

Week 15

Exodus 20 – 31:11 (Decalogue, Sanctuary, Priests)

Sunday (Exodus 20)

The Decalogue

20:1 God spoke all these words:

20:2 “I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you from the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery.

20:3 “You shall have no other gods before me.

20:4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water below. 20:5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, responding to the transgression of fathers by dealing with children to the third and fourth generations of those who reject me, 20:6 and showing covenant faithfulness to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

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

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

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

20:13 “You shall not murder.

20:14 “You shall not commit adultery.

20:15 “You shall not steal.

20:16 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

20:17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

20:18 All the people were seeing the thundering and the lightning, and heard the sound of the horn, and saw the mountain smoking – and when the people saw it they trembled with fear and kept their distance. 20:19 They said to Moses, “You speak to us and we will listen, but do not let God speak with us, lest we die.” 20:20 Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you so that you do not sin.” 20:21 The people kept their distance, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.

The Altar

20:22 The Lord said to Moses: “Thus you will tell the Israelites: ‘You yourselves have seen that I have spoken with you from heaven. 20:23 You must not make gods of silver alongside me, nor make gods of gold for yourselves.

20:24 ‘You must make for me an altar made of earth, and you will sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your cattle. In every place where I cause my name to be honored I will come to you and I will bless you. 20:25 If you make me an altar of stone, you must not build it of stones shaped with tools, for if you use your tool on it you have defiled it. 20:26 And you must not go up by steps to my altar, so that your nakedness is not exposed.’

PRAYER

Lord, Your 10 Commandments are as valid today as when You gave them to the Israelites, may I be found faithful to them.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Lord God gave Moses the “Decalogue”, which in the Bible means the 10 Commandments, and elsewhere refers to a list of laws, rules – together with the associated authority.

He introduced the Decalogue by reminding them of Who He was to them – the Liberator – the One Who with-power set them free from 400 years of slavery in Egypt.

One

20:3 *"You shall have no other gods before me."*

The Lord God declared His superiority. He pre-existed all else and caused it to be, He is sovereign.

Two

20:4 *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water below. 20:5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, responding to the transgression of fathers by dealing with children to the third and fourth generations of those who reject me, 20:6 and showing covenant faithfulness to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.*

The Lord God declared monotheism and then He left no room whatsoever for multiple Gods. He also included a curse for disobedience and His conditional-promise; "... *showing covenant faithfulness to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.*"

Three

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

The Lord God required respect, His name was holy because He is holy. In this case the failure to obey included a curse.

Four

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

The Lord God had previously "given" the Sabbath to His people, He knew that in their busyness they would lose site of the priority of their relationship with Him, forget their history with Him, and drift into the ways of non-Israelites around them. He removed their freedom to work; which did not mean they could do nothing at all on the Sabbath. He would later define this all in greater detail. He also explained that they were to model His pattern in Creation.

Five

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

He included a curse and a promise; a long life in the promised land, or the corollary.

Six

20:13 *"You shall not murder.*

The Lord God put a fine-edge on this command as it required a measure of heart-intent; He did not say (as some have mistranslated) "You shall not kill", He very intentionally said "You shall not murder". All murder is killing but all killing is not murder.

Murder is a selfish action, killing has multiple motivations. Murder begins with a heart of rebellion, it degrades what God says is in His image – humankind – and it is committed for selfish personal gain.

Killing was not only done by God, it was done at the behest of God, to make of all killing a act of sin one makes God the author of sin – which is blasphemy. Killing may be accidental, in self-defense, in defense of another, due to carelessness, or may be in war.

Seven

20:14 "You shall not commit adultery.

The Lord God set a literal standard, one that precluded a specific (and presumably physical) relational act, that of sexual contact with one not ones spouse, if one were married, (or contact with a married person if one were single).

Jesus would later expand the definition to include a heart of lust toward one not ones spouse, if one were married, or toward a married person if one were single. While God's legal standard was challenging for the undisciplined person the grace-centered heart-based requirement of Jesus called for a transformative surrender to the Holy Spirit, for without that no man or woman could remain free of sin.

The presumption for all sexual contact involved God-ordained male-female marriage, there was no provision for two non-married people having sexual contact, nor for same-gender relationships.

Eight

20:15 "You shall not steal.

The essence of the Lord God's law against stealing permeated all of the others. To have another God before Him would be to steal His rightful place. To worship idols would be to steal His rightful place. To dishonor ones parents is to steal from them due-respect. To murder steals life from another, and their dependents and loved-ones for selfish gain. To commit adultery steals affections not rightfully yours (whether stealing them from the disrespected spouse or taking them from another single person without the protective context of marriage). To give false testimony steals justice from another.

Nine

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

Just as adultery, disrespect, murder, and stealing would destroy the Israelite family, God knew that lying about one-another would do so as well.

Ten

20:17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that belongs to your neighbor." Covetousness was also a wrong heart condition. God knew that if His people focused on what others possessed, be it their house, spouse, servants, beasts of burden, or anything else it would become an obsession which would drive them to compete with or to take away from others.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

The 10 Commandments are often found, at least in part, in the guidelines for every successful civilization, yet rarely do they give the Lord God proper credit. There is evidence from the earliest recorded history of man that these things had been placed in their hearts by the Lord God, yet here God makes them ordinances for a nation who had promised to be a holy and priest-led people.

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you may be violating some of the 10 Commandments, and where you have been faithful in honoring them.

ACT

Today I will make an unflinching assessment of my walk, acknowledging where the Holy Spirit points out strengths and weaknesses in my partnership with Him. I will celebrate those areas where I have been found faithful and recommit myself to mature in the areas of failure.

Be Specific _____

Monday (Exodus 21 - 23)

The Decisions

21:1 "These are the decisions that you will set before them:

Hebrew Servants

21:2 "If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years, but in the seventh year he will go out free without paying anything. 21:3 If he came in by himself he will go out by himself; if he had a wife when he came in, then his wife will go out with him. 21:4 If his master gave him a wife, and she bore sons or daughters, the wife and the children will belong to her master, and he will go out by himself. 21:5 But if the servant should declare, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' 21:6 then his master must bring him to the judges, and he will bring him to the door or the doorposts, and his master will pierce his ear with an awl, and he shall serve him forever.

21:7 "If a man sells his daughter as a female servant, she will not go out as the male servants do. 21:8 If she does not please her master, who has designated her for himself, then he must let her be redeemed. He has no right to sell her to a foreign nation, because he has dealt deceitfully with her. 21:9 If he designated her for his son, then he will deal with her according to the customary rights of daughters. 21:10 If he takes another wife, he must not diminish the first one's food, her clothing, or her marital rights. 21:11 If he does not provide her with these three things, then she will go out free, without paying money.

Personal Injuries

21:12 "Whoever strikes someone so that he dies must surely be put to death. 21:13 But if he does not do it with premeditation, but it happens by accident, then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee. 21:14 But if a man willfully attacks his neighbor to kill him cunningly, you will take him even from my altar that he may die.

21:15 "Whoever strikes his father or his mother must surely be put to death.

21:16 "Whoever kidnaps someone and sells him, or is caught still holding him, must surely be put to death.

21:17 "Whoever treats his father or his mother disgracefully must surely be put to death.

21:18 "If men fight, and one strikes his neighbor with a stone or with his fist and he does not die, but must remain in bed, 21:19 and then if he gets up and walks about outside on his staff, then the one who struck him is innocent, except he must pay for the injured person's loss of time and see to it that he is fully healed.

21:20 "If a man strikes his male servant or his female servant with a staff so that he or she dies as a result of the blow, he will surely be punished. 21:21 However, if the injured servant survives one or two days, the owner will not be punished, for he has suffered the loss.

