe vs. Wade case elicited sympathy in court
and in the media by claiming to be raped. In the May 9, 1989, issue of the Oregonian, she admitted she lied and was never raped at all.

**Killing the baby in a rape case doesn't solve or cure the problem.** Why should you kill the innocent third party? Why should you punish the child for what the father did? By killing the child, you add more trauma to the situation. The violence of abortion is no solution to the violence of rape. Punish the rapist, not the child.

**Doctors have found that the innocence of the child has a healing effect on the mother.** The child can also be given up for adoption if the mother does not desire to keep the baby. Consider also people who are already born who were the product of a rape. Would their background change your view of their worth? Would you love these people any less? If not, why should we view the unborn child any differently? Singer Ethel Waters was conceived after her twelve year-old mother was raped. She touched millions through her life and music. The endangered life of the mother, rape, and deformity form 3% of abortion cases. It makes no sense to permit 97% of abortions because of the circumstances of 3%.

*Deception#7... Abortion-Rights are Fundamental For the Advancement of Women.*

If you ask me, killing babies to advance your cause is no advancement at all. Did you know that early feminists were pro-life, not pro-choice? Susan B. Anthony stood for women when they were not allowed to vote. She referred to abortion as “child murder” and a horrible crime. Alice Paul drafted the original version of the Equal Rights Amendment. She also referred to abortion as the “ultimate exploitation of women” (June 24, 1991, Christianity Today).

**The hypocrisy and irony of pro-choice feminists is the fact they defend a belief which is killing females across the globe by the millions.** Abortion is the number one means of eliminating unwanted females across the world. Surveys done in twelve villages in India revealed only fifty girls out of a population of ten thousand. The other girls were eliminated by pre-natal tests. If the female sex was determined, the baby was aborted. Of the six clinics in Bombay, India, Newsweek magazine revealed that 8,000 pre-natal tests indicated females and all of them except one were killed.

The same thing is going on in China where families are limited to one child. This devilish philosophy is now backfiring in China and other countries that are limiting the family size. If they can only have one child, the parents choose to have a boy to carry on the family name.
These Chinese boys are growing up now and finding it difficult to get a wife. Men outnumber women ten to one.

Amniocentesis is done in America and the same pattern is developing. You can tell within two months what sex the baby has. *Medical World News* reported a study of 99 informed mothers. Fifty-three pre-borns were boys and only one mother aborted the boy. Forty-six were girls and twenty-nine mothers aborted their daughters. Females are being targeted for extinction. The tool of destruction is defended by those who claim to be pro-woman. What a lie! Ladies, if you are going to preach equal rights, realize there can be no equal rights for all women until there are equal rights for unborn females....the future women of the nation.

*Deception #8.... It’s Unfair to Bring a Child into the World that is Unwanted. A Child Should Have a Meaningful Life. Abortion reduces child abuse.*

People, there is no such creature as an unwanted child. The demand for babies is so great that a Black Market has developed where babies are sold for as much as $35,000. Not only a normal baby is desired, children with Down Syndrome are desired too. An unwanted baby is a myth. Adoption agencies have a seven year waiting list with one and a half million families wanting to adopt. The problem is not unwanted children, but un-wanting adults.

Legalized abortion has not reduced child abuse. Reports of child abuse and neglect in the United States have more than tripled since the legalization of abortion in 1973, and those stats are continuing to escalate. There were 669,000 abuse and neglect cases in 1976. In 1986, it jumped to 2.1 million cases according to the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. Abortion cheapens life and a concern for the living.

*Deception #9.... Abortion Helps Solve the Problem of Overpopulation and Raises the Quality of Life.*

We are told that there are too many people in the world and there is not enough room. We hear of India’s problem, yet, they have less per square mile than England, West Germany, or Taiwan. Did you know that all the people in the world could fit side by side in Jacksonville, Florida standing several feet apart? Every person could live in Texas with a population density less than many cities around the world. The problem in India is they worship cows. They won’t eat them and their people starve. There are as many cows as Indians. Without the lie of reincarnation, there would be hamburger and steak for all.
The birth rate is declining in America and it will have a disturbing economic effect on this nation. Western European countries already are having economic problems due to population reduction. France offers child-bearing incentives that include monthly payments to families with more than a certain amount of children. Because women have fewer children today, there will be fewer parents tomorrow and fewer children. This leads to a dying society.

Legalizing abortion resulted in a drastic reduction of children in the country. By 1980, there were 6.5 million less school age children in the U.S. than a decade earlier. The result was 9000 elementary schools were closed. Legalized abortion in the U.S.A. has resulted in over 30 million fewer tax payers in America to support the elderly.

The solvency of the Social Security System is gradually eroding into bankruptcy. The imbalance of older and younger is shaping into a chronological civil war. This issue has already been addressed on ABC’s Nightline in March of 1993. By 2025, there will be twice as many grandparents as young children. Some predict Social Security taxes will increase 25-40% of the total income. In 1980, there were four people of wage earning age for each retired person. By 2020, there will only be 2 and by 2040 there will be 1.5 per person. Society will rebel against high Social Security taxes. The elderly will demand what was promised to them. **Will society offer the solution of killing the unwanted elderly to deal with the problem? Why not? Society is in the habit of killing unwanted life now. Abortion cheapens life.**

In the 1980's, a governor in a western state told elderly people that they had a duty to step aside and die. If the elderly will not step aside, will society begin setting them aside? Former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop stated publicly his fears about mandatory euthanasia eventually resulting from the unwillingness of the younger generation to support the elderly. He said, “**My fear is that one day for every Baby Doe in America, there will be ten thousand Grandma Does.**” If you are not willing to fight for unborn life, then fight abortion to defend your own life from future tyranny.
Chapter 18
Temptation
Exodus 20:14
Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Circumstances don’t make a man, they reveal him. Like tea bags in boiling water, our real strength comes out when we get into hot water. David saw a beautiful bathing Bathsheba from the roof top of his home and his struggle with fantasy, flesh, faith, and his future kicked in gear. His mind became an arena of debate and rationalizing sin.

What he saw sparked his imagination and in less time than it takes to tell it, he was feeding a fantasy that became an obsession. He had been drawn away by his own desires. These desires conceived and he was pregnant with lust before Bathsheba even got to his room and became pregnant with his child.

Temptations appeal to desire; desire creates the fantasy; fantasy sparks the feeling; the feelings cry out for action. Everyone is tempted. Temptation knows no strangers. You can’t evade it or avoid it. It’s an inescapable fact of life. Like the dust, it falls on everyone. No isolation from people will isolate us from temptation. Ask the secluded priest, the hermit in a cave, or the prisoner in his cell and they will acknowledge they are tempted. There are no exceptions and no exemptions.

If you are a sexual being, you will have sexual temptations. In fact, if a person mistakenly thinks that he is safe from temptation, he is already vulnerable and Satan is preparing his destruction. Paul warned us to watch out!

* 1 Corinthians 10:12- Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

In 1986, Gordon MacDonald was the president of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. He was admired and respected by countless people throughout the Christian community. Within a year, he was a broken man. He had committed adultery. By 1988, he was on the long road to healing and wrote a therapeutic book which dealt with his own
brokenness, *Rebuilding Your Broken World.* In this book, Mr. MacDonald shared an experience which took place several years before his adulterous relationship. While on campus to speak at a college commencement, he struck up a conversation with a school board member. After some pleasantry, the new acquaintance asked, “If Satan were to blow you out of the water, how do you think he would do it?” Gordon replied, “I’m not sure I know. All sorts of ways, I suppose, but I know there’s one way he would not get me.” “What’s that?” “He would never get me in the area of my personal relationships. That is one place where I have no doubt I am as strong as you can get.” This was the area where he fell.

**God does not tempt us with sin. We are tempted when we are attracted and seduced by our own desires.**

*James 1:13-15... Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: [14] But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. [15] Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

The author of temptation is Satan. Who tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? Who tempted Jesus in the wilderness for 40 days? It was the Devil. Let me say that temptation is not a sin. Jesus was tempted.

*Hebrews 4:15- For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

**Our reaction and responses to temptation determine whether we sin or not.** In fact, temptation all by itself is about the weakest thing in the world. All alone it is utterly powerless. To succeed, temptation always needs a partner, someone to agree with it, open the door for it, welcome and cuddle it, keeping it warm. Listen, you can’t stop some temptations from coming, but you can decide what you are going to do with each one.

You can’t stop the birds from flying in the sky, but you can stop them from nesting in your hair. You can’t stop Satan from singing his seductive songs in your ear, but you don’t have to join him and sing a duet. You cannot stop Satan from displaying his wares in the shop window and urging you to buy, but you don’t have to make a purchase.

Sin is the goal, the objective of temptation. It will appeal to the weakest place in your life to defeat you. There is a humorous story from
the early days of football in Dallas, Texas. The Dallas Texans were the first attempt in having professional football in the Lone Star State. They had a brief history, lasting just one year in 1952. Their record that year was 1 win and 11 losses. The training camp for the team was located at Kerrville, Texas. Willie Garcia was their equipment manager and he had one wooden leg. The first time a football bounced off the playing field into the tall grass, no one wanted to go after it because of snakes. Garcia volunteered to retrieve the ball and wittingly said, “I’ve got a 50-50 chance the snake will go for the wrong leg.” Many Christians underestimate the power of Satan and dash through the tall grass of life thinking he will go for the wrong leg. He is dumb. Do not make the tragic mistake of underestimating the cunning and power of Satan.

**Temptation begins in the mind.** The most important sex organ is the mind. An affair starts in the mind long before it ends up in a bed. Behind every sinful tragedy, there is a process of wicked thinking.
* The mind is a garden that is cultivated to produce the harvest that we desire.
* The mind is a workshop where the important decisions of life and eternity are made.
* The mind is an armory where we forge the weapons for our victory or for our destruction.
* The mind is a battlefield where all the decisive battles of life are won or lost.

The battle over sexual purity or defeat takes place in the mind.
* Matthew 5:28 - But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

**When temptation comes, how do you meet it?** What do you do to pull its fangs and make it your servant?

**A. Deflate Temptation by Expecting It**
* Daniel 1:8 - But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

A great part of temptations power is in its surprise strategy. A surprise attack is an enemy's most successful tactic. Be prepared for temptation and how to deal with it. It is going to come.
B. Develop a Biblical Conscience
* Joshua 1:8 - This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

In a struggle with temptation, we usually live our values, not our beliefs. If our conscience has been trained by the Bible, and we are committed to its principles, we meet temptation with confidence instead of fear and failure. We are committed to doing what is right.

God’s warnings are the love words of a parent telling his child not to run into the streets, jump off a bridge, or play with matches. They are loving protections.
* Proverbs 2:16-18... To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; [17] Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgettieth the covenant of her God. [18] For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.
* Proverbs 4:23-27 - Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. [24] Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. [25] Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. [26] Ponder the path of thy feet, and all thy ways be established. [27] Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

C. Defuse Temptation by Not Fearing It

Every temptation is an opportunity to defeat the Devil. It is a chance to develop virtue and mastery, a stepping stone to Christian character. Face it firmly and resist it decisively.
* 1 Corinthians 10:13- There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

The man who has the most temptations has the most chance of growing in grace. Every temptation can drive us closer to God and gives Him a chance to confirm and demonstrate His victory over Satan. What the Devil designs for your destruction, God uses for your development. What Satan uses for our pollution, the Lord uses for our perfection. The moral struggles that we face can make us more mature or ruin us if we compromise. We were made to be conquerors in Christ, not cowards. We are sons of God, not slaves. Yet, we are not to stick our head in the mouth of the lion of temptation. If you do that, you’ll get bit. Stay away
from temptation as much as possible.
* Proverbs 4:14-15... Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. [15] Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

D. Decide Irrevocably if You Want Victory over Temptation

The word “victory” implies a battle. The battlefield is our mind and temptation is the attacker. Indecision on a battlefield spells defeat. The same fact holds true when it comes to overcoming temptation. If we are not sure we want victory, then we most likely will give in to our flesh.

Your overall life purpose will determine how you meet daily temptations. If you waver here, you will vacillate when the pressure is on you to yield to temptation. If your purpose it to glorify God in your life, your daily decisions will revolve around this purpose. If the purpose of your life is undefined or to please yourself, you will fall.

E. Stanley Jones said, “If you don’t make up your mind, then your unmade mind will unmake you.” Any decision or dallying around will be the Trojan Horse that will get on the inside of your heart and open the gates to your spiritual enemies. For this reason we are exhorted to make up our mind on whom we are going to live for.
* Joshua 24:15- And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
* 1 Kings 18:21- And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

E. Determine Your Response to Temptation Ahead of Time

You cannot wait until you are nose to nose with temptation to decide what your response is going to be. If you wait that long, it may be too late. In the back seat of a car, at the sales convention, at a party, at the office, these are not places to weigh, analyze, and decide about extra-marital affairs. Again, we are reminded of Daniel who made his decision ahead of time about doing what was right.
* Daniel 1:8a- But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself....

Putting these principles into practice will help us to gain victory over our temptations.
Chapter 19

The Scourge of a Marriage: Adultery

Exodus 20:14

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

No good Christian, man or woman, gets up in the morning, looks out the window and says, "My, this is a lovely day. I guess I'll go out and commit adultery." Unfortunately, some do it anyway. We live in a sex-saturated society where adultery and immorality are glorified, glamorized, and normalized.

Schools teach sex without responsibility. The result is one million teenage girls get pregnant every year. Movie houses and T.V. programs take families right into the bedroom with no restraints. Commercials on television consistently use sex and nudity to sell their products. Yes, you could say we have a sexual mind-set in our nation and world.

Survey after survey consistently agree that two-thirds of husbands (66%) have been unfaithful at some time during their marriage and one out of two wives have been unfaithful with this rate climbing as women work outside the home and become independent of their husbands.

Surveys also indicate that if a woman had pre-marital sex, she was much more likely to have an affair. Surveys also revealed that as more wives enter the work force, the affairs increased as men would proposition these women at work. The apathy and boredom at home, the lack of love, attention, and romance, the flirting and attention of men at work make these women feel young and special again. The excitement that people get from this kind of attention becomes like a narcotic. The powerful urge to fulfill the sexual curiosity and fantasy of being with another person is more than many people can handle. They become entangled in an adulterous affair. God has a solution to the problem.

* Titus 2:3-5... The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; [4] That they may teach the young women to be sober, to
love their husbands, to love their children. [5] To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

* Ephesians 5:25- Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

**What is adultery?** The dictionary says it is voluntary sex between a married person and a partner other than your lawful spouse. God doesn’t stop there though.

* Matthew 19:9- And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

* Romans 7:2-3.... For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

* Matthew 5:27-28.... Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: [28] But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

The word “looketh” is in the present tense which indicates a continual habit of life. The word “woman” is singular in number, not plural. This passage condemns the practice of centering your attention on a particular person with the motive of committing adultery with her and letting your thoughts and desires be dominated by your lust for her.

**Adultery is a thievish sin.** It steals when there is no need to steal. It steals from your neighbor. It steals away a wife or a husband. Job calls adultery a heinous crime and the Lord calls it villainy.

* Job 31:9-11... If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door; [10] Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her. [11] For this is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges.

* Jeremiah 29:22-23 .... And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon, saying, The Lord make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire; [23] Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my
name, which I have not commanded them; even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord.

Adultery wrecks havoc in a life and has devastating effects and consequences in a person’s home and marriage. What are the effects of adultery?

* The Effects of Adultery

1. Adultery debases a person, making them resemble a beast. The Bible describes the person as a horse neighing.
   * Jeremiah 5:8-They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.

   This sin is worse than brutish. Some creatures that are void of reason, by instinct of nature observe a decorum of chastity. The turtle dove is a chaste creature and keeps its mate. If the stork leaves its mate and goes to another nest, joining with another stork, the stork community will attack that bird and pluck his feathers from him.

2. Adultery can lead to death. In Bible times, adultery was a capital offense, usually by stoning. The Saxons dealt with this sin by burning the adulterers. The Romans cut their heads off. Today, a jealous wife or husband may kill the unfaithful spouse or the other lover. Adultery is dangerous.
   * Leviticus 20:10- And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.
   * Deuteronomy 22:24 - Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.

3. Adultery stains a person’s reputation and robs a person of honor. Honor is found in the wounds of a soldier or a martyr for Christ. The adulterer gets wounds in his name but there is no honor. The wounds of a reputation no doctor can heal. When the adulterer dies, his shame continues to live. When his body rots underground, his name continues to rot above ground.
   * Proverbs 6:32-33... But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. [33] A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.
* Proverbs 5:8-9... Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the
door of her house: [9] Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy
years unto the cruel:

4. Adultery pollutes and consumes the body. The harlot is a walking
dunghill infested with disease.
* Proverbs 5:11- And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body
are consumed,
* Proverbs 7:22-23.... He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to
the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; [23] Till a dart
strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not
that it is for his life.

Sexual diseases syphon the moisture of the body and bones. They
rot the skull and eat the beauty of the face. Sinful living ages people. As
the flame wastes the candle, so the fire of lust consumes the bones and
countenance. I’ve seen folks in their 20’s and 30’s who look like they are
in their 40’s because their sinful life has taken its toll on their health.

5. Adultery incurs the wrath of God and destroys the soul. This sin
is denounced in many of the books of the Bible.
* Proverbs 6:32- But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh
understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.
* Hebrews 13:4- Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled:
but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.
* 1 Corinthians 6:9- Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit
the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters,
nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,
* Revelation 21:8 - But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable,
and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all
liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and
brimstone: which is the second death.

The only hope for deliverance is to repent of this sin. If you have
never been saved, then trust Christ as your Savior.

6. Adultery is a purgatory to the purse, draining it or the billfold
until it is empty.
* Proverbs 6:26- For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to
a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.
* Proverbs 5:10- Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours
be in the house of a stranger;

When King Edward III lay dying in his bed, his concubine got all
that she could from him, plucking his rings from his fingers.
7. Adultery is like a scorpion, carrying a sting in its tail.  
* Proverbs 5:3-5... For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil; [4] But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword. [5] Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.

Part of the sting is the jealousy and rage of the betrayed man.  
* Proverbs 6:34- For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.

Adulterers are often killed in the very act of their sin. Adultery cost the lives of Otho the Emperor and Pope Sixtus IV. The sweetness of sin soon sours. Lust makes a joyful entrance, but leaves a person in misery. Causinius speaks of a tree that grows in Spain. It has a sweet smell and taste, but the juice is poisonous. This is the emblem of a harlot, perfumed with powders, fair to look upon, but poisonous to the soul.  
* Proverbs 7:26- For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her.

Even the goddess Diana was so artificially drawn that she seemed to smile upon those that came into her immoral temple, but frowned upon those that went out. This is the way adultery leaves a person.

8. Adultery breaks down the moral principles in a family. David’s lust for women affected his son Solomon and grandson Reheboam. David’s adulterous night of pleasure with Bathsheba became a nightmare of pain. God judged David and his house. His sin set a precedent for his family that affected them for years.  
* His baby died.  
* Tamar was raped by her half brother Amnon.  
* Amnon was killed by his son Absalom.  
* Absalom was separated from David for three years and conspired against him. He eventually was killed in his revolt.

The lessons from David’s life apply to us all.

1. No one, however chosen, blessed, or used of God, is immune to adultery.  
2. Anyone, regardless of how many victories he has won, can fall disastrously.  
3. The act of adultery is the result of uncontrolled desires, thoughts, and fantasies.  
4. Your body is your servant or it becomes your master.  
5. A Christian who falls will excuse, rationalize, and conceal their sin the same as anyone else.
6. Sin can be enjoyable, but it can never be successfully covered.  
7. One night of passion can spark years of family pain.  
8. Failure is neither fatal nor final. There is forgiveness when we repent and seek forgiveness. There are, however, limitations to service that are created by our adultery.

* How Does One Begin to Avoid Adultery?  

1. Avoid the actions that lead to adultery.  

* Wandering Looks:  

Wandering eyes belong to those who are looking for women or men. They hunt for new sex partners. *Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:* 2 Peter 2:14  

* Wandering Eyes, Wild Behavior, and Immodest Gestures: Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Isaiah 3:16  

Improper sensual embraces and hugging should be avoided. Stay off the dance floors. The close contact, looks, touching, the music and words stir the embers of emotion and fan the flames of passion.

2. Avoid sensual men and women. Avoid their houses like a sailor that avoids rocks.  

* Proverbs 5:8- Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house:  

* Proverbs 4:14-15... Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. [15] Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.  

* 1 Corinthians 15:33- Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.  

3. Guard your eyes and your heart.  

* Job 31:1 - I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?  

* Proverbs 4:23- Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Avoid places and activities of nudity and sensuality.

4. Be careful how you dress.  

Sensual dress provokes lust and attracts the wrong kind of men.  

* 1 Timothy 2:9- In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;
5. Keep your body pure; it is the temple of the Holy Spirit.
* 1 Corinthians 6:17-18... But he that is joined unto the Lord is one
spirit. [18] Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the
body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.
* 1 Corinthians 7:1-2...Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto
me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. [2] Nevertheless, to avoid
fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have
her own husband.

Do not fear scriptural marriage. Do not marry unbelievers,
backslidden Christians, or someone who has been divorced and their
former spouse is still alive. Those are God’s guidelines. Reject also the
philosophy of this world that promotes living together with someone
before you are married to them. It doesn’t work and has devastating
consequences.

7. Honor the estate of marriage.
* Hebrews 13:4 - Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled:
but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

A loving spouse can meet the need of attention, acceptance,
affection, admiration, and activities. These are reflected in the marriage
vows.
* “To have and to hold”...commitment
* “ For better or worse” .....belonging
* “ For richer or poorer” .....loyalty
* “ In sickness and in health” .....support
* “ To love and to cherish”.....faithfulness
* “ Till death do us part” .....companionship

* The Aftermath of Adultery

What does a person do when they believe or discover that their
spouse has committed adultery? We will address this issue. Common
questions that are expressed in the aftermath of adultery are:
1. Can we rebuild the marriage again?
2. Do I really want to rebuild my marriage and stay with my spouse?
3. Is there anything left to salvage? If so, what and how?
4. Where do we begin to rebuild the marriage?
5. Can I really trust my spouse when I have been hurt and betrayed?
6. What went wrong? Why did this happen?

In the aftermath of the discovery of adultery, your world may come
to a screeching halt. You may feel like you have been stomped into the
ground and are numb with pain. A feeling of utter hopelessness may
overwhelm you. Adultery may be the fact, but the feeling about the fact
and your reaction to your situation form the crux to further problems or
solving them. A proper and mature response can provide solutions to
rebuilding the marriage and having self control. Improper, immature,
unproductive responses throw gas on a burning marriage. There are
several natural human tendencies in such a stress-filled situation: freeze,
fry, fold, fight, and force.

A. The Response of Freezing

This reaction makes a person immobile because of refusal, a refusal
to see and admit what the evidence and signs indicate and the heart
confirms. When a husband or wife is involved in an affair, there are
definite signs that matters are not as they were before. There are subtle
changes in personality.
* There is a change in attentiveness. The spouse tends to be cool.
* There is a change in openness characterized by avoidance.
* Body language changes. There is less eye contact and touching.
* Guilt begins to take hold of the adulterous spouse.

For many, the very thought of their mate having an affair freezes
them into inaction or denial. Denial produces several disastrous courses
of action.
1. You begin unconsciously to cover for your partner and make excuses
   for their actions. You may even take blame for their behavior.
2. By doing this you become part of the problem, not the solution. You
   unwittingly encourage the affair when you do this. You reward your
   unfaithful spouse with greater opportunity.
3. Denial prolongs the punishment and keeps God from actively bringing
   solutions. God works through the one who initiates, confronts, forgives,
   and heals.

B. The Response of Frying

Many betrayed partners burn inside. They fry with self-pity or self-
righteousness. Bitterness, hostility, hurt, vengeance, and humiliation
express themselves in a "Look at what they did to me!" attitude. When
you are frying you may entertain such feelings as:
1. After all I've done for him or her, this is the thanks I get!
2. I've given the best years of my life and have been trashed.
3. As a wife you may feel, "I've cooked, cleaned, given birth to his
   children and this is how he treats me!"
The fact that your spouse has found someone else is devastating. If the person is not that pretty or handsome, you feel insulted that they left you for them. If the person is drop-dead gorgeous or handsome, your self esteem takes a hit. Some folks wrestle with these feelings of worthlessness, self-hate or ugliness. Concern over the opinion of others haunts the mind too. People are taunted with such thoughts as, “I can’t keep my own spouse! What is wrong with me? I am a failure.” Such thinking fries a person mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and then physically.

**C. The Response of Folding**

The mate that folds, falls into a pile and takes all the blame, is waiting for the inevitable. Webster defines “fold” as “closed for lack of funds; to declare bankruptcy; to throw in the towel.” Some people fall into this pile because they tend to lean heavily upon their spouse. Wives, especially are very vulnerable because they do lean greatly upon their husbands who are supposed to care for them. When the husband is involved in an affair, her prop has been taken away. The one person she has been totally dependent upon has been removed and she has great difficulty in standing alone.

Some spouses fold because they are rendered hopeless by sheer threats, abuse, or violence. They are scared to death to confront the spouse or say anything. Guilt also paralyzes one to fold. Often the rejected partner looks inward and takes all the blame for the whole mess. This is not always the case, but it holds true in many situations.

In the case of a rejected wife, she often reviews all the things she could have done differently and dwells on her past mistakes. Some of the mistakes are valid and real. Some of them are imaginary weaknesses. Her self-worth takes a nose dive and her guilt multiplies. Much of her guilt is a false guilt.

**D. The Response of Fighting**

Anger, hate, or bitterness may smoulder within or explode like a volcano. There is anger over the embarrassment, humiliation, deception, or betrayal. Some spouses want to express their anger with retaliation, “If he can do it, I can do it too.” There are wives that yield to the desire to get even and give their husbands a taste of their own medicine. They are out to prove that they are still desirable, beautiful, sexy, and can get a man anytime they want, even out of spite. Their attitude is, “I’ll show him and teach him a lesson he will never forget!” So they go out and commit immorality with another man.
If this is the response that is chosen, then another person goes astray. You may become the other woman or man in another relationship. You become what you hate and resent. When you respond this way, you demonstrate you are controlled by the person whose actions you copy. You become just like them. Instead of becoming an initiator, you become only a reactor. Revenge becomes more than retaliation. It is committed to finding a way to punish in return for the injury and hurt that has been inflicted.

Anger also takes another form: blame. Blame is assigned to the unfaithful spouse, “It’s all his fault! I wasn’t unfaithful! I did nothing wrong!” I have heard these statements before and have found with probing questions that the wife or husband was not without fault. Some wives drive their husbands away because they become cold, frigid, and passionless, especially in the bedroom. They are not without blame if their husband is unfaithful. The same truth holds for the husband too.

The response of fighting is also seen in the desire to fight the third party. Many men have been killed by a betrayed husband and many women have been beaten or killed by an enraged wife.

E. The Response of Force

Forcing means to charge, push for a solution, to manipulate the people involved for a quick fix without really fixing the problem. The natural tendency is to get rid of the ugly problem as soon as possible. You may feel that any action is better than no action at all. Freezing, freezing, folding, fighting, and forcing lead to a dead end. They may provide a small bit of self-satisfaction, but do not contribute in resolving the dilemma. They only aggravate an already sensitive and volatile matter.

F. The Response of Finding

The affair is a sign of a need for help. It is an attempt to compensate for needs in a person’s life and deficiencies in the marriage. It is a warning that someone is suffering. Extramarital affairs serve as an indicator of a marriage malfunctioning. It is an alarm and can be a catalyst for positive changes. The marriage may be falling apart because of emotional immaturity, unresolved conflicts, or unmet needs.

A difficult response, yet a wise one, is to determine what the problem is and learn from it. Do not use what you find to cop out, give out, or walk out of the marriage. Find a way, with the help of God, to resolve the problem. Getting divorced and marrying someone else is not going to solve all your problems because the problem that caused the
affair has not been solved. If you marry again, the same root problem will most likely surface again in time. Take time before you take any action. The most important thing to do immediately is nothing. Don’t bury the marriage because of your hurt, anger, and thirst for revenge. These angry responses are not going to make you feel better or solve your problem.

Wounded pride, jealousy, righteous wrath, pressure from friends and relatives will urge you to explosive action. Resist hasty, drastic actions that will make it impossible to repair the marriage. Give yourself time to let your emotions settle down. Keep up your regular routine and responsibilities at home, church, and community the best way you can. Keep your physical appearance up. Continue to groom and clean yourself and not look like a walking zombie. Pour out your heart to the Lord and tell Him exactly how you feel. If you will focus on strengthening your relationship with Jesus Christ, it can help you overcome your bitterness and hurt.

When you are seeking answers from your spouse, ask for reasons, not for details of the affair. Why has your spouse turned to another? What are the struggles of your spouse that turned them to another? In almost every case, the other woman or man is providing something that you are not giving to them. You must listen and find out what is wrong before it is too late. Belittling or preaching to the spouse is not a good idea. Your rebuke will most likely fall on deaf ears and just make them more cold-hearted.

G. The Response of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is not a normal or easy response for us in this kind of situation, but it is the right response. It occurs through the help of the Holy Spirit. Seek your forgiveness for your weaknesses and failures in your marriage and speak your forgiveness to your unfaithful spouse. This does not come easily and quickly, but it is the only way to healing your marriage and the deep pain you have experienced within your heart.

Forgiveness is not necessarily forgetting. It is, however, releasing the person of the hurt and pain they caused you and it also involves never bringing up the issue again.

An old Arab guide from Baghdad told this true account from the back of a camel. The subject of the story was Ali Hafed, a prosperous farmer who lived near the River Indus. He received a visit one day from a venerable Buddhist priest. As they discussed the wonders of creation, the subject somehow turned to diamonds.
The priest told Ali Hafed that if he possessed just one of these "congealed drops of sunlight," he could buy the country. Had he a mine of them, he could place his children upon the thrones of the world through the influence of his great wealth. Hearing this possibility, the once-contented landowner grew discontented. After a sleepless night, he arose, sold his farm and set out on his search for the elusive diamond.

His journey finally ended on the shores of the Mediterranean at Barcelona. He had spent everything in his futile pursuit. Wretched and miserable, he cast himself into the tide rolling in between the Pillars of Hercules. The farmer was never seen again. Meanwhile, back on Ali Hafed's farm, the new owner led his camel into the garden to drink. As the beast plunged its nose into the shallow water, the man noticed a curious flash of light from the creek bed. He pulled out a black stone, with an eye of light reflecting all the colors of the rainbow. He placed the stone on the mantel in his house and promptly forgot about it.

