

Sept. 27, 1998

"God Continues With Israel"
Exod. 1

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. Genesis began with the mysteries which surrounded the creation by God of the universe from nothing. A man and woman were made perfect by God, perfect (complete) but with the ability to defy God's instructions given for their best welfare. Adam's and Eve's sins, for this reason, Gal. 3:22, was incorporated into the being of every person thereafter born from their union, I Cor. 15:21-26, but God, through his forgiving grace, now provides eternal life with God if one trusts God's Son, Jesus Christ, Rom. 5:12-17. The above is an appropriate introduction to God's Word entitled Exodus, because that title means "the going (way) out." Literally and historically what is dealt with in Exodus is the going from Egypt to God's promised land by the nation of Israel. However, taking the entire Judeo-Christian Bible (Old and New Covenants) into account, the final "going out" is the final separation of one's spirit from the earthly, temporary dwelling place, the physical human body. The chief personages of Genesis include Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Now we come to the period of God's dealing with his especially selected people, the Israelites (Hebrews, Jews). The prime person noted throughout Exodus is Moses who was born of priestly parents (of the tribe of Levi) in Chap. 2 and who witnessed the glory of the Lord in the last chapter of the book as God's glory filled the tabernacle, Exod. 40:34. I believe that Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Covenant (Exod. 17:14; 24:4-7; 34:27; Dan. 9:11,13; Mal. 4:4) which five books are referred to in the New Covenant as "the law of Moses," John 1:17,45; 5:46; 7:19,23; Heb. 10:28. Paul, inspired by God's Spirit, stated that "the law is our (believers in Jesus) tutor (teacher or schoolmaster) to bring us to Christ that we might be declared righteous by our faith in his Son," Rom. 10:4-11; Gal. 3:24. Moses lived for one hundred twenty years. His life involved three equal periods of time: forty years in Pharaoh's household, forty years in the Midian desert area, and forty years leading the Israelites in the wilderness (desert). One of the chief results of Moses' leadership of the young nation Israel was the Lord's giving to him the law which was to be followed by God's people for their physical and spiritual welfare. Moses' very life was the result of his family's faith in God and their willingness to defy the Pharaoh's order that all Hebrew male babies be murdered at birth, "full term abortion."

II. The Exodus account begins with the word "Now" in the King James Version which has also been translated as: "This is the list of sons of Jacob," or, "These are the names of the sons of Jacob." However, to indicate the tie of Exodus with Genesis, I believe that "Now" could better be translated as it is in the Hebrew, a conjunction, "And [again] here are the names of the children of Israel [Jacob]." Then Moses, the author, lists all twelve sons indicating that Joseph was already in Egypt before Jacob brought the others down. Long before the beginning of the Exodus story, Joseph died and his contribution to Egypt's welfare during the dire drought had long ago been forgotten. The children of Israel's faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob continued on as is evident in Moses' choices in

his life, Heb. 11:24-27. "[Moses] endured as seeing him who is invisible." In this period each generation passed to its own children the value of faith in the God of Abraham and how critical that repeated oral revelation was to sustain the Israelites' knowledge of, loyalty to, and faith in God Almighty. And that period lasted for over four hundred years, Gen. 15:13; Exod. 12:40; Gal. 3:16-18. There were thirty years from the call of Abraham in Ur to the time when God covenanted with him at Gen. 15:6-18. In that covenant God told Abraham that his posterity would dwell as strangers in a land that would not be theirs and that they would be servants and slaves to the inhabitants of that land. We learn at vs. 7 of our chapter today that during these four hundred years as slaves, the Israelites would "be fruitful, increase abundantly, multiply and become very numerous so that the strange land (Egypt) would be filled with them."

III. We have observed several times in the later chapters of Genesis that when Joseph and his family first came to Egypt as a group (seventy persons in all), the Pharaoh was a Shepherd King of the Semitic peoples of Arabia. During this period the Hamitic Egyptians were, in a sense, hostages to these Shepherd Kings. In vs. 8 we are told that by Moses' time the Semitic leaders had been replaced by Hamitic Pharaohs who were antagonistic to the Hebrews who continued to multiply and cause the Egyptians trouble. The Bible states, "And there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." In fact, the Pharaoh informed his people that, "Look what is happening, the people of Israel are more [populous] than we and more forceful than we," vs. 9. If we do not take appropriate measures, they will ally with our enemies and overpower us. The action they took was to place slave drivers over the Israelites to work them so hard that they would either die of exhaustion or leave Egypt. The work they were forced to do was to make building materials, primarily clay bricks, with which the king built two cities, Pithom and Ramses. But, the Pharaoh noted, the harder they worked, the more numerous they became! For the king this continued to be dreadful. To assist the Hebrew women in childbearing, Hebrew midwives were used, two of whom were Shiphrah and Puah. The king gave these midwives strict instructions that as they delivered babies, while the pregnant women sat upon the birthing stools, every male baby was to be killed and the females were to remain alive. What the king had overlooked was that the midwives listened to their God, Jehovah, rather than the king. They practiced what we know today as "civil disobedience." The first believers in Jesus as the Savior (Messiah) practiced the same disobedience at Acts 4:19 when Peter and John asked the rulers, "Which is right, to do God's will or yours? Judge for yourselves." The Hebrew midwives refused to kill infant male children, deferring to what they knew was God's will. The king asked them why they refused to follow his command, and they replied that the Hebrews were not frail as the Egyptian women. The Israelite women delivered their own babies before the midwives came. God honored the midwives and made for them special homes. After all else failed, the Pharaoh commanded all families to throw all male babies into the River Nile and save only the females. Some of the reaction we shall see next Lord's Day.