21:22 “If men fight and hit a pregnant woman and her child is born prematurely, but there is no serious injury, he will surely be punished in accordance with what the woman’s husband demands of him, and he will pay what the court decides. 21:23 But if there is serious injury, then you will give a life for a life, 21:24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 21:25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

21:26 “If a man strikes the eye of his male servant or his female servant so that he destroys it, he will let the servant go free as compensation for the eye. 21:27 If he knocks out the tooth of his male servant or his female servant, he will let the servant go free as compensation for the tooth.

Laws about Animals

21:28 “If an ox gores a man or a woman so that either dies, then the ox must surely be stoned and its flesh must not be eaten, but the owner of the ox will be acquitted. 21:29 But if the ox had the habit of goring, and its owner was warned, and he did not take the necessary precautions, and then it killed a man or a woman, the ox must be stoned and the man must be put to death. 21:30 If a ransom is set for him, then he must pay the redemption for his life according to whatever amount was set for him. 21:31 If the ox gores a son or a daughter, the owner will be dealt with according to this rule. 21:32 If the ox gores a male servant or a female servant, the owner must pay thirty shekels of silver, and the ox must be stoned.

21:33 “If a man opens a pit or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls into it, 21:34 the owner of the pit must repay the loss. He must give money to its owner, and the dead animal will become his. 21:35 If the ox of one man injures the ox of his neighbor so that it dies, then they will sell the live ox and divide its proceeds, and they will also divide the dead ox. 21:36 Or if it is known that the ox had the habit of goring, and its owner did not take the necessary precautions, he must surely pay ox for ox, and the dead animal will become his.

Laws about Property

22:1 (21:37) “If a man steals an ox or a sheep and kills it or sells it, he must pay back five head of cattle for the ox, and four sheep for the one sheep.

22:2 “If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there will be no blood guilt for him. 22:3 If the sun has risen on him, then there is blood guilt for him. A thief must surely make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he will be sold for his theft. 22:4 If the stolen item should in fact be found alive in his possession, whether it be an ox or a donkey or a sheep, he must pay back double.

22:5 "If a man grazes his livestock in a field or a vineyard, and he lets the livestock loose and they graze in the field of another man, he must make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard.

22:6 "If a fire breaks out and spreads to thorn bushes, so that stacked grain or standing grain or the whole field is consumed, the one who started the fire must surely make restitution.

22:7 "If a man gives his neighbor money or articles for safekeeping, and it is stolen from the man's house, if the thief is caught, he must repay double. 22:8 If the thief is not caught, then the owner of the house will be brought before the judges to see whether he has laid his hand on his neighbor's goods. 22:9 In all cases of illegal possessions, whether for an ox, a donkey, a sheep, a garment, or any kind of lost item, about which someone says "This belongs to me," the matter of the two of them will come before the judges, and the one whom the judges declare guilty must repay double to his neighbor. 22:10 If a man gives his neighbor a donkey or an ox or a sheep or any beast to keep, and it dies or is hurt or is carried away without anyone seeing it, 22:11 then there will be an oath to the Lord between the two of them, that he has not laid his hand on his neighbor's goods, and its owner will accept this, and he will not have to pay. 22:12 But if it was stolen from him, he will pay its owner. 22:13 If it is torn in pieces, then he will bring it for evidence, and he will not have to pay for what was torn.

22:14 "If a man borrows an animal from his neighbor, and it is hurt or dies when its owner was not with it, the man who borrowed it will surely pay. 22:15 If its owner was with it, he will not have to pay; if it was hired, what was paid for the hire covers it.

Moral and Ceremonial Laws

22:16 "If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged and has sexual relations with her, he must surely endow her to be his wife. 22:17 If her father refuses to give her to him, he must pay money for the bride price of virgins.

22:18 "You must not allow a sorceress to live.

22:19 "Whoever has sexual relations with a beast must surely be put to death.

22:20 "Whoever sacrifices to a god other than the Lord alone must be utterly destroyed.

22:21 "You must not wrong a foreigner nor oppress him, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

22:22 “You must not afflict any widow or orphan. 22:23 If you afflict them in any way and they cry to me, I will surely hear their cry, 22:24 and my anger will burn and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives will be widows and your children will be fatherless.

22:25 “If you lend money to any of my people who are needy among you, do not be like a moneylender to him; do not charge him interest. 22:26 If you do take the garment of your neighbor in pledge, you must return it to him by the time the sun goes down, 22:27 for it is his only covering – it is his garment for his body. What else can he sleep in? And when he cries out to me, I will hear, for I am gracious.

22:28 “You must not blaspheme God or curse the ruler of your people.

22:29 “Do not hold back offerings from your granaries or your vats. You must give me the firstborn of your sons. 22:30 You must also do this for your oxen and for your sheep; seven days they may remain with their mothers, but give them to me on the eighth day.

22:31 “You will be holy people to me; you must not eat any meat torn by animals in the field. You must throw it to the dogs.

Justice

23:1 “You must not give a false report. Do not make common cause with the wicked to be a malicious witness.

23:2 “You must not follow a crowd in doing evil things; in a lawsuit you must not offer testimony that agrees with a crowd so as to pervert justice, 23:3 and you must not show partiality to a poor man in his lawsuit.

23:4 “If you encounter your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, you must by all means return it to him. 23:5 If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen under its load, you must not ignore him, but be sure to help him with it.

23:6 “You must not turn away justice for your poor people in their lawsuits. 23:7 Keep your distance from a false charge – do not kill the innocent and the righteous, for I will not justify the wicked.

23:8 “You must not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and subverts the words of the righteous.

23:9 “You must not oppress a foreigner, since you know the life of a foreigner, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

Sabbaths and Feasts

23:10 “For six years you are to sow your land and gather in its produce. 23:11 But in the seventh year you must let it lie fallow and leave it alone so that the poor of your people may eat, and what they leave any animal in the field may eat; you must do likewise with your vineyard and your olive grove. 23:12 For six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you must cease, in order that your ox and your donkey may rest and that your female servant’s son and any hired help may refresh themselves.

23:13 “Pay attention to do everything I have told you, and do not even mention the names of other gods – do not let them be heard on your lips.

23:14 “Three times in the year you must make a pilgrim feast to me. 23:15 You are to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; seven days you must eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you, at the appointed time of the month of Abib, for at that time you came out of Egypt. No one may appear before me empty-handed.

23:16 “You are also to observe the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors that you have sown in the field, and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year when you have gathered in your harvest out of the field. 23:17 At three times in the year all your males will appear before the Lord God.

23:18 “You must not offer the blood of my sacrifice with bread containing yeast; the fat of my festal sacrifice must not remain until morning. 23:19 The first of the firstfruits of your soil you must bring to the house of the Lord your God.

“You must not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.

The Angel of the Presence

23:20 “I am going to send an angel before you to protect you as you journey and to bring you into the place that I have prepared. 23:21 Take heed because of him, and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him. 23:22 But if you diligently obey him and do all that I command, then I will be an enemy to your enemies, and I will be an adversary to your adversaries. 23:23 For my angel will go before you and bring you to the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and I will destroy them completely.

23:24 “You must not bow down to their gods; you must not serve them or do according to their practices. Instead you must completely overthrow them and smash their standing stones to pieces. 23:25 You must serve the Lord your God, and he will bless your bread and your water, and I will remove sickness from your midst. 23:26 No woman will miscarry her young or be barren in your land. I will fulfill the number of your days.