A few days later, the old priest came to visit. He immediately spotted the stone, recognizing it as a precious diamond. Together the two rushed to the stream, stirred up the white sands with their fingers and discovered what would later be acknowledged as the most magnificent treasure of diamonds in the world, the mine of Golconda. Ali's treasure was right under his own nose, but he failed to find or see it. Beloved, our wife or husband is a treasure right under our own nose. Don't make the mistake of not realizing this and looking for your treasure somewhere else.
Chapter 20
Don’t Be a Crook

Exodus 20:15
Thou shalt not steal

According to Paul Harvey, in 1989, CBS sent a camera crew to Ft. Worth, Texas, to do a special story on big city crime. As the crew was unloading its equipment, their $30,000 camera was stolen. That was a good introduction for their story. If there were ever a command that needed to be obeyed in the USA, it would be this one. Nothing seems safe or secure any more. Thieves seem to steal at will and get away with it. One bank teller put it this way. She had been robbed three times by the same man. A police officer asked whether she had noticed anything specific about the criminal. The teller replied, “Yes, he seems to be better-dressed every time he comes into the bank.”

In 1992, there were 672,000 robberies, 3 million burglaries, and 8 million larceny thefts. The average maximum sentence for these crimes is 8-10 years for robbery of which 3 ½ years are usually served and 6 ½ years for burglary of which a little more than two years are served on the average.

Men have an amazing knack for taking what doesn’t belong to them. Commandments 6-9 deal with theft of some kind or another.
* Thou shall not kill: Theft of life
* Thou shall not commit adultery: Theft of a wife or husband
* Thou shall not steal: Theft of possessions
* Thou shall not bear false witness: Theft of a reputation
* These are repeated in the New Testament
* Mark 10:19 - Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

Let’s take an extensive look on the issue, “Don’t be a crook.”
I. THE CAUSES OF THEFT

A. Inwardly:
1. Unbelief and Doubt that God can Provide for You
   * Psalm 78:19 - Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

   The thief believes that God will not provide for his needs. He decides to spread his own table at the expense of others. His attitude is, “I will do it my way,” which indicates a lack of patience.

2. Covetousness and Greed
   In the Greek, covetousness signifies “an immoderate desire of getting” which is the root of theft. It also involves being dissatisfied with one’s possessions. It was a coveting spirit which moved Eve to take forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. It was a coveting spirit that moved Achan to take the forbidden treasures of Jericho. The result of his theft destroyed his life, his family, and the lives of 36 soldiers.

B. Externally:
1. The Solicitation of Satan
   Judas was a thief. How did he become one? Satan filled his heart.
   * John 13:27 - And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou dost, do quickly.

   Satan is the master thief who is out to ruin and rob our lives of God’s best for us and His blessings. Satan robs men and women of several things.

1. Peace of Mind- He makes us worry and fret.
2. Purity of Heart- We lose this when we give in to temptation.
   * Acts 5:3- But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

3. The Perception of Truth-
   * 2 Corinthians 4:3-4... But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: [4] In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

4. The Power of God- Sin gets us out of fellowship with God.
5. People we Love- Satan will try to lead them astray.
   * 2 Timothy 4:10- For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.
   * 1 Peter 5:8- Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:
II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A THIEF

A man plays the thief when he does several things. Notice this acrostic on the word “THIEF.”

* The Letter “T”
1. He Takes what he wants.
2. The Time of his theft is unexpected.
   * 1 Thessalonians 5:2- For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.
   * 1 Thessalonians 5:4- But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.
3. He Tampers with our freedom. People feel insecure after they have been robbed.
4. He Troubles his life with guilt. A new convert went to his pastor and said, "Before I was saved, I stole a rope from my neighbor's barn. After reading the story of Zacchaeus, I decided to return it. Yet my neighbor still isn't reconciled to me." The preacher, noticing his downcast eyes, questioned him a bit further. "Are you sure that's all you took from him, or is something else wrong?" Embarrassed, the man replied, "I guess that's the problem. You see I didn't bring back what was attached to the rope -- the man's prize calf!" Beloved, guilt will continue to plague until your conscience has been cleared with God and men.
   * Acts 24:16- And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

* The Letter “H”
1. He Hurts others.
2. He Hides what he is doing.
3. He Hinders maturity.

* The Letter “I”
1. Important and valuable items are sought by him.
2. He Impersonates himself as a friend.
3. He is Inconsiderate of others.
4. He Invokes God’s judgment.
   * 1 Corinthians 6:10- Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.
* The Letter “E”
1. He is **Evaluated** by God
2. He **Eliminates** the confidence and trust of people.
3. His **Expectations** are unrealistic and dangerous. His philosophy is, “What you have belongs to me.”

* The Letter “F”
1. He **Fails** to realize the value of what he has. Danny Sampson robbed a bank in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. He used a hand-me-down Colt 45 pistol, robbed a bank and got away with $6000. When the Royal Canadian Mounted Police caught him and confiscated the gun, they sent it to their lab where it was recognized as a collector’s prize. Danny did not realize that his gun was worth $100,000 dollars.
2. He has **Fun** at first when he steals. It is very exciting.
* Proverbs 9:17- Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.
3. His **Future** is bleak. He will get caught.
* Galatians 6:7- Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

III. THE KINDS OF THEFT

A. There is Stealing from God
1. God can be robbed of His glory.
   * 1 Corinthians 6:20- For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.
   * 1 Corinthians 1:29- That no flesh should glory in his presence.
   * 1 Corinthians 1:31- That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.
2. God can be robbed of tithes and offerings.
   * Malachi 3:8-10... Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. [9] Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. [10] Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

B. There is Stealing from Others
1. Some steal from their neighbors, friends, or strangers, robbing them on
the street or burglarizing their homes.
* Leviticus 19:13- Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.

2. Stealing people or kidnaping is forbidden.
* Exodus 21:16- And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

3. Some are robbed by dishonest attorneys who take advantage of their clients.

4. Folks are also robbed by dishonest business men who overcharge or take advantage of people.
* Hosea 12:7- He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.
* 1 Thessalonians 4:6- That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

5. To withhold payment on debts, rents, or to withhold wages is stealing.

Every year, millions of people fall victim to clever schemes designed to take your money for worthless ideas or products. Swindlers will use the victim’s feeling of guilt, greed, and inferiority to their fullest advantage. They target those who are self confident, make their own decisions, and are their own authority. Swindlers use several traps to take advantage of people.

* The Bait...Your Secret Desires

Swindlers take your secret dreams and assure you that you can have them fulfilled. Common statements that are made are, “How would you like to double your money in three weeks? Would you like to be the boss of your own company?”

* The Hook.... True Statements

The hook involves true statements which penetrate the hidden motives of our fallen human nature... the desire to get something for nothing, impatience with unchangeable defects, and rejection of growing old.

* The Plant....Documentation

Swindlers often work in teams. They place people around you to get you excited about their schemes. They give testimonials as though they were satisfied customers. They will show phoney tests and demonstrations. The plant is there to reassure you.
* The Bite...The Pressure to Act

They don’t want you to pray about your decision. They want you to buy now! Pressure is put on you by telling you that time is running out. If you don’t act now, you will lose the opportunity of a lifetime. They will assure you that someone else is waiting in line or the price will go up tomorrow. The reasons for the pressure is to keep you from getting counsel from those who know better or can see through your fraudulent schemes. The only protection against swindlers is a commitment to follow Bible principles without compromise.

A man is a thief if he is a false prophet. He steals the truth and the souls of men.

* Jeremiah 23:30 - Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbor.

Failure to pay taxes is stealing. Jesus paid His taxes.

* Matthew 17:24-25... And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? [25] He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

* Matthew 22:17-21... Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? [18] But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? [19] Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. [20] And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? [21] They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

It is possible to steal from yourself. The thief robs himself of peace. He lives in fear of being caught. His guilt breeds worry and fear.

* Psalm 53:5- There were they in great fear, where no fear was: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee: thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them.

When we disobey God, we rob ourselves of reward and blessing.

* Colossians 2:18a- Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshiping of angels, ...

* 2 John 1:8- Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

May the Lord help us all to not be a crook.
Chapter 21

The Tongue Commandment

Exodus 20:16
Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

God created our tongue to be an organ of praise, but it has changed into an instrument of unrighteousness. This commandment binds the tongue to its good behavior. God has set two natural fences to keep in the tongue, the teeth and the lips. This command is the third fence to restrain it from doing evil.

When Satan controls our tongue, it becomes a fire, full of deadly poison, unruly evil, a world of iniquity, and defiles the whole body. No man can tame it. Job, in fact, spoke of the tongue as a scourge.

*Job 5:21-* Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.

The tongue is a trouble-maker to our soul.

*Proverbs 21:23-* Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.

The tongue torments us when its venom is unleashed through the fangs of words. Joseph was more tormented by the lying lips of Potiphar’s wife than by the depth of the dungeon and jail bars. More tormenting to Moses than the hardships in the wilderness wanderings were the tongues of Miriam and Moses.

*Numbers 12:1-* And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

More tormenting to Samson than the young lion that attacked him, and Samson killed, was the tongue of his wife who wept before him.

*Judges 14:16-* And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it
More tormenting to David than Goliath’s size and armor was the tongue of Goliath.

* 1 Samuel 17:43- And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

More tormenting to David than his hunger, thirst, and weariness in the wilderness was the betraying tongue of Absalom which stole the hearts, the love and loyalty for King David. More tormenting to Paul than the stripes laid upon his back in Philippi were the tongues of philosophers who encountered him, calling him a babbler and mocking him.

This world has been tormented by the tongues of men. The tongue has been a scourge to torture the lives of those near to us. It has been a razor wielded as by a madman on a child’s playground. The tongue has been a battering ram that drives its way through walls of communities and breaks down society. Does this describe your tongue? Is the world, your community, your church, your work place or school, your family tormented by your words or are they encouraged and uplifted? The Lord said, “Thou shall not bear false witness against they neighbor.” Two things are forbidden in this commandment.

I. SLANDERING OUR NEIGHBOR IS FORBIDDEN

To traduce means “to misrepresent willfully the character or conduct of someone.” It means “to defame or slander.” Slandering is to report things of others unjustly.

* Psalm 35:11- False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.

The tongue that slanders is a traducing tongue. It is like a hidden assassin who shoots his arrows in the dark. The slanderous tongue steals a good name which is rather to be chosen than great riches.

The tongue of the slanderer and gossip is the cancer of society; the leprosy of a community; the pestilence that walketh at the noonday; the destruction that wasteth at midnight; the hailstorm beating with icy hammers, the flood sweeping away sacred things, the fire that burns to ashes, and the cold that freezes to the marrow of the bones.

The slanderous tongue is an assassin of character and a viper that stings to death the reputation of others. It is a vulture that lives off the
carrion of lies, a hyena that digs into the graves, and a scavenger that drives its cart through every community. The tongue of slander is the climax of meanness, the sackcloth at a wedding, the bones at a banquet, and the sarcastic laughter at a funeral.

The scorpion carries his poison in his tail; the slanderer carries his poison in his tongue. Holiness itself is no shield from slander. The innocence of the lamb will not protect it from wolves. Jesus was the most innocent and holy man to ever live on the earth yet was slandered being accused of being a drunk and demon possessed. John the Baptist was a godly man that was falsely accused.

* Matthew 11:18- For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

Paul was another godly man that was slandered.

* Romans 3:8- And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. Paul was accused of saying, “Let us do evil that good may come.”

The Bible calls slandering “smiting with the tongue.”

* Jeremiah 18:18- Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.

A person can be smitten without being touched. He can be smitten by the tongue. The wounds of the tongue are many times more painful than that of a sword. They are wounds a doctor cannot heal. Let me ask, “Do you wound others with your words? Do you gossip constantly about others?”

Gossip is the poison of a slanderous tongue. It is a humming bird with eagle’s wings and a voice like a fog horn. It travels far, wide, and loud. George Meredith said, “Gossip is a beast of prey that does not wait for the death of the creature it devours.” Gossip devours others because its thoughtless, unkind words, in passing from mouth to mouth, receive progressive exaggerations and they snowball as they roll through the community.
II. FALSE WITNESSING IS FORBIDDEN

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Three sins are condemned in this verse. They are 1. Lying, 2. False witnessing, 3. False swearing.

A. Lying

* Proverbs 12:22- Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight.

To lie is to speak that which is not true. It is directly opposite of what God is all about.

* 1 John 4:6- We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Lying tongues have caused wars between nations, the separation of husbands and wives, and barriers between brothers and sisters, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, friends and neighbors. They have caused feuds which have lasted for decades. Lying tongues have blackened the reputations of young girls, beardless boys, godly preachers, and old men and women whose lives are almost spent. They have split churches, wounded and run off pastors, hindered Christian growth, and planted the seeds of bitterness in millions. If all the tears that lying tongues have caused to be shed were put in one place, they would make a river.

The man who lies cannot be trusted because his word cannot be trusted. God hates and judges the sin of lying.

* Acts 5:5- And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

* Revelation 21:8- But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

* Revelation 22:15-For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

B. False Witnessing or False Swearing is Condemned

There are two aspects of a false witness. First, bearing false witness for another. Giving our testimony to clear or justify a person who is a criminal and guilty is wrong. He that seeks to make a wicked man a just man, makes himself unjust.
* Isaiah 5:23- Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

Bearing false witness against another is condemned when he accuses him in open court falsely. Doing so imitates the devil who is the accuser of the brethren.

* Proverbs 25:18- A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.

It was two men that falsely witnessed against Naboth in order to gain his vineyards for the king and queen.

* 1 Kings 21:13- And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

**False witnesses and perjurers corrupt the judicial system.** The jury comes to the wrong conclusions based on faulty testimony. It corrupts the judge by making him pronounce a wrong sentence. It causes the innocent to suffer. Vengeance will find out the false witness.

* Deuteronomy 19:18-19...And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; [19] Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.

If a life was put to death by false testimony, the false witness would be executed. As Christians, may the Lord help us all to be truthful in all that we say.

* Psalm 19:14- Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.
Chapter 22
The Mother of All Sins: Covetousness

Exodus 20:17
Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Throughout history, much has been written about happiness and contentment. Two thousand years ago, Lucius Seneca wrote, "It is not the man who has too little, but the man who craves more, who is poor." Fred Allen said, "I don't want to own anything that won't fit into my coffin." Someone else wrote, "Half the world is unhappy because it can't have the things that are making the other half unhappy." Steve Brown put it this way, "The most unhappy person in the world is not someone who didn't get what he or she wanted. The most unhappy person is the one who got what he or she wanted and then found out that it wasn't as wonderful as they expected."

Beloved, the secret of a happy life and contentment is not getting what you want but living with contentment with what you already have. Most people spend their lives concentrating on what they don't have instead of thanking God for what they do have. When they finally wake up, their life is over, and they have missed the beauty of the present.

In the Greek language, there are two words which set forth the nature of "covetousness."

A. Pleonexia = This is an insatiable desire of getting the world. It is considered an ugly word by the Greeks.

* Luke 12:15 - And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Pleonexia comes from two Greek words meaning to have more. It has been defined as the accursed love of having. It has been defined as
"the spirit which snatches at that which it is not right to take, the baneful appetite for that which belongs to others." It is the spirit which snatches at things, not to hoard them like a miser, but to spend them in lust and luxury.

*Pleonexia* is the irresistible desire to have what we have no right to possess. It might issue in the theft of material things; it might issue in the spirit which tramples on other people to get its own way; it might issue in sexual sin. It is not the desire for money and things; it includes the desire for power, the insatiable lust of the flesh. Plato said, "The desire of man is like a sieve or pierced vessel which he ever tries to, and can never fill." *Pleonexia* is that lust for having which is in the heart of the man who sees happiness in things instead of in God.

**B. Philarguria** = This word signifies an inordinate love of the world. The world is the idol of the covetous person. The Apostle John described this kind of person in 1 John 2.

* 1 John 2:15-16 ... Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

The covetous person has:

* a greed for goods
* miserliness with money
* stinginess for stuff
* a craving for capital and control
* an appetite for accessories
* a thirst for things
* a passion for possessions, property, and popularity.
* a hunger to have
* a lust for luxuries

**The covetous person is piggish in priorities.** Self is number one in his considerations and choices. He is like the horse-leech crying "Give! Give!" His *focus* is on things. His *futility* is the fact he is never satisfied and always wanting more. The *foundation* of his problems is the fact he is selfish, lacks contentment and satisfaction. The *funnel* of his problems are the lust of the flesh, eyes, and pride of life. His *frustration* is the fact that his possessions do not satisfy him. He feels left out or is missing out on life. He also feels he is not treated fairly because you have something that he does not have, and he has just got to have it too.
The scourges in world history have been coveting men. Men like Napoleon, Alexander, and Hitler all coveted the rule of the world. The coveters of Scripture complicated and corrupted their lives with their greedy, grasping attitudes.

* Ahab and Jezebel wanted Naboth’s vineyard. **Death** was the result.
* David coveted Bathsheba. He was **disgraced**.
* Eve coveted forbidden fruit. This **damaged** humanity’s relationship with God.
* Absalom coveted David’s throne. **Death** was the outcome.
* Judas coveted 30 pieces of silver. He became **depressed** and then **died** after committing suicide.
* Achan coveted gold, silver, and garments. The result was **detriment** to Israel, **defeat**, and **death**.
* Demas coveted this world. He was **disgraced**.
* Balaam coveted the wages of unrighteousness. He was **disgraced**, and **dumbfounded** by a talking donkey.

**What Does it Mean to Covet?**

There are four particulars when a person may be said to be given over to covetousness.

1. **When my thoughts are wholly dominated and consumed with this world and its goods, I am coveting.**

   The godly man on the other hand is focused on Heaven.

   *Philippians 3:20 - For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

   The coveter is focused on this world. His thoughts are consumed with the things of this life. He just can’t get enough and is not satisfied with what he has. This is why he continually wants more things, because what he already has does not make him happy or satisfied. Because of his selfish nature, he struggles in sacrificing and giving to others in need. The coveter deafens his ears to the cries of others. His eyes are blind or closed to other’s needs. He closes his hands and hardens his heart with unconcern and a lack of compassion.

2. **A person is given to covetousness when he takes more pains for earthly matters than eternal ones.**

   He covets when he is more concerned about his earthly home than his heavenly home and is more concerned about earthly rewards than heavenly ones from the Lord. Coveters are more focused on the praise of men than the praise that God will give one day. Let me ask, “Are you
going to Heaven when you die?” You may say, “I hope so.” Beloved, God wants us to know this for sure and we can by putting our faith in Jesus Christ to take us to Heaven when we die. He is the only holder of eternal life. Trust in Him today if you have never made this decision.

* 1 John 5:13- These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

3. A man is given to covetousness when he overloads himself with worldly business.

We are not talking about one who is trying to provide for his needs and his family. We are speaking of the one that has too many brands in the fire and thus, has no time for God in his life. He has no time for church, Bible reading, and prayer. He robs God of His tithes and offerings to get the material things he covets. He behaves just like Martha, cumbered about with many things and has no time for matters of the soul. This person is under the power of covetousness. The priority of possessions drown out the Lord.

* Matthew 13:22- He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. The word “choke” is from the Greek word sumpnigo {soon-pnee'-go} which means “to choke, crowd out, or crush.” Riches have a way of doing this to the Lord and His Word.

4. A person is given to covetousness when his heart is so set upon the world that he cares not what unlawful, crooked, dishonest methods he uses to get what he craves.

The coveter will wrong, defraud, cheat, lie, and raise his estate upon the ruins of others.

* Hosea 12:7-8...He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress. [8] And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.

* Micah 2:2- And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.

* Habakkuk 2:6- Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay!
Covetousness is the acid of avarice, a cancer of corruption and carnality that eats away at the health of society turning people into beasts.

**Covetousness causes people to:**
* burn in their hearts for the possessions of others.
* learn to deceive their neighbor, looking upon him as a competitor.
* spurn the rebukes and warnings of Scripture and the conscience.
* turn from honesty and hard work to dishonest means.
* yearn for more after you get what you want.

The blessings of the Lord maketh rich and he addeth no sorrow with it. On the other hand, the bounty of covetousness leaves one deceived, distracted, discouraged, and depressed from the need for more, from selfishness, lack of satisfaction from possessions, and from the guilt which comes from the unlawful means by which things were attained. For these many reasons, we are warned against covetousness throughout the Bible.

* **Warnings Concerning Covetousness**
  * Luke 12:15- And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

1. **Covetousness is a subtle sin, not easily detected in our own lives.**

   It can dress itself in the attire of virtue. Notice what Paul said in reference to a cloak of covetousness.
   * 1 Thessalonians 2:5 - For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness: The cloak could be in the name of good management, frugality, or the excuse, “I must provide for my own family.” The motive however, for our quest for money is concealed, which is a greed for things that dominate and control us. This is not good at all.

2. **Covetousness is a disheartening and dangerous sin that is an enemy of grace and compassion.**

   It is like a bucket of cold water that drowns out the fires of enthusiasm of caring for other people. It's a weed or vine that chokes out the seed of the Word of God.
   * Matthew 13:22- He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

   Many sermons lie dead and buried in earthly hearts. We preach to men and women to get their hearts in Heaven, but if covetousness is in
control, their hearts are chained to earth. Like the Pharisees, it can even cause one to deride the Lord or His Word.

* Luke 16:14- And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

4. Covetousness is a mother sin that spawns other sins. The Ten Commandments have their roots in the tenth commandment. Paul gave us this principle in 1 Timothy 6.

* 1 Timothy 6:10- For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

   Notice how the first nine commandments are linked to the tenth one.

1. “No other gods before me.” The coveter has more gods than one. Mammon is his god. He has a god of gold, therefore he is called an idolater.

* Matthew 6:24- No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

* Colossians 3:5- Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

2. “No grave images or bowing down to any.” Coveters bow to graven images or currency in their heart and by their actions.

3. “Don’t take the Lord’s name in vain.” Absalom wanted his father’s crown. He told David he was going to worship the Lord and pay his vows. Instead, he committed treason. By his deception, he used God’s name in vain.

4. “Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.” Coveters will work on Sunday when they don’t have to do this. They do this so they won’t have to go to church. I realize that some folks have to work on Sunday sometime. I am addressing those who want to get out of church to make money.

5. “Honor your father and mother.” The coveter won’t care for his parents or their needs when they can’t care for themselves.

6. “Do not murder.” Coveting Ahab killed Naboth to get his vineyards. Many kings have trampled through blood to get to the crown. Coveting David had Uriah killed in battle to get Bathsheba for himself.

The prostitute commits whoredom because she covets money.
8. “Do not steal.” Covetousness is at the root of theft. A coveting Achan stole gold and garments from Jericho. Thieves and coveters are grouped together in the Bible.
* 1 Corinthians 6:10- Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.
9. “No false witnessing.” One reason a perjurer makes a false oath is he is promised or he hopes for a reward. Beloved, covetousness is a sin dishonorable to Christianity. It is a dishonor when we claim that our hopes are above, while our hearts are below. It is a dishonor to be born of God while our roots are buried in this world.
* Ezekiel 33:31- And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

* What are the Results of Covetousness?
1. Covetousness exposes us to God’s abhorrence.
* Psalm 10:3 - For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.
2. Covetousness bars our way to Heaven.
* Ephesians 5:5- For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

The only hope for the coveter is the Lord Jesus Christ.
* 1 Timothy 6:9- But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

The coveter is like a bee in a jar of honey and there he drowns himself. As a ferry man takes in so many passengers on his boat to increase his profit, yet sinks the boat, the covetous man takes in so much wealth to increase his estate but ends up drowning in perdition. Beloved, you cannot buy eternal life.
* Proverbs 10:2-Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.
* Proverbs 11:4- Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.
3. Covetousness causes family troubles.
* Proverbs 15:27- He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but
he that hateth gifts shall live.

Riches are thought to be a shield, but end up being a sword. They are thought to solve problems, but end up being a source of problems many times. Greed makes you a target for con artists.

4. Covetousness leads to disappointment.
   * Ecclesiastes 5:10- He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.
   * Proverbs 11:28 - He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

5. Covetousness results in folly and emptiness.
   * Jeremiah 17:11- As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.
   * Proverbs 1:32- For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. Prosperity brings out the worst in fools and covetous. Riches choked Judas mentally with guilt, physically with suicide, and spiritually with Hell.

6. Covetousness leads to apostasy.
   * 1 Timothy 6:10- For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

* What are the Remedies or Cures for Covetousness?

1. Faith
   * 1 John 5:4- For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

   The rot of covetousness is doubt and distrust in God’s providential care. Faith believes that God will provide and that He who feeds the sparrows will also feed His own children. It believes that He who clothes the lilies will also clothe His own lambs.

   * James 1:17- Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

   Faith is the cure for worry. It not only purifies the heart, pacifies the heart, but also satisfies the heart. It makes God our portion and realizes that the Lord is all we need.

   * Psalm 16:5-6 ... The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintakest my lot. [6] The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.
Chapter 22...The Mother of all Sins: Covetousness...20:17  225

* Philippians 4:19- But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Faith is a remedy against covetousness. It overcomes the fear of the world and the love for the things in it.

2. Careful Considerations

Money cannot satisfy or give a person peace. The crown jewels could not comfort a perplexed and distressed King Saul.

* 1 Samuel 28:15- And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.

The silver of Hollywood cannot calm the troubled hearts of the silver screen. The things of this world can no more ease a troubled spirit than a gold cap can cure a headache.

God has also made our face to look upward toward the heavens. Anatomists observe that other creatures have four muscles to their eyes while man has a fifth muscle which enables him to look toward Heaven.

* Colossians 3:1-2... If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. [2] Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

* Philippians 3:20- For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

* Psalm 92:12- The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Whereas all other trees have their sap in their roots, the sap of the palm tree is toward the top, thus an emblem of the saints, who hearts and treasures are in Heaven.

A third consideration is to covet spiritual things.

* 1 Corinthians 12:31- But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

We are to replace that which is negative with those things that are positive. We are to covet God’s grace and Heaven. If we covet Heaven more, then we will covet the world less.

We are also to pray for a heavenly mind and that the Lord would dig the earth out of our heart and teach us how to possess the world without loving it.

* Proverbs 28:16- The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor: but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.
The best remedy for covetousness is contentment. This is what Paul learned.

* Philippians 4:11- Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. He who has enough, will not covet that which is another.

Those who covet are like the bird, the oyster catcher. They lay two to three eggs, but will desert their nest for one that has four eggs if it is undefended by the parents. They are also attracted to larger eggs and will desert their nest for a nest that has larger eggs. They will even try to incubate eggs they cannot straddle. These birds are a fitting illustration of people not content with their present provisions.

We will be content if we believe that our present condition and circumstances are best for us, for our good, and are carved out by God's hand.

* Romans 8:28- And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. If God wants us to have more, He will give it to us. If He wanted us to have more, He would have already provided it.

We will also be content when we consider that the less we have, the less account we have to give to God at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Every person is a steward of what God has provided for them and must give an account.

* 2 Corinthians 5:10- For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

What is contentment? First of all, contentment is realizing that God has already provided everything that I need for my present happiness.

* 1 Timothy 6:8- And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

Contentment also involves valuing God-given relationships more than earthly possessions. Creatures of nature teach the unimportance of possessions. The traits of a pack rat are typical of a coveting person. The pack rat is continually dissatisfied with its possessions. This impulse drives it to covet whatever it does not have. Though it collects and seeks more, it is increasingly discontented with what it already possesses, exchanging one thing for another. The rats persistent obsession to collect shiny things is an apt illustration of man’s nature.

* Psalm 39:6 - Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are
disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

The pack rat’s inability to live in harmony and its resorting to living alone is an accurate warning to anyone who seeks after wealth.

*Proverbs 15:27* He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.

If you put two of these rats in a cage, they will fight each other to the death. Older rats have chunks of flesh bitten out of their ears or stubs from their battles. Each pack rat needs twenty acres of privacy to avoid fighting with his neighbor. They are very selfish animals, just like a coveter.

In the Bible, Mary of Bethany was an example of valuing God-given relationships more than earthly possessions.

*Luke 10:38-42*... Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. [39] And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. [40] But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. [41] And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: [42] But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. When Martha was running around, Mary sat at Jesus’ feet. She enjoyed His presence rather than doing things for Him. Jesus said she chose the “better part.”

Contentment is also realizing that I am indestructible until my work is done and God is finished with me.

*Psalm 31:14-15*.. But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God. [15] My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

In many ways our lives are like the porcupine. Valuable lessons can be learned from it. A porcupine is given an armor of quills. God has given us spiritual armor to withstand the wiles of the devil and help us not to self destruct. The two vulnerable areas of the porcupine are the same for the Christian. They are his glass jaw and his underside near his heart. Our vulnerable areas are our heart and mouth too.

*Psalm 34:13* Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

*Proverbs 4:23* Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the
issues of life.

The porcupine’s eating habits remind us to feed on heavenly food, meditating on God’s Word day and night. He feeds on the bark of the tree beginning at the top of the tree. This is called girding. He eats just enough bark where he will not kill the tree. This actually sweetens the tree. In the following year, sugar has built up over the section that he girded and he feeds on the sugar. This section is 300 times sweeter than the amount of food found below. One porcupine was observed to return to the same tree eleven years in a row. Beloved, God’s Word is also sweet. Like the porcupine, we should be feeding on its richness.

* Psalm 19:10- More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

The old promises of God’s Word get sweeter through the years. As you return to familiar passages in your reading and study, you may find new, sweeter insights in Scripture that you never saw before just as the porcupine finds sweetness in old feeding grounds.

Contentment is also avoiding the bondage of personal expectations.

* Psalm 62:5- My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.

Achan did not avoid his personal expectations. He forsook God’s provisions and coveted gold and a garment from Jericho. He expected these things to satisfy, meet his needs, and make him happy, but instead, they brought him death. Why? These items belonged to God. The first fruits belonged to the Lord. God would give them all what they needed if they honored Him with the firstfruits and acknowledge Him as their source of all gifts. He does the same thing with us when we tithe and give Him offerings. Jericho was the first fruit of their conquest of the Promised Land. This is why everything belonged to God in the city. We will learn contentment when we put all of our expectations in the Lord and depend upon Him.