Oct. 11, 1998

"The Deliverer Moses Is Born"
Exod. 2

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. Because of the time and situation in the life of Jacob's (Israel's) descendants in Egypt, the need was apparent for a strong leader to do God's will regarding Israel's welfare. That leader whom God brought into being was the son of a couple of the members of the tribe of Levi. God's choice for the birth of this leader came when Pharaoh of Egypt feared Jacob's posterity because of the danger they presented to his nation, in his opinion. The king had decreed that, in order to reduce the Hebrew people's increase, every family was to drown every male child born into a Hebrew family in the Nile River. Females would be spared in this plan of Hebrew population control. The parents of the coming leader of Israel were Amram and Jochebed although they did not name him because of the circumstances of his birth. Jochebed was Amram's father's sister, i.e., he was then marrying his aunt. We know that the couple had three children, two boys and one girl. The girl was older than one of the boys. One boy was named Aaron and the girl was named Miriam. The other son was born while the kill-all-male-newborns edict was in effect. When this the other son was born, his parents were especially impressed with his physical characteristics. His mother decided to hide him for his safety which she did for three months. After three months she felt that his crying would betray her secret. Amram's family evidently lived near the Pharaoh, because the Pharaoh's daughter took her baths in the river nearby. When the boy's cries made him conspicuous, his mother Jochebed fashioned a basket of reeds (bulrushes) which grew about twelve or fifteen feet high with stalks two or three inches in diameter alongside the river. Papyrus was a genus (scirpus) of these bulrushes which were used for making writing surfaces. Jochebed wove the basket closely and spread slime and pitch on its exterior so that it would float on the water at the river's edge among the reeds. She then stationed Miriam in hiding, within eyesight of the ark basket and placed her three-month old precious boy within the basket. One day Pharaoh's daughter came to the river for her bath. Her attendants were asked to examine the ark and bring it to the daughter. When she opened the ark, the baby boy cried and aroused her compassion toward him. The daughter recognized the boy as one of the Hebrew's babies. Miriam came near at this time and suggested, since Pharaoh's daughter could not nourish such a young infant, that she (Miriam) could find the young one a wet-nurse to serve. Pharaoh's daughter took her suggestion, and Miriam went and called the child's mother (and hers) Jochebed. The daughter of Pharaoh told her to nurse it for her, and she would pay her for her trouble! For some time the boy was cared for by his mother. We are not told at what age (Nursing usually lasted about three years.), but when the boy was able to eat for himself, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him as her own child and named him Moses. She chose this name, because, she said, "I drew him out of the water," vs. 10. (Moseh means "to draw forth.")

II. When Moses was born, the children of Israel had been in Egypt about three hundred and twenty years (400 - 80 = 320 years). He lived in Pharaoh's household for forty years, and at that age he

became outraged when he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew whom Moses identified with as one of his kin. He glanced in every direction, and seeing no one, he killed the abusive Egyptian and buried him in the sand. The very next day he saw a Hebrew fighting another Hebrew. Moses asked the aggressor why he would attack a fellow Hebrew. Evidently, the Hebrews held Moses in contempt as one of their own who was favored by Pharaoh. The two joined together in expressing their contempt by asking Moses, "Who made you a prince and judge over us? Do you intend to kill us as you did the Egyptian yesterday?" Moses at once realized that the Hebrew whom he had saved had made Moses' act of murder the previous day known. Pharaoh heard of Moses' act of murder and sought to kill him, but Moses, knowing that he could not defend himself against his grandfather (by adoption), fled all the way to Midian in the northwest section of the Sinaitic Peninsula along the east bank of the Red Sea. At the age of forty Moses chose to abandon the family who had nurtured him since childhood as an adopted member of the family. He had, no doubt, been afforded the best education in the world at that time at the Temple of the Sun university, where he studied astronomy, chemistry, architecture, philosophy, etc. We get an insight into Moses' upbringing at Acts 7:20-41 where Stephen said of Moses, "Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him as her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds." God had, by age forty, trained a person exceedingly above average for his magnanimous task of taking God's people to the land he had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The evidence is that one of Moses' chief abilities was his literary skill as indicated by his having written the Pentateuch, i.e., Genesis through Deuteronomy. Moses' counterpart in the early New Covenant period was Paul of Tarsus and Jerusalem. In both instances God needed well trained minds disciplined by a profound, unfettered faith in the one, true God, the Creator of all the universe.