23:27 “I will send my terror before you, and I will destroy all the people whom you encounter; I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. 23:28 I will send hornets before you that will drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite before you. 23:29 I will not drive them out before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild animals multiply against you. 23:30 Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you become fruitful and inherit the land. 23:31 I will set your boundaries from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert to the River, for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you.

23:32 “You must make no covenant with them or with their gods. 23:33 They must not live in your land, lest they make you sin against me, for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.”

PRAYER

Lord, Your law was perfect in its time as is your grace, may I have your heart for justice and love. You are the author of love, the definer of justice, and the source of holiness – please draw me nearer to You. You instructed the ancient Israelites to not even mention the name of other Gods, to destroy their places of worship, to copy none of their religious customs or traditions, or to dwell among them. May You find me as equally-yoked to You-alone, in all of these ways, for all of my days.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Lord God dictated the laws or regulations for the Israelites, recognizing their primitive social customs and economic systems, and He provided guidelines for the Elders to whom Moses had delegated much of the justice system.

Hebrew servants were generally in that role for economic reasons rather than involuntary servitude, perhaps “indentured servant” might be a better term. While the term Hebrew was to the Egyptians a generic term for nomadic people, whose lineage was not limited to the twelve tribes but may have traced back to Abraham, in this case it appears to have been narrowed to the Israelites (the 12 tribes).

The Lord God provides for consideration of intent and for what would later become known as a city of refuge 21:12 *“Whoever strikes someone so that he dies must surely be put to death. 21:13 But if he*

does not do it with premeditation, but it happens by accident, then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee."

In an interesting reference to the unborn God required special caution around pregnant women "21:22 *"If men fight and hit a pregnant woman and her child is born prematurely, but there is no serious injury, he will surely be punished in accordance with what the woman's husband demands of him, and he will pay what the court decides. 21:23 But if there is serious injury, then you will give a life for a life, 21:24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 21:25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise."*

In multiple cases God provides for consideration of careless and reckless disregard for the safety of others, something often thought of as a modern legal concept, for example 21:29 *But if the ox had the habit of goring, and its owner was warned, and he did not take the necessary precautions, and then it killed a man or a woman, the ox must be stoned and the man must be put to death.*

The Lord God continues to define the boundaries for a balanced and just society.

The rules for the new Israelite civilization included moral regulations, a prohibition against witchcraft (among them), and a "do to others" imperative in the treatment of non-Israelites in their midst ("... for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt").

Widows and orphans were not to be mistreated in any way, if funds were loaned to fellow Israelites then interest was not to be charged and ones last possessions (e.g. their coat) was only allowed to be kept for a day, not overnight when they desperately needed it.

The NET translators note that 22:28 could reasonably be translated to refer to not blaspheming God by cursing leaders Whom God had chosen and empowered "You must not blaspheme God or curse the ruler of your people."

The Lord God continued His instructions as to the administration of justice among the Israelites.

He then also required of them sabbaths and feasts of celebration, remembrance, and sacrifice.

He required that they not even say the names of false foreign gods.

He then announced 23:20 *"I am going to send an angel before you ..."*, which in some ways would be like the power they viewed from a distance on the mountain, or in the columns of cloud/smoke and fire as they traveled away from Egypt, and in some others like the angel/man with Whom Jacob wrestled, and the One who appeared standing on the rock which Moses struck to draw forth water. While speculation has been that this may refer to a preincarnate Jesus, such is not required (nor excluded) by the text as there is a pattern throughout the OT of angelic appearances and various expressions of God's power in men, animals, and even inanimate objects.

The Lord God once-again makes clear that His provision and protection is conditional “23:22 *But if you diligently obey him and do all that I command ...*”

He concluded this section of instructions with a warning to not be in fellowship with, or yoked to, those who worshiped foreign Gods.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

Many of our so-called modern legal concepts find their roots in the ancient Book of Exodus, as well as others. These were a million somewhat primitive people who had grown dependent upon the provision and regulations of their Egyptian captors, they had more than once expressed a desire to return to captivity rather than face struggles and the unknown, thus they required a very clear and detailed structure. Most, if not all of these laws and regulations, sabbaths, feasts, and promises have been completed, yet all are valuable upon which to reflect God's character and wisdom.

DISCUSS

How uncomfortable does the ancient primitive social and legal system make you in these modern times? Are you aware that Sharia Law, promoted by a powerful minority in Islam, bears much in common with this law – though Sharia it is not as enlightened in many ways e.g. the Lord God singles out widows and orphans for special protection; in primitive societies, then and now, is not their vulnerability profound? God forbade the Israelites from even speaking the names of the false foreign gods. Perhaps it was because He did not want them to become in any way comfortable with them by so doing? Surely God Himself was repelled by them.

REFLECT

While a Hebrew servant was not treated with equal value to a non-servant God provided some considerable protections to them. God's moral boundaries span a wide range of circumstances from the seduction of a virgin to the loaning of money, He addressed all of those issues which could be used by the enemy to attack the Israelites from within. How amazing must it have been to hear that the Lord God would send the “angel of His presence” ahead of and among them to guide, to provide, and to protect.

SHARE

When have you been a participant in a legal proceeding, or been aware of the details of one? Share something from that proceeding that now reminds you of something in [Exodus 21](#). When have you faced one of the circumstances described in this text? If the others involved did not deal with you justly, and/or honor these moral boundaries, how might things have worked out better if they had?

When have you experienced or observed conflict and confusion that resulted from Christians who had become enmeshed in relationships with non-Christians and/or with non-Christian religious influences?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you need to learn to be an greater control of your actions and your words, to show you where you a widow or an orphan who is being mistreated and/or who needs assistance, to show you where you may be compromising your pure Biblical faith due to improper associations and/or mixing-in the religious beliefs and/or practices of non-Biblical faiths. (This is called syncretism).

ACT

Today I will begin a week of careful monitoring of my actions and my words, and may choose to invite a fellow believer to observe and keep notes for me as well. Where my actions and/or words result in harm to another, be they physically violent of otherwise improper or unloving, I will repent (turn away) from them. I will reach out to a Christian widow or a Christian orphan and encourage them, pray for them, and provide them some sort of assistance. I may provide services if my gifts and/or profession matches their need, or some sort of practical assistance in the form of food or clothing. I will heed the warning of the Holy Spirit and cleanse my faith-walk of any non-Biblical influences and I will place careful boundaries upon my associations with non-Christians so that I may be certain to be not of this world while I remain in this world to honor, obey, and serve the Lord God.

Be Specific _____

Tuesday (**Exodus 24**)

The Lord Ratifies the Covenant

24:1 But to Moses the Lord said, "Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from a distance. 24:2 Moses alone may come near the Lord, but the others must not come near, nor may the people go up with him."

24:3 Moses came and told the people all the Lord's words and all the decisions. All the people answered together, "We are willing to do all the words that the Lord has said," 24:4 and Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord. Early in the morning he built an altar at the foot of the mountain and arranged twelve standing stones – according to the twelve tribes of Israel. 24:5 He sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls for peace

offerings to the Lord. 24:6 Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and half of the blood he splashed on the altar. 24:7 He took the Book of the Covenant and read it aloud to the people, and they said, "We are willing to do and obey all that the Lord has spoken." 24:8 So Moses took the blood and splashed it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words."

24:9 Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up, 24:10 and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear like the sky itself. 24:11 But he did not lay a hand on the leaders of the Israelites, so they saw God, and they ate and they drank.

24:12 The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me to the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandments that I have written, so that you may teach them." 24:13 So Moses set out with Joshua his attendant, and Moses went up the mountain of God. 24:14 He told the elders, "Wait for us in this place until we return to you. Here are Aaron and Hur with you. Whoever has any matters of dispute can approach them."