In Dangers, Toils & Snares, John Ortberg writes: “When we take our children to the shrine of the Golden Arches, they always lust for the meal that comes with a cheap little prize, a combination christened, in a moment of marketing genius, the Happy Meal. You're not just buying fries, McNuggets, and a dinosaur stamp; you're buying happiness. Their advertisements have convinced my children they have a little McDonald-shaped vacuum in their souls. We try to buy off our kids sometimes. I tell them to order only the food and I'll give them a quarter to buy a little toy
on their own, but the cry goes up, ‘I want a Happy Meal.’

All over the restaurant, people crane their necks to look at the tight-fisted, penny-pinching cheapskate of a parent who would deny a child the meal of great joy. The problem with the Happy Meal is that the happy wears off, and they need a new fix. No child discovers lasting happiness in just one. Happy Meals bring happiness only to McDonalds. You ever wonder why Ronald McDonald wears that grin? Twenty billion Happy Meals, that's why. When you get older, you don't get any smarter; your happy meals just get more expensive."

Beloved, we sometimes fall in the same rut. We think that the Happy Meals of this world are going to make us happy. They may temporarily, but then we find ourselves coveting more Happy Meals. Finding contentment with God’s provisions will cure us of our covetousness.
Chapter 23
Moses the Mediator
Exodus 20:18-26

After giving His Ten Commandments to His people, we will look at their response to these commands. In this section, we will see Moses’ role as the mediator to his people.

I. THE EVASIVENESS OF GOD’S PEOPLE 20:18
And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.

God’s people are terrified at the thunderings, lightning, trumpet noise and the smoking mountain. They removed themselves and stood afar off. Would you be a little scared too?

II. THE ENTREATY FOR A MEDIATOR 20:19
And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

Israel was unable to deal with God directly on the ground of the Ten Commandments. They felt at once that some provision needed to be made for them. A mediator was necessary in their situation. They wanted Moses to speak with them, but not God for fear of death.

Where does the need for a mediator come from? We will look at three things.
1. A sense of weakness and frailty creates this need.
2. A sense of sin. Excessive fear expels love. Demons, who have no love, believe in the Lord, yet tremble. Men who have sinned greatly are plagued with guilt and look upon God as a consuming fire. They find it difficult to have feelings of love because they expect punishment from God.
3. The feeling of need or the longing of fellowship with God. These all give rise to the desire for one to mediate that fellowship or to bring it about by making peace.
Moses, as a mediator, was a type of Jesus Christ who is our mediator.

* 1 Timothy 2:5- For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

We know that we need a mediator. We know our frailty and weaknesses.

* James 4:14- Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

* Psalm 39:5- Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.

* 1 Chronicles 29:15- For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

We know that we are sinners.

* Romans 3:10- As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

* Romans 3:23- For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

We long for fellowship with God and Christ is the answer to that need.

* John 14:6- Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

The word “mediator” in the New Testament is from the Greek word *mesites* {mēs-ē'-tace}. He was a man who stood in the middle and brought two parties together by representing both parties. He would post bail for another person’s appearance in court. He would also guarantee or co-sign a debt.

Jesus fulfilled the role of mediator for you and me. As our mediator, He stands good for our sin debt to God only if we put our faith and trust in Him for our salvation. He is our guarantor. The wages of sin is death. He paid the debt with His own blood and death on the cross. Our responsibility is to believe in Him.

In the conflict between God and men, Jesus Christ represents both parties. He represents God for He is God. He represents man for He was a man. He was God incarnate, God in the flesh. Coming from the courts of Heaven to be clothed in the garments of humanity, Jesus became the liaison to the Father and the intercessor for the indifferent. He was Infinite who became intimate. If mankind could have reached God any other way, Jesus death would not have been necessary. The
death of Christ on the cross verifies there is no other way to Heaven. Trust Him today if you have not done this.

Moses could not be a mediator in the same manner as Jesus was for us. Moses served to meet the people's needs from their viewpoint, but he did not meet God's requirements. The Law could not be totally satisfied with just a mediator. The judgment of sin had to be satisfied. In a moment we will see God's solution to this dilemma...the altar.

III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT 20:20-21

*And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. [21] And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.*

Moses says, "Don't be afraid! The Lord has come to prove you." God has shown His terrors, not for injury, but to put fear in their hearts. He was proving or testing them to see if they had a true respect or fear for the Lord. Israel was still a child only fit for childish discipline and had to be directed by a firm voice until it had learned to be guided by tender accents of love. They needed a reverence and respect for the Lord.

People feared death because God had spoken to them. Moses told them to not be afraid. The voice of the law in Scripture, though felt in the conscience to be a voice of death, is not intended to be so. God's intention was the law was to lead us to Christ.

*Galatians 3:24- Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

The Israelites were invited to draw near to the Lord but declined, seeking a mediator. Moses, on the other hand, was given the same invitation, witnessed the same sights and sounds, and drew near to the Lord in the darkness. That which drove Israel away attracted Moses. Why? Love, where it is strong, counteracts fear and masters it. Moses loved God! Where love increases, fear diminishes.

*I John 4:18- There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*

Moses loved the Lord and knew the Lord loved him. He was comfortable approaching God like a child that is drawn to its parent. Some folks see God as love and others view Him as an awesome, dreadful power. God's presence either attracts or repels, charms or
frightens people. When Jesus was on earth, crowds flocked to Him. One man said, "Lord, I will follow you wherever you go." So great was the power of the Lord Jesus Christ that some besought Him that He would depart off their coasts.

God's people feared the Lord here in Exodus, but not for long. They soon forgot their terrors and within 40 days they were dancing in a frenzy around a golden calf (Exodus 32).

IV. THE EXHORTATION CONCERNING AN ALTAR 20:22-26

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

The altar at once tells of the provision of divine grace. We read of no altar in the Garden of Eden. Why? Man in his innocence, was created in the image and likeness of God and did not need an altar. He had no sin, no sense of shame, no fear of coming into God's presence and having fellowship with the Lord. When man sinned, the fellowship was broken and an altar, provided by God's grace, became necessary. Why? God is holy and the wages of our sin is death.

The purpose of the Ten Commandments was to make sin exceedingly sinful.

* Romans 7:7 - What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.
* Romans 7:13 - Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

The commandments showed men their moral inability to keep God's law and atone for his sin. They also showed men their need for a Savior.
* Galatians 3:19- Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because
of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was
made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.
*Galatians 3:23-24... But before faith came, we were kept under the law,
shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. [24]
Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we
might be justified by faith.

The Law was not given as a means of salvation. Instead, they
were rules of conduct and standards to live by. To address the sin issue,
an altar needed to be built. The altar was not to be made of that which
man had manufactured nor was it beautified by his skill like the heathen
altars. Any touch of human handicraft would pollute the altar. The
handiwork of men would only allow men to glorify themselves in their
ornamentation. God is to get the glory for everything.
*1 Corinthians 1:29- That no flesh should glory in his presence.

The sacrifices that were offered in the appointed way were
acceptable. If we try to improve on God’s appointed way, to put
something of our own into the sacrifice as a ground for acceptance, we
would spoil it all. The altar was an expression of God’s will. If men
tried to improve it, then it would become an expression of the
“improver.” The altar of self will, of my own way, is not the altar of
God. The sacrifices offered upon it may soothe the worshiper, but not
please the Lord at all.

People today are expecting to atone for their own sins and go to
Heaven by offering their own sacrifices on their own altars. They are
offering on their altar church membership, good works, confirmation,
baby baptism, obeying the Golden Rule, their donations, their family
heritage (Grandma went to church), and mysterious experiences such as
“I saw Jesus,” to get them to Heaven. These are all the carrion of
carnality and corruption. They are rotten, ruined, and rank.
*Isaiah 64:6- But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our
righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our
iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.
*Titus 3:5- Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but
according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and
renewing of the Holy Ghost;
*Ephesians 2:8-9... For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that
not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: [9] Not of works, lest any man
should boast.
Cain did not follow God’s directions for a sacrifice and thus, his sacrifice was not accepted. He presented the fruits of the ground, the product of his own labors, and they were rejected.

**Exodus 20:26 - Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.**

Steps were forbidden in the approach to the altar. They are a human contrivance to avoid the strain of rising from a lower level to a higher one. Men cannot climb up to God by any steps of his own making. What God requires from sinners is that he shall take his true place before the Lord.... in the dust. There, God will meet with him. Men can’t climb up to God, but the Lord can come down to meet with him. This is what the Lord did in the person of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2 describes the gracious descent of the Lord of glory. Five distinct steps are marked in this chapter. Five is the number of grace. He who was in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God.
1. He made Himself of no reputation.
2. He took upon Himself the form of a servant.
3. He was made in the likeness of men.
4. Being found in the fashion as a man, He humbled Himself.
5. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

There are no steps for us to climb to the Lord. Jesus came to us.

There were to be no steps to the altar so the nakedness of the offerer would not be discovered. The very efforts of men to climb up to God only expose their shame. For example, right after Adam and Eve sinned, do you remember what they put on themselves? Notice Genesis 3.

* Genesis 3:7- And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

When the Lord came hunting for them, they hid themselves. Their fig leaf aprons did not even satisfy themselves. The fig leaves emphasized the fact that he was still naked, even with the apron on. Notice Genesis 3:9-10.

* Genesis 3:9-10... And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? [10] And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. Men’s efforts to climb to the Lord only expose their shame. Trust Christ today!
Treasures from the Tabernacle
Chapter 24
The Importance of the Tabernacle
Exodus 25

Chapters 21-24 cover the book of the covenant with God’s people. These chapters contain the first installment of laws for the Hebrew nation which we will not take the time to address. These laws were written in a book. The covenant that was to be obeyed was sealed with blood.

* Exodus 24:4, 7-8... And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. [8] And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.

The laws covered in this book are about the following issues: slavery; death for murder, kidnapping, or cursing parents; “eye for eye” compensation; stealing; restitution for damage to crops; seduction; sorcery; sex with animals; idolatry; treatment of widows and orphans; lending; pledges; firstfruits; firstborns; false reports; mobs; justice; consideration for animals; bribes; strangers; Sabbath; Sabbatical year; Passover; the Feast of Harvest; no covenant with Canaanites; and the reward of obedience.

Chapters 25-31 give the directions for the Tabernacle and chapters 35-40 discuss the actual construction of the Tabernacle. In this section of the this Bible commentary, we are going to deal with the issue of the Tabernacle and how it is a beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. This chapter will deal with the issue of why the Tabernacle is important to us.
Why is the Old Testament Tabernacle important to the believer today? Why is it so significant? The Tabernacle is very significant because it reveals the redemptive saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It reveals God’s principles and plan of salvation, especially to the Jewish people.

*Revelation 13:8- And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* This verse reveals that Christ’s death was spoken of from the foundation of the world. The principles of His death are seen in the Tabernacle.

**Worship at the Tabernacle was central to the spiritual well-being of the Israelites and only when we begin to understand that God dealt with them as He does with us, we will begin to see the tremendous importance of the Tabernacle.** Some folks may believe the Tabernacle was not important because it was used only 40 years, when in fact it was used 647 years. In addition, when the Tabernacle was no longer in use, Israel came to worship at Solomon’s Temple, which continued the same means of worshiping God.

From the birth of Israel to the death of Christ, a period of 1700 years, Israel approached God with the same system which started in the wilderness. The fact that it was used for so long indicates its importance.

Another factor of importance was the location of the Tabernacle which was at the center of the camp and the location of the Levites, who camped nearby to guard against an unlawful approach to the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was also at the center of the nation of Israel during the journeys of the people.

*Numbers 2:17- Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp: as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards.*

Joshua followed this same principle in the Promised Land when he established the Tabernacle at Shiloh which was at the geographical center of the nation.

**God used the Tabernacle, its priesthood, rituals, offerings, and furniture as object lessons to preach His salvation message to the Jewish people.** When Jesus came, He revealed the Gospel that was concealed in the shadow of the Tabernacle. The only thing that was lacking in the Gospel preached through the Tabernacle was the fact that Christ had not yet died as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.
Chapter 25
The Tabernacle as a Type of Christ

Part One
Exodus 25

In addition to being a picture of Jesus Christ as we will see in future studies, the Tabernacle is secondarily a picture of the believer and the Christian life. Let me give a brief overview of this fact.

I. THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: THE BRAZEN ALTAR

The brazen altar points graphically to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. This was the first place the priest came to in the Tabernacle courtyard. The cross is the starting point of our redemption.

* Hebrews 9:12-14... Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. [13] For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: [14] How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

* Hebrews 9:22- And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.
II. THE CLEANSING OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: THE LAVER

The Laver was the wash basin for the priest. It illustrates the process of sanctification in the believer. Sanctification is very important for the believer and is a continual process in our lives.
* Ephesians 5:25-26 ... Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; [26] That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.

III. THE CULTIVATION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD

The Table of Shewbread was a picture of the maturing process of the Christian. It was the place of fellowship for the priests. It speaks of our fellowship that we have together as Christians and individually as we feast or make the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ, and His Word a part of our lives.
* 1 John 1:7- But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.
* John 6:48-51... I am that bread of life. [49] Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. [50] This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. [51] I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.
* Jeremiah 15:16- Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.

IV. THE CALLING OF THE CHRISTIAN: THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

As the golden candlestick gave light to the Holy Place in the Tabernacle, so the Christian is to shine forth the reflected light of Jesus Christ through the energy and power of the Holy Spirit.
* Matthew 5:14-16 ... Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. [15] Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. [16] Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

V. THE CONDUCT OF THE CHRISTIAN: THE GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE

The altar of incense speaks of the private and personal relationship of the believer with the Lord as the Christian engages to worship the Lord from the heart. He learns the importance and power of prayer by engaging in prayer.

* Revelation 8:3- And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

VI. THE COMPREHENSION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: THE VEIL

The veil is the last barrier to the sweetness of the rest and victory which God has for all Christians. This is the principle of grace. Total surrender to Jesus Christ is the only way to total victory in Christ.

* Hebrews 10:19-20... Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, [20] By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

* 2 Corinthians 3:14- But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

VII. THE CONSUMMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: THE MERCY SEAT AND ARK OF THE COVENANT

The Mercy Seat and the Ark of the Covenant indicate the presence of God for us in power and pleasure. These places are the places of close communion, peace, and rest. Jesus Christ is our
mercy seat or propitiation. His blood atones for our sins when we put our faith in Him.

* Romans 3:25 - Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

1 Corinthians 3:16
Chapter 26
The Tabernacle as a Type of Christ
Part Two
Exodus 25

I. ITS SITUATION IN THE CAMP

As mentioned earlier, the Tabernacles was at the center of the camp which speaks of its pre-eminence. Beloved, Jesus is to be at the center of our lives.

* Colossians 1:18- And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

The Tabernacle was entered through the camp of Judah which speaks of Jesus’ parentage. The Messiah would be from this tribe.

* Genesis 49:10- The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

* Numbers 2:3- And on the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch throughout their armies: and Nahshon the son of Amminadab shall be captain of the children of Judah.

* Hebrews 7:14a - For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah;.....

* Revelation 5:5- And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

The Tabernacle was always separated from the rest of the camp which speaks of the purity of Christ.

* Hebrews 5:9- And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;
* Hebrews 4:15 - For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.
* Hebrews 7:26 - For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;
* 2 Corinthians 5:21 - For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
* 1 Peter 2:22 - Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

II. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE TABERNACLE

A wide variety of materials were used in the Tabernacle.

A. Acacia or Shittim Wood

The ark was primarily constructed out of indestructible material known as Acacia or Shittim wood. This wood speaks of the perfect humanity of Christ since it is an earthly substance. This wood is very hard and close-grained. Joseph said, "It was naturally strong and could not be corrupted." Our Lord, though tempted, was not corrupted. The gum that oozed from this tree, especially in hot water, was used for medicinal purposes. It was especially used to allay thirst. Christ is the living water that quenches the thirst of a sin-sick soul.

Acacia was yellowish-brown in color and turned darker or almost black as it aged. This wood was used in the boards, pillars, ark, altar of incense, and the table of shewbread. The tree had "touch-me-not" thorns making it unapproachable. This reminds us of the majesty of a holy God. The Acacia tree was also small. Larger items such as boards and pillars were made by joining the wood together. In Solomon’s temple, cedar and olive woods were also used.

B. Gold-Overlaid Wood

Gold was used in the Tabernacle, especially on the inside boards and furniture. It was used to overlay the wood. Gold was a picture of the deity of Christ while wood pictured His humanity. The walls were made of gold-plated upright boards. They stood vertically in sockets of silver. The boards were around 15 feet long and 2.25 feet wide. Josephus said that these boards were about four fingers thick.

The boards were locked together by five gold-overlaid bars inserted in the rings of the boards and they were stood on end in a foundation of
silver blocks. This was a picture of the unity and fellowship of the saints. Cooperation is needed for service, and the boards demonstrate this by standing side by side and being connected together by the bars so they could work together.

**Humiliation is needed for service, and it is seen in the cutting of the trees to provide the wood for the boards.** Sometimes God has to put us through cutting situations in order to level our heads and flush the pride out of our lives. Preparation is needed for service too, and it is seen in the wood being cut and shaped to the exact dimensions. If we are to be effective servants for Christ, we need to be fashioned in the image of Christ and not this world. Exaltation is the result of faithful service.

*Romans 12:1-2* ... I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. [2] And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

**C. Silver**

The foundation of the Tabernacle was made of silver sockets. It is interesting to note that 3000 shekels were used to form one socket. This was the ransom money for 6000 men. Two sockets were used for each board. This represented 12,000 men. One talent of silver was used for each of the 100 sockets. A talent was around 95 to 100 pounds. The total weight of the silver sockets came to around five tons. The value of the silver in the Tabernacle, at the May, 2007, price of around $13 per ounce would be $2,080,000.

*Exodus 38:25-27*... And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: [26] A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men. [27] And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail; an hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket.

**The silver was collected from the atonement offering.** It was a registration tax on the qualified men for military service which was determined when the people were numbered or counted for war. In essence, this was redemption money.

*Numbers 1:45-46*... So were all those that were numbered of the
children of Israel, by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel; [46] Even all they that were numbered were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty.

* Exodus 30:11-12... And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, [12] When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them.

These men could not be enrolled among God's people without giving this offering of a half shekel of silver. It was the same amount for everyone whether they were rich or poor. Failure to give this meant death. In 2 Samuel 24 and in 1 Chronicles 21, David numbered the people and failed to collect the atonement money. The result was seventy thousand people died.

**Silver in the Bible speaks of atonement.** As silver from the redemption money was used in the foundation sockets of the Tabernacle, we are reminded that the foundation of Christianity is the blood atonement of Jesus Christ which redeems those who put their faith in Christ for salvation.

* 1 Peter 1:18-19. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; [19] But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

**D. Brass or Copper:**

When we read of brass in the Tabernacle, it is referring to copper. Brass, which is an alloy of copper and zinc, was not developed until a much later time. The brass that was dug from the ground was copper. The following verse indicates it was raw metal.

* Deuteronomy 8:9- A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

Twenty-four hundred shekels (weight) of brass were used for sockets of the door and pillars, for pins, and for the brazen altar.

* Exodus 38:30-31... And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the brasen altar, and the brasen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar, [31] And the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court gate, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about.
Copper is found all over the world, frequently with gold, silver, sulphur, and brimstone. It is a very reddish color. It is ductile and malleable, making it good for beating into pots, vessels, or sheets. It is very tough and durable.

The word “copper” is derived from the island of Cyprus. This was the location of the main supply of copper for the Romans. The Hebrew word for copper is *nehosheth* which is very similar to the Hebrew word for “serpent” which is *nehash*.

Copper is a symbol of durability, strength, unyieldingness. Applied to God, it declares God’s unchanging character, strength, and the impossibility of escaping His judgment.

III. THE SPECTRUM (colors) of THE TABERNACLE

A. Blue

The golden vessels of the sanctuary, with the exception of the ark, were all covered with a cloth of blue. A ribbon of blue was also worn on the garment of the High Priest. The blue was called *Techelet* and was a purplish-blue color. It was made from a marine creature.

The ability to make this color was lost for many years, but around 1890, a Jewish rabbi searched the Mediterranean Sea and discovered the secret of the blue dye. It comes from the Murex Snail which gives off a yellow fluid that turns a reddish-purple color when it is exposed to sunlight. The ultra violet light from the sunlight causes a change in color. On a cloudy day, the fluid will turn to a purple color. On a cloudless day, it turns a sky blue color. Thousands of snails are needed to dye one robe. For this reason, purple robes were very expensive and usually worn only by royalty or those who were very wealthy. The blue represents the gracious and holy character of God. It is the color of the heavens and pictures the heavenly origin of Jesus Christ.

B. Red or Scarlet

This is the color of blood and speaks of Christ’s sacrifice. It was the color of the earth. Flowers and plants display the color red. Before He was crucified, Jesus wore a red robe. The word “scarlet” is translated “worm.” The dye for this color comes from the cut and crushed eggs of the cochineal worm which is found in oak trees. The red is a deep, blood-red color called “shanee.” This color was used in making the curtains in the Tabernacle.

*Exodus 26:1-* Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with
cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them.

C. Purple

Purple is made by mixing blue and red together. It comes from the murex snail. It was called “argamine.” It was the color of royalty and speaks of Christ’s kingly glory. All three colors, blue, red, and purple come from the sacrifice of a living creature.

D. White

White was used in making the linen, especially for the priest and the roof. It speaks of the purity of Jesus Christ. All these colors speak of Christ as king, servant, perfect man, and perfect God. They suggest a picture of Jesus in the four Gospels.

* Matthew (purple)- Christ as King.
* Mark (red)- Christ, the suffering servant.
* Luke (white)- Speaks of Jesus as the Son of Man and His perfect, sinless humanity.
* John (blue)- Jesus is the Son of God, sent from Heaven.

IV. THE SIMPLICITY OF THE TABERNACLE

The simplicity of the Tabernacle is seen in its construction and in the elements of the construction.

A. The Roof

The roof of the Tabernacle consisted of four layers of material.

1. Linen

The curtain was made of fine, twined linen embroider with blue, purple, red, and gold. Herodotus stated that Egyptian linen was extremely fine, with each slender thread being composed of 360 distinct threads. This was the only layer that was visible from the inside. It covered the entire top and hung over the sides to almost the ground. Embroidered in patterns were figures of cherubim overshadowing the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.

Cherubim were the guardians of the holiness of God. They had four faces:
1. A Lion- A picture of power and kingship. It represents the Gospel of Matthew where Christ is pictured as King of Kings and King of the Jews.
2. A Man- Represents the Gospel of Mark where Jesus is seen as the Son of Man.
3. An Ox- A picture of service and sacrifice. Represents the Gospel of Luke where Jesus is portrayed as the Suffering Servant.
4. An Eagle- A picture of omniscience and able to see great distances. Represents the Gospel of John which portrays Jesus as the Son of God. The linen cover was made of ten curtains put together.

* Exodus 26:1- Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them.

Fine linen represented Christ’s perfect righteousness and the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ. This first layer was emphatically called the Tabernacle.

2. Goat Hair

The second layer was made from the hair of goats. It went over the linen and down the sides to the ground. The goat in the Bible was a picture of Jesus Christ, our sin bearer. On the Day of Atonement, the priest took two goats. One was slain and the blood was poured out. This pointed to Calvary and the death of Christ.

* Isaiah 53:6- All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

The other goat was released into the desert. This was a picture of Christ carrying away our sins as far as the East is to the West. This goat spoke of Christ as our sin bearer and our substitute.

* Hebrews 9:28 - So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

* 2 Corinthians 5:21- For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Eleven goat hair curtains were woven together to cover the Tabernacle. Goat hair was an effective roof covering. When it was wet, it would swell and become waterproof. When it was dry, it would breathe in the desert heat.

3. Ram Skins Dyed Red

The third layer was made of leather, ram skins tanned and dyed a deep crimson red color.

* Exodus 26:14- And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams’ skins dyed red, and a covering above of badgers’ skins.

Ram’s skins pointed to Christ in His role of the substitute for sinners. Red speaks of the blood atonement for our sins. The skin speaks of the blood covering the sins of those who shelter themselves under its canopy. The first mention of skins is found in Genesis 3.

* Genesis 3:21- Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make
coats of skins, and clothed them.

Adam sinned and was naked. He needed covering. God made him a coat of skins to cover him. Animals died, blood was shed, and a substitute was made to cover him. The lesson of sacrifice was laid down at the dawn of creation.

In Genesis 22:13, the ram was offered in place of Isaac. This pointed to the coming substitution of Jesus for us. This place was called Jehovah-jireh which means “Jehovah will provide a substitute for me.”

4. Badger or Porpoise Skins

* Exodus 26:14- And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering above of badgers' skins.

The inner layer was called the Tabernacle. The outer layer was called the “tent.” The outer layer had no beauty. It was drab and dull and was exposed to the elements of sun, wind, sand, and rain. The word “badger” is from the Hebrew word tachash {takh'-ash} and not a good translation. This skin was the bluish hide of possibly a porpoise, or marine animal from the Nile or Red Sea. This marine animal was related to the whale or dolphin. The hide made excellent leather. It was highly waterproof and very durable. The Tabernacle would need 6000 sq. feet of this material. This would require the skins of 1000 to 1500 animals. This material was also used for shoe leather and it did not wear out.

* Ezekiel 16:10- I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.

* Deuteronomy 29:5- And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot.

This layer of the Tabernacle pictured the humanity of Christ. Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. There was no apparent attractiveness about Him. When He was crucified, He was pulverized. * Isaiah 53:2-3... For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. [3] He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Only those who pass through the door past the brazen altar and into the Tabernacle, can see the beauty and glory of God. Only those who trust Christ as their Savior can see the glory of God.
B. The Doors of the Tabernacle

The simplicity of the Tabernacle is seen in the fact there was one entrance into the courtyard of the Tabernacle at the east end. It reminds us of the fact that there is only one way to enter Heaven. That way is through Jesus Christ alone.

* John 14:6- Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

While the fence had only one gate, the gate was open to all. Any Israelite was permitted to come through that gate. So it is with Christ. Though He is the only way of salvation, yet anyone can come to Him for salvation and be saved.

* Acts 2:21- And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

In the Tabernacle itself, there was an outer door and inner door into the Holy of Holies. First, there was the outer opening. Across the east end of the Tabernacle was the opening of the tent. This opened into the first of two rooms in the Tabernacle. This first room was 30 feet long by 15 feet wide and was called the Holy Place. The veil that covered the opening was the outer veil and was hung on gold pillars set in brass blocks with gold hooks (Exodus 26:37).

The inner veil was the divider of the two rooms in the Tabernacle, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies was a cube, for it was 15 feet long, wide, and high. This veil was more ornate than the outer veil (Exodus 26:31–33).

C. The Floor of the Sanctuary

The simplicity of the Tabernacle is also seen in the fact there was no floor, just dirt. There were no chairs to sit upon in the sanctuary of the Tabernacle. The priests were in continual defilement with the dirt floor. The lesson is the fact that even though we are saved, we are still exposed to the defilement of the world. We still struggle with our flesh and have a need for daily, spiritual cleansing.

The sanctuary of the Tabernacle was a contrast of beauty and barrenness, preciousness and worthlessness, glory and vanity, and that which was incorruptible with that which was perishable.

D. The Ropes and Pins

* Exodus 27:19 - All the vessels of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, shall be of
brass.

The ropes were placed over the roof and secured to the nails, stakes, or pins in the ground. This made the Tabernacle secure in storms. The priests were secure because the Tabernacle was secure. What a reminder of the fact that Christians are eternally secure in the Lord Jesus Christ. The cords are a reminder of the love of Christ. We are made secure by the cords of His love for us.

* Hosea 11:4 - I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.

The pins or stakes point to Jesus Christ, our security. They were made of copper and resisted rust and corrosion. They were partly buried and partly above ground. What a beautiful picture of the death and the resurrection of Christ. The love of Christ (the cords) led to the death and resurrection of Christ (the stakes). If the pins or stakes were 100% in the ground they would be useless. You could not attach the ropes to them. The death of Christ would be useless without His resurrection, showing the world that He has power over death and He truly is the Son of God.
Chapter 27
The Ark of the Covenant

Exodus 25:10-22
Exodus 37:1-9
I. THE CONSTRUCTION

There are three arks mentioned in Scripture.

1. Noah’s Ark- This was lined with pitch (kaphar) which means “atonement.” This ark pictured our security in the blood atonement of Christ.
2. Moses’ ark- He was laid in this and found in the bulrushes of the Nile.
3. The Ark of the Covenant.

The Ark of the Covenant was in one of three areas of the Tabernacle. These three areas picture the three offices of Jesus Christ.

A. The Outer Court: the Place of Sacrifice

The outer court points to the cross, the place of sacrifice. This area pictures Christ as the Prophet. He preached against sin and was the solution for our sins becoming the final sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

* Galatians 3:13- Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

B. The Holy Place: the Place of Worship and Intercession

The Holy Place pictures our Lord as our Priest. Jesus intercedes for us now at the right hand of God the Father. He is our High Priest and mediator.

* Hebrews 3:1- Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

* 1 Timothy 2:5- For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

C. The Holy of Holies: the Place of Communion and Victory

The Holy of Holies pictures Jesus as our King. The Holy of Holies was the location of the Ark of the Covenant. The Shekinah glory of God illuminated the Holy of Holies. The presence of the King of the universe was visible in this place. To pass through the veil and commune in God’s presence demonstrated spiritual victory in the life of the High Priest. If he was not right with God, he would have died in the presence of God.

The Ark was a chest of shittim wood and overlaid with gold within and without. It was approximately four feet long, 2 ½ feet wide, and 2 ½ feet high. There was a crown around the top of this ark picturing the royalty of Christ. This crown was for beauty and security. It kept the lid of the ark from falling off and held the mercy seat in place. This was
important. The men of Bethshemesh lifted the lid of the ark to look inside it and over 50,000 people died.

* 1 Samuel 6:19-20.... And he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and three score and ten men: and the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter. [20] And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? and to whom shall he go up from us?

**The Mercy Seat was the lid or covering on top of the ark.** It was 2 ½ by 1 ½ cubits (about 4 feet by 2 feet). This seat was considered as the throne of God. The Hebrew word for the mercy seat was *kapporeth* which means “a covering; to atone.” The Lord Jesus Christ is our mercy seat and atonement. He is the covering for our sins when we put our faith in Him for salvation. The mercy seat speaks of the security of the believer from judgment.

* Romans 3:25- Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

The word “propitiation” is from the Greek word *hilasterion* which means “mercy seat.” Through the blood of Christ, we have atonement for our sins when we put our faith in Him. Let me explain this. Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies and sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on the mercy seat to atone for the sins of the people. The blood atoned for their sins. This is what the Lord did for us.