III. When Moses arrived in Midian, he sat down by a well. As he sat there, the priest of Midian's seven daughters came to that well to fill the troughs for their father's flocks. The local shepherds drove them away from the well. Moses saw how maliciously the shepherds had treated the seven young women, and interceded in their behalf. They were therefore able to water their father's flock, with Moses' help, and return home earlier than usual. Their father, Reuel (Jethro), noted their promptness, "How is it that you come [home] so soon today?" They told him that an Egyptian had been at the well and assisted them. Moses had, of course, become as one of the Egyptians in appearance and bearing when reared in Pharaoh's household. Jethro chided his daughters for not having invited him to their home for food. Moses was then invited into his home by Jethro who, in time, gave the "Egyptian" the hand of his daughter Zipporah in marriage. Zipporah gave birth to Moses' son Gershom which means "sojourner," because Moses said that he was a temporary resident of Midian. Meanwhile, back in Egypt, another Pharaoh came to power who was even harsher with the Hebrews. God heard their groaning and acknowledged their need and his promise to Abraham. Next Lord's Day we shall see God's action as a result of the burden of his people and his compassion for them.

Oct. 25, 1998

"God Appears To Moses"
Exod. 3-4

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. As you read the Scripture which we will discuss through Exodus, please remember that we will consider two chapters each Lord's Day instead of one per Sunday as we did in Genesis. By reading the two chapters within the week preceding our discussion, the outline will be more interesting, I believe. In the New Covenant which our heavenly Father provides through his Son Jesus Christ, we believers are all priests of God, because God the Holy Spirit lives within each of us who are trusting Jesus as Savior and Lord. However, during the Old Covenant period, God appeared only to certain individuals. Examples of God's appearing to individuals are: To Adam and Eve, Gen. 3:8-10; to Noah, Gen. 6:9,13; to Abram (Abraham), Gen. 12:7; to Isaac, Gen. 26:2; to Jacob, Gen. 28:13. I cite these instances to illustrate the parallel which appears in Exod. 3:3-6, one of the chapters we are examining today. Now, in the name of Jesus Christ, we believers converse with the God and Creator of the entire universe. Our God is the true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, Matt. 22:32. God appeared to Moses first when he had taken his father-in-law (Jethro's) sheep for grazing. On this occasion Moses went much farther south into the lower area of the Sinaitic Peninsular than he had been going to graze Jethro's herds. He took the herd all the way to the Horeb Mountain Range in which is located Mount Sinai. It was there that in a bush the messenger of God appeared to the eighty-year-old Moses. The bush was, or appeared to be, afire, but the leaves and branches were not consumed, i.e., not burned to ash. This unnatural phenomenon caught Moses' attention. (Remember his Egyptian training in physics, etc.), and he turned aside to examine further the situation. The Lord noted Moses' interest and spoke to him from the bush saying, "Moses, Moses." Moses answered that he had heard his name called. The Lord cautioned, "Do not come too close, but take off your shoes, for this land is holy ground. Moreover, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob." Moses covered his face, being afraid to look upon God, John 1:18. (I believe that this "messenger" of God was the preincarnate Christ.) This awe of God's holiness by Moses gave him strength which he needed to do God's will. Moses had taken action back at Exod. 2:11 when he saw his own people mistreated and saw that they, the Hebrews, needed deliverance from the oppression of the Egyptians. His action was in his own strength, displayed by his killing of the Egyptian who physically hurt and humiliated a Hebrew. Now after forty more years of life, Moses is beginning to realize that the task of delivering the Hebrews was only what God could do. When God appeared to Moses and he saw the miracle of God, he saw the power which alone could save his people.. Examine Paul's experience at I Cor. 1:25-31; II Cor. 12:7-10.

II. God did not plan to save his people from Egypt entirely by miracles. No, his plan included Moses' participation, for God elected to commission Moses to be a part of his plan to bring his people, the Hebrews, back from Egypt to the land he had promised them.

The Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, - - I know their pain," Vs. 3:7. What surprised Moses was the Lord's next statement, "I am come down to deliver them, - - come now, therefore, and I will send you unto Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt," Vs. 3:8-10. Moses knew that God was right about the misery of the people of Israel, but he questioned whether God was fully aware of his (Moses') limited abilities. Moses had been away from Egypt for forty years, even his own people the Egyptians or Hebrews would not remember who he was or his intentions. (Note Paul's experience in Acts 9:26-28.) "Who am I?" Moses asked God. God promised him that he would be with him to lead Jacob's people back to the promised land, via this very mountain, Sinai. Moses then suggested that the Hebrews could have forgotten who God is, Vs. 3:13. God said to Moses, "I AM that I AM, therefore tell the children of Israel 'I AM has sent me to you.'" Vs. 3:14. Further, God told Moses that the One sending him is the Lord God of their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the One who is forever, the One to be remembered by all generations [of mankind], Vs. 3:15. Then God gave Moses a plan to approach the massive task. Gather the elders (leaders) together and explain God's assignment, but explain to them that the Pharaoh will object. First, Moses is to go with the elders to the Pharaoh and ask for a three-day-journey out into the desert to offer a sacrifice to their God, worship. Pharaoh will veto the request, but I will perform works among the Egyptians to change the king's mind. When you leave Egypt, you will carry a spoil [for your earnings as Egyptian slaves].