24:15 Moses went up the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. 24:16 The glory of the Lord resided on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day he called to Moses from within the cloud. 24:17 Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in plain view of the people. 24:18 Moses went into the cloud when he went up the mountain, and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

PRAYER

Lord, in Your new Covenant we no longer "worship at a distance", nor do we have a mere human priest like Moses to stand in our stead. You, in the Holy Person of Jesus the Christ – the Son - are both priest and God for every believer. Thank You that I may approach Your throne because of Christ.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Lord God instructed that only Moses was allowed to come to the top of the mountain.

Moses brought the Lord God's "decisions", as reported to us in [Exodus 21-23](#), to the people. They agreed and sealed their commitment to the covenant with blood splashed on twelve stones – one for each tribe – and on their tribal leaders – the elders.

God allowed "Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel" to come part way up the mountain and He appeared to them "... and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet

there was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear like the sky itself.” His appearance was not His full presence, else they would have been destroyed.

The Lord called Moses up the mountain and Moses instructed the elders to bring the most significant justice matters to Aaron and Hur in his absence.

The text reports “... and Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord”. Archeologists date early usage of papyrus to 3,000 BC, at this point in the OT story it is about 1600 BC. Moses would have learned to write while living in Pharaoh's home and would have had access to papyrus and to writing utensils. It is reasonable to expect that he took some of those tools and supplies with him during the Exodus. It may be that on some of the occasions when Moses was away with the Lord the time may have been a result of the slowness of writing.

The Lord God had Moses wait 7 days and then kept him for 40 days.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

It is important to remember that the elders, on behalf of the people, agreed to the terms of God's covenant. They were now bound to them.

DISCUSS

The text says that Moses was writing everything down that God told him. Why does God decide to write on stone tablets Himself and give them to Moses “... so that you may teach them”?

REFLECT

“... Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up, 24:10 and they saw the God of Israel.” along with Moses. In addition to hearing what God had said to Moses and then agreeing to the covenant via the ritual of animal blood, now God brings them into His symbolic presence to worship, and then He says He will write the law and commandments on stone. How much more clear could He have made the terms of their relationship with Him?

SHARE

When have you found it valuable to be able to refer to God's Word for authority and guidance, and when has He corrected you for violating your agreement to honor and obey Him?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you anew what God expects of you in the new covenant, with a focus on one area where you are doing well (submitting to the Holy Spirit), and one area where you remain in rebellion against complete submission to the Holy Spirit.

ACT

Today I will celebrate that area of my walk that the Holy Spirit shows me is in His hands, and I will prayerfully commit to an intentional process of submission where I have willfully resisted the control of the Holy Spirit.

Be Specific _____

Wednesday (Exodus 25)

The Materials for the Sanctuary

25:1 The Lord spoke to Moses: 25:2 “Tell the Israelites to take an offering for me; from every person motivated by a willing heart you are to receive my offering. 25:3 This is the offering you are to accept from them: gold, silver, bronze, 25:4 blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, goat’s hair, 25:5 ram skins dyed red, fine leather, acacia wood, 25:6 oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for fragrant incense, 25:7 onyx stones, and other gems to be set in the ephod and in the breastpiece. 25:8 Let them make for me a sanctuary, so that I may live among them. 25:9 According to all that I am showing you – the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings – you must make it exactly so.

The Ark of the Covenant

25:10 “They are to make an ark of acacia wood – its length is to be three feet nine inches, its width two feet three inches, and its height two feet three inches. 25:11 You are to overlay it with pure gold – both inside and outside you must overlay it, and you are to make a surrounding border of gold over it. 25:12 You are to cast four gold rings for it and put them on its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other side. 25:13 You are to make poles of acacia wood, overlay them with gold, 25:14 and put the poles into the rings at the sides of the ark in order to carry the ark with them. 25:15 The poles must remain in the rings of the ark; they must not be removed from it. 25:16 You are to put into the ark the testimony that I will give to you.

25:17 “You are to make an atonement lid of pure gold; its length is to be three feet nine inches, and its width is to be two feet three inches. 25:18 You are to make two cherubim of gold; you are to make them of hammered metal on the two ends of the atonement lid. 25:19 Make one cherub on

one end and one cherub on the other end; from the atonement lid you are to make the cherubim on the two ends. 25:20 The cherubim are to be spreading their wings upward, overshadowing the atonement lid with their wings, and the cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the atonement lid. 25:21 You are to put the atonement lid on top of the ark, and in the ark you are to put the testimony I am giving you. 25:22 I will meet with you there, and from above the atonement lid, from between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will command you for the Israelites.

The Table for the Bread of the Presence

25:23 “You are to make a table of acacia wood; its length is to be three feet, its width one foot six inches, and its height two feet three inches. 25:24 You are to overlay it with pure gold, and you are to make a surrounding border of gold for it. 25:25 You are to make a surrounding frame for it about three inches broad, and you are to make a surrounding border of gold for its frame. 25:26 You are to make four rings of gold for it and attach the rings at the four corners where its four legs are. 25:27 The rings are to be close to the frame to provide places for the poles to carry the table. 25:28 You are to make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold, so that the table may be carried with them. 25:29 You are to make its plates, its ladles, its pitchers, and its bowls, to be used in pouring out offerings; you are to make them of pure gold. 25:30 You are to set the Bread of the Presence on the table before me continually.

The Lampstand

25:31 “You are to make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand is to be made of hammered metal; its base and its shaft, its cups, its buds, and its blossoms are to be from the same piece. 25:32 Six branches are to extend from the sides of the lampstand, three branches of the lampstand from one side of it and three branches of the lampstand from the other side of it. 25:33 Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms are to be on one branch, and three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms are to be on the next branch, and the same for the six branches extending from the lampstand. 25:34 On the lampstand there are to be four cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms, 25:35 with a bud under the first two branches from it, and a bud under the next two branches from it, and a bud under the third two branches from it, according to the six branches that extend from the lampstand. 25:36 Their buds and their branches will be one piece, all of it one hammered piece of pure gold.

25:37 “You are to make its seven lamps, and then set its lamps up on it, so that it will give light to the area in front of it. 25:38 Its trimmers and its trays are to be of pure gold. 25:39 About seventy-five pounds of pure gold is to be used for it and for all these utensils. 25:40 Now be sure to make them according to the pattern you were shown on the mountain.

PRAYER

Lord, You have made of those who belong to Christ a new kind of “Ark of the Covenant”, You – as the Holy Spirit - dwell in us and meet with us continually. May I be ever-grateful and mindful of Your incredible gift and of Your amazing presence.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Lord God instructed Moses to take up a special collection because He wanted the Israelites to build a sanctuary where He could come among them without destroying them.

He gave Moses very detailed instructions as to every detail.

Key to it all was God's desire to draw the eyes of the Israelites away from the corrupting fallen things of the world and rather to His healing a loving and perfect presence.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

The Israelites had plundered Egypt of many valuables, God now asked that they voluntarily surrender some of what had become dear to them to build a place for sacrifice and worship.

DISCUSS

Imagine the reaction of the Israelites to the announcement that the Lord God wanted a sanctuary in order to dwell among them? Would their reaction have been fear, or joy, or some mixture of both?

REFLECT

Everything the Lord God described was portable – He knew that they would be traveling for a while.

SHARE

When you planned to travel what were the valuables which you prepared to be certain that they traveled well and were readily accessible?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you have sacrificed something that the world considers important for the sake of improving your intimacy with God.

ACT

Today I will celebrate the success of the Holy Spirit in leading me to the moment of maturity where I sacrificed something that the world sees as valuable for the sake of drawing nearer to Him. It may have been money and time spend on entertainment or a hobby, the pursuit of fame or fortune, popularity or possessions, but whatever it was it came between me and intimacy with my Lord God. And then I will commit to partner with the Holy Spirit to do it again in another area of my life.