* Hebrews 9:24-26.. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: [25] Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; [26] For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. In Heaven, Jesus sprinkled His blood in the presence of God the Father.

The Mercy Seat also had a cherubim on each end. They faced one another. Between the cherubim dwelt the Shekinah glory of God which was the physical manifestation of the glory of God and His presence with His people. These cherubim were beaten out of one piece of gold and were part of the lid of the mercy seat.
The word “cherub” is from the Hebrew word *keruwb* (ker-oob*) and it has a variety of meanings.
* To consecrate, guard, a keeper
* One who is permitted to draw near
* A compound of two words meaning “pleaders” or “adversaries.”
* The meaning is from their work rather than a name.

When cherubim are mentioned, they are mentioned in the context of guarding the way to holiness and the presence of God. They were put at the entrance of the Garden of Eden. Cherubim point to Christ in their appearance. They picture the Lord in the four Gospels. They had four faces.
1. The Face of a Lion- Pictures Christ in Matthew as King of Kings.
2. The Face of an Ox- Pictures Christ in Mark as the Suffering Servant.
3. The Face of a Man- Pictures Christ in Luke as the Son of Man.
4. The Face of an Eagle- Pictures Christ in John as the Son of God.

*As we continue to look at the Ark of the Covenant we find that it was not to be touched.* The staves were not to be removed from their rings.
*Exodus 25:15- The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it.*
*1 Chronicles 13:9-10.... And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark: for the oxen stumbled. [10] And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God.*

The ark was carried by twelve priests. The ministry of the ark was to be continuous. With the Christian, the Holy Spirit also has a continual ministry. The ark preceded the nation in a journey, leading and guiding the way. We are to let the Lord lead and guide us too.
*John 16:13- Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself: but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

II. THE CONTENTS OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

There were three items in the ark, each of which is highly instructive of the benefits of spiritual rest. All three articles of the ark were reminders and witnesses of the failures of God’s people.
1. **The Table of the Law**- This reminded them of the golden calf apostasy where the first tables were broken.
2. The Golden Pot of Manna - This reminded them of their murmuring and unbelief in the wilderness.

3. Aaron’s Rod that Budded - This reminded them of the rebellion and pride of Korah against the priest of God.

The tables of the Law speak of liberty. Men cannot keep the law of God (Romans 3:20). The law demands death for sin and judgment. This is the reason why the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the mercy seat. God saw the blood which atoned for the law that was broken by man’s sinfulness. When Jesus came into the world, He was under the law, yet He fulfilled the law in order to redeem those under the law.

* Galatians 4:4 - But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

* Matthew 5:17 - Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

* Galatians 4:5 - To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Christ is our mercy seat. His blood covers our sins. The bondage of sin has been broken through the payment He has made on the cross. We have liberty because of the obedience of Christ to the law and His sacrifice on the cross.

The pot of manna speaks also of satisfaction, for Jesus is the Bread of Life. He brings satisfaction to a trusting believer, no matter what his circumstances may be. Aaron’s rod speaks of fruitfulness and resurrection, life coming from death. When we rest in Christ, we have liberty, satisfaction, and fruitfulness in our lives.

Where is the Ark of the Covenant now? It was not in the second temple. What happened to it? Where did it go? Do we know where it is today? We will share with you what has been recorded, what eye witnesses have stated, and then you can make up your mind yourself.

The last reference we have of the Ark is in 2 Chronicles 35:3.

* 2 Chronicles 35:3 - And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the Lord, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders: serve now the Lord your God, and his people Israel,

Josiah was warned by Huldah the prophetess that the Temple would be destroyed soon after his death. Josiah took heed to the warning and gave orders that the Ark be hidden in the “house” which Solomon built 36 years before this Temple was destroyed. The Ark would be concealed
and not be a burden anymore to them. This "house" was a vault prepared by Solomon for the safekeeping of the Ark. The word "house" is the Hebrew word bayith which means "special place or shelter in the inward parts." The Jewish Talmud states this place is under the Temple Mount. The Jewish Mishnah in Shekalim 6:1 states the Ark is hidden in a secret passageway that begins beneath the Chamber of Wood which was located in the northwest corner of Women's Courtyard. There is an underground room in that corner of the Temple Site. It is a chamber 44 feet below ground level and has never been explored. This woodshed was close to the Holy of Holies.

A warning was given to those who might seek the Ark in Shekalim 6:1,2 (Yoma 52a-54a). It is recorded that a priest during the Second Temple times was in this wood store and discovered the secret passage in the floor of this room. When he went to tell the other priests that he discovered this chamber of the Ark, he was struck down dead in mid-sentence. The Jews interpreted this event as the place where the Ark truly was and that his death prevented the Gentiles from discovering the Ark's location and taking it away. This may be the one of the reasons that the Rabbi's don't want to talk about the location of the Ark anymore, a big change from what took place in 1992. Problems with the media, Israeli opposition, and with the Arabs has led the rabbi's to tone down the talk about the Ark.

In April, 1992, Rabbi Getz, the chief rabbi of the holy sites in Israel and Rabbi Shlomo Goren, the chief rabbi of the Israel Defense Force in 1967 stated they found the location of the Ark. In 1982, they went under the Temple Mount, broke through the Western Wall at Warren's Gate and claim they saw the Ark in an underground tunnel. Warren's Gate provided the most direct access to the Temple from the West and was nearest to the Holy of Holies. Rabbi Getz was afraid to look directly upon the Ark, so he used a mirror to look around the corner of the tunnel and beheld the reflected image of the Ark. The Ark was not, however, examined, only looked at from a distance.

Rabbi Getz announced they discovered the Ark's location in April, 1992, on the CBS television special, Ancient Mysteries of the Bible. In February, 1992, Rabbi Richman stated the same thing at the First Annual Temple Conference in Jerusalem. A Rabbi Hacohen stated he saw the Ark at the end of the long tunnel. It was covered with old, dried, animal skins. One gold end of the Ark was visible. He also saw the gold loops in which the poles were placed. Rabbi Hacohen now
denies he ever said this. David Allen Lewis still has the tape recording with Hacohen’s statements as evidence that he made these statements to Lewis’s tour group.

The discovery of the Ark was going to be explored more the next day after its initial discovery, but the Muslims found out what had happened and sealed up the entrance with bricks and concrete that night. The rabbi’s have stated they are content for now to leave the Ark where it is because they have no place to put it. When it is the right time, they will get it. Goren and Getz are dead now, but they have shared the location of the Ark with others. There are archaeologist that think this story is a joke and there are others that believe it is true. It depends upon whom you talk to. Only time will tell.

Grant Jeffrey states in his book, Armageddon, Appointment With Destiny, that he believes what was discovered in this tunnel is a replica of the true Ark which was taken to Ethiopia by the Queen of Sheba and her son Prince Menelik I, who was also the son of King Solomon. Menelik lived in the palace at Jerusalem and was educated by the priests. He returned to Ethiopia at the age of 19.

Ethiopian records indicate Solomon made a duplicate Ark for his son Menelik, because He wanted to worship Jehovah. Because of the apostasy and idolatry that was taking place in Israel, Menelik secretly switched the arks and brought the real one back to northern Ethiopia where it has been guarded for the last 3000 years in a secret underground temple in the Church of Zion in Aksum. It would be returned when Israel turned from idol worship. The descendants of Menelik and these Jewish priests are called Falasha Jews (exile Jews). The Encyclopedia Britannica confirms this historical tradition.

Grant Jeffrey states in his book Prince of Darkness that he received three reports from three sources, Canadian, Ethiopian, and Israeli, that claimed the Ark was secretly returned to Israel during the violent closing days of the Ethiopian Civil War. Thousand of Ethiopian Jews were flown home to Israel. After bribing the corrupt Ethiopian officials with 42 million dollars, the Ark in the temple at Aksum was flown back to Israel in an unmarked cargo plane and was carried by a special team of trained Levites to a secret location where it will stay until a new Temple is built. Is this the true Ark? I don’t know. You’ll have to decide yourself. This is the main information that I have found on this topic. I do know that the Ark is going to be found one day according to Jeremiah’s writings.
*Jeremiah 3:16,17 - And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. After the Messiah returns, there will be no more interest in the Ark of the Covenant because of the presence of the Lord Himself. They will worship the Lord Jesus Christ directly. The fact they will not visit the Ark anymore, talk about it or think about it indicates it will be found again.
Chapter 28

The Table of Shewbread

Exodus 25:23-30
Exodus 37:10-16
I. THE PROPERTIES OF THE TABLE

The length of this table was two cubits or about three feet. It was about 1 ½ feet wide and a little over two feet in height. The height was the same as the Ark of the Covenant. This reminds us that the same grace which grants us mercy (ark) also allows fellowship and provision (table of shewbread) to maintain the Christian life.

The table was made of shittim wood which speaks of the perfect humanity of Jesus Christ. It was overlaid with gold picturing Christ’s deity. The gold added preciousness, firmness, glory, and eternal stability to the wood. The table was also constructed with a double crown all the way around it, giving it elegance and beauty. This crown also held the bread in place. The bread was carried in tact when the camp was moved. It was covered with blue cloth. The double crown reminds us of the security and the safety of the Christian because of Christ. It also reminds us of Christ who was crowned with glory and honor.

* Hebrews 2:9 - But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

When the priest transported the table of shewbread, they needed to be the same height in order to carry it level. They needed to walk in unison to avoid stumbling. If Christians are going to have fellowship with one another, they too, need to walk in unison.

The table was also known as Lehem Lappanim which means “the bread of faces or the bread of the presence.” It was also called the “continual bread” because there was always bread on the table in God’s presence.

* Numbers 4:7- And upon the table of shewbread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withal: and the continual bread shall be thereon:

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD
A. Preparing the Bread

The purpose of the table was to hold the twelve loaves of bread that were placed upon it. This bread was heavy bread, not like what we get at the store today. Two omers or 4 ½ to 5 quarts of flour were used in each loaf. The combined weight of the bread alone was 90-100 pounds.

The loaves were kneaded one at a time. In the Temple, the dough was made in one mold and shaped in a second mold for baking. A third
mold was used to keep it whole. Horns were placed on the four corners of the bread which spoke of the power of the bread, and thus, the power of Christ. The height of the bread was seven fingers. The bread was prepared by the house of Garmu who knew the secret of preserving the bread for long periods. This family was disgraced because they would not teach or pass on the method to others.

When the bread was being prepared, it was anointed in the middle with oil in the shape of a cross. Isn’t that interesting? What a picture of the Bread of Life, the Lord Jesus Christ, our mediator in the middle between God and man, giving Himself for us on the cross of Calvary.

The bread was made of grain, the fruit of the ground and is a reminder of the humanity of Christ. It was not just any grain, but very fine flour. There were no lumps, taint, or chaff within it. The flour passed through eleven sieves or strainers. This fine flour speaks of the purity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The bread also speaks of the death and suffering of the Lord. The wheat was ground to powder. Christ was crushed for us, beginning at Gethsemane all the way to the cross. The bread was baked in a heated oven and endured the fire. Jesus endured the fiery trial of Calvary and the grave, rising from the dead. Jesus is the prepared bread for mankind. He is the Bread of Life.

* John 6:35- And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

B. Presenting the Bread

The bread was presented to God for seven days before it was available to men. The twelve loaves were placed on the table, each loaf represented a tribe of Israel. Twelve is the number of national unity and divine government. There are twelve apostles, twelve gates in Heaven, twelve fruits on the tree of life, and the heavenly city is 12,000 furlongs. Israel is under the control of divine government.

The cakes of shewbread were called challoth. They were pierced to allow quick baking. Our Lord was also pierced at the cross. His life was also subjected to the piercing hatred of man. The shewbread was crowned with frankincense. Frankincense is known for its whiteness and fragrant smell. It burned with a white flame. The Hebrew word for frankincense is lebonah {leb-o-naw'} which is formed from a root word taban {law-bawn'} which means “to be white.” The name of the county
Lebanon is formed from the same root word because of the snow-clad summits of the mountains in this region. It speaks of the purity of Christ. Frankincense grew in rocky soil and reminds us that Christ was a root out of a dry ground. It was also extracted by piercing the tree. The incision in Jesus’ life took place on the cross. When they placed the bread on the table of shewbread, it was spaced apart so that the air could circulate between the loaves.

C. The Procedure for Changing the Bread

In the Temple era, there were 13 tables. There were eight marble ones in the slaughter house. There were two west of the brazen altar. One was marble for meat and the other was silver for the vessels. There were also two tables in the hall entrance to the Holy Place. One was marble and one was gold. There was one table of shewbread in the Holy Place.

Eight priests were involved in changing the bread. Four priest removed the bread and four replaced the new bread. The new bread was placed on a marble table which was cool. During this replacement process, the bread was removed and replaced at the same moment. The table of shewbread always had bread on it. The old bread was placed on the gold table in the hall. This taught the people they were to always go up, and not to go down or digress. They were to always be steadfast and never retreat. Whatever was holy must be honored. This is why the old bread was placed on the gold table. This bread was eaten by the priests.

The prohibitions to eating the bread.
1. No strangers (a picture of man in his natural, sinful state)
2. No sojourner of the priest. Visiting friends of the priest could not enter the Holy Place or eat holy things.
3. No hired servant (a picture of working for salvation).
4. No leper (picture of defilement). Defiled believers ruin fellowship with God.

Ahimelech gave bread to David’s men (1 Samuel 21:1-6). The loaves came from the table of the priests, not the table of the shewbread.
Chapter 29
The Golden Candlestick

Exodus 25:31-39
Exodus 37:17-24

I. THE PROPERTIES OF THE CANDLESTICK

As we enter the Tabernacle sanctuary, we view three pieces of furniture in the Holy Place where the priests ministered. To the left or the south side was the golden candlestick. It was made of one talent of pure gold. A talent was around 131 pounds. At the present, May, 2007 price of $655 an ounce, the value of this menorah would be $1,372,880. The golden candlestick was a picture of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was God. Pure gold speaks of His holiness. This candlestick was also hand-beaten showing the suffering, agonies, and sorrow in His ministry and on the cross to provide light to the world.
* Isaiah 53:10-11... Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. [11] He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

* Isaiah 53:5 - But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

II. THE PATTERN OF THE CANDLESTICK

The candlestick was all one piece. It was not attached where it could be broken off or ruined. As believers, we are eternally united in Christ, in one body, and are secure in Him.

* 1 Corinthians 6:17- But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.
* Ephesians 5:30- For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

The candlestick had several parts. One central shaft or pillar with six side branches, three on each side. The candlestick or “menorah” had a central shaft which was straight and taller than the other six branches which pointed toward it. The central shaft was called “the light of the world or the light of God.” This central shaft was a picture of Christ, our mediator and the Light of the World.

* John 8:12- Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

The six branches pointed toward the center branch. The number six is the number of man in the Bible. We are lights that are to point others to Christ and shine for Him. The central shaft shows Christ is to be at the center of our lives and our church. Our lives are to revolve around the Lord daily, impacting our thoughts, decisions, and actions.

The central shaft is the seventh one. Seven is the number of completion and God’s perfection. Christ completes our lives. He was perfect and sinless. He completed God’s plan on the cross for us.

No measurements are given of the candlestick in the Scriptures. Historians state that it was around five feet high and three feet wide. The fact that the Bible records no measurements of the menorah reminds us that the deity of Christ cannot be measured or computed. The center
shaft teaches us that Christ is the vine and we are the branches (John 15:1-7). The branches partake of the nature of the central shaft. We are made partakers of the nature of Christ.

* 2 Peter 1:4- Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

* 2 Corinthians 5:17- Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

* Galatians 2:20 - I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The branches are dependent upon the vine for their existence. We are dependent upon the Lord for our spiritual survival and eternal life.

* John 15:5- I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

The candlestick or menorah was ornamented with flowers, knops, and bowls. The central shaft was more ornate than the others, reminding us of the fact that Jesus is the altogether lovely one. Flowers speak of the beauty of Jesus. Their beauty would not fade for they were made of gold.

* Galatians 5:22-23... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, [23] Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. Here we see the beauty of God.

The knops seem to represent fruit. Josephus suggested they were pomegranates. As the branches bear fruit, we too, are to be fruitful.

* John 15:8 - Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

The lamps or bowls were like almonds and they were for oil. The almonds are a reminder of the resurrection of Christ. It is the almond tree that is first to wake up or bud in the spring, usually in January. The word “almond” comes from a Hebrew root word *shaqad {shaw-kad‘}* which means “awakening tree, wakeful, hastener.”

* Jeremiah 1:11-12... Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. [12] Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it. This was a play on words.

In this almond bowl on the candlestick, we find a glimpse of the humanity of Christ, His death and His resurrection. Jesus was first
born among the brethren and He was pre-eminent in His resurrection.
* Romans 8:29- For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to
be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn
among many brethren.

It is interesting to note that Aaron’s rod budded, flowered, and bore
fruit. It was a picture of Christ too.
* Numbers 17:8 - And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went
into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the
house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed
blossoms, and yielded almonds.

The bud reminds us of Christ’s birth; the flower reminds us of
the fruit of His ministry; the rod speaks of His death as He was cut
off. Aaron’s budding rod established his priestly position. The
resurrection of the dead almond rod confirmed his position as priest by
the Lord Himself. The resurrection of Jesus Christ confirmed the fact
that Jesus was God. It confirmed His position as our High Priest,
mediator, and Savior.

The central lamp was not lit by the other lights on the menorah.
It was lit only by the coals that came from the brazen altar. The message
of this method was the fact that the source of light of Jesus Christ points
to the cross of Calvary, not to man. The events of Calvary and His
resurrection confirmed that Jesus was the Light of the world. The
sacrifice for mankind was paid by the Lord, not by anything that men
could do. We have light because of the sacrifice that was made by the
Lord at Calvary.

III. THE POWER OF THE CANDLESTICK

The light of the menorah was dependent upon the oil. The oil
is a picture of the Holy Spirit’s fulness. As Jesus was
anointed with the Holy Spirit in His earthly ministry, we too, are
dependent upon the Holy Spirit.

Not just any oil would do in the candlestick. It was pure beaten oil
of the finest quality. This olive oil was beaten by hand in a mortar with
a pestle and not ground or pressed in a mill. The first extraction of oil is
called virgin oil. This oil had to be clear. It passed through a strainer.
Pure oil gave off more light and less smoke. This oil was used
exclusively for the lamps. God wants our lives to be pure too. When we
live a godly life, we shine brighter for the Lord. When our lives are
impure, we give off smoke that creates a smell and distorts vision. In other words, people cannot see the Lord in our lives because of the smoke of our inconsistency.

The oil revealed the glory of the candlestick and the Holy Spirit revealed the glory of Christ.
* John 16:12-15... I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. [13] Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. [14] He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. [15] All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

IV. THE PURPOSE OF THE CANDLESTICK

The purpose of the menorah was to give light in the Holy Place for the service and fellowship of the priests. There was no natural light inside the Tabernacle. The priests were not to walk and serve in the light of nature, of human reasoning, philosophy, and logic.
* I Corinthians 2:14... But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The priests were to walk in the light provided for them by God. They were to worship in spirit of God and in the truth of God. The light from the candlestick is also a picture of the task of the church. Christians are the light of the world.
*Matthew 5:14-16... Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. [15] Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. [16] Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

The menorah was to give off a clear light. It was attended continually by the priests and was NEVER to go out.
* Exodus 27:20-21... And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always. [21] In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the Lord: it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.
The light went out once because of neglect.
* 1 Samuel 3:3 - And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep;
* 1 Samuel 3:11-14... And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. [12] In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. [13] For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. [14] And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

There was only enough oil for eight hours of light, but the menorah would continue to burn after eight hours. The lamps were trimmed two times a day (Exodus 30:7-8). The light wicks came from the garments of the priests. The lights were trimmed in order to give off the brightest light. Our Lord want us to burn brightly for Him. He prunes, trims, chastens, and removes the imperfections in our lives that we might shine brighter for Christ.

* Hebrews 12:9-11.... Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? [10] For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. [11] Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

The flame of the candlestick pictures the sacrifices we make to shine for Jesus Christ. The charred ends of the wicks were considered sacred by the priests and were disposed of very carefully. Beloved, our past experiences of service, communion, and worship are burned wicks. They cannot be a channel for today’s flame. Yesterday is gone. Today is a new day to serve the Lord.

* Philippians 3:13-14...Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, [14] I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.
The trimming of the wick was an opportunity for the light to burn brighter. If the wick was to be used at all, it had to burn. Burning is what led to the trimming of the wick. The wick was not the fuel, but the channel for the fuel (oil). Beloved, we are the channel which the Holy Spirit works and we are to shine bright for Christ. For this reason, God may prune us with trials to help us to shine brighter for Him. Are you letting your light shine for Christ? As Christian lights, we are to ....

1. DEVELOP fruit ... John 15:8,16- Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

2. DELIGHT others... Hebrews 3:13 - But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. We are to encourage and exhort one another.

3. DELIVER messages .... Romans 1:16- For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

4. DEVELOP health, maturity, and strength .... 1 Peter 2:2- As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

5. DISPEL DARKNESS... Matthew 5:16- Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

6. DISPLAY warnings... Ezekiel 3:18 - When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

7. DO OUR DUTY .... Galatians 5:13- For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: (Ephesians 6;7). We are to be servants and giving toward others.

8. Be DESCENT and pure.... 1 Timothy 4:12- Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

9. DIRECT and guide others.... 2 Timothy 2:2- And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. The Word of God gives
direction and guidance. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple* (Psalm 119:105,130). Are you a shining light for Christ? Are you getting guidance and direction from the Lord?

*Psalm 32:8 - I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*

We cannot be apostles; but we can all be living epistles.
Chapter 30
The Veil

Exodus 26:31-33
And thou shalt make a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made: [32] And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver. [33] And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.

I. THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE VEIL

There were two sets of pillars with veils or curtains, in the Tabernacle. At the entrance into the Holy Place were five pillars made of shittim wood and overlaid with gold. These pillars speak of both the humanity of Christ and His deity. This veil was called “the door of the Tabernacle.” The chapiters at the tops of these pillars showed the crowning work of Christ as our great High Priest. The number five is the number of grace in the Bible. We enjoy the bread of God (fellowship), the light of God (guidance and truth), and intercession with the Lord all because of God’s saving grace.

Inside the Tabernacle there was a second set of pillars. They were four in number and were set in sockets of silver. Each pillar had a hook for the veil to rest upon. These four pillars were a picture of the four Gospels. As the pillars held up the veil, the Gospels held up Christ for all to see.

The Jewish Mishnaoth records that the veil of the Temple was 73 feet by 52 feet. It was a handbreadth in thickness (3.65 inches). Two curtains were made each year. The Temple had and inner and an outer curtain with a cubit (18 inches) space corridor between each curtain. The
High Priest would enter this corridor at the south end and walk to the north end through the second veil into the Holy of Holies where the ark was located.

**This curtain or veil was woven securely.** It was so strong that two teams of oxen pulling in opposite directions could not pull it apart. When the veil was torn during the death of Christ, it could not be repaired because no thread could hold it. The colors of the veil were blue, purple, and red. They spoke of Christ in His incarnation.

* Blue spoke of Heaven, the place of His origin. Blue points to the fact that He was the Son of God.

* Scarlet spoke of Christ’s passion and pointed to the fact that He was the Son of Man. It also reminded us that Jesus was the last Adam. The word Adam means “red.” The first Adam was the great taker, for he became lost and humanity lost much because of his disobedience and sin. The last Adam (Jesus) was the great adder for we are saved because of Him. Christ adds to the inhabitants of Heaven.

* Purple points to the position and power of Jesus. It reminds us that He was the God man. When you add blue (heaven) and red (earth) equally together, you get purple. With the color purple, you cannot tell where blue ends and red begins. In Christ, deity is perfectly blended with humanity. It was so perfect of a blend that you cannot tell where one begins and the other ends. He was the God man. On the boat in a stormy sea, Jesus slept, showing His humanity. Yet, He awakened and told the sea to be still, revealing His deity.

*Mark 4:39- And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*

**Purple is the color of royalty.** Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords. Upon the veil was embroidered cherubim. Cherubim guarded the entrance of Eden. They were the guardians of God’s holiness. Two cherubim were on the mercy seat of the ark.

**II. THE INDICATION OF THE VEIL**

The Hebrew word for “veil” comes from a root word that means “to separate.” This was the function of the veil in the Tabernacle and Temple. The veil hid the Holy Place from the view of people in the courtyard. It also separated the priests from the Holy of Holies where the ark of the covenant rested. They were separated from the presence of God manifested in the Shekinah glory cloud. Once a
year, the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies with the atonement blood.

By barring the way to God’s presence, the veil reminded or taught the priests of God’s holiness. This was the indication of the veil. God would not tolerate any sin in His presence. He would not reveal Himself until the sin question was settled. Christ settled this issue on the cross of Calvary.

* Ephesians 2:13- But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

III. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE VEIL

The separation between God and men because of sin has been spanned in Christ. As a result, there is no longer discrimination between Gentile and Jew.

* Ephesians 2:11-15... Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; [12] That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: [13] But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. [14] For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; [15] Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

Both Jew and Gentile are saved through the finished work of Christ on the cross.

* Ephesians 2:16-17... And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: [17] And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Through the Lord Jesus Christ, we have access to God the Father.

* Ephesians 2:18- For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Through Christ, God no longer dwells in the Holy of Holies between the cherubim, but in the bodies of believers in Christ.

* Ephesians 2:22- In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.
When Jesus died on the cross, He permanently removed forever the barrier between God and all who will believe in Him.

* Ephesians 2:14- For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

The veil spoke of the perfect humanity of Christ. Christ was the veil. He said, “I am the door.” Through the Lord Jesus Christ, we enter into God’s presence. The veil separated even good men from God. It shut out good men from the Holy of Holies. The life of Christ met the demands of a holy God for He was God. He was perfect, spotless, and free from sin. His life was rent in two for us so that we could have eternal life.

* Matthew 27:46-51 ... And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? [47] Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. [48] And straightway one of them ran, and took a spunge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. [49] The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. [50] Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. [51] And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

The rent veil pictures the fellowship that we can now have with the Lord. We have access into His presence through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.
Chapter 31
The Brazen Altar
Exodus 27:1-8
Exodus 38:1-5
I. THE PORTRAYAL OF THE BRAZEN ALTAR

This altar was known as the brazen altar, the altar of burnt offering, the altar, or the altar of shittim wood. The Hebrew word for “altar” is mizbeah and it has the thought of “sacrifice.” It is derived from a Hebrew root word, zabah, which means “to slay or slaughter.” The word “altar” signifies lifting up. It is a word that points to the cross of Calvary.

*John 12:32- And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

Our English word “altar” is from Latin and signifies “high.” The words “burnt offering” are from the Hebrew word olah which signifies “ascending.” The entire offering was consumed and ascended toward God. It was an odor of sweet savor to the Lord. This conveyed the thought of acceptance as the fire consumed the sacrifice and the smoke ascended up to the Lord. Jesus was an acceptable sweet savor at Calvary.

II. THE POSITION OF THE BRAZEN ALTAR

The brazen altar was the place of sacrifice and death. It was the place where the blood was poured out. It stood at the door of the Tabernacle courtyard. Thus, being the first item you would encounter on your way to the Tabernacle. There was no other way to access the Tabernacle. You had to pass the brazen altar. What a picture of Christ. The blood of Christ is our only passport to the presence of God in Heaven. Because of what Jesus did for us on the cross at Calvary, we have eternal life.

The ministry of the brazen altar was accessible to all the people of Israel, rich or poor, slaves or free. The brazen altar was an object lesson of John 3:16.

*John 3:16- For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

No steps led to the altar. It sloped upward. There was a caution against worshiping the altar. The stones had to be virgin stones, not touched by man-made tools.

*Exodus 20:25-26... And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. [26] Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar,*
that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

The priests wore undergarments. God wanted no immodesty at His altar which was a common trait of heathen priests that were characterized by nakedness and abundant sexual immorality.

III. THE PROPERTIES OF THE BRAZEN ALTAR

The brazen altar was made of shittim or acacia wood with copper. Acacia wood was very hard, dense or heavy, and was especially good for building ships. The wood is a picture of the humanity of Christ and the copper or brass is a type or picture of God’s manifestation in judgment. In order for the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Savior, it was necessary for Him to be both human and divine since He was to be the mediator between both God and man.

The altar itself was three cubits (4.5 to 5 feet) high and five cubits (7.5 feet) square. It was a square, signifying its completeness and equality. All sinners are equally lost with the Lord and need Him. Christ is the same for all men and women.

* Romans 10:12- For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

The brazen altar was the largest of all furnishings and large enough to hold all the other vessels of the Tabernacle. This speaks of the far-reaching and boundless results of Jesus’ death on the cross. All spiritual blessings flow out of the sacrificial death of the Lord.

* Romans 8:32- He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

The altar had a brazen grate for the meat that was placed down into it. It was 2.25 feet high. Remember, the brass pictures the judgment of God for the sins of men and points to the cross of Calvary. It is interesting to note that the mercy seat was also 2.25 feet in height (Exodus 25:10). The identical measures of these two items remind us of the fact that the justice of God (brazen altar) was perfectly balanced by the mercy of God (the mercy seat). The judgment for sin required death and Christ balanced this demand by paying the price for man’s sins with His death on the cross.

There is one other beautiful lesson hidden here. The table of shewbread was a picture of the fellowship of believers with God and other believers. This piece of furniture was also 2.25 feet in height. This fact teaches that the same grace which grants us mercy (mercy seat), also
allows fellowship and provision to grow and mature in your Christian walk with the Lord. If we are commanded to grow in the Lord, God will give us the means to do so.

* 1 Peter 2:2- As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

**IV. THE PARAPHERNALIA OF THE BRAZEN ALTAR**

The altar consisted of a brazen grate upon which the wood and animals to be sacrificed were placed (Leviticus 1:12). This altar had two staves with rings in order to transport it. One stave was not enough. Two were needed for balance. These staves remind us of two key parts of the Gospel: the death and the resurrection of Christ.

* 1 Corinthians 15:3-4... For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; [4] And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

**The Horns on the Altar**

There were four horns on this altar which were about 1 ½ feet long. The horns speak of strength and power. They pointed in four directions: N-E-W-S. The message of the cross, the place of sacrifice, the place where the blood of Christ was poured out, is good news for the entire world.

Some believe that the sacrificial animals were tied to the horns. This was not known to have been practiced since sacrificial animals were already killed and quartered when they were brought to the altar. However, when a large number of animals were offered at a national feast, some of them may have been tied to the horns.