III. Moses responded negatively to God's proposal, because "they will refuse to believe that God has appeared to you," Vs. 4:1. God then demonstrated how he would convince Pharaoh and the Hebrews. He told Moses to take his shepherd's rod and throw it to the ground. He did. The rod became a snake from which Moses fled, but God told Moses to grasp it by the tail. As Moses followed God's command, the snake became a rod again. Then God told Moses to place his hand under his clothing on his chest and remove it. His hand came out white with leprosy. The Lord told him to repeat the procedure, and when he did, his hand came out whole (cured). God told Moses that if they did not believe such signs, he should take water from the river and throw it upon the bank where it would become blood. (Concerning God's use of signs see Matt. 12:38-40; John 10:36-39; 11:45-48; 12:37; Acts 2:11,22; 10:46-48; 19:1-7.) Moses' complained to God of his inability to speak well (stutterer?). Moses' reluctance provoked the Lord to say that he had created him. Further, the Lord promised Moses that he could speak to Aaron, his brother, who would speak for him. Also, "You will have your rod for miracles." When Moses returned to Jethro, he took his wife and son, Zipporah and Gershom, and left for Egypt. At their first stop the Lord appeared to Moses and reminded him of his need to be circumcised. Apparently, Moses circumcised himself, and Zipporah circumcised Gershom. The occasion upset Zipporah, but it pleased God, Exod. 18:2-12. Moses returned to Horeb, and the Lord sent Aaron to meet him there. They planned their return to Egypt. In Egypt, Aaron spoke for Moses and the latter performed miracles as needed. The Israelites believed and worshiped the Lord.

Nov. 1, 1998

~~Oct. 23, 1998~~

"Moses Rejected And God Speaks"
Exod. 5-6

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. Moses has accepted God's commission to return to Egypt from Midian and confront the Pharaoh with the proposition that, as the Lord's people, the king should permit the Israelites to leave Egypt and return to Canaan. At this time in Egypt's history the huge population of the Israelites, about two million, had become a large segment of Egypt's population who did most of the manual labor of the nation. Their herding days were long past, and their efforts were assigned by the Egyptians to be producers of building materials, household servants, etc. They were driven by Egyptian over-lords to, and beyond, their capacity to the point of daily stress. It was in this uncivil climate that Moses and Aaron made an appointment with Pharaoh to tell him, "The Lord of Israel says for you to let my people go into the wilderness (desert) and keep a pilgrim-feast to honor (worship) our God," Exod. 5:1. Pharaoh's response was, "Who is the Lord that I should give such leave to you Hebrews? I do not know your Lord and, therefore, I will not permit you three days to be away from your labor." Moses (probably through Aaron) told Pharaoh that if the Hebrews did not so recognize their Lord, he could visit them with pernicious, deadly physical conditions even to the killing of the Egyptians' firstborns. This request made Pharaoh very angry and vindictive and caused him to issue the following command to the slave-masters over the Hebrews: No longer are the Hebrews to be provided with straw for brick reinforcement for the bricks. They are to gather their own straw while maintaining the same daily quota of brick production. We will show the Hebrew slaves whether they have enough time to be practicing their religious fervor in idleness in the desert! Their religious leanings toward spending time away from their work is an appeal to vanity, an unnecessary waste of time, Exod. 5:7-9.

II. Pharaoh's command was passed down through the ranks. These taskmasters quoted the Pharaoh's new plan concerning the increase in expected work. The Hebrews were constantly badgered and the Hebrew leaders appealed directly to Pharaoh. The king reminded them that they had wanted to perform "unnecessary" religious rites out in the wilderness which indicated that they had spare time away from their assigned work. The Pharaoh refused to budge from his new stringent position. The Hebrew leaders went immediately to their religious leaders, Moses and Aaron, and complained that, "Your request for religious leave has made us to stink in Pharaoh's eyes." From this encounter (Note the chain of command.), Moses "returned to the Lord," and prayed, "Lord, why have you, (He was, after all, following the Lord's command, Exod. 4:22-23; 5:1.), brought so much trouble upon your people? Why did you choose me for such a forbidding task? Since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has treated your people wickedly, and he has made no effort at all to relieve your people," Exod. 5:22-23.

III. The Lord's answer to Moses' prayer: "You shall see what I will do to Pharaoh, and when I am through, the king will willingly decide to let my people go, even to driving them out," Exod. 6:1.