Be Specific _____

Thursday (**Exodus 26 - 27**)

The Tabernacle

26:1 “The tabernacle itself you are to make with ten curtains of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet; you are to make them with cherubim that are the work of an artistic designer. 26:2 The length of each curtain is to be forty-two feet, and the width of each curtain is to be six feet – the same size for each of the curtains. 26:3 Five curtains are to be joined, one to another, and the other five curtains are to be joined, one to another. 26:4 You are to make loops of blue material along the edge of the end curtain in one set, and in the same way you are to make loops in the outer edge of the end curtain in the second set. 26:5 You are to make fifty loops on the one curtain, and you are to make fifty loops on the end curtain which is on the second set, so that the loops are opposite one to another. 26:6 You are to make fifty gold clasps and join the curtains together with the clasps, so that the tabernacle is a unit.

26:7 “You are to make curtains of goats’ hair for a tent over the tabernacle; you are to make eleven curtains. 26:8 The length of each curtain is to be forty-five feet, and the width of each curtain is to be six feet – the same size for the eleven curtains. 26:9 You are to join five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves. You are to double over the sixth curtain at the front of the tent. 26:10 You are to make fifty loops along the edge of the end curtain in one set and fifty loops along the edge of the curtain that joins the second set. 26:11 You are to make fifty bronze clasps and put the clasps into the loops and join the tent together so that it is a unit. 26:12 Now the part that remains of the curtains of the tent – the half curtain that remains will hang over at the back of the tabernacle. 26:13 The foot and a half on the one side and the foot and a half on the other side of what remains in the length of the curtains of the tent will hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on one side and the other side, to cover it.

26:14 “You are to make a covering for the tent out of ram skins dyed red and over that a covering of fine leather.

26:15 “You are to make the frames for the tabernacle out of acacia wood as uprights. 26:16 Each frame is to be fifteen feet long, and each frame is to be two feet three inches wide, 26:17 with two projections per frame parallel one to another. You are to make all the frames of the tabernacle in this way. 26:18 So you are to make the frames for the tabernacle: twenty frames for the south side, 26:19 and you are to make forty silver bases to go under the twenty frames – two bases under the first frame for its two projections, and likewise two bases under the next frame for its two projections; 26:20 and for the second side of the tabernacle, the north side, twenty frames, 26:21 and their forty silver bases, two bases under the first frame, and two bases under the next frame. 26:22 And for the back of the tabernacle on the west you will make six frames. 26:23 You are to make two frames for the corners of the tabernacle on the back. 26:24 At the two corners they must be doubled at the lower end and finished together at the top in one ring. So it will be for both. 26:25 So there are to be eight frames and their silver bases, sixteen bases, two bases under the first frame, and two bases under the next frame.

26:26 “You are to make bars of acacia wood, five for the frames on one side of the tabernacle, 26:27 and five bars for the frames on the second side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames on the back of the tabernacle on the west. 26:28 The middle bar in the center of the frames will reach from end to end. 26:29 You are to overlay the frames with gold and make their rings of gold to provide places for the bars, and you are to overlay the bars with gold. 26:30 You are to set up the tabernacle according to the plan that you were shown on the mountain.

26:31 “You are to make a special curtain of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen; it is to be made with cherubim, the work of an artistic designer. 26:32 You are to hang it with gold hooks on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold, set in four silver bases. 26:33 You are to hang this curtain under the clasps and bring the ark of the testimony in there behind the curtain. The curtain will make a division for you between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. 26:34 You are to put the atonement lid on the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place. 26:35 You are to put the table outside the curtain and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle, opposite the table, and you are to place the table on the north side.

26:36 “You are to make a hanging for the entrance of the tent of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twined linen, the work of an embroiderer. 26:37 You are to make for the hanging five posts of acacia wood and overlay them with gold, and their hooks will be gold, and you are to cast five bronze bases for them.

The Altar

27:1 “You are to make the altar of acacia wood, seven feet six inches long, and seven feet six inches wide; the altar is to be square, and its height is to be four feet six inches. 27:2 You are to make its

four horns on its four corners; its horns will be part of it, and you are to overlay it with bronze. 27:3 You are to make its pots for the ashes, its shovels, its tossing bowls, its meat hooks, and its fire pans – you are to make all its utensils of bronze. 27:4 You are to make a grating for it, a network of bronze, and you are to make on the network four bronze rings on its four corners. 27:5 You are to put it under the ledge of the altar below, so that the network will come halfway up the altar. 27:6 You are to make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and you are to overlay them with bronze. 27:7 The poles are to be put into the rings so that the poles will be on two sides of the altar when carrying it. 27:8 You are to make the altar hollow, out of boards. Just as it was shown you on the mountain, so they must make it.

The Courtyard

27:9 “You are to make the courtyard of the tabernacle. For the south side there are to be hangings for the courtyard of fine twisted linen, one hundred fifty feet long for one side, 27:10 with twenty posts and their twenty bronze bases, with the hooks of the posts and their bands of silver. 27:11 Likewise for its length on the north side, there are to be hangings for one hundred fifty feet, with twenty posts and their twenty bronze bases, with silver hooks and bands on the posts. 27:12 The width of the court on the west side is to be seventy-five feet with hangings, with their ten posts and their ten bases. 27:13 The width of the court on the east side, toward the sunrise, is to be seventy-five feet. 27:14 The hangings on one side of the gate are to be twenty-two and a half feet long, with their three posts and their three bases. 27:15 On the second side there are to be hangings twenty-two and a half feet long, with their three posts and their three bases. 27:16 For the gate of the courtyard there is to be a curtain of thirty feet, of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twined linen, the work of an embroiderer, with four posts and their four bases. 27:17 All the posts around the courtyard are to have silver bands; their hooks are to be silver, and their bases bronze. 27:18 The length of the courtyard is to be one hundred fifty feet and the width seventy-five feet, and the height of the fine twisted linen hangings is to be seven and a half feet, with their bronze bases. 27:19 All the utensils of the tabernacle used in all its service, all its tent pegs, and all the tent pegs of the courtyard are to be made of bronze.

Offering the Oil

27:20 “You are to command the Israelites that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, so that the lamps will burn regularly. 27:21 In the tent of meeting outside the curtain that is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons are to arrange it from evening to morning before the Lord. This is to be a lasting ordinance among the Israelites for generations to come.

PRAYER

Lord, Your attention to detail was with perfect precision and with perfect purpose, thank You that You are equally attentive to the lives of all who belong to You.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Lord God continued His presentation of the details of the portable tabernacle.

A key element in the design *“You are to hang this curtain under the clasps and bring the ark of the testimony in there behind the curtain. The curtain will make a division for you between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. 26:34 You are to put the atonement lid on the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place.”*

He reminded Moses *“You are to set up the tabernacle according to the plan that you were shown on the mountain.”*

Even the orientation of the tabernacle, when not being transported, was important *“You are to put the table outside the curtain and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle, opposite the table, and you are to place the table on the north side.”*

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

Moses had been previously given a vision of the tabernacle, as well as many of the details, so the Lord God was repeating Himself to be certain that Moses did not forget any of the important detail.

DISCUSS

Does the Lord's attention to detail give you greater confidence as to His awareness of the details of your life as well?

REFLECT

The Lord God was making it very clear that every detail of His laws and regulations were important.

SHARE

When have you been given a big picture by God, and later to experience Him filling in all of the detail?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you are skipping some of the Lord God's details for you life.