The horns were also anointed with the blood of the sacrifice.

* Exodus 29:12- And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar.

The horns were also a place of refuge for the guilty.

* 1 Kings 2:28- Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.
Other items used at the brazen altar were:
1. Pans- They caught the ashes of the sacrifice and were used to carry the ashes outside the camp. The ashes themselves pictured an acceptable sacrifice. Christ acknowledged that His sacrifice was acceptable when He cried, “It is finished.”
2. Shovels- They were used to handle coals and remove the ashes.
3. Basins- They caught the blood of the slain animals.
4. Flesh hooks- They handled the sacrifice and were used to place the meat on the altar
5. Fire pans- They transported burning coals from the brazen altar to the candlestick and the altar of incense.

V. THE PRINCIPLES OF THE BRAZEN ALTAR

A. The Blood

The blood of the sacrifice was poured out at the bottom of the altar. The Bible says that the life of the flesh is in the blood. Christ poured out His blood and His life for us.

* Isaiah 53:12- Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

B. The Fire

How long did the fire burn? The fire was to be a perpetual fire and was never to go out.

* Leviticus 6:12-13... And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace offerings. [13] The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.

How was the fire started? Was it by stone or flint? The fire was started originally from Heaven. It was not kindled by human hands.

* Leviticus 9:24- And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

The fire was kindled once for all and always ready for the sacrifice of the poor sinner. God is holy and this fire reminds us of His holiness and hatred for sin. The sinner who refuses to appropriate the sacrifice of Christ by faith must endure for eternity the fires of Hell.
C. The Offerings on the Brazen Altar

The five Levitical offerings were not only meaningful to the Israelites, but they had a prophetic fulfillment in some aspect of the suffering and death of Christ.

1. The Burnt Offering (Leviticus 1)-

The burnt offering comes from a Hebrew word *olah* which means "to ascend upwards." The whole animal was consumed on the brazen altar, which pictured the complete and voluntary surrender of Jesus to His Father's will when He offered Himself on the cross. Those who were rich offered a bull. The middle class folks offered sheep or goats. The poor offered doves or pigeons. Often the priests would not accept a sacrifice if it was beneath what the person could afford. God wants believers to give their best to the Lord, whether it is your talent or your treasure. If those who are wealthy give meager offerings when they have great possessions, they are robbing God. The Lord does not want us to offer that which costs us nothing.

* Malachi 1:7-8...Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.

* Malachi 1:13- Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have smuffed it at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord.

Believers are to give according to the way that God has prospered them.

* 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.. Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. [2] Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

The burnt offering is an object lesson of several New Testament verses.

* Luke 22:42- Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

* Mark 12:30- And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this
is the first commandment. Our unwillingness to surrender any area of our life to the Lord is an indication that the area we are clutching to is more important than the Lord. Nothing but 100% surrender is acceptable to the Lord.

* 2 Corinthians 8:5- And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. God wants us to give all of ourselves to Him.

The burnt offering was flayed and cut into pieces. Flaying is taking off the outside skin and exposing the inner flesh. Satan sought to flay the Lord and expose His inner life, hoping to expose some kind of wickedness. His plan was foiled as the purity, perfection, and glory of Christ radiated like the morning sun.

* Hebrews 4:15- For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

2. The Meal Offering (Leviticus 2)-

The offerings of the Levitical system were blood offerings, with one exception. The meal offering was bloodless, consisting of grain that was presented to the Lord. The Hebrew word for "meal" is minchah which means "a gift" and refers to any gift presented to God or man. Jesus was God’s gift to us.

This offering was an expression of the Israelites’ thankfulness and recognition of God’s sovereignty over them. This offering typified Jesus’ perfect obedience to God the Father which revealed His perfect character and His suffering on behalf of sinful men.

The meal offering could be presented in only one of three forms.

A. Uncooked flour- Much labor went into the preparation of the meal offering. The meal had to be crushed, ground, sifted thirteen times to become fine flour. This sifting and purity pictured Christ’s ministry.

The fine flour speaks of the evenness and uniformity of Jesus’ character and service. He was a man of balance. The Lord went through the sifting process of Satan’s temptation and the testing of religious leaders without sin.

The uncooked flour pictured the labor of the Israelites (planting, watering, harvesting, crushing, and sifting). It was a symbol of their daily life. For our labors to be acceptable and blessed by the Lord, they must be presented with pure motives. Even if you are doing the Lord’s work, your labor is unacceptable to Him if it is done with the wrong motives or for the purpose of glorifying yourself instead of Christ.
* Matthew 7:21-23... Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. [22] Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

B. Unleavened Cakes- This was a second form of the meal offering. It could be prepared by kneading the flour into cakes and baking them in the oven or in pans. This would picture the sufferings of the Lord at the hand of God the Father, at the hand of Satan, or at the hands of men.

* Matthew 27:45-46... Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. [46] And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

* Matthew 27:30- And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

C. Green Ears of Grain- These were dried over fire and beaten to remove the grain. Jesus pictured Himself as a grain of wheat that had to die to produce fruit.

* John 12:24- Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

Through His death, Jesus brought resurrection life to all who trust in Him. The scorched grain pictures the fires of suffering that He went through to save us. The beating of the grain reminds us of the beating He took at the hands of the Romans (Matthew 27:26-30). The meal offering was to be of the firstfruits. Jesus was the firstfruit of the resurrection.

* 1 Corinthians 15:20-But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

* 1 Corinthians 15:23- But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Various ingredients were added or omitted from the meal offering. Leaven was not allowed in it (Lev. 2:11). Leaven was allowed in the peace offering (Lev. 7:13). Leaven was made by kneading flour without salt, into a ball, and allowed to stand until it fermented. In the Bible, it was a picture of impurity or evil.

* 1 Corinthians 5:6-8... Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? [7] Purge out therefore the old
leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: [8] Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Jesus compared the evil doctrines of the Pharisees as leaven.

* Matthew 16:12- Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

**Honey could not be used in the meal offering for several reasons.**

1. It ferments when used in the preparation of vinegar.
2. Honey represents natural sweetness and is a symbol of carnal pleasure.
3. Though tasty in the mouth, honey becomes sour in the stomach if too much is eaten.

* Proverbs 25:16-Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.
* Proverbs 25:27- It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory.

Honey was offered in pagan worship in the countries around the Jews. When we look at the life of the Lord, we find that He turned away from some of the sweet things of life if they interfered with His mission on earth. There were no elements of sweetness at the cross for sure. The applause of the world is like sweet honey. The honey of applause was offered to the Lord by the crowds when He did His miracles. The honey of convenience, safety, and comfort was offered to Him when Peter tried to persuade Him to not suffer the death of the cross.

Olive oil was mixed in the meal offering symbolizing the anointing power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was conceived, baptized, anointed, empowered for service, and resurrected by the Holy Spirit. He was the God-man.

**Salt was used in the meal offering to preserve from putrefaction and arrest corruption within the meal.** Salt was emblematic of God’s covenant with Israel which was an everlasting covenant. Salt was a reminder that they should live pure lives. They were to offer their sacrifices and offerings in truthfulness and without hypocrisy.

In the New Testament, salt is a symbol for Christians.

* Matthew 5:13- Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. We are to arrest
the corruption of Satan.

Our speech is to be seasoned with salt.

*Colossians 4:6- Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Frankincense was sprinkled on top of the meal offering. It gave the offering a sweet fragrance and pictured the purity of the Lord. The meal offering was voluntarily brought to the Lord. It was a sweet savor. The meal offering was given to the priests at the entrance of the Tabernacle. There was no ceremony involved in this offering. The offering was simply given to the priests in obedience to the law.

3. The Peace Offering (Leviticus 3)-

The Hebrew word for peace offering was *shelamin*. It is like the word *shalom*, and it expresses two main ideas.

* It represented the sacrificial gifts brought by the Israelites in thanksgiving for the peace, friendship, and fellowship they experienced with God.
* After it was presented to the Lord, it provided a fellowship meal that the Israelites and priests joyfully shared before the Lord. The offerer and the priests each got a portion of the offering.

The peace offering spoke of the Jews experiencing peace and fellowship with the Lord. This offering pictures Jesus Christ as our peace. He is the One who reconciled us back to God so that we can have peace and fellowship with the Lord.

*Romans 5:1 - Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

*2 Corinthians 5:18- And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

*Ephesians 2:14 - For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

4. The Sin Offering (Leviticus 4)-

The word “sin” comes from the Hebrew word *chattah* and means “to miss the mark or err from God’s ways.” The sin offering was established to atone for a person’s sins, whether intentional or done ignorantly, and to teach people the seriousness of sin, the need for repentance, and the consequences that the sin would bring into their lives. This offering was brought as a substitute to make atonement for sin. The sin offering was the foundation for all other offerings. There would have been no atonement without it. It portrayed Jesus becoming sin for us,
dying in our place. He was our sin-bearer, taking upon Himself the sin and shame of mankind on the cross.

* 2 Corinthians 5:21- For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

* Galatians 3:13- Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

The blood from the sin offering had to be applied in three ways. First, it was sprinkled seven times in the Holy Place before the veil. Secondly, the blood was smeared upon the horns of the golden altar of incense which was the place of prayer and fellowship with God. The blood on the horns symbolized a prayer for the pardon of sins before God. The blood gave the incense of prayer its value. This act pictured the blood of Christ which gives value and power to the prayers of the saints. Jesus is our intercessor that sits at the right hand of God the Father.

* Hebrews 7:25- Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

The remaining blood of the sin offering was poured out at the base of the brazen altar. The remainder of the bull was burned outside the camp. The priests were permitted to partake of every offering presented on the altar except the sin offering for themselves, which was totally burned outside the camp. This area was on top of the Mount of Olives. The priests could partake of the sin offerings for rulers and people. They were to always be rewarded for their ministry to others.

5. The Trespass Offering (Leviticus 5)-

This sacrifice was made to offer satisfaction and reparation for wrongs committed against God and fellow men. It was a picture of Christ being offered on the cross for the sins of others.

Though similar to the sin offering, there were a number of differences between this offering and the sin offering.

* Sin= Dealt with sin against God; Trespass= Dealt with sin against God and men.

* Sin= Dealt with the nature of sin or its root. Trespass= Dealt with the acts of sin or its fruit.

* Sin= Dealt with the guilt of the sinner. Trespass= Dealt with the injury against God and men.

* Sin= Dealt with atonement. Trespass= Emphasized the satisfaction and
reparation for wrong committed.

The word “trespass” is from the Hebrew word *asham* which means “guilt.” It denotes being guilty of infringing or violating the rights of others. The Israelites were to present their trespass offerings for sins committed in three areas.

1) For Concealing the Truth (Lev. 5:1) This applied especially in court.
2) For Contamination by Touching (Lev. 5:2-3) This involved touching dead animals, lepers, people with discharge coming from their bodies. This offering was required to purify the worshiper before entering the sanctuary.
3) For Careless Talk (Lev. 5:4) Oaths that were forgotten or unfulfilled required correction and reconciliation. The Israelites had to keep their oaths, whether they were good or bad. Christians are to watch their words for they will be held accountable for them before God (Matthew 12:36-37).

Two types of transgressions could be made against holy things.
* First, personally using things dedicated to God such as tithes, first fruit of the harvest, the first born of cattle or sheep.
* Second, breaking commandments ignorantly, mistakenly, or forgetfully.

Sins against men could also be committed.
1) Being Distrustful- Lying  Lev. 6:2
2) Dishonesty with partners  Lev. 6:2
3) Despoiling or robbing others  Lev. 6:2
4) Deceiving neighbors or oppressing them  Lev 6:2
5) Denial of property- finding a lost item or borrowing one and not returning it to the rightful owner.  Lev. 6:3

**Restitution was an important part of the trespass offering.** Israel was required to replace whatever they withheld from God or man and add one-fifth or twenty percent of the appraised value (Lev. 5:16). Zacchaeus (Luke 19) made restitution four-fold. Why not one fifth? He considered what he had done as “theft.”

*Exodus 22:1- If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.*

The trespass offering included expiation, where the guilt was removed, and restoration. True blessing can come only when we are in proper fellowship with God and men.
These five offerings were divided into sweet and non-sweet offerings. The sweet offerings were the burnt, meal, and peace offerings. They were acceptable and pleasing to God. The voluntary death of Jesus upon the cross was a sweet aroma to the Lord. The non-sweet offerings dealt with sin and the shame connected with it. They portrayed Christ bearing the sin and shame of man on the cross.

In these five offerings, five animals were used in the sacrifice. The animals portrayed the work of Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry.

A. The Ox- It pictured Jesus as a strong, enduring servant and obedient to death.

B. The Lamb- The lamb showed the Lord’s meekness, purity, and silent, voluntary surrender to His death on the cross.

C. The Goat- The goat pictured Jesus as our sin bearer.

D. The Turtle Dove- They were symbols of mourning, innocence, and poverty. Jesus mourned over the sin of men. He was innocent, the just dying for the unjust. He became poor so that we could become rich in Him.

The entire sacrificial system of the Old Testament was only a shadow of wonderful things to come in the future that were fulfilled in Christ.

* Hebrews 10:1- For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

* The Reasons for the Sacrificial System

God demanded that an elaborate sacrificial system be established for several reasons.

* By offering a blood sacrifice, man acknowledged that atonement must be made before the Lord for sins.

* They acknowledged that another must make atonement for them. They could not atone for their own sins.

* Blood atonement covered sins, withholding God’s judgment.

* The sacrifices made possible the communion of sinful people with a holy God.

* The sacrifices pointed to the day that Jesus would once and for all atone for the sins of men (Hebrews 9:26-28).
Chapter 32
The Garments of the High Priest
Exodus 28

The High Priest
Exodus 28:1-3

And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. [2] And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty. [3] And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

The garments for the High Priest and the other priests that served in the Tabernacle were set apart from common clothing to elevate the office and to serve as a constant reminder of God's holiness. These garments were to be worn only by the priests that served in the Tabernacle (35:19). The garments were to be made by fine craftsmen and to be made of the same materials of yarn and fine linen as the curtains of the Tabernacle along with gold and precious stones.

There was a total of seven articles of dress. The priests were perfectly clothed because seven was the number of perfection. The material used in the garments was gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen. First we will look at the ephod of the priest.

A. The Ephod 28:6-14

The ephod was a sleeveless outer garment reaching from the shoulders to below the knees. It consisted of two pieces, one covering the back and the other the front side of the body. It was fastened on each shoulder by a golden clasp on the top of which were two onyx stones.

The onyx stones were for a memorial of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt by the Passover lamb. The onyx stones had the names of six tribes on each stone and were set in sockets or ouches of gold. The word “ouches” is from a Hebrew word which means “to set.” The word “onyx” is from a Hebrew root word which means “to shine with fire or luster.” It was not like our onyx stone. This stone was precious and brilliant.

The ephod was held in place by a curious or skillfully made girdle. When a person looked at it from one view, it was all gold, catching every ray of sunlight and gleaming in splendor. From another angle, it was
linen with white, blue, purple, and red colors. Thus, there was one ephod with two distinct materials. The gold was not linen and the linen was not gold.

This ephod was a perfect symbol of Jesus Christ, the God man. Gold represented His divinity and the linen represented His earthly or human nature. We saw His human side in that He was born of a woman, labored, sweated, tired, slept, hungered, suffered, sorrowed, bled, and died. We saw his divine side in the fact that Jesus was sinless, holy, performed miracles, and arose from the dead.

The two onyx stones with the tribes were carried on the shoulders of the High Priest. Shoulders are symbols of strength and power. Shepherds carried lost sheep on their shoulders. Jesus bears believers on His shoulders. He is our source of power, strength and bears us up.

* John 1:12- But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:
* Isaiah 26:4- Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength:
* Psalm 27:1- The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
* Psalm 29:11- The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.
* Psalm 46:1- God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

B. The Breastplate of the High Priest

The breastplate of judgment, as it was called, was a square piece of cloth attached to the ephod over the heart of the priest. On this cloth were twelve precious stones set in gold and arranged in four rows. This material was made of the same cloth as the ephod and was around 9-10 inches square. It was doubled to form a bag or pouch. Inside this pouch, the Urim and Thummim were placed.

The breastplate was attached snugly over the ephod by gold chains and a ribbon of blue. The twelve stones in the breastplate represented each tribe of Israel. The name of the tribe was engraved on each stone. The breastplate was worn over the heart of the High Priest signifying that we are upon the heart of the Lord as well as on His shoulders. We are jewels to the Lord that are distinctly different, yet belonging to Him.

* 1 Corinthians 6:20- For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify
God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

The jewels were close to the heart of the High Priest and we are to be close to the heart of God, leaning upon Him. Jesus had disciples that followed Him afar off. John, however, leaned upon His breast. Paul wanted to know the Lord and be close to Him.

* Philippians 3:10 - That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

The breastplate lay on the breast, the place of rest. Our rest is truly in the Lord Jesus Christ.

* Matthew 11:28 - Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

The breastplate was used to learn the counsel of God, declare what course the people should take, or what events should happen in the future. A close look at the stones reveal some interesting insights. We find that the arrangement of the stones may have been like the order of the tribes as they were arranged in the camp and while they marched.

* Row 1: Zebulun  Issachar  Judah
* Row 2: Gad  Simeon  Reuben
* Row 3: Benjamin  Manasseh  Ephraim
* Row 4: Naphtali  Assher  Dan

The Jews read from right to left. This would mean that the tribe of Judah would be listed first. This was the tribe the Messiah would come from. It was to be the tribe of the kings. Let's take a look at the stone for Judah and the other stones on the breastplate.

* The Stones on the Breastplate

A. Sardius

Sardius is from the Hebrew word odem. This word composes the word Adam. It was light red in color and represented the tribe of Judah. This stone is significant because Jesus was the lion of Judah and was the last Adam.

The word "Judah" was inscribed on this stone. The reddish color was a reminder of blood and wine. The land of Judah was a land of vineyards and wine. Jesus Himself said, "I am the vine." Judah means "praise." Jesus receives our praise because He was victorious over His baptism of blood at Calvary.
B. Topaz

This stone had a bright yellow luster and represented the tribe of Issachar. The name Issachar means “recompense or reward.” God Himself is the rewarer and reward of our faith. God said in Genesis 15:1, “I am thy exceeding great reward.” Jesus Christ is the true Issachar of the believer.

C. Carbuncle

The name of this stone is from a Hebrew word *burekath* {haw-rek-ath’}. The Hebrew root word means “lightning or glittering.” There are two different opinions on its color. Josephus said it was an emerald green and others believe it was a stone of flashing redness. This stone represented the tribe of Zebulun which means “a home or dwelling place.” Zebulun’s stone shot forth with lightning splendor. Zebulun pictures our dwelling in the presence of God and therefore, shining out to give light to others.

The Second Row

D. Emerald

This word is from the Hebrew word *nophek* {no’-fek} and was believed to be a deep green or turquoise. Reuben’s name was inscribed upon it. Reuben’s name means “Looking to see a son.” When you look at the history of Reuben, you find that he was unstable as water, but now his name is transferred to a stone of durable strength.

God has proclaimed to us the gift of His only Son, “Unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given.” God looked upon our affliction, instability, and sin and said, “See a Son!” Christ is the solution to our sinfulness. Reuben’s name points us to the Son of God.

* Hebrews 12:2... Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

E. Sapphire

Sapphire is from the Hebrew word *cappiyr* {sap-peer’}. It is from a verb which means “to scratch, polish, to count, write, or number.” It was believed to be a deep blue color and had the tribe of Simeon inscribed upon it. The throne of glory in Ezekiel’s vision appeared as sapphire. This stone speaks of Heaven. The throne that Ezekiel saw was a throne of grace. Grace was demonstrated in Simeon’s life. He was cruel, but still included among the tribes. Simeon’s name means
“Hearing.” Our Lord’s ears are open to our cries.
* Jeremiah 33:3- Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. If we are to stay close to the Lord, we must listen to Him with the intention of obeying.

F. Diamond

Diamond is from the word **yahalom (yah-hal-ome’)**. It is from the root word *halam* which means “to break into pieces or bruise.” This stone breaks or scratches other stones. The tribe of Gad was put on this stone. Gad means “a company or troop; a multitude.” The ministry of Christ is seen in these three stones on the second row....see a son, hearing and obeying, a multitude. When God sent His Son, His voice was heard and multitudes have been following Him ever since.

*John 10:26-28.... But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. [27] My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: [28] And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

The multitudes of believers have power, strength, and security in Christ. As the diamond engraved stones, we are engraved in the palms of God’s hands.

G. Liqueur

The liqueur was believed to be one of several colors including orange, red, yellow, or brown. Interpreters are at a loss concerning this stone. The name “Ephraim” was engraved upon it which means “double fruit or double increase.” Ephraim was Joseph’s second son, born amidst the trials of Egypt. Joseph’s trials led to his fruitfulness. He went from prison to a palace. In thankfulness to the Lord for His blessings, Joseph named the baby Ephraim or fruitful.

The story of the cross is seen here. Believers are the blessing that God has given to Christ in the land of His affliction. Jesus is like the almond rod of Aaron, cut off and laid up in death before the Lord and has been found in the morning, covered with fruit, blossoms, and buds. He is alive and continues to change lives that were dead in sin but have been changed into new creatures, transformed by His saving grace and power.

H. Agate

Agate was a pale blue or gray with stripes of black, brown, or blue. The tribe of Manasseh was engraved upon it. Manasseh means “forgetfulness.” This was Joseph’s firstborn son. God made him to
forget all his toil and his father's house. The order is reversed because in Jacob's blessing, Ephraim was preferred before the elder Manasseh.

In the Christian life, forgetfulness (Manasseh) must precede fruitfulness (Ephraim). God enables us to cast off the influence of our past so that we are not hindered by the guilt or bitterness of our offenses or the offenses of others.

*Philippians 3:13-* Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

Jesus delivers us from old bad habits and lifestyles so that we may walk in liberty from the bondage of sinful practices and bear spiritual fruit in our lives.

*Galatians 2:20-* I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

When we put our faith in Christ, He forgets our sins and blots them out by His blood.

I. Amethyst

This was a purple or violet stone. Benjamin's name was inscribed upon it. His name means "Son of my right hand." Jesus is at the right hand of God the Father. The right hand of the Lord is mentioned in Scripture as glorious in power, saving, upholding, full of righteousness, purchasing, and planting.

Benjamin was given life through death. Rachel, before she died from childbirth, called him Benoni which means "son of my sorrow," but Jacob changed his name to Benjamin, son of my right hand.

Jesus is at the right hand of God the Father now. Jesus gave us life through His death on the cross. Benjamin was the only son named by his Father. Jesus was named by God.

*Philippians 2:9-11.* Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: [10] That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; [11] And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
J. Beryl

Beryl is from the Hebrew word *tarshiys[ə]h* (*tar-shee-sh') which means “to break or subdue.” It was a dull yellow, green, or bluish crystal. The tribe of Dan was engraved on this stone which means “judgment.” One day, Jesus will judge the entire world. The saints will judge too.

* 1 Corinthians 6:2-3... Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? [3] Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

K. Onyx

This was a pale green stone. It means “flashing forth in splendor.” Two onyx stones were on the shoulder of the High Priest. This stone had the name Asher engraved upon it which means “happy or blessed.”

L. Jasper

This was a reddish-yellow color or a cloudy gray. The name “Naphtali” was engraved upon it which means “wrestling.” Jesus wrestled the lures of the flesh and overcame every temptation without sin. As believers, we wrestle too.

* Ephesians 6:12- For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. The blessing that actually comes from wrestling is the maturity it develops in our lives.

We have looked at the ephod of the High Priest, the breastplate and its stones, now we will take a look at the urim and thummim.

C. The Urim and the Thummim 28:30

And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually.

U rim means “lights or flame.” Thummim means “perfections.” The words were in plural form giving emphasis to what they represented. They were used to consult Jehovah for direction and guidance.

* Numbers 27:21- And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and
all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.

* 1 Samuel 28:6 - And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

What were they? There are several ideas.

1. Some scholars think the actual 12 stones were the urim and thummim.
2. Others feel they were three stones with “Yes, No, or Nothing” engraved on them. In the phrase “casting lots,” the word “lots” originally meant “small stones.” These three stones were said to be in the pocket of the breastplate of the High Priest.

The High Priest, with the Urim and Thummim, became a channel by which God made manifest His counsels. God makes His will known today through His Word and the Holy Spirit.

D. The Robe of the Ephod 28:31-34

And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. [32] And there shall be an hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent. [33] And beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: [34] A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about.

This is the first occurrence of this word “robe” in the Bible. In all the cases it was used, it was a garment worn by a king or prince. This word was also translated “mantle or cloak.” The ephod was worn over the robe. The robe was worn over the tunic or fine linen. The robe of the ephod was a garment of special dignity or office. Honor was associated with this garment.

No color is mentioned but blue. This robe embodied the color of Heaven. It pointed to the Son of God, our High Priest, who came from Heaven. Christ was the Heavenly man. He came from Heaven, spoke of Heaven, lifted His eyes toward Heaven, and now resides in Heaven.

This robe was to be a single piece of cloth with an opening for the neck made in the weaving to prevent tearing. Christ is our peace. Our peace from Him is firm and eternal and no evil can rend it. The robe also had a hemmed bottom and a seam at the side with space for an arm hole. It was most likely long enough to reach the knees. At the bottom of the robe on the hem were attached bells and pomegranates all the way around
the robe. Tremendous truths are found in these bells and pomegranates.

It was the bells that drew attention to the pomegranates made of threads of blue, purple, or red. The pomegranates played an important role in the nation of Israel. Pomegranate was the fruit of a deep maroon, blood red color. It had bright red flowers and was about the size of an orange. The flowers grew at the bottom of the fruit and had a shape of a trumpet. It was a very sweet tasting fruit. The juice was used for cold drinks. Medicine was made from its blossoms. The bark contained a drug for tapeworms.

Not only did the garments of the priest have pomegranates, but the chapters of the pillars of Solomon's temple were engraved with 400 of them. Coins also had pomegranates on them. The shekel was engraved with this fruit and three separate flowers. Jewish coins could have no gods engraved on them, no men, and no animals. The seven branches of the candlestick had pomegranates. The lamps in the bowls were shaped like them.

Pagan nations also used this fruit in their cultures. The pomegranates could have 5 to 11 petals on the flower. Canaanites, Babylonians, and Assyrians used 5 to 9 petals. Israel used six petals on their flower. The six petals formed the emblem of the Star of David that is used today. When the pomegranate is cut, you can see the Star of David shape on the inside of the fruit.

The Jews put pomegranates on top of the scepter of the High Priest with flowers on top. This staff was called the shavet or matay. These were two terms for the Messiah. The Messiah will be king and High Priest. The shavet was used for protection. Thus, the Star of David became a symbol of kingship, protection, and authority. In Numbers 24, the Star and Scepter are linked together.

* Numbers 24:17- I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.*

The blood red color of the pomegranates points us to the blood of Christ. In Christ, we have healing. In the blood of Christ, we enjoy the sweetness of salvation just like the flower brings healing and the fruit is sweet. The petals of the flower are trumpet-shaped. Because of the blood of Christ, we are to proclaim like a trumpet the good news of the Gospel. The trumpet also is a wonderful reminder that one day the trump of God shall sound and the dead in Christ will rise first, then we which
are alive will rise to meet the Lord in the air. Why? We have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

Another feature of the pomegranate is it contains many seeds. Hundreds of seeds are floating in a red, sweet syrup. The Jews traditionally say there are 613 seeds (not a fact). They related the seeds to the Torah which contained 613 commandments. The seeds were seen as God’s commands that were to be obeyed.

The pomegranates also spoke of fruitfulness. Because of the work of our High Priest, Jesus Christ, we are to bear fruit in our Christian life. The many seeds spoke of future, abundant fruitfulness.

* John 15:1-10 ... I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. [2] Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. [3] Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. [4] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. [5] I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. [6] If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. [7] If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. [8] Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. [9] As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. [10] If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

E. The Bells

The bells on the High Priest’s garment spoke of our testimony and that which was divine. The bells were a divine and tuneful sound. The sounds of the bells were equivalent to words, speech, or testimony. The bells made others aware of the presence of the High Priest as he ministered in the Tabernacle. They were required. Without them, he would die.

* Exodus 28:35- And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.
When the High Priest walked, he could not serve in secret. The bells would notify others of his actions. The bells drew attention to the High Priest.

What a powerful message for us! Like the bells, we are to make others aware of the Lord Jesus Christ, pointing others to Him. Christians are NOT to serve the Lord in secret, hiding their light under a bushel. We are to shine for Christ.

* Matthew 5:16- Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Our testimony is to draw attention to Christ. The bells with the pomegranates show that our lip-service is to be supported by a life of fruitfulness. There is to be a balance in our lives. Our walk, our talk, our actions should bring forth beauty, holiness, and peace.

It is interesting to note that the bells were not worn in the Holy of Holies. The High Priest wore white garments only. He was not to dress in his pontifical garments, but in the simple sacerdotal vestments, or those of the Levites, because it was a day of humiliation. As he was to offer sacrifices for his own sins, it was necessary that he should appear in clothing suited to the occasion. Hence he had neither the robe, the ephod, the breastplate, the mitre, etc. These constituted his dress of dignity as the high priest of God, ministering for others and the representative of Christ. But now he appears, before God as a sinner, offering an atonement for his transgressions, and his garments are those of humiliation.

* Leviticus 16:4- He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

F. The Mitre or Crown of the High Priest 28:36-38

And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. [37] And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. [38] And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.

The word “mitre” is from a Hebrew word which means “to
wrap or roll around.” This was the hat or crown of the High Priest. It was made of fine white linen and wrapped around the head of the High Priest in a turban shape. This linen was eight yards long and was ornamented with blue ribbon and gold plate. The gold plate was engraved with the words “Holiness to the Lord” or “Consecrated to the Lord.”

The mitre speaks of the crown and reminds us that Christ is not only our Savior, but also our prince and coming king.

* 1 Timothy 6:14-15... That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: [15] Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

The plate signified the consecration of the High Priest, whose work as the mediator typified the work of Jesus Christ, our High Priest.

* Hebrews 3:1- Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

* Hebrews 4:15- For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Consecration to God involves separation from sinful living. The crown reminds us what God expects from His people.

* Romans 12:1-2... I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. [2] And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The words “Holiness unto the Lord,” worn on the head, signify the importance of our thought life. Thoughts lead to action; belief affects behavior.