Further, God told Moses, "I am the Lord [YHWH], and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by the name of God Almighty [EL SHADDAI] (Gen. 17:1), not by my name Jehovah [YHWH], Lord, was I known to them." I believe that the distinction or difference the Lord God is making to Moses here in the two names is the time element involved. God is telling Moses here that he was God to people before the covenant he made with Abraham and his son and grandson, Isaac and Jacob. However, in fulfilling that Abrahamic covenant, a long period of time would take place before the covenant would be consummated. Taking the Hebrews to Canaan would be fulfilled many millennia hence as well as a nearer time during Solomon's era. The "bottom line" on God's communication to Moses at Exod. 6:2-4 is that God's relationship with Abraham's descendants, the Hebrews, is now with an earthly nation whereas he had been relating to heads of households before this time. God was also relating himself to be the self-existent One, as a Being who is depending upon no one or upon no thing, apart from Himself. God is completely self-sufficient. (Remember the I AM designation at Exod. 3:14.) He is wholly, one-of-a-kind, completely independent, within Himself, but everyone and everything else depends wholly, exclusively upon the only one true God and Creator of all creation. In this absolutely sovereign position, God chose to dwell in his Son, Jesus his Christ (Savior), and subjugate himself to the pinnacle of his creation, humanity, II Cor. 5:17-21; Col. 1:17. God told Moses at Exod. 6:4 that he (God) had established (made or ratified) his (God's) covenant with Israel, as a nation, the land of Canaan permanently, a land which had been and would be for some time a temporary dwelling place. I believe that the Hebrews have still not received that promise on a permanent basis but will when Jesus returns to earth, Acts 1:6-7; Rom. 11:25-32; Heb. 11:39-40.

IV. God continued his answer to Moses' prayer by confirming God's knowledge of the agony of the Hebrew people under Egyptian slavery and his covenant with Jacob's posterity. Further, God will bring his people away from Egypt. While this is being done, and thereafter, God will bring his people to the land which he swore to the Hebrews' forefathers, Exod. 6:6-8. When Moses related God's promise to his people, they disregarded the promise because of their bitter role as slaves. Moses, again, prayed to God who told him to go again to Pharaoh and reiterate the request to leave. Also, God told Moses and Aaron to go personally to the Hebrew leaders and assure them that God, indeed, was about to become personally involved in releasing his new nation from Egyptian slavery. At this place in God's Word, Exod. 6:14-25, many Hebrew leaders are given by name, the ones who are to approach Pharaoh personally and again request to leave Egypt. This personal plea by these Hebrew leaders is the prelude to God's harsh treatment of the Egyptians because of the order of the Pharaoh to retain the Hebrews. The king's position was only hardened in the interchange with God's request, Exod. 9:12, 16; Rom. 9:13-24. God again instructed his servant Moses to appeal again to Pharaoh for God's people, but Moses complained to God about his lack of speaking ability. The plot thickens as we shall see next Lord's Day. Lest we should become impatient with God's long-suffering, our side wins eventually!

Nov. 8, 1998

"God's Plagues Begin"
Exod. 7-8

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. At the end of Chap. 6 Moses had continued to complain to God that his speech was not forceful enough to persuade Pharaoh that the Lord was determined that the Hebrews should be permitted to leave Egypt after their four-hundred-year sojourn. The Lord's response to this complaint of Moses was indeed unusual, "See I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be a prophet," Exod. 7:1. This elaboration of God's commission of Moses to Pharaoh meant that Moses was to represent the Lord, and Aaron was to speak for God as directed by Moses. Moses was to represent God before the Hebrews and Pharaoh. Aaron, as the prophet, was simply to be the spokesman to relate God's message. We as believers in God's message of forgiveness through the Lord Jesus Christ are prophets or evangelists as we witness to those who have not heard the Gospel, the Good News of the Lord. At Exod. 7:2-3 God repeats the links of his message bearing, i.e., God will instruct Moses, Aaron will tell the Pharaoh, and God will harden the heart (will) of the king. God's part in hardening Pharaoh's heart is often misunderstood. God's part in the process was to make Pharaoh's introspective will known publicly, not to force him to change his will. God has never, from Adam and Eve in Eden, forced anyone to do his will. We humans have never been God's puppets, because God did not want the relationship to be so. God can create conditions which encourage individuals to make a right decision (God's will), but God never forces his will on any human's will. Finally, every person is in control of his or her own spiritual condition. God's invitation to all today is, "whosoever [wills to] believe in him [Jesus the Christ, Savior] will not perish [be condemned spiritually], but will have eternal life [be at one with God, spiritually alive or quickened]," John 3:16; Rev. 22:17. Even Jesus as a human (God in human flesh) did not do his own will but God his Father's, Matt. 26:39,42,44; John 10:27-30. God's will was that Jesus be sacrificed for anyone who will trust his Son's righteousness for eternal life, Isa. 53:10-11; II Cor. 5:17-21.

II. At this time God revealed to Moses that Pharaoh will be encouraged by God's action to show his hand publicly. The king refuses to accept Moses' God rather than the Egyptians' many gods. Pharaoh will learn Moses' God is superior to the false gods of Egypt by God's actions in Egypt. Moses is now eighty years of age and Aaron is eighty-three. They both followed God's instructions when he told them to demonstrate God's miraculous power when Pharaoh asked them. They visited Pharaoh and threw down Moses' staff which became a snake. At once Pharaoh called his "wise men," magicians (sorcerers), and asked them to analyze Moses' miracle. Their answer was to perform the same feat through their sleight-of-hand tricks. Just as the Lord had predicted, Pharaoh's heart remained hardened against Moses' request. He refused to discuss the matter further when his own magicians were able to duplicate the miracle. This phenomenon has been explained by some scientists as the release of microcosms known as flagellates and associated bacteria from the red soil up river during an unusual flood-year of the Nile.