ACT

Today I will humbly acknowledge that I do not have all of the details, nor that I am even fully following the ones that I do know, and I will ask the Holy Spirit to remind me of what I have left undone. I will submit myself anew to study and prayer, service and discipline as the Holy Spirit leads.

Be Specific _____

Friday (**Exodus 28 - 29**)

The Clothing of the Priests

28:1 “And you, bring near to you your brother Aaron and his sons with him from among the Israelites, so that they may minister as my priests – Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron’s sons. 28:2 You must make holy garments for your brother Aaron, for glory and for beauty. 28:3 You are to speak to all who are specially skilled, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, so that they may make Aaron’s garments to set him apart to minister as my priest. 28:4 Now these are the garments that they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a fitted tunic, a turban, and a sash. They are to make holy garments for your brother Aaron and for his sons, that they may minister as my priests. 28:5 The artisans are to use the gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen.

28:6 “They are to make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twisted linen, the work of an artistic designer. 28:7 It is to have two shoulder pieces attached to two of its corners, so it can be joined together. 28:8 The artistically woven waistband of the ephod that is on it is to be like it, of one piece with the ephod, of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twisted linen.

28:9 “You are to take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, 28:10 six of their names on one stone, and the six remaining names on the second stone, according to the order of their birth. 28:11 You are to engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel with the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a seal; you are to have them set in gold filigree settings. 28:12 You are to put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod, stones of memorial for the sons of Israel, and Aaron will bear their names before the Lord on his two shoulders for a memorial. 28:13 You are to make filigree settings of gold 28:14 and two braided chains of pure gold, like a cord, and attach the chains to the settings.

28:15 “You are to make a breastpiece for use in making decisions, the work of an artistic designer; you are to make it in the same fashion as the ephod; you are to make it of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twisted linen. 28:16 It is to be square when doubled, nine inches long and nine inches wide. 28:17 You are to set in it a setting for stones, four rows of stones, a row with a ruby, a topaz, and a beryl – the first row; 28:18 and the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald; 28:19 and

the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 28:20 and the fourth row, a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper. They are to be enclosed in gold in their filigree settings. 28:21 The stones are to be for the names of the sons of Israel, twelve, according to the number of their names. Each name according to the twelve tribes is to be like the engravings of a seal.

28:22 “You are to make for the breastpiece braided chains like cords of pure gold, 28:23 and you are to make for the breastpiece two gold rings and attach the two rings to the upper two ends of the breastpiece. 28:24 You are to attach the two gold chains to the two rings at the ends of the breastpiece; 28:25 the other two ends of the two chains you will attach to the two settings and then attach them to the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front of it. 28:26 You are to make two rings of gold and put them on the other two ends of the breastpiece, on its edge that is on the inner side of the ephod. 28:27 You are to make two more gold rings and attach them to the bottom of the two shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod, close to the juncture above the waistband of the ephod. 28:28 They are to tie the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod by blue cord, so that it may be above the waistband of the ephod, and so that the breastpiece will not be loose from the ephod. 28:29 Aaron will bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of decision over his heart when he goes into the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually.

28:30 “You are to put the Urim and the Thummim into the breastpiece of decision; and they are to be over Aaron’s heart when he goes in before the Lord. Aaron is to bear the decisions of the Israelites over his heart before the Lord continually.

28:31 “You are to make the robe of the ephod completely blue. 28:32 There is to be an opening in its top in the center of it, with an edge all around the opening, the work of a weaver, like the opening of a collar, so that it cannot be torn. 28:33 You are to make pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet all around its hem and bells of gold between them all around. 28:34 The pattern is to be a gold bell and a pomegranate, a gold bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe. 28:35 The robe is to be on Aaron as he ministers, and his sound will be heard when he enters the Holy Place before the Lord and when he leaves, so that he does not die.

28:36 “You are to make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it the way a seal is engraved: “Holiness to the Lord.” 28:37 You are to attach to it a blue cord so that it will be on the turban; it is to be on the front of the turban, 28:38 It will be on Aaron’s forehead, and Aaron will bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the Israelites are to sanctify by all their holy gifts; it will always be on his forehead, for their acceptance before the Lord. 28:39 You are to weave the tunic of fine linen and make the turban of fine linen, and make the sash the work of an embroiderer.

28:40 “For Aaron’s sons you are to make tunics, sashes, and headbands for glory and for beauty.

28:41 “You are to clothe them – your brother Aaron and his sons with him – and anoint them and ordain them and set them apart as holy, so that they may minister as my priests. 28:42 Make for them linen undergarments to cover their naked bodies; they must cover from the waist to the thighs. 28:43 These must be on Aaron and his sons when they enter to the tent of meeting, or when they approach the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they bear no iniquity and die. It is to be a perpetual ordinance for him and for his descendants after him.

The Consecration of Aaron and His Sons

29:1 “Now this is what you are to do for them to consecrate them so that they may minister as my priests. Take a young bull and two rams without blemish; 29:2 and bread made without yeast, and perforated cakes without yeast mixed with oil, and wafers without yeast spread with oil – you are to make them using fine wheat flour. 29:3 You are to put them in one basket and present them in the basket, along with the bull and the two rams.

29:4 “You are to present Aaron and his sons at the entrance of the tent of meeting. You are to wash them with water 29:5 and take the garments and clothe Aaron with the tunic, the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastpiece; you are to fasten the ephod on him by using the skillfully woven waistband. 29:6 You are to put the turban on his head and put the holy diadem on the turban. 29:7 You are to take the anointing oil and pour it on his head and anoint him. 29:8 You are to present his sons and clothe them with tunics 29:9 and wrap the sashes around Aaron and his sons and put headbands on them, and so the ministry of priesthood will belong to them by a perpetual ordinance. Thus you are to consecrate Aaron and his sons.

29:10 “You are to present the bull at the front of the tent of meeting, and Aaron and his sons are to put their hands on the head of the bull. 29:11 You are to kill the bull before the Lord at the entrance to the tent of meeting 29:12 and take some of the blood of the bull and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger; all the rest of the blood you are to pour out at the base of the altar. 29:13 You are to take all the fat that covers the entrails, and the lobe that is above the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, and burn them on the altar. 29:14 But the meat of the bull, its skin, and its dung you are to burn up outside the camp. It is the purification offering.

29:15 “You are to take one ram, and Aaron and his sons are to lay their hands on the ram’s head, 29:16 and you are to kill the ram and take its blood and splash it all around on the altar. 29:17 Then you are to cut the ram into pieces and wash the entrails and its legs and put them on its pieces and on its head 29:18 and burn the whole ram on the altar. It is a burnt offering to the Lord, a soothing aroma; it is an offering made by fire to the Lord.

29:19 “You are to take the second ram, and Aaron and his sons are to lay their hands on the ram’s head, 29:20 and you are to kill the ram and take some of its blood and put it on the tip of the right ear of Aaron, on the tip of the right ear of his sons, on the thumb of their right hand, and on the big toe of their right foot, and then splash the blood all around on the altar. 29:21 You are to take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil and sprinkle it on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on his sons’ garments with him, so that he may be holy, he and his garments along with his sons and his sons’ garments.

29:22 “You are to take from the ram the fat, the fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the lobe of the liver, the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, and the right thigh – for it is the ram for consecration – 29:23 and one round flat cake of bread, one perforated cake of oiled bread, and one wafer from the basket of bread made without yeast that is before the Lord. 29:24 You are to put all these in Aaron’s hands and in his sons’ hands, and you are to wave them as a wave offering before the Lord. 29:25 Then you are to take them from their hands and burn them on the altar for a burnt offering, for a soothing aroma before the Lord. It is an offering made by fire to the Lord. 29:26 You are to take the breast of the ram of Aaron’s consecration; you are to wave it as a wave offering before the Lord, and it is to be your share. 29:27 You are to sanctify the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the contribution, which were waved and lifted up as a contribution from the ram of consecration, from what belongs to Aaron and to his sons. 29:28 It is to belong to Aaron and to his sons from the Israelites, by a perpetual ordinance, for it is a contribution. It is to be a contribution from the Israelites from their peace offerings, their contribution to the Lord.