* Hebrews 4:12- For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

* 2 Corinthians 10:5- Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;
G. The Broidered Coat of Fine Linen  28:39

And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle of needlework.

This garment was worn under the robe of the ephod to the feet. Broidered work implies a special method of weaving, not needle work. This coat was a seamless robe of white shining linen made from the flax plant. It was believed to have been of a chessboard or diamond-pattern of weaving. White linen was a symbol of righteousness, especially the righteousness of Christ, but also of the saints.

* Revelation 19:8- And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

Aaron the High Priest was a type of Jesus Christ. These inner garments of linen were a picture of the character of Jesus Christ including His moral cleanness, purity, and sinless perfection.

When the garments were soiled, they were not washed, but used as wicks in the Temple. The garments of the High Priest were hid away. The High Priest wore a fresh suit of linen on the Day of Atonement. The linen itself pointed to Christ even in the way that it was made.

The linen was made from the fiber from the flax plant which was used for the sails of ships. Rahab hid the spies under the flax on her roof. The linen was so fine that it was almost transparent. How was it made? What was this plant like? The flax plant bore clusters of small five petal flowers. Five is the number of grace in the Bible. We are made righteous because of the grace of God.

To obtain the longest, possible stem fibers, the plant is pulled from the ground instead of cut. The seeds were removed by crushing the flax. The flax was placed in cold water streams. This process was called "retting." It caused the flax to decompose or rot and softened it. It was then dried and placed in rollers or beaten. This was called "breaking" and was done to separate the filaments in the plant. It was then ready to be spun in mills or woven. We are made righteous because of the bruising, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The seamless robe points to Christ in the fact that Jesus wore this garment.

* John 19:23-24 ... Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.
[24] They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

John 19:23-24 are a fulfillment of Psalm 22:18 which is a Messianic chapter in Psalms. Psalm 22 is a prophecy of the suffering Savior. Notice verse number six.

* Psalm 22:6 - But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. The Messiah said, “I am a worm.” The Hebrew word for worm is towla’ {to-law’} which was a crimson red worm. What a picture of the blood of Christ that was shed at Calvary. Jesus was like a crimson worm that day and was treated like one as He was covered in His own blood.

This worm was also used to make the red dye for the royal robes of kings. The worm had to be crushed to make the dye. The kings of the world were clothed in glory by the death of this worm. Christ was crushed to death for us at Calvary so that we would be adorned with the glory of His righteousness.

The garment that Christ wore also showed His universal priesthood. He is our High Priest. The seamless trait reminds us of His eternal union, strength, and durability. It speaks of the righteousness of Christ that we have when we put our faith in Him. Our salvation is eternal and everlasting, without end like a seamless garment. A seamless garment is strong and durable, just like our salvation. We are eternally secure in Christ.

* John 10:27-28... My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: [28] And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

H. Linen Breeches 28:42

And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach:

The linen breeches were the under-clothing of the High Priest. They reached from the loins to the thighs. These breeches were required so the priest would not be exposed when he climbed the ramp to minister at the brazen altar. Breeches demonstrated the importance of modesty and that the worship of God was not associated with idolatrous worship which involved nudity. To be without these
breeches was considered as nakedness and would result in death.

* Exodus 20:26- Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

* Exodus 28:42-43... And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach:

[43] And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him.

**White linen speaks of righteousness and purity.** It reminds us that our walk is to be a holy one.

* Ephesians 4:1- I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

* Ephesians 5:8- For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

* Ephesians 5:15- See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.

* Ephesians 5:1-2.... Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; [2] And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.

As you can see, all the different elements of the High Priest's garments pointed or reminded us of the Lord Jesus Christ.
Chapter 33
The Altar of Incense or Golden Altar
Exodus 30:1-10, 34-38;
Exodus 37:25-29
I. THE COMPOSITION OF THE GOLDEN ALTAR

The altar of incense was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. It was about 1 ½ feet long and wide and about 3 feet in height. It was the tallest piece of furniture in the Holy Place reminding us that our prayers and priestly intercession for others is the highest act of worship and greatest privilege we have in Christ. The equal sides point to the fact that God is no respecter of persons and all believers have access to the throne of God’s grace.

* Hebrews 4:16- Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

The golden altar occupied the central position between the table of shewbread and the candlestick. The lesson here is that prayer is to be at the heart or center of our lives. This altar was right before the veil of the Holy of Holies and was placed as close as possible to the physical manifestation of the presence of God in the Holy of Holies. The saints of God are no closer to the Lord than when they are interceding in prayer to the Lord. The horns on the corners of this altar speak of power. There is great power in prayer.

* James 5:16- Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

This altar was ornamented with a crown around the top reminding us of the crown of glory and honor attributed to Jesus Christ.

* Philippians 2:9-11... Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: [10] That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; [11] And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

* Revelation 4:9-11... And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, [10] The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, [11] Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

The crown reminds us of our royal priesthood.

* 1 Peter 2:9 - But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an
holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

The altar had rings which were used in moving it from place to place as the Tabernacle was moved. The lesson is with the privilege of prayer, we are not bound to a single location or posture. We can pray anytime and anywhere.

II. THE CONFINES OF THE ALTAR OF INCENSE

This altar was in the Holy Place. Only the priests had access to it. With prayer, we have access to God if we have trusted Jesus Christ as our personal Savior.

* Ephesians 3:12- In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.
* John 9:31- Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

Why do we have access to the Lord? Prayer is dependent upon the atonement of the blood.

* Exodus 30:10- And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord. Intercession received its value from the blood that was shed at the brazen altar.

Strange fire was prohibited on this altar. The fire was to come from the coals of the brazen altar.

* Exodus 30:9- Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon.
* Leviticus 10:1- And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not.

The continual offering of incense upon the coals of the brazen altar picture Christ as our ever interceding High Priest.

* 1 John 2:1- My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:
* Hebrews 4:14-15... Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. [15] For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we
are, yet without sin.

III. THE COMPOUNDS OF THE ALTAR OF INCENSE

Of particular importance was the incense that was burned upon the altar. In the Bible, incense is associated closely with and is a type of ascending prayers.
* Revelation 8:3-4... And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. [4] And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.
* Psalm 141:2- Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

The incense was prepared after a very particular formula.
* Exodus 30:34-38... And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight: [35] And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: [36] And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. [37] And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord. [38] Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.

The component parts of the incense teach us the vital elements of proper worship as incense was a picture of the prayers of the saints.

A. Stacte: A Picture of Spontaneous Worship

Stacte is from the Hebrew word *nataph* (naw-tawf') which means “to drop.” The spice is from the gum of the storax tree grown on the mountains of Gilead. It was called by some the “balm of Gilead.” It was used as an expectorant and was a source of perfume. The storax tree was twenty feet high and had dark green leaves clustered with white blossoms in March. The fragrant gum oozes from the tree through pores or cuts. It can flow on its own accord without being cut. As believers walk in the Spirit and are yielded to the Lord, their worship of Christ will be spontaneous. It will be a natural outflow of what is within them. The
spice pictured the fragrant outflow of Christ's life as He yielded to His Father. The spice yields its fragrance when it is trampled upon. The crucifixion of Christ crushed our Lord, yielding the fragrance of His love and life like no other deed.

* John 15:13-* Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

* John 1:14-* And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

To hasten the harvest of the gum, the tree would be pierced, yielding its fragrant perfume. The fragrance of Christ was evident as He was scorned, mocked, hated, and pierced on the cross. Such treatment drew forth His fragrant submission to God which expressed itself in words of love, forgiveness, and truth.

Our greatest opportunity to show forth the fragrance of Jesus Christ in our own life is when we are pierced by trials, turmoil, or scorn. The normal response would be bitterness, depression, or discouragement. The fragrant response would be forgiveness, patience, and love.

B. Onycha: A Picture of Sincere Worship

Onycha means "fingernail, scale, or shell." This spice came from a crab found in the depths of the Red Sea. This shellfish fed upon the stems of fragrant plants by the water. The shellfish was ground up, yielding its perfumed fragrance. Its strong odor enhanced the smell of other perfumes. The crushing of Jesus Christ was fragrant to God the Father and brought healing to man. Christ fed upon His Father's will, not the flesh pots of Egypt. He was crushed by the tyranny and viciousness of men, on the cross of Calvary and in so doing, yielded the fragrance of His deity and sincere submission to His Father's will. He was totally sold out to doing the will of God the Father.

* Luke 22:42-* Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

C. Galbanum: A Picture of Supplicating Worship

Galbanum means "to be fat or fertile." It refers to the sap or the fatness of the plant. It was secured from a shrub which grew on the high land of Syria. It grew 8-10 feet with leaves from which, if broken, issued a thin juice of a cream-colored fat. It was a tough substance. It had a bitter, acrid taste and a musty, disagreeable odor. It added strength and
persistence to the other ingredients. It enabled the incense to keep its fragrance longer.

Galbanum had the power to drive away vermin, reptiles, and pests. Holy dedication to the Lord drives away evil pests too. The spice was a picture of the holy energy of total dedication to God. It teaches that prayer and praise must flow from a broken, contrite heart and be inspired by the Holy Spirit, just as this plant yielded its strength when it was broken. The plant also reminds us that bitter, disagreeable experiences add strength, patience, and persistence to our own lives.

**D. Frankincense: A Picture of Successful Worship**

Frankincense means "to be white." It grows on almost bare marble rocks, drawing strength from the rocks. The gum spice comes from an incision made in the tree similar to the way we get maple syrup. Frankincense was good for incense, medicine, and was an effective antidote for poison. It was used in the meat offerings and shewbread offering. When it was burned, it emitted a white smoke. The white powder also had a bitter taste and burned with a white flame.

Frankincense points to Christ in several ways.  
1. Jesus was a root out of a dry ground and flourished in a barren world.  
2. The piercing and death of Christ on the cross were the antidotes to Satan’s poison. Jesus brings healing to a sin-sick soul.  
3. The whiteness of frankincense is a picture of the purity of Christ.
Chapter 34

The Laver

Exodus 30:17-21

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, [18] Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. [19] For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: [20] When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord: [21] So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.
I. THE PROPORTIONS OF THE LAVÉR

There is no mention in Scripture of the size, shape, or manner of moving the laver. This is directly opposite of other furniture that has exact descriptions. We do not know who or how the laver was carried. The fact that no dimensions are given for the laver shows that it was limitless in its applications. God has the power to cleanse and change any sinner. There are no limits to His power.

Later in history, in Solomon’s Temple, the huge laver was supported by twelve big lions. It held 24,000 gallons of water. It was drained each evening and filled each morning by watering machinery and an ingenious watering canal system. This low-level aqueduct got its water from three sources: the hill of Hebron, Ethan, and the three pools of Solomon. The total length of the canal system was forty miles. The ground is honeycombed with rock-hewn cisterns. They are connected by a system of channels cut out of the rock. If a cistern filled up, the surplus would flow into the next cistern. Ten million gallons could be stored in this storage system.

II. THE POSITION OF THE LAVÉR

The laver stood directly between the brazen altar and the entrance into the Tabernacle.

III. THE PURPOSE OF THE LAVÉR

The purpose was to wash the hands and feet of the priests. This was done before the priests entered the Holy Place. It was a precaution against the spread of disease since the priests handled bloody animals. Failure to wash meant death. There was no worship done at the laver, but there could be no worship without it.

When a priest was initially consecrated, he was washed all over first. This washing was done by another. He had no hand in it at all. This act was never repeated. Every New Testament believer is a priest.

* 1 Peter 2:9- But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

As it was necessary for the priest of the Tabernacle to be cleansed from the defilement of this world, so we must be cleansed from the
defilement of the flesh if we are to have fellowship, worship, and service to the Lord. The consecration of the priest was done by another. The fact that he had no hand in it pictured the cleansing power of Christ when we were saved. We do not cleanse or save ourselves. Jesus did this for us. The fact that the consecration was never repeated pictures the security of the believer. We do not need to be saved over and over again.

Once we are saved, there is a need for daily spiritual cleansing in our lives. The water of the laver pictures the cleansing power of the Word of God.

* John 15:3 - Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.
* John 17:17 - Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.
* Ephesians 5:26 - That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
* Psalm 119:9 - Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

The brazen altar speaks of justification. The penalty for sin was taken care of as blood was shed. It was a picture of the cross and our salvation. A person must be saved first before he can be sanctified to serve the Lord. You can’t live the Christian life without Christ in your life.

The laver speaks of sanctification. Sanctification is being set apart for service to God. At the laver, daily defilement was cleansed. The laver speaks of separation from a carnal, worldly lifestyle, self-judgment, and yielding to Christ.

* Ephesians 5:25 - Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; (the work of the brazen altar)
* Ephesians 5:26 - That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, (the work of the laver)

The laver had to be visited before entrance could be gained into the Tabernacle (Exodus 30:19-21). The Holy Place speaks of our service to God, our prayers, our fellowship, our testimony as shining lights. The laver teaches us that God wants our service to be done with clean hands and feet. As God’s people, we should be separated unto the Lord before serving Him so that our service will not be hindered or ruined. Our hands speak of service and our feet speak of our walk and conduct. We are His ambassadors.

* Titus 2:11-12. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, [12] Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and
worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;
* 2 Corinthians 5:20- Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

* We are to Have Clean Hands

1. For Acceptance-
* Psalm 24:3-4 ... Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? [4] He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

2. For Increased Strength-
* Job 17:9- The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

3. For Drawing Close to the Lord-
* James 4:8- Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

4. For Worship-
* Psalm 26:6- I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord:

5. For Reward-
* 2 Samuel 22:21,25...The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. [25] Therefore the Lord hath recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanness in his eye sight.

IV. THE PROPERTIES OF THE LAVER

The laver was made of brass or copper. The copper spoke of judgment, incorruptibility, and power of endurance. The source of the copper was very unique. It was made from the brazen mirrors or looking glasses of the women of Israel.

* Exodus 38:8- And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the lookingglasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

These mirrors were carried out of Egypt and were symbols of pride, vanity, and the glorification of the flesh. These were very special items to the women. Their gift for the laver was a great sacrifice. The laver,
the place of cleansing for service involved putting away pride, vanity, and love of self. Service for the Lord involves sacrifice. We must be willing to sacrifice our personal glory (which the mirrors speak of) in order to serve God. Too many enter the service of God in order to obtain personal honor, applause, and esteem, but that is not the right motivation for service. Christ gives the right example. He humbled Himself—and no one ever gave up more glory to provide our salvation. We ought to be willing to sacrifice the honor, applause, and accolades of men in order to serve Christ. If you cannot sacrifice these things, you will not do well in His service. You will quit when men do not honor you as you think they ought.

**Mirrors are a type of the Word of God.** They reveal our weaknesses and faults.

*James 1:23-24... For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: [24] For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*

Both the brazen altar and the laver were in the outer court of the Tabernacle. This court was 150 feet by 75 feet and 7 ½ feet high. This court was surrounded by white, linen curtains on sixty pillars of shittim wood lying on copper bases and topped with silver crowns. There was one door into this courtyard, 30 feet wide on the east side. The linen curtains spoke of God’s holiness and righteousness. The sinfulness of men prevents them from coming before the Lord unless they come to the Lord through His door. The price for sin must be dealt with at the brazen altar. We have access to the Lord because of the work of Christ on the cross. This is the focus of everything in the Tabernacle. Almost everything points to Christ and His ministry in some way or another.
Chapter 35
When the Cat’s Away the Mice will Play
Exodus 32:1-6

In Exodus 21-24, instructions are being given to Israel concerning their relationships with fellow men. Chapter 21 deals with the place of the slave and the punishment for personal injuries to neighbors, parents, servants, and animals. Chapter 22 deals with property rights for the people and proper attitudes toward men. Chapters 23-24 deal with God’s provisions for right living, rest, remembrance of the Lord, recognition, and reconciliation. In Exodus 24-31, we have the recorded communication which Moses received from Jehovah while he was with God in the mount for 40 days. They are instructions dealing with the Tabernacle and the priesthood.

In chapters 32-34, we are given what transpired among the congregation while Moses was in the mountain for those 40 days. You have heard the slogan, “When the cat’s away, the mice will play.” Here in this section it was, “When the cat was away, a calf was made.” Notice verse one.

I. THE DESIRE OF THE PEOPLE  32:1

And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

Chapter 32 of Exodus is the sewer of Israel’s history to this
point. It’s filled with....

* the rubbish of rejection of their Redeemer,
* the corruption of carnality,
* the filth of frivolity and foulness,
* the stench of sensuality and sin,
* the scum of sexual immorality,
* the dregs of drunkenness, devilry, disgrace, depravity, and disloyalty,
* the waste of wickedness, wantonness, and wandering from God,
* the garbage of godlessness,
* the bits of baseness and badness.

Verse one reveals the root of the problem. The people SAW that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain. At this juncture, they are still walking by sight, not by faith and are putting their trust in the wrong things. First it was Moses and now they want other gods. The people felt like a swarm of bees that had lost their queen.

* If he is our leader, why is he not leading.
* If he is our lamp, why is he not burning and lighting the way.
* If he is our shepherd, why is he not among the sheep.

They said, “We wot not what is become of him.” They presumed that Moses was dead. Beloved, our presumptions can get us into major trouble. People presume that sin will satisfy them, but it won’t. Some presume that someone is snobby because they are quiet, but that is not true. Folks presume a person is guilty of a crime without giving them a trial. Presumptions can create a headache for you and for others. The key to this incident is found in Acts 7:38-40.

*Acts 7:38-40... This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: [39] To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, [40] Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

Notice above the phrase “thrust him from them.” God’s people had cast off their allegiance to God. Their hearts departed from Him. They claimed that Moses brought them out of Egypt. Later in history, they have the same attitude again. Notice Judges 8.

* Judges 8:22- Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. They attribute their deliverance to Gideon.
In Exodus 32, the people approached Aaron and commanded him to make gods to go before them. Moses left Aaron in charge of the people. *Exodus 24:14- And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them.*

This was the first time Aaron had this responsibility and unfortunately he is going to fail, flop, and flounder miserably. Aaron will fail because he will try to serve two masters. *Matthew 6:24- No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

Aaron was older than Moses in age, but he was younger in genius and character. He was an eloquent mouth piece, but unstable in character. Symbolically speaking, the kitchen is getting hot for Aaron and he wants out. He is going to jump from the frying pan into the fire. Aaron was a good man, but not a strong man. He caves in to mob rule and peer pressure. Aaron yields to the crowd just like Pilate who yielded to the cries, “Crucify Him!” Aaron caters to please the crowd and it brings nothing but trouble to him and the nation. The Lord was so angry with Aaron that He was ready to destroy him. *Deuteronomy 9:20- And the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time.*

II. THE DEGENERACY OF AARON  32:2-6

*And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. [3] And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. [4] And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. [5] And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the Lord. [6] And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.*

Instead of saying, “No,” Aaron instructs them to take off their gold earrings and bring them to him. Some have speculated that
he asked for these because he presumed they would not part from these valuables. If this is true, Aaron was wrong. The people gladly bring their gold to him.

**It is interesting to note that many of the earrings during this time were signs or symbols of idolatry.** Some of them were in the shapes of gods that were worshiped. Now they are being used to fashion a false god. The earrings were emblems of God’s victory over Egypt, but now they became emblems and tools of spiritual defeat. Satan is a master at using our blessings for evil purposes if we yield them to him. Your abilities, gifts, appearance, or possessions can be corrupted and used for evil purposes. Don’t give Satan the opportunity to corrupt you or what God has given you. Don’t give him a chance to work in your life.

*Ephesians 4:27- Neither give place to the devil.*

*James 4:7 - Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

**These Hebrews were poor, freed slaves who were gladly giving gold away for this idol. We will note several lessons here.**

1. People as a rule, spend freely on their vices. They will gladly fork out their money for sinful pleasures or for a false religion.
2. People tend to be hesitant and reluctant to part with their valuables in the service of God. They are not as willing to sacrifice.

The earrings were used to make an idol. Most men must have an object to worship. When a man turns from the true God, he at once craves a false god, which may involve the worship of himself. The human heart lusts after something that can be seen. It loves that which meets and gratifies the senses.

**Serving false gods was not new to Israel.** They served false gods in Egypt. They were out of Egypt, but Egypt was not out of them.

*Joshua 24:14- Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord.*

The Hebrews were redeemed by the Lord, physically set free, but spiritually they lacked faith in God.

*Deuteronomy 32:20- And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.*

*I Corinthians 10:6-7... Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. [7] Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat*
down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.
* Psalm 106:21 - They forgot God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt;

Beloved, we are going to follow and believe in something. If we do not follow the Lord, who is Truth, then we will end up following something that is false. Satan is the father of lies. Agnostics and atheists follow false reasoning.
* Romans 1:21- Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
* Romans 1:23- And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

The events found in this chapter are very applicable for us today. As Moses was away from Israel up in the mount, so Christ is away from the earth at the right hand of God. Jesus admonished us to believe in Him and not lose our first love for Him. We are to spiritually be on our guard.
* John 14:1- Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.
* Revelation 2:4 - Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Moses was gone for 40 days. This number is the number of probation or testing. He was gone for 40 days so that Israel could be tested to see if they would patiently wait for the ordinances they promised to obey. They were tested to see if they had enough faith to wait on God. How quickly they broke their promise. How impatient they became. Beloved, God wants us to wait on Him.
* Psalm 27:14- Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.

Aaron was also tested here. Instead of boldly withstanding the whims of the people, he yields to them and fails to properly lead. Aaron used the gold to fashion a golden calf. The cat was away and the mice played. This is the first mention of a golden calf.

Live bulls were worshiped in Egypt. Apis was worshiped at Memphis and Mnevis at Heliopolis. They were considered by the Egyptians as the gods of strength and fertility. The sun god was also represented by a bull. Some scholars think it may have been the body of a cherub which was common in Egypt. It had the body of a bull, the head
of a man, and wings. Whatever it was like, they quickly and
enthusiastically go into idolatry again and served idols.

* 2 Peter 2:22- But it is happened unto them according to the true
proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was
washed to her wallowing in the mire.

God’s people were so ungrateful to the Lord for all that He had
done for them. He defeated the Egyptians, divided the Red Sea, and
gave them a diet of free manna, but still they rejected the Lord. Beloved,
don’t take for granted what the Lord has done for you.

The calf idol was made. The calf is a beast of burden and becomes
their burden. God punishes and judges their blasphemy and idolatry. His
judgment does not prevent it from surfacing again. After the nation of
Israel divided, Jereboam erected a calf idol in Dan and Bethel.

* 1 Kings 12:28-29 ... Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two
calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to
Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the
land of Egypt. [29] And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in
Dan.

Aaron constructed the calf and an altar. While the cat was away,
the mice played. He calls for a feast to the “Lord?” No way! All of this
was a cloak to cover their disobedience in the name of the Lord. They
rose early and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.
Unfortunately, their offerings were a mockery. They were not dedicated
to the Lord which is the meaning of the burnt offering. They would not
have any peace because they did not properly deal with their sins.

* Proverbs 15:8- The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the
Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

The people sat down to party, eat, drink, and play which means they
sexually caressed and danced. God was not concerned with their
sacrifices. He wanted their obedience.

* 1 Samuel 15:22- And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in
burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of
rams. Obedience is the first requirement of worship. Are you obedient
to the Lord or are you like the mice that played while the cat was away?
Chapter 36
Struggling with Stiff-necked People

Exodus 32:7-35

In Houston, Texas, you might find an unusual phenomenon. Although you pay to see and learn about animals, the alligator exhibit can tell you much more about people. At every other cage you don’t find a large display of scattered coins. You see normal habitat without a spattering of loose change. At the alligator cage, however, there is money everywhere in the water. Why? Is it because there is water and people seem enamored with throwing pocket change in the water? Other exhibits have water, but don’t have coins everywhere. The answer to this mystery is the fact that at the alligator cage, there is a sign that says “Don’t throw coins in the water.” The sign explains that if one coin is ingested by the alligators, it will kill the huge reptile. To the dismay of the zoo keepers, there are coin everywhere around the gators. Whether it is coins in the alligator pit or just one tree in a garden called Eden, sinful man has a tough time obeying the rules.

As we continue our journey through this chapter, we find that the nation of Israel has broken their word. Six weeks earlier they promised to obey the Lord and His Word. Instead, they have used gold to build a golden calf. Notice verse seven.

I. THE DISCERNMENT OF THE LORD 32:7-10

And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: [8] They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. [9] And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it
is a stiffnecked people: [10] Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

God instructs Moses to get back down to the people. Notice He says, “THY people which THOU broughtest out of the land of Egypt.” The Lord is revealing His anger and repudiation of Israel, and rightly so. They have corrupted themselves which means “to go to ruin, perverted, or destruction.” It is the same word used in Genesis 6:12.

* Genesis 6:12- And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

Several lessons surface at this point.

1. God sees our wickedness.
* Proverbs 15:3- The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

2. God is angered by our sin and rebellion.
* Psalm 7:11 - God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.

3. Sin ruins our life. It destroys us, drains us of joy, love, peace, strength, and health.

Their tongues were no longer used to sing the sweetness of praise to God, but instead they were filled with the poison of idol worship. No longer were their eyes filled with adoration for God, but instead they were filled with adultery for a molten calf. No longer were their ears open to His instruction, but instead they were given to foolish clamor and music to a heathen idol. No longer were their arms, legs, hands, and feet used for the service of God, but to satisfy their lustful desires.

Notice the speed of their spiritual free fall. Verse eight says they turned aside quickly or speedily. The fall from sinful living can be fast and hard. Quickly, Adam sinned against God in the garden of Eden. Quickly, Noah ruined his life after the Flood. How quickly believers can lose their first love for Christ. Let me ask, “Do you have a fickle faith? Are you up and down all the time spiritually?” The Bible explains why people get this way sometimes.

* James 1:8- A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.
* Matthew 6:24 - No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise
the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Israel had forgotten God, but God had not forgotten Israel. He was watching them. He stated in verse nine, “I have seen THIS people” (not personable). He continues and says, “It is a stiff-necked people.”

*2 Chronicles 30:8- Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

Israel had become beastly in their behavior.
* They were pigheaded in their perversion of idol worship.
* They were bullheaded in their blasphemy and belligerence against God.
* They were mulish in their mutiny against God’s leadership.

God’s people were stiff-necked, hard-hearted, and stone-faced in their relationship with the Lord. They would not submit to God’s authority, but would submit to this calf. How does a person get into this condition or position? How does a nation get into this condition? What causes a person to become stiff-necked? There are several reasons for this condition.

* Reasons why People become Stiff-necked
1. Spiritual Leadership is Absent

Moses’ temporary absence affected the people. Spiritual leadership provides an example, encouragement, exhortation, an end or goal in view, and examination. Spiritual leaders deal with problems when they see them.

2. Sinful Associates (wrong crowd)

* 1 Kings 11:4 - For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

The wrong kind of friends can influence you in a bad way. Peer pressure can cause someone to behave sinfully and unwisely. For this reason, we should avoid close fellowship with wicked people.

* Proverbs 4:14-15... Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. [15] Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

3. Shallow Spiritual Growth

* Luke 8:13- They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.
* John 6:63-66... It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. [64] But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. [65] And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. [66] From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

4. The Substitution of Good Habits with Bad Habits
* Luke 11:24-26.... When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. [25] And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. [26] Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

5. The Snares of Worldly Pleasures
People can become humanistic, materialistic, and unwilling to sacrifice for the Lord.
* 2 Timothy 4:10- For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

6. Selfish Attitudes
The “It’s My Life” syndrome can make you stiff-necked and unteachable.
* Proverbs 14:14 - The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.

7. Sinful Living
* Matthew 24:12- And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

8. Spiritual Enthusiasm is Gone
* Revelation 2:4 - Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Some folks get burned out spiritually. Their lack of fellowship with other believers or the Lord will weaken you. Living by excuses instead of being “real” with God will leave you spiritually anemic.

9. A Sense of Need for the Lord is Lost
If we stop depending on the Lord or feel we do not need Him, then we will stop seeking Him.
* Deuteronomy 8:11-14.... Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes,
which I command thee this day: [12] Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; [13] And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; [14] Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

*Proverbs 30:8-9... Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: [9] Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Notice verse number ten again:  **Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.**

God says, “Let me alone that my wrath wax hot against them.” Moses had been interceding for his people and now the Lord says, “Don’t intercede Moses. Let my anger wax hot and consume them. I will make of you a great nation.” What’s going on here? God has placed the nation of Israel into the hands of Moses. If Moses gave the word to have them wiped out, God would.

Notice again the tremendous offer to Moses, “I’ll make of you a great nation.” They no longer would be sons of Israel, but sons of Moses. God knew the heart of Moses. He chose a great man to shepherd His people.

**We hear much about the love of God, but little about His wrath and anger.** Beloved, God gets mad! The Bible reveals His wrath was upon people like Saul, Job’s friends, Achan, Hezekiah, and Balaam. The object of the Lord’s wrath is upon several types of offenders.

1. Those who mistreat orphans and widows.

*Psalm 146:9- The Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.*

2. Those who are involved in sexual sin.

*Ephesians 5:5-6.... For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. [6] Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*

3. Truth rejecters.

*Romans 1:18- For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in
unrighteousness;
  * John 3:36 - He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he
  that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth
  on him.
  * 1 Thessalonians 2:16- Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they
  might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon
  them to the uttermost.

  In the Great Tribulation period, men will suffer from the wrath
  of God and then will suffer through all eternity.
  * Revelation 6:16-17... And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us,
  and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the
  wrath of the Lamb: [17] For the great day of his wrath is come; and who
  shall be able to stand?
  * Revelation 14:10- The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God,
  which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and
  he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy
  angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

  Beloved, don’t underestimate the wrath of God. You may ask,
  “What do I do to keep this from happening to me?” Your only protection
  from God’s wrath is Jesus Christ. You must seek His forgiveness for
  your sins and trust Christ to take you to Heaven.
  * Romans 5:9 - Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we
    shall be saved from wrath through him.
  * 1 Thessalonians 1:10- And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he
    raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to
    come.

II. THE DETERMINATION OF MOSES  32:11-14

  And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath
  wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of
  Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? [12] Wherefore should the
  Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in
  the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy
  fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. [13] Remember
  Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own
  self; and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and
  all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall
  inherit it for ever. [14] And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to
  do unto his people.
The Lord said, “Let me alone,” but Moses did not do this. He besought the Lord again. God put His people into the hands of Moses and Moses puts them right back into the hands of the Lord. Moses basically says in verse eleven, “These are your people and you brought them out of Egypt.” Moses consistently mediated for his people.

* Exodus 14:15- And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:
* Exodus 15:25- And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,
* Exodus 17:4 - And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.