Pharaoh's magicians' ability to repeat the act would be explained by a recurrence of the flood level of the Nile. Even if this were true, the timing of the two events would have been entirely at the discretion of God. Why would the second flood have been performed by God? Remember the hardening of Pharaoh's heart (will, revealing Pharaoh's real position in not wanting the Hebrews to leave Egypt) was yet God's purpose. The Egyptians had to dig wells away from the river's flow for potable water for seven days, Exod. 7:24-25.

III. After the plague of a bloody river and the lack of drinking water, the Pharaoh continued to refuse the request of Moses. The Lord told Moses to warn Pharaoh that further refusal would cause the Lord to fill the land of Egypt with frogs. And the frogs will be so numerous that living quarters of all Egyptians will be uninhabitable. The frogs will infiltrate even the bedcovers in all homes including the servants. The frogs will fill the cooking ovens and wiggle in dough being kneaded for cooking. Having forewarned Pharaoh, the Lord told Moses and Aaron to stretch forth their hands and the sanctified staff over the streams, tributaries, and ponds. As they did so, the frogs appeared and aggravated every Egyptian household. Oddly, again the Egyptian magicians were able to create the same existence of frogs, but Pharaoh believed that Moses' and Aaron's God was responsible for the plague of frogs. The king begged Moses to pray to his God (beg him) to take away the frogs, and, if the Lord would do so, Pharaoh would let the Hebrews go. The king would promise anything to get rid of the frogs! Interestingly, the magicians could produce excess frogs, but they would not kill or otherwise dispose of them. At this point it is well, I believe, that we be reminded that each of the plagues involved Egyptian gods. The Nile was sacred to the Egyptians, because it produced water and plant nutrients (silt) which sustained human life. The god constructed and worshiped by the Egyptians representing the Nile was called Osiris. A beautiful temple built by the Egyptians at Memphis was dedicated to the god Heka, an ugly frog-headed goddess. The frogs appeared in the Nile predominately in the spring when the planting time occurred. Thus Heka was the god associated with reproduction. Frogs were therefore sacred and could not be killed by the Egyptians. However, Moses and the Hebrews held no such religious falsity. When Moses prayed to the Lord, all of the frogs died, were heaped away from homes, and gave respite to the people. The frogs were dead, and Pharaoh refused to let Moses go. The third plague involved lice which infiltrated the soil, and the soil represented the Egyptian god Geb. The magicians could not duplicate this plague even though they tried. These sorcerers informed Pharaoh that, because they could not do the same feat, it must be an act of Moses' God, not one of theirs. Even so, Pharaoh refused Moses' request. The fourth plague brought swarms of flies across the entire nation. These "flies" were perhaps "flying beetles" or scarabs (dung beetles) which the Egyptians associated with their sun-god Ra. The Lord, through Moses, told Pharaoh that he would exempt the Hebrews' area, Goshen, to prove his position. The Lord did so, but later, when the flies were depleted, Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the Hebrews go to serve him as a nation. The king still would not do God's will!

Nov. 15, 1998

"God's Plagues Continue"
Exod. 9-10

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. We should remember that the ten plagues which the Lord visited upon Egypt were to demonstrate the real God of the universe over the false gods of the Egyptians, Exod. 9:13-16; Rom. 9:16-24. Through Chap. 8, four plagues had appeared involving the blood in the River Nile, a preponderance of frogs, lice in the soil, and flies (dung beetles). All four plagues were loathsome to the Egyptians even though each represented one of the gods revered and worshiped. But Egypt had many gods, for their religion was polytheistic so the plagues continued. The next plague brought a terrible disease (murrain) upon the cattle, horses, donkeys, camels, oxen and sheep. This disease was especially bothersome, because it adversely affected food, clothing and transportation for the Egyptians. To distinguish between the division between Himself as the true God of the Hebrews and Egyptian gods, God made a difference in the animals of the Hebrews and the animals of the Egyptians. The Egyptians' animals were diseased, but the Hebrews' were not. Further, to emphasize the difference, God appointed a specific time when the problem would arise, tomorrow! Just as the Lord had promised, the Egyptians' animals died, and the Hebrews' did not. Pharaoh even sent representatives to Goshen to double check on God's promise, but he still would not let God's people go. He learned that God keeps his promises. God's Word promises that anyone who trusts Jesus as God's Messiah (Savior) will live eternally, spiritually (John 11:25-26), and he will keep that promise forever!