29:29 “The holy garments that belong to Aaron are to belong to his sons after him, so that they may be anointed in them and consecrated in them. 29:30 The priest who succeeds him from his sons, when he first comes to the tent of meeting to minister in the Holy Place, is to wear them for seven days.

29:31 “You are to take the ram of the consecration and cook its meat in a holy place. 29:32 Aaron and his sons are to eat the meat of the ram and the bread that was in the basket at the entrance of the tent of meeting. 29:33 They are to eat those things by which atonement was made to consecrate and to set them apart, but no one else may eat them, for they are holy. 29:34 If any of the meat from the consecration offerings or any of the bread is left over until morning, then you are to burn up what is left over. It must not be eaten, because it is holy.

29:35 “Thus you are to do for Aaron and for his sons, according to all that I have commanded you; you are to consecrate them for seven days. 29:36 Every day you are to prepare a bull for a purification offering for atonement. You are to purge the altar by making atonement for it, and you are to anoint it to set it apart as holy. 29:37 For seven days you are to make atonement for the altar and set it apart as holy. Then the altar will be most holy. Anything that touches the altar will be holy.

29:38 “Now this is what you are to prepare on the altar every day continually: two lambs a year old. 29:39 The first lamb you are to prepare in the morning, and the second lamb you are to prepare around sundown. 29:40 With the first lamb offer a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a fourth of a hin of oil from pressed olives, and a fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering. 29:41 The second lamb you are to offer around sundown; you are to prepare for it the same meal offering as for the morning and the same drink offering, for a soothing aroma, an offering made by fire to the Lord.

29:42 “This will be a regular burnt offering throughout your generations at the entrance of the tent of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet with you to speak to you there. 29:43 There I will meet with the Israelites, and it will be set apart as holy by my glory.

29:44 “So I will set apart as holy the tent of meeting and the altar, and I will set apart as holy Aaron and his sons, that they may minister as priests to me. 29:45 I will reside among the Israelites, and I will be their God, 29:46 and they will know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out from the land of Egypt, so that I may reside among them. I am the Lord their God.

PRAYER

Lord, thank You that the era of the priest has passed and all who belong to You are priests whose high priest is Christ. You drew me near and offered me the gift provided by Jesus, then You washed me clean of my past – You own me and have set me apart as holy. May I be found faithful in a life devoted to You.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Lord God called “*Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron’s sons.*” to the priesthood, to serve in the newly created tabernacle.

He declared that “It is to be a perpetual ordinance for him and for his descendants after him.”

The details of their clothing were designed to set them apart and to indicate that their service is only valid through God and their speech only has authority as it comes from God.

For Aaron was to be made “... *a breastpiece, an ephod, and a robe, and each element of his priestly clothing had a meaning and a purpose:*

The breastpiece is summarized “*You are to make a breastpiece for use in making decisions... You are to put the Urim and the Thummim into the breastpiece of decision*” [From the NET translators notes: “U. Cassuto has the most thorough treatment of the subject (Exodus, 378-82); he lists several very clear rules for their uses gathered from their instances in the Bible, including that they were a form

of sacred lot, that priests or leaders of the people only could use them, and that they were used for discovering the divine will in areas that were beyond human knowledge.”]

The ephod bore the names of the 12 tribes as a reminder of God's chosen people and whom, o earth, the priest served at God's anointing.

The robe included “... *a gold bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe. 28:35 The robe is to be on Aaron as he ministers, and his sound will be heard when he enters the Holy Place before the Lord and when he leaves, so that he does not die.*”

For Aaron's sons was to be made “... *a fitted tunic, a turban, and a sash.*”

If they were to survive entry into the altar-area they must be dressed in this specific respectful manner.

It took more than clothes to prepare Aaron and his sons to serve in God's tabernacle, He instructed Moses “... consecrate them so that they may minister as my priests.”

Aaron and his sons were prepared somewhat like the sacrificial offerings they were being consecrated to handle on behalf of the Israelite people “... *present Aaron and his sons at the entrance of the tent of meeting. You are to wash them with water*”

Everything that was handled in the consecration received a status of holy, so that the bread and the meat could only be eaten by Aaron and his sons, leftovers had to be burned. Aaron's specially designed robes were to be passed to his sons and then to those who followed, to be worn for 7 days.

The Lord God established the tabernacle as “... *the tent of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet with you to speak to you there. 29:43 There I will meet with the Israelites, and it will be set apart as holy by my glory.*”

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

The Lord God did not merely call but He also attended to the details of preparation so that the one whom He had called displayed appropriate respect before Him for all of the people to see. The covenant to which the elders (the leaders of the 12 tribes) agreed on behalf of their people required their assent to be a priest-led people, so here the Lord God established that priesthood.

DISCUSS

How scary must it have been for Aaron, and especially his sons, to know that their preparation to enter the altar-area was so specific that death could result from any carelessness. One wonders how long it took the Israelites to discover that their lives just became more accountable and complex with the establishment of rules and rule-keepers?

REFLECT

The Lord God made certain that Aaron and his sons knew that they were servants of the 12 tribes and that every detail of everything that they did was specified by God and not subject to their changes. The Lord God was no longer a stranger to most of the Israelites, He “... *will meet with the Israelites*”.

SHARE

When have you sensed that the Holy Spirit was preparing you for a special form of service? Perhaps leading you to discipleship with mentoring in some area, leading you to learn about a different culture or nation, leading you into fellowship with a new community of people, etc. When did you discover a way that you prepare yourself to really come-apart with the Lord that helped you to make the most of that time? Perhaps fasting, perhaps going to a certain location, perhaps listening to certain music, perhaps reciting certain Bible text; not to create a rigid ritual but more-so learning how you focus on Him and disconnect from the busyness and noise of the world.

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to make you aware of your next place of service and to show you how to prepare yourself to be set apart for holy service.

ACT

Today I will ask a fellow believer to pray for confirmation of my calling and will then immediately and humbly pursue the preparation He calls me to so that I will be fully prepared with the tools to be His hands and feet in the world. I will humbly acknowledge my artificial piety, my carelessness, my distractedness, my rigid religiosity, or whatever other impediment to a full surrender to fellowship with the Holy Spirit during my time(s) apart with God. I will joyfully follow the leading of the Holy Spirit to a healthier means of preparing my special time with the Lord.

Be Specific _____

Saturday (Exodus 30 – 31:11)

The Altar of Incense

30:1 “You are to make an altar for burning incense; you are to make it of acacia wood. 30:2 Its length is to be a foot and a half and its width a foot and a half; it will be square. Its height is to be three feet, with its horns of one piece with it. 30:3 You are to overlay it with pure gold – its top, its four walls, and its horns – and make a surrounding border of gold for it. 30:4 You are to make two

gold rings for it under its border, on its two flanks; you are to make them on its two sides. The rings will be places for poles to carry it with. 30:5 You are to make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.

30:6 “You are to put it in front of the curtain that is before the ark of the testimony (before the atonement lid that is over the testimony), where I will meet you. 30:7 Aaron is to burn sweet incense on it morning by morning; when he attends to the lamps he is to burn incense. 30:8 When Aaron sets up the lamps around sundown he is to burn incense on it; it is to be a regular incense offering before the Lord throughout your generations. 30:9 You must not offer strange incense on it, nor burnt offering, nor meal offering, and you must not pour out a drink offering on it. 30:10 Aaron is to make atonement on its horns once in the year with some of the blood of the sin offering for atonement; once in the year he is to make atonement on it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the Lord.”