**Notice several important elements of this intercessory prayer.**

1. Lord these are your people. Vs. 11
2. Egypt will be triumphant if Israel is destroyed. They will mock you Lord. This will hurt your reputation with the heathen. Vs. 12
3. Lord, your promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel would be revoked. Lord, keep your word. Turn from this decision. Vs. 13 An important element of praying is to pray God’s Word to the Lord. Claim His promises.

To pray this way, Moses had to feel close to the Lord and comfortable in the presence of God. He demonstrates boldness, not timidity. This kind of praying is an example of Hebrews 4:16 and James 5:16.

* Hebrews 4:16- Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.
* James 5:16b- “...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

A tavern was being built in a town that had previously been dry. In opposition to the tavern, a group of Christians began an all-night prayer meeting and asked God to intervene. Lightning struck the tavern and burned it down. The owner then brought a lawsuit against the church and held them responsible. The Christians hired a lawyer and denied responsibility. In response to this unusual scenario, the judge said, “No matter how this case comes out, one thing is clear. The tavern owner believes in prayer and the Christians do not.” The story is a reminder of why we don’t get our prayers answered sometimes. We really don’t
believe in what we are doing.

The result of the Moses’ prayer is the Lord repented of the evil He intended to do to Israel. What does this mean “the Lord repented?” The word “repented” is from the Hebrew word nacham (naw-kham’) which means “to relent, be moved with pity, or to have compassion.” This word suggests relief or comfort from a planned, yet, undesirable course of action. God embarked on another course of action. The Lord is not inflexible. He does respond to individual needs, attitudes, and actions. He responds when we repent and is merciful and compassionate.

*Psalm 106:45- And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.

God does change His course of action and emotions toward men when given proper grounds to do so, especially when we repent. We see this in the book of Jonah.

* Jonah 3:9-10 ... Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? [10] And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

*Jeremiah 18:8- If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

God’s course of action may change, but His character and integrity do not change at all. He is holy and just. His requirement for eternal life is the same for all men without exception. If you are going to go to God’s Heaven, you will have to go His way.

Ben Wofford caught a bass worth almost $22,000 on April 11, 1992, at the Texas Bass Championship Tournament on Lake Conroe. His 7.64 pound fish was the fourth largest fish overall, but according to Rule Number 6, Ben’s fish didn’t qualify. The fish was fine, but Ben wasn’t. Rule 6 clearly stated that all contestants must wear the official tournament hat they were issued at check in. Ben opted instead to wear his “lucky” cap and left the tournament headgear in his partner’s truck. Because of Ben’s small error, he was denied any prize money.

In the same manner, the Bible is clear that salvation requires identification with Jesus Christ as your Savior. You must wear His hat spiritually speaking. Unfortunately, though, many people feel their “lucky” cap is a better option and they end up forfeiting the greatest gift of all...eternal life.
III. THE DISCIPLINE OF THE PEOPLE  32:15-20

A. The Tables of the Law  32: 15-16

   And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two
tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both
their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. [16] And
the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God,
graven upon the tables.

   As Moses descended from the mountain, he brought with him
the treasure of Heaven, the tables of the Law written
literally by the finger of God Himself. The tablets were written upon
both sides. Imagine how Moses felt as he is about to show these tablets
to the nation of Israel. It must have been an awesome feeling of humility,
yet eager excitement for him to show these writings.

B. The Trepidation of Joshua  32:17

   And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he
said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp.

   Joshua is apprehensive and worried, “Moses, there is a noise of
war in the camp.” His presumption is off-target. The problem
is worse than war. It was spiritual suicide. They had turned their backs
on God.

C. The Temper of Moses  32:18-19

   And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery,
neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise
of them that sing do I hear. [19] And it came to pass, as soon as he
came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and
Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and
brake them beneath the mount.

   Moses, not Joshua, is the only one who discerns the true state
of affairs in the camp. His ear was able to discern the
commotion. When we fellowship with the Lord and walk with God like
Moses did, the Lord gives wisdom and discernment about our
circumstances and world affairs.
* Proverbs 1:7- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

The Word of God clears the fog and smoke of humanistic, worldly philosophy that creates confusion and corruption instead of eliminating these things. The philosophy that teaches that a person is born a homosexual, that alcoholism is a disease, that people evolved from apes, and the baby in the womb is just a blob of tissue is ludicrous and foolish. Such ideas are spawned from the hearts of men that want to indulge and excuse sinful living and resist the authority of God in their lives.

When Moses heard the singing, and saw the calf god and sensual dancing, this man who was usually patient and calm, became infuriated with a righteous indignation and rightly so. There are some things that should make us angry and wickedness is one of those things. In his anger, Moses broke the tablets.

D. The Trouncing of the Calf Idol 32:20

* And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.

In judgment, Moses destroys the idol.

* He scalded it in flame.
* He smashed it into powder
* He scattered the dust in water of the brook that came from the mount.

(Deuteronomy 9:21).

* It was swallowed by Israel. They drank their own shame. The message is the fact that idolatry affects your whole life: body, soul, and spirit. They were idolatrous internally in the heart. The drinking of the water symbolized this point as they took the powdered idol into their bodies. The idol literally became a part of their idolatrous heart and body.

Nothing convinces men more of the vanity of idolatry as seeing idols destroyed. According to Jewish history, this event took place on the 17th of Tammuz (July). This day involved breaking a spiritual symbol which signified God's disfavor because of the people's disobedience. On this day the tables of the Law were broken. God's people broke their covenant with God so Moses broke the tablets. Israel was not worthy to receive them.

Also on the 17th, the Babylonians broke through the walls of Jerusalem and caused the daily sacrifice to cease. For the first time in 400 years, the priest mourned because they could no longer continue the
daily sacrifice required by the law of God. Why? Disobedience to the Word of God destroyed them. This marked the beginning of the end for Jerusalem. God withdrew His protection because of their national sins.

Also on this day, the Roman army forced the halt of the daily sacrifice by breaking into the Temple area. This was 40 years after the crucifixion and 656 years after Babylon. Why? The national sin of Israel and their rejection of Christ brought judgment.

The decent of Moses has a hidden message. Moses did not end his days on top of the mountain. In due time, he returned to the people. In like manner, the One who Moses foreshadowed, the Lord Jesus Christ, is not going to remain on high forever, but will come back to earth again as truly as He went away.

IV. THE DENUNCIATION OF AARON 32:21-24

And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? [22] And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. [23] For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. [24] And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.

Moses confronts Aaron and asks for an accounting of his actions. Why did you do this? What are you doing? Aaron gets into the “blame game” like Adam, Eve, and Saul. He offers four fickle excuses. He has no remorse, claims no responsibility, and shows no repentance. He says, “You know the people that they are determined to do mischief. Everybody is doing it. It’s the way things are! They told me to make this god. The devil made me do it!” The list goes on and on. The words may be a little different, but the excuses are still basically the same. Beloved, you choose! You are responsible for your choices. If you are running around with a crowd that influences you to do wrong, then don’t run with them anymore.

Another excuse was, “We don’t know where Moses has gone? We’ve got to do something.” The classic excuse, however is, “I threw the gold into the fire and out came this calf! It was a miracle!” Aaron adds a new sin to the ones already committed. He lies and shows us that one sin has a way of leading to others. You can see at this point that Aaron
does not have a repentant spirit, but is resistant and unrepentant. God, in fact, wanted to destroy him, but Moses interceded for him.

* Deuteronomy 9:20- And the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time.

V. A DECISION IS CALLED FOR 32:25-28

And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) [26] Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. [27] And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. [28] And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.

The people were wild, out of control, stripped and naked. This incident was an illustration of Proverbs 29:18.

* Proverbs 29:18- Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

Many people interpret this verse to mean that if you have no goals, you will perish. That is not the meaning at all. The word “vision” means “the revelation of God’s will through His Word or attention given to the Word of God.” The word “perish” means “uncovered, let loose or unrestrained, to run wild, ungovernable, to let one’s hair down.” This is what happened here at Sinai. It is also happening in churches across America that are weak in Bible preaching. This is one of the reasons why chaos and crime are rampant in our country, especially in our schools.

Moses demands a decision from the people, “Now who is for God? Come unto me.” God’s Word consistently admonishes us to make up our minds and choose.

* Joshua 24:15- And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

* 1 Kings 18:21- And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but
if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

There is no room for neutrality in the Christian life. Not to be on the Lord’s side is to oppose Him. The Lord’s side is one of honor, duty, and one we will ultimately wish we had chosen or will be glad we chose. Being on the Lord’s side carries certain obligations.
1. It involves personal consecration to the Lord. He must be #1.
2. It involves renouncing earthly ties of worldliness and carnal living.
3. It involves doing the Lord’s work.

The sons of Levi respond immediately to Moses’ challenge. Those who did not respond to the Lord’s side were to be slain. Three thousand were killed because the Law was broken. It is interesting to note that 3000 were saved when the Holy Spirit was given to the church at Pentecost. Paul addressed this truth in 2 Corinthians 3.

* 2 Corinthians 3:5-6.... Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; [6] Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

VI. THE DISCOURSE OF MOSES  32:29-35

A. A Call to Consecration  32:29-30

For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day. [30] And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.

Moses acknowledged the sin of the people, but they didn’t. He wanted them to consecrate themselves to the Lord so that he could bestow a blessing upon them. Moses offered to make an atonement for sin. How would he do this?

B. The Cry to the Lord  32: 31-32

And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. [32] Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.
Moses offers to be blotted out of God’s book. This book is believed to be God’s book of life. Moses was willing to die a premature death. In offering himself willingly, Moses was a foreshadow of Jesus Christ.

* Moses, a type of Christ
1. Both were of obscure birth.
2. Both were in peril in infancy. Their lives were sought by rulers: Pharaoh sought Moses and Herod sought to kill Christ.
3. Both passed their youth in obscurity. We begin to learn much about the Lord when He turned about 30 and Moses when he turned 40.
4. Both men felt they had a mission, but were rejected by their brethren.
5. Both men showed signs and wonders to show their mission was from God.
6. Both men were great deliverers and teachers, leading their people through the wilderness. Moses led them through Sinai and Christ leads us through life.
7. Both men offered to be a sacrifice for their brethren. Christ sacrifice was accepted and Moses’ was rejected.

C. The Conclusion 32:33-35

And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. [34] Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. [35] And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

Moses’ offer was declined and God sent a plague upon His people. Each man was personally accountable for his own actions and so are you? Are you saved or lost? If you are a Christian, are you surrendered to the Lord or stiffnecked?
Chapter 37
The Burden of Broken Fellowship

Exodus 33:1-11

Captain James Cook was an English explorer and navigator in the mid 1700's. He is the man credited with the discovery of Hawaii. When he first landed on those Pacific islands, the natives thought that he was a god and gave him divine treatment. He did nothing to discourage their perception and embraced the role of god. Everything worked pretty good for him until he left the islands. A storm forced him back to the island for shelter. The natives believed no god would be hindered by a storm so they felt betrayed and killed Captain Cook for pretending to be a god. Beloved, when we assume the role of deity, our destiny is death.

Israel thought they knew more than God. They started running their own lives and being their own gods. The result was a catastrophe. As the curtain opens on Exodus 33, God tells His people He is closing His curtain to them. They broke their covenant with God by worshiping a golden cow. God did not consume the nation, but it was plagued because of the lack of repentance of the people. They were experiencing the burden of broken fellowship with God. Notice verse one.

I. THE DEPARTURE 33:1-3
A. The Command to Journey to the Promised Land 33:1

And the Lord said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it:
God said, “Depart and go up.” They needed to get back up after falling down flat upon their faces. God wanted them to go forward and claim His promises. Beloved, we are to do the same thing too. General Douglas MacArthur’s most famous words are probably those uttered in the Philippines during March of 1942, “I shall return.” He lived up to his promise and did indeed return. More significantly, though, is when and where that persistence was first forged. He was a West Point graduate and no doubt learned about diligence while he served as a cadet. MacArthur, however, learned persistence before he entered West Point. You see, West Point turned him down not just once, but twice. His persistence, however, paid off and he entered the academy. He went on to be one of the finest generals in American history. God wanted His people to have the same kind of persistence.

Notice that God still tells Moses, “The people THOU hast brought up out of Egypt.” Fellowship has not been totally restored at this point.

B. The Ceasing of God’s Presence and Guidance 33:2-3

And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: [3] Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way.

God promised to defeat and drive out their enemies, but He would not lead them. Instead, an angel would lead them. The Lord would not go in the midst of them. Sin broke their fellowship with God. By the way, it hurts our closeness with God too.

* Psalm 66:18- If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

* Isaiah 59:2 - But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

* Isaiah 64:7 - And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

* 1 Samuel 28:6 - And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

The Lord gave two specific reasons why He would not be in their midst. Reason one was the fact they were a stiffnecked, rebellious, hard-
hearted, stubborn people. Our stubborn pride robs us of blessings and our closeness with the Lord. We become unteachable to Scripture, and unmoveable to the Spirit of God's leading and guidance.

* Proverbs 11:2- When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.
* Proverbs 16:18- Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.
* James 4:6- But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

Romanian ruler, Nicolai Ceausescu was one of the cruelest dictators of this century. After years of viciously persecuting Christians and killing all potential threats to his power, he instructed the National Opera to produce a song in his honor. Included in this song were the words, “Ceausescu is good, righteous, and holy.” He wanted this song to be sung at his 72nd birthday on January 26, 1990. Instead, he and his wife were executed a month earlier on Christmas day, 1989. God does resist the proud.

The second reason why the Lord would not dwell in their midst was His concern that He might consume them. Their sin would not be as provoking to an angel as to God’s divine majesty and holiness. God was hiding His face as an act of mercy. Beloved, life would be unbearable without the mercy of God. God’s Word describes His mercy.

* The Mercy of God

1. It is eternal.
   * Psalm 103:17-But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;
2. It is boundless.
   * Psalm 108:4 - For thy mercy is great above the heavens: and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.
3. It prolong’s our life.
   * Lamentations 3:22-23... It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. [23] They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.
4. It forgives our sins.
   * Micah 7:18- Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.
5. It makes salvation possible.
* Titus 3:5- Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

When Jesus did not many miracles at Capernaum, He did it as an act of mercy. Why? To whom much is given, much is required. The greater the privileges we enjoy, the greater is our responsibility and accountability to apply and obey what we have revealed to us.
* Romans 14:12- So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.
* Luke 12:48- But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.
* 1 Corinthians 4:2- Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

If God’s presence does not purify us, it will harden and deaden us. There is no neutrality in the Christian life. For example, when we look at the Last Supper, we find that the two disciples nearest to Jesus responded to the Lord either in tenderness or treachery. John loved the Lord and Judas betrayed Him. One was tender-hearted and the other was hard-hearted. The presence of God will have one effect or the other.

God told His people He would no longer be in their midst because He was not in the midst of their hearts. Beloved, the Lord wants to be at the center of our lives. Like the bulls eye, our focus and aim are to be on Jesus Christ. He want our life to revolve around Him.
* Hebrews 12:2- Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Have you ever played on a teeter-totter or a see-saw? We did all the time when we were kids. Jesus is like the hinge or center of the teeter-totter. If our life is balanced upon Him, whether our circumstances are up or down, He is at the center, giving us support.
II. THE DESPAIR 33:4-6

And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments. [5] For the Lord had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. [6] And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb.

A stiffnecked people must be humbled and broken. The cry of oppressed Israel had been answered by the exhibition of grace, but the song of an obstinate, idolatrous Israel must be answered by the voice of a stern, firm rebuke and chastisement. Because of their sin, God was going to leave their midst as a form of chastisement, not because He hated them. He wanted to draw them closer to Him. The woodshed is no fun, but is needful at times for a wandering people. They were about to know the burden of broken fellowship.

God’s purpose for chastisement is revealed in Hebrews 12.
1. We are not to despise His chastening.
   * Hebrews 12:5- And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:
   * Proverbs 3:11- My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction:
2. Chastening is a sign of parental love.
   * Hebrews 12:6-8... For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. [7] If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? [8] But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.
   * Deuteronomy 8:5- Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.
   * Proverbs 3:12- For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.
   * Revelation 3:19- As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.
3. Chastening has a purpose: productivity, growth, and blessing.
   * Hebrews 12:10-11... For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of
his holiness. [11] Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

* John 15:2 - Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

* Psalm 94:12- Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law;

When God’s people heard this message that was from the Lord, they considered them as evil tidings and mourned. No man put on his ornaments. They were burdened over broken fellowship with God. God judges them for He knows what is in the heart of men. We know what a man does; God knows what he is in his heart. We know what proceeds from man, but God knows what is IN man.

In verse 5, God tells them what they deserved. Those whom God has pardoned need to know what their sin deserved and how miserable they would be without His forgiveness so that God’s mercy might be more magnified.

God’s people mourned for their sin which provoked God to withdraw from them. They were feeling the burden of broken fellowship. At this point, the consequences of their sin distressed them more than the sin itself. They would lose the privilege of His presence. This is what bothers the truly penitent person. They were promised a land of milk and honey, but the satisfaction and sweetness would be gone without God’s presence. They would suffer the burden of broken fellowship.

Our life is like a bag with holes without a close walk with God. Things will not satisfy you. Fame, fortune, popularity, and power will not meet the longing of your heart, but the fullness of the Holy Spirit will meet your needs. A close walk with God can give you peace and joy when you have nothing. God can give healing when you are hurting, clarity when you are confused, and love and laughter when you are lonely. Israel lost the privilege of companionship, counsel, comfort, and constant closeness. They got what they wanted, but they lost what they had. Now they only know the burden of broken fellowship with God.

The best way they know how, they repent. They put off their ornaments which in the Hebrew means “they laid them aside altogether or continually.” Ornaments were armlets, bracelets, anklets, necklaces, and rings. Many of these were inscribed with emblems of Egyptian gods.
These ornaments were the avenues of sin and idolatry. As a sign of continual repentance, they stripped off these things permanently.

Let's focus on the topic of “repentance” for a moment. The evidence of saving faith is repentance from sin or a turning from and hatred for sin. A Sunday School teacher once asked a class what was meant by the word "repentance." A little boy put up his hand and said, "It is being sorry for your sins." A little girl also raised her hand and said, "It is being sorry enough to quit."

Spurgeon said, “Repentance is an inseparable companion of faith.”

* The tear of repentance glitters in the eye of faith.
* Faith and repentance are like Siamese twins, they are virtually joined together. They are two spokes of the same wheel; two handles of the same plow.
* Repentance is a heart broken FOR sin and FROM sin. True repentance has a double aspect. It looks upon things in the past with a weeping eye, and upon the future with a watchful eye. If your sorrow is because of certain consequences that have come on your family because of your sin, this is remorse, not true repentance. If, on the other hand, you are grieved because you also sinned against God and His Word, then you are on the right road. Late repentance is seldom true but true repentance is never late.
* Repentance is a turning from sin and returning to the Lord.

Repentance adds nothing to faith but is rather an integral part of it. Saving faith is repentant faith. Repentance and faith are inseparable.

* Acts 20:21- Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible refers to salvation as repentance at times.

* Romans 2:4- Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?
* 2 Peter 3:9- The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

If a person genuinely loves God, he will have a built-in hatred for sin. It is impossible to love two things contradictory of one another. If you love gardens, you will hate weeds. If you love babies, you will hate abortion. If you love God you will hate sin.

* Proverbs 28:13- He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso
confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. This verse links the two inseparable parts of true repentance: confession and forsaking sin.

True repentance is more than being sorry for your sins. Some are sorry they got caught. This is not repentance. Hell is full of people sorry for their sins. Judas was sorry for betraying Jesus. He thought he could solve his problem by giving the money back to the priests. It did not work. He ended his anguish by committing suicide. We never saw any repentance in Judas or asking forgiveness. Judas knew only the burden of broken fellowship and it destroyed him.

The test of true repentance does involve a godly sorrow that one has disobeyed and offended the Lord.

* 2 Corinthians 7:8-9... For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. [9] Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

The truly repentant person, who wants freedom from the burden of broken fellowship, comes to the Lord with no pride, self-will, rights, and no claim to worthiness. He sees himself as a repulsive sinner who has no claim to salvation apart from the abundant grace of God. Without repentance, we will perish.


Those who do repent of their sins, God has given several promises.

1. Prayers will be answered-

* 2 Chronicles 7:14- If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

2. Pardon for sins-

* Isaiah 55:7- Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

3. Perpetuity or life-

* Ezekiel 18:21- But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.
4. Peace-
* Matthew 5:4- Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5. The Presence of the Spirit of God-
* Acts 2:38- Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
* Psalm 34:18- The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.
* Acts 3:19- Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

6. The Pacifying of God’s Anger-
* Micah 7:18- Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

A silversmith does not need a fancy formula for calculating purity. He simply knows the silver is free of dross when he can see his reflection in the liquefied metal. When are we pure? When the Lord Jesus Christ looks at us and sees His reflection. What does the Lord see when He looks at you? What do you see when you look at yourself?
* 1 Corinthians 11:28- But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

III. THE DIVISION 33:7-8

And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp. [8] And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle.

God’s intention was the Tabernacle be in the midst of the people, but sin broke that fellowship. The Lord said He would not be in the midst of His people, yet, He did not withdraw His presence altogether. Communication was not totally broken off. God gave His people room to repent and provided another opportunity to demonstrate their penitent hearts. He gave them a chance to remove the burden of broken fellowship.
A tent was provided for worship. This Tabernacle was not the one with the Holy Place and Holy of Holies. It has not been constructed yet. God’s Tabernacle in the Hebrew was mishkan which means “a dwelling place and abode of Jehovah.” The word used here is oheil which means “tent or meeting place for God’s people.” It was a temporary place to meet until the Tabernacle could be constructed.

IV. THE DESCENT 33:9-11

And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. [10] And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. [11] And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

The cloudy pillar descended when Moses entered the tent. He met with the Lord “face to face” which was an expression that suggested openness and friendliness. Joshua remained in the tent as a guard or as one who would be available to receive messages from the Lord. It was Joshua, not Aaron because Joshua was not part of the idolatry in the camp. This is the third mention of the pillar in Exodus. The pillar pictures the work of the Holy Spirit in our own lives.

* The Pillar and the Holy Spirit
1. It Gave Direction—
* Exodus 13:21- And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:
* Romans 8:14- For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
* John 16:13- Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself: but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

It is said that a certain guide lived in the deserts of Arabia who never lost his way. He carried with him a homing pigeon with a very fine cord attached to one of its legs. When in doubt as to which path to take, he threw the bird into the air. The pigeon quickly strayed at the cord to fly
in the direction of home, and thus led the guide accurately to his goal. Because of this unique practice he was known as "the dove man." So, too, the Holy Spirit, the heavenly Dove, is willing and able to direct us in the narrow way that leads to the more abundant life if in humble self-denial we submit to His unerring supervision.

2. It Gave Protection-
   * Exodus 14:19- And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:
   * Acts 16:6- Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

3. It Gave Communion-
   * John 14:16-18....And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; [17] Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. [18] I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

For the shooting of the film Ben Hur, Charleton Heston was training to drive a chariot. Heston was having trouble with the apparatus so he confided in his director, William Wyler. He said, "I can barely stay on this thing. I can’t win the race.” Wyler told Heston, “Your job is to stay on it. It’s my job to make sure you win.” Beloved, the Holy Spirit orchestrates the victories for God’s kingdom. Our job is to simply stay in the chariot of obedience.” By living our lives for Christ and being yielded to Him each day, we can avoid the burden of broken fellowship.
Chapter 38
Show Me Thy Glory!
Exodus 33:12-23

After the rebellion of God’s people at the golden calf incident, God informed Moses that He would withdraw His presence, lest He destroy them if they sinned again. This broke the heart of the people. They repented and removed their ornaments of idolatry. They wanted the Lord in their midst. Their drinking and immorality has now turned to sorrow and mourning. Billy Sunday put it this way, “Sin’s sweetness soon sours.” Beloved, the pleasure of sin leads to problems and perplexity. The fun of frivolity leads to frustration and fear. The kicks of ungodliness will end up kicking you in the end.

Recently a huge tree in Colorado fell to the ground with a resounding crash after having stood majestically on a hill for more than 400 years. A mere sapling when Columbus landed in San Salvador, over the centuries it had been struck by lightning 14 times, braved great windstorms, and even defied an earthquake. In the end, however, it was killed by some little beetles. Boring under the bark, they chewed away its mighty fibers until one day that lordly king of the forest came thundering down.

So, too, apparently insignificant sins often make substantial inroads into our spiritual lives, and if left unchecked may cause our downfall. The idle word spoken, the prayer time omitted, and the occasional fleshly pleasure indulged — these things "spoil" the vineyard much more than we realize. If Satan gets an entering wedge on inconsistency, the leverage he then exerts is greatly increased. This is what happened with the nation of Israel. Moses knew it was useless to go on without God’s leading. He pleas with the Lord.
I. THE PLEA OF MOSES 33:12-13

And Moses said unto the Lord, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. [13] Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.

A. The Plea for God’s Path

Lord, you said you knew me by name and we have found grace in thy sight. If so, show me thy way.

*Psalm 25:4- Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths.*

How many times have we asked the Lord the same thing, “Show me thy way? Lord, where do I go? What decision should I make? How do I do it?” You may be asking those questions now. That’s good! If you are seeking God’s guidance, you are asking the right person. Many folks are content to run their lives without the Lord’s direction, only to mess up later.

The phrase, “Show me thy way,” indicates three important thoughts.

1. You and I don’t know it all. Those who do think this get into trouble.

*Proverbs 28:26 - He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.*

*Proverbs 16:18- Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*

2. You may have several choices to pick from in making your decision. We have a broad road and a narrow one to pick from for sure.

*Matthew 7:13-14... Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: [14] Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

Some time ago a scientific magazine published an article concerning a certain species of alligator. Being lazy beasts, they seldom hunt for their dinner but just wait for their unwary victims to come to them. They lie near the bank with open mouths, acting as if they are dead. Soon flies begin to light on their moist tongues, and several other insects gather. This crowd attracts bigger game. A lizard will crawl up to the alligator to feed on the bugs; then a frog joins the party. Presently a
whole menagerie is there; then there is a sudden "earthquake" -- WHAM -- the giant jaws come together and the party is over! Here's the lesson: don't be lured by large groups of people. Remember, the crown is always found on the "broad way." The "narrow way" of life admits only individuals, one by one. Most people take the easy, downward path. You as a Christian must follow Jesus on the upward road; it is the only safe way.

You choose the path you take. You are responsible for your choices. Don't blame others such as your parents, spouse, boss, or others for your problems. Take responsibility for your own actions, attitudes, and choices. That is the first step in conquering your problems.

3. "Show me thy way," indicates your confidence in God's guidance and His willingness to do so.

* **God's Promises about Guidance**

A. He will guide us in our decisions.

* Psalm 32:8- I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

* Psalm 16:11- Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

B. He will guide us until we die.

* Psalm 48:14- For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.

C. He will guide us in confusion and uncertainty.

* Isaiah 42:16 - And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

D. He will guide us into truth.

* John 16:13- Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

E. He will guide us to our home in Heaven.

* John 14:6- Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

**Don't expect the Lord to guide you if you will not follow Him.**

You must follow.

* John 12:26- If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father
honour.

* Matthew 16:24- Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

B. A Plea for Personalness

Moses says, "I want to know you Lord." His plea is the same as others in the Bible.

* Philippians 3:10- That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; (Paul)
* John 14:8- Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

The pleas of Moses and Paul ought to be our desire and plea too. Too many Christians think they know the Lord when in reality they do not. They have an acquaintance with God, but not a close walk with Him. Why? The answer is they never spend time with the Lord in His Word, in meditation on His Word, and in prayer.

Howard Hendricks shares this insight about the value of learning: When I was a college student -- I worked in the college dining hall, and on my way to work at 5:30 every morning I walked past the home of one of my professors. Through a window I could see the light on at his desk, morning after morning. At night I stayed late at the library to take advantage of evening study hours, and returning home at 10:30 or 11 o'clock I would again see his desk light on. He was always pouring over his books. One day he invited me home for lunch, and after the meal I said to him, "Would you mind if I asked you a question?" "Of course not." "What keeps you studying? You never seem to stop." His answer, "Son, I would rather have my students drink from a running stream than a stagnant pool." Beloved, do you have a desire to really get close to the Lord? If so, then get into His Word!

C. A Plea for Grace

Grace is the desire and the power to do the will of God. Grace enables us to endure trials, be patient when we want to be impatient, to work when we are weak, and to have joy when we don't feel happy. Grace is God's Riches At Christ's Expense.
J. Wilbur Chapman often told of the testimony given by a certain man in one of his meetings: "I got off at the Pennsylvania depot as a tramp, and for a year I begged on the streets for a living. One day I touched a man on the shoulder and said, "Hey, mister, can you give me a dime?" As soon as I saw his face I was shocked to see that it was my own father. I said, "Father, Father, do you know me?" Throwing his arms around me and with tears in his eyes, he said, ‘Oh my son, at last I’ve found you! I’ve found you. You want a dime? Everything I have is yours.’ Think of it. I was a tramp. I stood begging my own father for ten cents, when for 18 years he had been looking for me to give me all that he had." What a wonderful illustration of the way God longs to treat us, if we will only let Him.

* **The Grace of God**

1. It is freely given to us.
   * Psalm 84:11- For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

2. It enables us for service.
   * 1 Corinthians 3:10- According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.
   * 1 Corinthians 15:10- But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain: but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

3. It is sufficient for us.
   * 2 Corinthians 12:9- And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

4. It saves us.
   * Acts 15:11- But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.
   * Romans 3:24 -Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

5. It has appeared to all men, not just a select few.
   * Titus 2:11- For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
6. It can be made ineffective.
* 2 Corinthians 6:1- We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. Don’t spurn God’s grace and working in your life.

D. The Plea to be the People of God

Moses said, “Consider that this nation is thy people.” Is this your desire? Are you wanting to have a testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ and demonstrate by your life to others, that you belong to Christ and are his ambassador.
* 2 Corinthians 5:20- Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

II. THE PROMISE OF HIS PRESENCE 33:14-15

And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.
[15] And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.

God said, “My presence will go with thee.” Through good and bad, God has watched over His people. Through the invasions of Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome, God has been with His people. In spite of the slaughter of six million Jews during WW2, God has been with His people.