II. The sixth plague should remind us of what happened to the prophet Job at Job 2:1-11. God permitted Satan to strike his servant Job with boils "from the bottom of his feet to the crown of his head." These sores itched and aggravated Job so menacingly that he took pieces of broken clay jugs and scraped the sores for comfort. His wife assured him that if he would become disloyal to God, he would find comfort from death. Job told her that God permits men, even those who believe in him, to receive both good and evil during mortal life. Eliphaz, Job's "friend," in trying to convince Job that he (Job) was not a true believer in God, said, "What is man that he should be clean, and he [anyone] which is born of a woman should be righteous?," Job 15:14-16. Job told Eliphaz that he and the others were miserable comforters, all of them, Job 16:1. Job longed for, "One that might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbor!" (Job 16:20-21). Job's conclusion was, due to his belief in God, "And though after my [life] worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh [a new body] shall I see God," because, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at a latter day upon the earth," Job 19:25-26. What God revealed to Job made Job a much wiser man than his critics: his wife, Bildad, Zophar, and Eliphaz. Jesus, God's Redeemer, did come to salvage spiritually anyone who will trust him, II Cor. 4:8-15. The Lord told his servants Moses and Aaron to take handfuls of furnace ashes and, in Pharaoh's presence, sprinkle them upward toward heaven. They did as the Lord commanded, and it happened then that the dusty

ash went all over Egypt causing sores to come upon every person and beast. Even the magicians (priests, holy men) were smitten with open boils so that religious rites were halted. But the refrain continued, "and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart" as the Lord had forewarned Moses.

III. At the beginning of the seventh plague, as noted above, the Lord confided in Moses why he was bringing these awful plagues upon Pharaoh and Egypt, "that my name may be declared throughout all the earth," Exod. 9:16. All gods are false except the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses! This plague was large hail falling over the entire nation of Egypt. The hail was accompanied by fire (lightening?), Exod. 9:24, and was unlike any phenomenon ever seen in Egypt. The devastation was so thorough that Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron to tell them that he recognized that he had sinned. Your Lord is righteous and my people and I are wicked, Exod. 9:27. Perhaps the evidence was building in Pharaoh's mind to bring about this conclusion because, again, in the land of Goshen where the Hebrews lived, the hail and fire were not experienced. Moses honored Pharaoh's request to ask the Lord to cause the hail and lightning to cease. But when the destruction ceased in answer to Moses' prayer, Pharaoh remained steadfast in his position not to let God's people leave Egypt. Moses really did not expect a change of Pharaoh's heart, because the Lord had said as much before. Again, for the eighth time, the Lord told Moses to approach Pharaoh and warn him of a pestilence. The Hebrews' God would now bring locusts upon the nation to ravish all plant life. "How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go that they might serve me," the Lord said to Pharaoh through Moses and Aaron, Exod. 10:3. The locusts will cover the earth so that you will be unable to see the ground, and the pests will literally fill every house. With this warning Pharaoh's servants begged the king to let the Hebrews leave and serve their God. "How long will you let this man [Moses] be a snare to us," Exod. 10:7. Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and told them that they could go and serve their Lord, but asked them about who among them would be expected to leave. Moses answered that everyone with all their herds would be going. Pharaoh said that only the men would be permitted to go. When Moses refused to leave without the women, children, and herds also, Pharaoh drove them from his presence. The Lord then told Moses to stretch forth the sanctified rod over Egypt. The Lord brought a strong east wind which blew for twenty-four hours. On the second day the locusts came and ate all the vegetation which the hail and fire had left. Pharaoh begged for mercy and God blew away the locusts with a strong west wind. As before, Pharaoh refused the Lord's proposal. With Pharaoh's stubbornness, the ninth plague was sent by God, a thick darkness for three days. Pharaoh then agreed that all of the Hebrews could leave, including the women and children, but they must leave their herds. Moses told Pharaoh that the animals would be a necessary part of their sacrifice to their God, and therefore everything must leave. The king became furious and drove them out, telling them that if he saw them again, he would kill them. Moses agreed and left. Only the tenth plague remains, and we shall see what happens next Lord's Day.

Nov. 22, 1998

"Death: The Last Plague"
Exod. 11-12

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. God's Word states at Rom. 6:23 that, "For the wages of sin (that which separates one from God) is death (the spiritual state of being separated from God), but the gift of God is eternal life (being at one with God [united with]) in Jesus Christ, our Lord." God through nine calamities (plagues) had pleaded with Pharaoh to permit his people, the Hebrews, to leave Egypt and become a nation unto themselves in Canaan, but Pharaoh remained stubborn (with a hardened heart, sinful) and refused God's request through Moses and Aaron. Over and over Moses had been directed by God to go to Pharaoh and appeal to him on behalf of the Hebrews. Just after the ninth plague (darkness) Moses went to Pharaoh, and in his continuing begging for God's will to be done, Pharaoh threatened to kill Moses and Aaron if they came to the king again, Exod. 10:28-29. Because of this threat we note, as Chapter Eleven begins, the Lord speaks with Moses, but Pharaoh is not spoken to before the tenth plague. The Lord said to Moses, "Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Every household will have its firstborn killed as well as the firstborn of every beast," Exod. 11:5-6. Afterwards he will let you go away. At this time (after the tenth plague), Pharaoh will not only let you go, "he shall surely thrust you out of his country, gladly," Exod. 11:1. In preparation to leave Egypt, the Lord gives what to us believers in Jesus Christ is a rather strange instruction. The Hebrews are to borrow (ask for) from their Egyptian neighbors things of value which can be transported readily, e.g., silver and gold jewelry. Why would the Egyptians be willing to give their valuables to people who were leaving and who would surely not be able to return the gifts? There were two reasons, I believe: First, Moses had an excellent reputation among the Egyptians (Exod. 11:3), i.e., he was well respected. Second, the Egyptians were well aware of the what and why of the terrible plagues (nine) which had befallen them. In other words, they welcomed an end to the catastrophes which they believed would cease only when the Hebrews were allowed to go and serve their God, Exod. 10:7. The Egyptians had endured a bloody Nile, frogs in their bread and beds, lice all over the land, flies (dung beetles) everywhere, disease which decimated livestock, open sore boils on all people and beasts, hail which destroyed most plant life, locusts to finish all plant life which the hail did not destroy, and finally, three days of darkness so eerie that one could feel it. Why was Pharaoh so insistent that the Hebrews remain in Egypt? First, these approximately two million Hebrews were performing the physical and menial tasks for the Egyptians as virtual slaves. They were building whole cities which would later portray the Pharaoh as a strong king who had accomplished great things for Egypt and the Egyptians, for so had the pyramids. Second, Pharaoh was against the Hebrews' leaving, because God planned to use Pharaoh's reluctance, while serving his false gods, to demonstrate that he (God) is the true Creator, the only God, I AM, Exod. 3:14; 9:16; 11:9-10; 12:12; Rom. 9:17.