The Ransom Money

30:11 The Lord spoke to Moses: 30:12 “When you take a census of the Israelites according to their number, then each man is to pay a ransom for his life to the Lord when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them. 30:13 Everyone who crosses over to those who are numbered is to pay this: a half shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel weighs twenty gerahs). The half shekel is to be an offering to the Lord. 30:14 Everyone who crosses over to those numbered, from twenty years old and up, is to pay an offering to the Lord. 30:15 The rich are not to increase it, and the poor are not to pay less than the half shekel when giving the offering of the Lord, to make atonement for your lives. 30:16 You are to receive the atonement money from the Israelites and give it for the service of the tent of meeting. It will be a memorial for the Israelites before the Lord, to make atonement for your lives.”

The Bronze Laver

30:17 The Lord spoke to Moses: 30:18 “You are also to make a large bronze basin with a bronze stand for washing. You are to put it between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it, 30:19 and Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and their feet from it. 30:20 When they enter the tent of meeting, they must wash with water so that they do not die. Also, when they approach the altar to minister by burning incense as an offering made by fire to the Lord, 30:21 they must wash their hands and their feet so that they do not die. And this will be a perpetual ordinance for them and for their descendants throughout their generations.”

Oil and Incense

30:22 The Lord spoke to Moses: 30:23 “Take choice spices: twelve and a half pounds of free-flowing myrrh, half that – about six and a quarter pounds – of sweet-smelling cinnamon, six and a quarter pounds of sweet-smelling cane, 30:24 and twelve and a half pounds of cassia, all weighed according to the sanctuary shekel, and four quarts of olive oil. 30:25 You are to make this into a sacred anointing oil, a perfumed compound, the work of a perfumer. It will be sacred anointing oil.

30:26 “With it you are to anoint the tent of meeting, the ark of the testimony, 30:27 the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, the altar of incense, 30:28 the altar for the burnt offering and all its utensils, and the laver and its base. 30:29 So you are to sanctify them, and they will be most holy; anything that touches them will be holy.

30:30 “You are to anoint Aaron and his sons and sanctify them, so that they may minister as my priests. 30:31 And you are to tell the Israelites: ‘This is to be my sacred anointing oil throughout your generations. 30:32 It must not be applied to people’s bodies, and you must not make any like it with the same recipe. It is holy, and it must be holy to you. 30:33 Whoever makes perfume like it and whoever puts any of it on someone not a priest will be cut off from his people.’”

30:34 The Lord said to Moses: “Take spices, gum resin, onycha, galbanum, and pure frankincense of equal amounts 30:35 and make it into an incense, a perfume, the work of a perfumer. It is to be finely ground, and pure and sacred. 30:36 You are to beat some of it very fine and put some of it before the ark of the testimony in the tent of meeting where I will meet with you; it is to be most holy to you. 30:37 And the incense that you are to make, you must not make for yourselves using the same recipe; it is to be most holy to you, belonging to the Lord. 30:38 Whoever makes anything like it, to use as perfume, will be cut off from his people.”

Willing Artisans

31:1 The Lord spoke to Moses: 31:2 “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 31:3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God in skill, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, 31:4 to make artistic designs for work with gold, with silver, and with bronze, 31:5 and with cutting and setting stone, and with cutting wood, to work in all kinds of craftsmanship. 31:6 Moreover, I have also given him Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, and I have given ability to all the specially skilled, that they may make everything I have commanded you: 31:7 the tent of meeting, the ark of the testimony, the atonement lid that is on it, all the furnishings of the tent, 31:8 the table with its utensils, the pure lampstand with all its utensils, the altar of incense, 31:9 the altar for the burnt offering with all its utensils, the large basin with its base, 31:10 the woven garments, the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons, to minister as priests, 31:11 the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the Holy Place. They will make all these things just as I have commanded you.”

PRAYER

Lord, with whatever gifts You have given me, please allow me to humbly serve You in any way that You choose. May the incense of my obedience, and the anointing oil of my service to fellow believers, be a sweet offering to You.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Continuing His pattern the Lord God described in careful detail the incense and anointing oil and how it is to be handled. He insisted that the recipe of both be reserved exclusively to their priestly purposes, preventing either from being demeaned in common use.

He required the washing of priestly hands and feet prior to any service, adding to the high standards of everything associated with God's tabernacle presence.

He also required the payment of an atonement-ransom "Everyone who crosses over to those numbered, from twenty years old and up, is to pay an offering to the Lord ... a half shekel when giving the offering of the Lord, to make atonement for your lives." It is unclear as to how often this was done. Some (see NET translators notes) have speculated it was only for the purpose of raising an army, but this text does not support that. Tradition suggests an annual census, which would have a multiple value: counting the new males just turned 20 which could generally be extrapolated-out to estimate growth in the tribes, knowing who would be available should an army need to be mustered, as a sociological check-point in their individual maturity, and as a means to raise funds to maintain the tabernacle.

The money itself did not buy peace with God, it was a token of submission and part of the larger system of sacrifice.

After the Lord God instructed Moses as to what He wanted done He then identified those whom He had prepared to do it; in this case it was Bezalel, the son of Hur, "*I have filled him with the Spirit of God in skill, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship,*" and "*Oholiab son of Ahisamach ... I have given ability to all the specially skilled*" [The latter phrase perhaps better rendered "specialty skills"?]

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

God's instructions to Moses in the preparation of Aaron and his sons then became patterns for their lifelong priestly service. The Lord God gives gifts for His purposes, not ours.

DISCUSS

How exciting must it have been for a young man to approach the age of twenty and the atonement-ransom. For some it may have been a difficult financial sacrifice but for all it much have become an important transitional moment in life. How exciting would it be to know that God had given to you specific gifts for such a special purpose as the construction of the tabernacle and the manufacture of the robes and furniture and utensils?

REFLECT

At twenty years old the Lord God established a new level of responsibility for ones sin and for ones place within the larger Israelite civilization. While God has given us the ability to be creative we do not Create in the same original way that He did. Man labored then, as now, under the terms of the curse of the Fall. God's insistence that they cease from those labors one day each week was to keep them from becoming slaves to the world with no time for Him.

SHARE

When have you experienced a transitional moment like that of the twenty year old male under the OT old covenant? When have you experienced God using the gifts that He gave to you?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a transition moment where He would like you to pause and celebrate. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you are using God's gifts to His purposes and glory and where you are either failing to use those gifts or are misusing them to some worldly purpose.

ACT

Today I will ask a Biblical elder or other mature Christian friend to pray in-agreement with me to know what is a transitional moment in my life where the Holy Spirit has led me to a new step of more-mature faith. I will celebrate by doing something for another in His name, and by committing myself to push on toward the next step in my spiritual growth. Today I will celebrate the way(s) that God has and is using the gifts He gave me. I will also commit to partner with the Holy Spirit, and a prayerful accountability partner, to cease from using His gifts to my glory or that of anyone or anything other than Him.

Be Specific _____

All Bible text is from the NET unless otherwise indicated - <http://bible.org>

Note 1: These Studies often rely upon the guidance of the NET Translators from their associated notes. Careful attention has been given to cite that source where it has been quoted directly or closely paraphrased. Feedback is encouraged where credit has not been sufficiently assigned.

Note 2: When NET text is quoted in commentary and discussion all pronouns referring to God are capitalized, though they are lower-case in the original NET text.

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