Since May 14, 1948, God has been with His people in spite of five major wars against Israel. On May 15th, 1948, 45 million Arabs were pitted against 64,000 Jews as Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon attacked. In soldiers, the Jews were outnumbered 40 to 1. Eight days before the attack, British General Montgomery visited Palestine and said, “The Arabs will drive you into the sea in eight days.” Israel had ten thousand rifles, 50 rounds for each rifle, four cannons, and 3600 sub-machine guns. God protected His people in spite of overwhelming odds against them.

Beloved, God’s presence is not only with Israel, but with those who are Christians. God’s presence does several things.
1. It gives courage.
* Deuteronomy 20:1-When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not
afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.
* Psalm 23:4- Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

2. It gives comfort.
* Isaiah 43:2- When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

3. It is constant.
* Hebrews 13:5 - Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.
* Matthew 28:20 - Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

One Christmas Eve the telephone rang in the office of the pastor of the church in Washington, D.C. that President Franklin Roosevelt attended. "Tell me Reverend," the voice inquired, "are you holding a Christmas Eve service tonight?" When advised that there would certainly be a service that evening, the caller asked, "And do you expect President Roosevelt to attend your church tonight?" "That," explained the Pastor patiently, "I can't promise. I'm not sure about the President's plans for this evening, but I can say that we fully expect God to be in our church tonight, and we feel secure in the knowledge that His attendance will attract a reasonably large congregation."

Beloved, if you want God's presence, He must be present in your life. You must trust Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.
* Romans 10:9-10... That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
* Romans 10:13- For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
IV. THE PROPHET’S DEPENDENCE  33:15-16

And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. [16] For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

Moses tells the Lord, “We can’t make it without you. If you are not with us, then don’t lead us out of here. Moses knew the burden of getting ahead of God or living without God’s direction. After killing the Egyptian, he spent 40 years in the wilderness. Beloved, without God’s leading, we waste our life away by making foolish choices, having wrong priorities, and being ineffective for Christ.

*Psalm 127:1- Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

All that we have is because of the Lord and without Him, we are nothing.

*John 3:27- John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.
*2 Corinthians 3:5- Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;
*John 15:5- I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

V. A PRAYER FOR GOD’S GLORY  33:18

And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

The closer you get to the Lord, the more you want to get to know Him. The more you realize how little you are, the more you will realize just how much you need Him. Moses was not satisfied with His walk and relationship with the Lord. Are you satisfied or do you want to grow more in Christ?

*1 Peter 2:2- As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Moses said, “Shew me thy glory!”

*Exodus 40:34- Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.
God has shown us His glory....

1. In Creation
* Psalm 19:1- The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

2. In Christ
* John 1:14- And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

3. In the future in His Coming again
* Matthew 16:27- For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

VI. THE PROMISES OF GOD  33:19

And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

God promised to do four things.

1. I will make all my goodness pass before thee.

The Lord can do this because God is good. His goodness is abundant and it follows us.
* Psalm 25:8 - Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.
* Psalm 33:5- He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.
* Psalm 23:5-6... Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. [6] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Missionary Chuck Madaus said after the death of his baby, “God is good. God has given us a glimpse of His glory, answered prayers, saved souls, given us strength in trials, and the provision of our needs.” Yes, beloved, God is good.

2. I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee.
3. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and show mercy on whom I will show mercy.
Grace and mercy are not to be confused together. They have a close relationship, but are different. Mercy deals with the symptoms of sin and grace deals with the cause and root problems. Mercy offers relief from punishment and grace offers pardon from the crime. Because of the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s mercy says, “No Hell for you.” I don’t get what I deserve. God’s grace says, “You have a home in Heaven, an inheritance in Christ, and I will make you like my Son. You will be a new creature and have eternal life.” Because of God’s grace, I do get what I don’t deserve. If you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you will know God’s grace and mercy.

* Titus 3:7- That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

VII. THE PROVISION FOR PROTECTION  33:20-23

And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. [21] And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: [22] And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: [23] And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

God told Moses, “You can’t see my face and live, but there is a place near me where you may stand upon a rock. When my glory passes by, I WILL put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. I’ll remove my hand and you may see my back.” There are several insights we will examine here.

1. For sinful man to have access to God’s holy presence, it is necessary that He should be put into a place of security and peace. That place of security is found in the Rock of Ages, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is pictured in this passage. Because of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have fellowship with God the Father.

2. God said, “I will put thee in the cleft (crack) of the rock. No sinner can do this himself. No one can save himself. Only God can put us in Christ or in the rock. He is the only one that can save us.

* Ephesians 2:8-9.... For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: [9] Not of works, lest any man should boast.
* Titus 3:5- Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

3. The Lord said, "I will cover thee with my hand." In Christ, we are covered by His blood and protected securely by His hand.

* Psalm 91:1- He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

* John 10:28-29... And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. [29] My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

4. It is only as we seek or are in the cleft of the rock, that God’s goodness passes before us. His glory comes into focus as the flesh is altogether hidden and we seek Him and are made new creatures in Jesus Christ. If you want to know God’s goodness, receive His Son as your Savior.

5. Our rightful place is behind the Lord, seeing His back parts. He is to be leading our lives and we are to be following behind Him.

S. I. McMillen, in his book None of These Diseases, tells a story of a young woman who wanted to go to college, but her heart sank when she read the question on the application blank that asked, "Are you a leader?" Being both honest and conscientious, she wrote, "No," and returned the application, expecting the worst. To her surprise, she received this letter from the college: "Dear Applicant: A study of the application forms reveals that this year our college will have 1,452 new leaders. We are accepting you because we feel it is imperative that they have at least one follower." Beloved, God wants us to be teachable and to follow Him. Are you doing this in your life? Do you desire to glorify the Lord with your life?
Chapter 39
Back to the Drawing Board
Exodus 34:1-30

In Exodus 33, we found Moses asking God, "Shew me thy way."
As we glean through Exodus 33, we find several insights about God's way.
* The Way of Consecration (vs. 1-6)- It is the way up, the way of humility and provision.
* The Way of Worship (vs. 7-11)- For all the people in the presence of the Lord.
* The Way of Grace (vs.12-17)- The way of supplication separation, and appropriation.
* The Way of Mercy (vs. 18-23)- The way of new vision, vindication, and victory.

The conclusion is we should seek the way of the Lord in everything we do. Our way can ruin us.
* Proverbs 14:12- There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

As we continue to blaze the trail through Exodus, we find Moses again, spending 40 days and 40 nights with the Lord and walking in close fellowship with God. God takes Moses and the people back to the drawing board and they start over again. Notice verse one.

I. THE RE-WRITTEN TABLES OF THE LAW 34:1-4

And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. [2] And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount. [3] And no man shall come up with thee,
neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount. [4] And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.

The first tablets were broken when Moses saw the idolatry of Israel at the golden calf incident. Moses threw them down in his anger, feeling they broke their word and were unworthy of God’s commandments. The breaking of the tablets were a reminder of man’s inability to keep God’s law. The second set contained the same words as the first and were written by the Lord Himself.

The difference between the first set and the second was the fact that the first tablets were provided totally by God and the second set were hewed out by Moses. Why? Moses was to repair the loss caused by his actions. Infractions involve new duties. God never condemns Moses, but gives him the responsibility of replacing what he ruined. In our lives, infractions lead to new responsibilities and accountability.

* Cheat someone= make restitution
* Lie= confession of the lie and correcting it
* Slander= retraction of the statement
* Insult= apology for the insult
* Stealing= replacing what is stolen
* Bitterness= Seeking forgiveness for attitudes and actions

Making matters right in your life involves going back to the drawing board and clearing your conscience with God and with men.

* Acts 24:16- And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

Another change in the second tablets was that fact that no man was to be with Moses when he made them. That means Joshua and no flocks were to be near the mount. God was going to restore His written law. It was not to be destroyed. The law is important in the life of the believer.

* Matthew 5:17- Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

Beloved, we are still under God’s moral laws, not for salvation, but for our daily walk and fellowship with God. Adultery, stealing, lying, murder, coveting, and idolatry are all still wrong. We are still to honor our parents too.
II. THE REVELATION OF THE LORD  

And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. [6] And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, [7] Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. [8] And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. [9] And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

As Moses waited on the Lord, God descended in a cloud and met with Moses. He declared Himself, proclaiming the name of the Lord. To proclaim His name, God was revealing Himself, His nature, and His character.

* Matthew 1:21 - And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. The name of Jesus revealed what He was to mankind.... divine Savior.

The word “Lord” or Yahweh, was the name of God’s relationship with His people. He is compassionate, loyal, faithful, and forgiving. He is the self-existent one. God’s name is very special. The third commandment states that His name is not to be taken in vain. In the first petition of the Lord’s prayer, it says, “Hallowed by thy name.” God’s name is very special.

* Proverbs 18:10- The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. In His name is protection, security, and insight to see.

* Malachi 3:16 - Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

* Revelation 22:4- And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. Names on the forehead show ownership and fellowship.

* Acts 4:12- Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Our salvation is in the Lord Jesus Christ.
Who is God? What is He like? God declares Himself and what He is like. Notice His traits.

A. Merciful-

This trait is mentioned first. It is the fountain from which the other traits flow. Because of God’s mercy, we don’t get what we do deserve. We deserve to go to Hell, but because of Christ we are given eternal life and His blessings.

* Titus 3:5 - Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

B. Gracious-

Graciousness is the ground by which God shows His mercy. His graciousness is compassionate and liberal.

* Psalm 86:14-15 ... O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them. [15] But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

* 2 Chronicles 30:9 - For if ye turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.

* Jonah 4:2 - And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

C. Longsuffering-

1. The Patience of Longsuffering: God waited when men were interested in their own affairs and indifferent toward the Lord.

* 1 Peter 3:20 - Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

2. The Provision of Longsuffering:

* 2 Peter 3:15 - And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

3. The Purpose of Longsuffering:

* 2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some
men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Many years ago in St. Louis, a lawyer visited a Christian to transact some business. Before the two parted, his client said to him, "I've often wanted to ask you a question, but I've been afraid to do so." "What do you want to know?" asked the lawyer. The man replied, "I've wondered why you're not a Christian." The man hung his head. "I know enough about the Bible to realize that it says no drunkard can enter the kingdom of God; and you know my weakness!" "You're avoiding my question," continued the believer. "Well, truthfully, I can't recall anyone every explaining how to become a Christian."

Picking up a Bible, the client read some passages showing that all are under condemnation, but that Christ came to save the lost by dying on the cross for their sins. "By receiving Him as your substitute and redeemer," he said, "you can be forgiven. If you're willing to receive Jesus, let's pray together." The lawyer agreed, and where it was his turn he exclaimed, "O Jesus, I am a slave to drink. One of Your servants has shown me how to be saved. O God, forgive my sins and help me overcome the power of this terrible habit in my life." Right there he was converted. That lawyer was C.I. Scofield, who later edited the reference Bible that bears his name, The Scofield Reference Bible.

4. Abundant in Goodness and Truth

The word "goodness" means "loving kindness or kindness."

* Isaiah 63:7

I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

* Jeremiah 9:24 - But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

The word "truth" means "steadfastness, firmness, certainty, and righteousness." It is translated "verity."

* Psalm 111:7- The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure.
* Psalm 108:4- For thy mercy is great above the heavens: and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds. This tells the extent of the reach of His truth.
Truth is at the root of His goodness. There can be no trust without truth and dependability. No matter what men say, God is true. His truth is forever.

* Psalm 117:2 - For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord.

Goodness and truth reveal the balance of God. Paul addressed this balance in Romans 11.

* Romans 11:22- Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

The two sides of God’s character shine forth in all His dealings with men. In Eden, we are given the promise of the woman’s seed coming to bruise the serpent’s head (Genesis 3:15). We see God’s severity when Adam and Eve were driven from the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24). We see His goodness in the provision of the Ark for Noah and anyone who believed in the Lord's message and His severity in sending the Flood. We see God’s goodness in sending two angels to deliver Lot, and his severity in destroying Sodom and Gomorrah.

In the life of Christ, we see His fulness of grace and truth. He was a friend of sinners but was considered an enemy of self-righteous hypocrites. He wept over Jerusalem, but drove the money-changers from the Temple with a whip. He blessed the disciples, but cursed a fig tree. In His goodness we enjoy Heaven, but in His severity, the lost are condemned to Hell.

God said He would visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and the children’s children, to the third and fourth generation. Visiting iniquity means “punishing iniquity.” Sin makes God “visit.” Sin is the reason why God visits with sickness and poverty.

* Psalm 89:31-32... If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; [32] Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

Sin twists the chords which pinch us. It creates our troubles. It is the gall in our own cup and the gravel in our own bread. Sin is the Trojan Horse that we invite into our life and destroys us from within. What is iniquity? Is it sin? Actually, God distinguishes sin from iniquity.

* Psalm 51:2- Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

* Psalm 51:5 - Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.
* Psalm 51:9- Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

A clue to the definition of iniquity is found in Matthew 7:21-23.

* Matthew 7:21-23.... Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. [22] Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. When we do these things in our own will instead of God’s will, they are considered “iniquity.”

Iniquity is doing my own will even though it may be something that is good. Iniquity is going our own way, doing our own thing, and disobeying God’s will.

* Isaiah 53:5- But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

When Saul disobeyed the Lord in not destroying the Amalekites and saving the best animals for sacrifice, Samuel rebuked him.

* 1 Samuel 15:22-23... And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. [23] For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

How are children affected by the iniquities of the fathers? Even though children are not responsible for or guilty of their father’s iniquities, they are affected by them. Our iniquities affect our loved ones. The iniquity of deception that Abraham practiced was passed on to his son and grandson. With each generation, the deception increased.

* Genesis 20:2 - And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

* Genesis 26:7- And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon.

* Genesis 27:32- And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau.
The sensuality of David affected his son Solomon and grandson Rehoboam.

* 1 Kings 11:1-3...But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; [2] Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. [3] And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.

* 2 Chronicles 11:21- And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters.)

* 2 Chronicles 12:1-And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him.

**What we do in moderation as parents, our kids take to excess.**
The Bible stresses the importance of acknowledging the iniquities of our forefathers.

* Nehemiah 9:2- And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.

* Daniel 9:16- O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

By acknowledging the iniquities of the forefathers, children agree with God they are wrong and are able to deal with them in a Scriptural manner by building disciplines to avoid repeating them. There are four steps of action in dealing with the iniquities of our forefathers.

1. Identify the precise iniquity that has been passed on to family members. Is it an independent spirit, willfulness, stubbornness, a lack of self control, pride, deception, self gratification, greed, a coveting spirit, anger, unfaithfulness, or lustfulness? Let a man examine himself.

2. Acknowledge your sin and forefather’s iniquities. Don’t excuse them.

* Jeremiah 14:20 - We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee.

3. Reclaim lost ground and yield yourself to God.
* Romans 6:19- I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

The more we sin, the more ground we turn over to Satan in our soul.

* Ephesians 4:27- Neither give place to the devil.

4. Cast down Satan’s strong hold in your mind. The Word of God will be your key weapon in getting victory. If you have surrendered areas of your life to Satan, then go back to the drawing board and start over with the Word of God in your life.

* 2 Corinthians 10:4-5... (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) [5] Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

III. THE RENEWAL OF THE COMMISSION 34:10-17

A. The Covenant 34:10-11

And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee. [11] Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.

God renews His covenant that the people broke and promises to perform unseen marvels never done before on earth before His people. He takes them back to the drawing board, assuring them of His plans for them. God’s people will see the work of the Lord.

B. The Caution and Call of Separation 34:12-13

Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: [13] But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves:

God instructs them to not yoke up with the wicked and make treaties with them. A treaty implies acceptance of gods and
lifestyles. God’s Word warns all of us to avoid the lifestyle of the wicked.

* Psalm 1:1- Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

* Proverbs 4:14-15... Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

* Proverbs 24:1- Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.

* 1 Corinthians 5:11- But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

**Yoking up with the wicked leads to a snare.**

1. It brings shame to parents.

* Proverbs 28:7- Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.

2. It leads to the denial of Jesus Christ.

* John 18:17- Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

* John 18:25- And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

3. Defilement

* 1 Corinthians 15:33- Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. If you are not careful, you start acting like the wrong crowd.

Joshua failed to separate from the Gibeonites. Notice Joshua 9.

* Joshua 9:14-15.. And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord. [15] And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.

Centuries later, trouble issued forth from Joshua’s disobedience (2 Samuel 21:1-9). There were three years of famine because of Saul’s killing of the Gibeonites. David spoke to the Gibeonites to reconcile the matter. They did not want Saul’s money. They wanted to execute his seven sons. David complied and they were hanged. There are consequences when we yoke up with evil.
God told His people here to cut down the groves or asheras. Ashera poles were poles that were erected in honor of the fertility goddess Ashera. Canaan was full of sexual diseases. The land was covered with idolatry and immorality like a dog infested with fleas. God was trying to spare His people from sickness and destruction.

C. The Character of God  34:14-17

[14] For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: [15] Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; [16] And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods. [17] Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.

The Lord is a jealous God. His jealousy makes Him delight and protect us. He has great affection for us.

* Zechariah 2:8- For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.

* Isaiah 42:13- The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.

God is jealous of His people when they worship other gods. God did not want His people to intermarry, become immoral, and idolatrous. His holiness cannot bear a rival. He demands to be first in our lives. When we allow something other than the Lord to control our devotion and love, it angers Him. That which we allow to get us out of church and our daily walk with Christ becomes our god.

IV. A REMINDER OF THE FEASTS AND SABBATHS  34:18-27

The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. [19] All that openeth the matrix is mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male. [20] But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty. [21] Six days thou shalt work, but
on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest. [22] And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. [23] Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. [24] For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year. [25] Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning. [26] The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk. [27] And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

One of God's provisions for bringing His people out of Egypt is found in Exodus 3:12.

* Exodus 3:12 - And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

In Exodus 34, God makes known the character of that service which He required from Israel. The Feast of Unleavened Bread spoke of God's design in redemption. It was connected with the Passover when God freed His people from Egypt. The Feast of Unleavened Bread spoke of communion and joy as God gathered His redeemed around Himself. The Passover provided the sacrifice upon which the Feast of Unleavened Bread was based.

**Christ is our Passover.** His sacrifice was the final payment for man's sins. Because our sins have been paid for, we can now have fellowship and communion with God when we put our faith in Christ for our salvation. Unleavened bread speaks of Christ, the Bread of Life who was slain without sin. Leaven was a type or symbol of evil. Jesus was without spot or sin. You could say He was without leaven.

* 1 Peter 1:19 - But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

The Feast of Unleavened Bread reminds us of the importance of the purity of the believer. Prior to this feast, all leaven was removed from the house. It was scoured. We are the house or temple of the Holy Spirit as believers. Leaven was a picture of sin and we are to remove sin from our
own lives as the Holy Spirit and the Word of God reveal to us what needs to be removed.

*I Corinthians 6:19-20*... *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? [20] For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

*Psalm 119:105-* *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

The ass is referred to in verse 20. Under the Mosaic law, the ass was an unclean animal. It was a picture of an unsaved man who is also unclean before God. Clean animals had a divided hoof and chewed the cud. The divided hoof reminds us of a separated walk, a life lived with God and for God. Chewing the cud reminds us of rumination or meditation. We are to meditate on the Word of God day and night. The ass is considered stupid and senseless at times. The natural, unsaved man proudly boasts of his powers of reason, yet he is devoid of spiritual intelligence. It is difficult for him to understand the spiritual truths of the Bible. Thank God, the Lord has kept the plan of salvation simple for mankind so that men can understand how to be saved if they desire to know Christ and enjoy His grace, His gift of eternal life, and His forgiveness.

*I Corinthians 2:14-* *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

The ass is stubborn and intractable. It is hard to move at times. Fallen man is also a rebel against God.

*Isaiah 53:6-* *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

*Romans 3:11-* *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

The ass accurately portrays sinful man, being unclean, senseless, intractable, fit to have his neck broken. It was redeemed with a lamb. We were redeemed by the Lamb of God.
V. THE RETURN OF MOSES TO THE CAMP  34:28-35
A. The Sustaining of Moses  34:28

And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

Moses has gone back to the drawing board again. He goes again to the mount for 40 days and nights. The presence of God sustained Moses. He did not eat bread or drink water.

B. The Shining Skin  34:29-35

And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. [30] And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. [31] And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. [32] And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in mount Sinai. [33] And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face. [34] But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. [35] And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

Moses did not know that his face was shining. What a difference from the first trip. In Chapter 32, his decent was characterized by anger on his face. Here he descends with a radiant countenance. In chapter 32, the people were idolatrous, but here, they are broken and ashamed of their sin. In chapter 32, Moses broke the tablets on the ground, but here, he deposits them into the Ark.

* Deuteronomy 10:5- And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the Lord commanded me.
Three key truths are seen in this section.

1. No person can enjoy real fellowship with the Lord without being affected by that fellowship.

Communion with the Lord will conform us to His image. We will not be more Christlike until we walk more frequently and closely with Him. The Spirit of God helps us grow in the Lord and mature in Christ. *2 Corinthians 3:18* - But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

A man bought a new hunting dog. Eager to see how he would perform, he took him out to track a bear. No sooner had they gotten into the woods than the dog picked up the trail. Suddenly he stopped, sniffed the ground, and headed in a new direction. He had caught the scent of a deer that had crossed the bear's path. A few moments later he halted again, this time smelling a rabbit that had crossed the path of the deer. And so, on and on it went until finally the breathless hunter caught up with his dog, only to find him barking triumphantly down the hole of a field mouse.

Sometimes we as Christians are like that dog. We start out with high resolve, keeping Christ first in our lives, but soon our attention is diverted to things of lesser importance. One pursuit leads to another until we've strayed far from our original purpose. The Holy Spirit is the One who keeps us from being sidetracked. As the Spirit of God fills our life, He has an effect upon our countenance. A happy, radiant face comes from an illuminated spirit that is close to the Lord. Have you wandered away from the Lord, then get back to the drawing board and start again.

2. The second consequence of real communion with God is we shall be less occupied with our wretched selves.

Dr. James Dobson had spoken at a seminary on the subject of the need for self-esteem among men in the ministry. Strangely, many people have the mistaken idea that those preparing for ministry seldom struggle with inferiority. One young man was brave enough to admit that he found himself paralyzed with fear, even though he sincerely desired to help others as he served God.

Dr. Dobson spoke openly of this common predicament that gnaws on one's soul. Here is what he said: Sitting in the audience that same day was another student with the same kind of problems. However, he did not write me a letter. He never identified himself in any way. But three weeks after I left, he hanged himself in the basement of his apartment. One of
the four men with whom he lived called long distance to inform me of the tragedy. He stated, deeply shaken, that the dead student's roommates were so unaware of his problems that he hanged there five days before he was missed! They were so occupied with themselves, they did not realize what was going on around them.

Moses was unaware of himself and his radiance. His mind was so full of God, his attention was drawn away from self, appearance, and egotism. God wants us to have the same attitude as the psalmist and John the Baptist.

* Psalm 115:1- Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.
* John 3:30- He must increase, but I must decrease.

3. The third effect of communion with God is others will notice your life and the effect of Jesus Christ in your actions and behavior.

* Acts 4:13- Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

We cannot keep company very long with the Lord without His impression being left upon us. Your life will be a source of conviction to others and their need to walk closer to the Lord. The people were afraid of Moses (vs.30). Radiance and joy cannot be obtained by trying for it. It comes by losing yourself, walking with the Lord, and loving Him. Selfishness, on the other hand, will rob you of your joy. Have you drifted away from the Lord and lost your effectiveness for Christ, then get back to the drawing board and start over again in you walk with God.
Bibliography for Exodus

The following men of God have made contributions to this book.

1. *Believer's Bible Commentary* by William MacDonald. (very good)
2. *King James Bible Commentary* (very good)
3. *The Life Application Bible* (very practical notes)
4. *Exodus* by James Vernon McGee
5. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament* by Dallas Theological Seminary. (very good notes)
6. *Adam Clarke’s Commentary* on Exodus. (very practical and helpful)
7. *Barnes Notes on Exodus* by Albert Barnes (excellent)
8. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary on Matthew* by Frank Gaebelein.
10. *Devotional Commentary on Exodus* by F.B. Meyer.
11. *Moses* by John Butler
17. *The Tabernacle of Israel* by James Strong.
22. *Teachings from the Tabernacle* by Roy DeWitt
Index on Exodus: Volume 2

A
* Abortion-176
* Acacia-244
* Adultery-194
+ effects of adultery-196
* Altar of Incense-241,307
* Ark of Covenant-241,254

B
* Badger skins-250
* Bells of High Priest-300
* Blue-247
* Brass-246
* Brazen Altar-239,278
* Breastplate-292
* Burnt offering-282

C
* Candlestick-240
* Chastisement-341
* Children-96
* Contentment-29,226
* Copper-246
* Covetousness-217
+ warnings about covetousness-221
+ remedies for it-224
* Crown-301

D
* Doors of Tabernacle-251

E
* Ephod-291
* Euthanasia-172

F
* Floors of the Tabernacle-251
* Frankincense-263,311

G
* Galbanum-310
* Goat’s Hair-249
* God’s name in vain-134
* God’s Traits-362
* Golden Candlestick-240,265
* Gossip-214
* Grace of God-352
* Guidance of God-81,350

H
* High Priest-291
* Holy of Holies-254
* Holy Place-254
* Honoring Parents (ways)-149
* Horns on the altar-280

I
* Iniquity-364
+ dealing with father’s-118
* Irritations-134

ILLUSTRATIONS
* Ambassadors for Christ: Man becomes bridge of a broken wire-71
* Anger: Angry mother tells her husband to discipline the son. 96
* Covetousness: The oyster catcher is not content with its eggs. 226
* Discontentment: The pack rat-226
* Disobedience: People will not obey the sign at the zoo. 323
* Feeling Defeated: There may be days you feel you cannot win. 18
* Followers Needed: Girl says she is a follower on her application and is accepted in college-358
* Grace of God: The wandering son meets his father-351
* Holy Spirit’s Guidance: Story of the dove man in the desert-346
INDEX ON EXODUS: VOLUME 2

* Ignorance: We don't have all the answers sometimes- 12
* Incarnation: The king came to the poor man. Christ came to us-46
* Ingratitude: Little girl does not say "Thank you." She wants more. 21
* Knocking Out Yourself: The story of boxer C.D. Blalock -140
* Marriage: Some wives wreck their home by trying to change their man-73
* Mercy of God: Queen Elizabeth refuses to forgive Countess-126
* Mother's Day: The beginning of Mother's Day. 150
* Preparation Lacking: Orchestra not ready to play. 6
* Preparation Lacking: The painful adventure of a brick layer- 53
* Preparation Lacking leads to defeat: The fall of Aqaba-119
* Presence of God: The Christmas Eve service and the President-353
* Pride: Leads to disgrace. 14
* Proud Resisted: Ceausescu is executed for his wickedness. 339
* Provision of God: God knows what needs we have before we do. 26
* Scoffer rebuked: Native chief rebukes a scoffer-102
* Sin Enslaves You: Boy kills a duck and is blackmailed by sister. 62
* Soul winning: The conversion of C.I. Scofield. 363
* Stubborn thinking: It killed the people on the Titanic. 148
* Study the Word of God: Howard Hendrick's professor-351
* Substitute for Sin's Punishment: The whipping boy in England-99
* Temptation: Satan targets the areas where we feel confident. 189
* Unaware of Others: Student hangs for five days before he is found. 373
* Unbelief: Christians don't believe in prayer but the tavern owner does-329
* Word of God: Burned man reads Bible with his tongue. 47
* Worry: Man worries about too many canaries in his truck-26

J. K. L
* Laver-239,313,
* Law and the Gospel differences-99
* Leadership traits- 83
* Linen-248,303

M
* Manna-38-52
* Marah's in the Bible-9
* Marriage-74
* Meal Offering- 283
* Menorah-240
* Mercy of God (described)-339
* Mercy Seat-241,255
* Mercy & forgiveness compared-120 + compared with love-121 + compared with grace-121 + compared with justice-122 + properties of God's mercy-124 + ways God shows it-127
* Moses (type of Christ)-336
* Murmuring Insights-27

N.O
* NAME-129 +our relationship with God's name131
* Obedience (ingredients)-102
* Onycha-310
* Outer Court-254

P
* Parents Dishonored (how)-151
* Peace Offering-286
* The Pillar & Holy Spirit-346
* Pomegranates-299
* Pride-77-78
Protection of God-353

Q R
* Ram skins-249
* Ransom-1
* Red-247
* Redemption-1
* Repentance-343
* Rock (Christ)-61
* Ropes-251

S
* Sabbath-141
* Scarlet-247
* Shittim wood-244
* Silver-245
* Sin Offering-286
* Sinai’s location-88
* Stacte-309
* Slander-213
* Stealing-207
* Stiff-necked (reasons)-325
* Stones on the breastplate-293
* Stubbornness-325
* Suffering’s purpose-12
* Suicide-167
* Sunday worship-145

T, U, V
* Tabernacle-238,239,243
* Table of Shewbread-240,262
* + type of Christ-239
* Teachable-83
* Techelet-247
* Temptation-191
* Ten Commandments-95
* Thummim-298
* Tongue-134
* Trials-55
* Urrim-298
* Veil-241,273

W, X, Y, Z
* War-166
* White-248
* Wisdom (getting)-80
* Worm-304
* Worship-309-311
* Zipporah-73
Treasures From Scripture Series

As of June 1st, 2007 these are the 23 books that are available in the Treasures from Scripture Series written by Dr. Mattoon and published by Lincoln Land Baptist Church.

* Treasures from Exodus, Volume 1 $20
* Treasures from Exodus, Volume 2 $20
* Treasures from Sermon on the Mount, V-2 $20
* Treasures from Sermon on the Mount, V-1 $20
* Treasures from Hosea $20
* Treasures from John, Volume 2 $20
* Treasures from John, Volume 1 $20
* Treasures from Treasured Psalms $20
* Treasures from James $20
* Treasures from Numbers $20
* Treasures from Philippians $20
* Treasures from Romans $20
* Treasures from Revelation $20
* Treasures from Genesis $20
* Treasures from 1 Samuel $20
* Treasures from 2 Samuel $20
* Treasures from Joshua $20
* Treasures from Judges $20
* Treasures from 1 Kings $20
* Treasures from Jonah $15
* Treasures from Ruth $15
* Treasures from the Names of Jesus $15
* Treasures from Esther $13

To Order: Make your gift payable to Lincoln Land Baptist Church. Credit card sales are not available. Mail Your Book Orders to:

Dr. Rod Mattoon
3223 Angelo St.
Springfield, Illinois, 62707

email: Dr.Mattoon@Juno.com    Church voice mail: 217-525-3553