II. The tenth and last plague which the Lord God brought upon Egypt is extremely important, both to the Hebrews as well as to us who

trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as God's Messiah (Savior), for the Jews from that time to the present celebrate what God did for the Hebrews in relieving them from Egyptian slavery to become a distinctive nation in the earth. It is important for us believers, because we believe, as did John the Immerser, that "Jesus was fathered by God's [as] Holy Spirit," Matt. 1:20; Lk 1:34-37, but also, "Jesus is God's [Passover Lamb] who takes away the sin of the world [from everyone who will trust him]," John 1:29,34; I Cor. 5:7-8. This tenth plague is announced in Exod. 11, and instructions for the Passover (Exod. 12:1-20), participation in the Passover (Exod. 12:21-28), the redemption made possible by the Passover (Exod. 12:29-36), and freedom afforded to believers and participants in the Passover (Exod. 12:37-51), are given in Exod. 12.

III. The Lord told Moses that the time of the tenth plague will start the Hebrew year thereafter. On the tenth of that first month, the entire nation of Israel will, in each household, take a lamb in its first year and without blemish (healthy) and prepare it until the fourteenth day of the same month (for four days). On that fourteenth day in the evening every family will kill the lamb especially chosen for that family, save the blood from the sacrificed lamb, and take the blood therefrom and strike (place) it on the two side posts and the top door beam of every Hebrew house. The lamb's flesh is to be eaten by the family that night. Any portion not eaten is to be burned completely. The lamb is to be roasted, but not boiled in water, and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The family of Israel (Jacob, seventy persons) had come to Egypt about four hundred years before, but now about two million Hebrews were leaving as a nation. Very noteworthy is the fact that the new nation will begin by celebrating the Feast of the Passover as families in concert with all other Hebrew families. The nation did not make the families, but the families made the nation. The families are to become the building blocks which constitute the nation just as individual believers in Jesus are to be the building blocks of the Ecclesia, I Pet. 2:4-10. When the Hebrews were freed from Egypt, their innocent children were delivered with the families from bondage. This movement from physical bondage can logically be likened to the taking up from the earth of the Ecclesia when Jesus comes again for us believers, Matt. 24:27-31; I Cor. 15:42,50-52,58; I Thes. 4:13-18. I believe that when Jesus comes for us, all believers, the infants and all youngsters who have not reached the age of accountability (those too young to realize their need for a Savior) will be taken as redeemed by the blood of Christ along with each person who has received Jesus as his or her Lord and Savior. The same will be true for all believers and innocents who have died physically before Jesus comes for us. They too will Jesus bring with him and who will have been with Jesus since their mortal demise. The entire family of faith, the whole Ecclesia, will be made up of individual family members, not a "glob" or a large mass without individual distinctives. I believe that we will know each other in heaven. We have not the ability in this life even to conceive of the glory and rapturous conditions which await us who are trusting our Creator through Jesus our Lord and Savior, I Cor. 13:12; Philip. 3:10-21. Faith in Jesus is our Passover for sins.

Nov. 29, 1998

"Moses' God Triumphs"
Exod. 13-14

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. At Exod. 12:1-3 (last Lord's Day) we learned that when God instituted the Passover Feast for the nation of Israel, he told Moses and Aaron to make that month the beginning of the nation's year. Very probably the Egyptians followed a solar month with the year made up of twelve thirty-day months plus five additional days, i.e., three hundred sixty-five days. The Hebrew calendar, however, became a year of twelve lunar months probably because the moon cycle of size-changes gave a definite method of determining a regular variable for honoring certain events. For sure the Lord wanted his new nation to note and remember in perpetuity God's action for the new nation's creation and care. Israel's deliverance from Egypt by the Lord was an outstanding feat which God wanted Israel's (Jacob's) posterity never to forget. The ten plagues were brought about by God to signify the Lord of the Hebrews as the true God of the universe, confounding the falsity of the thousands of false gods (idols) of the Egyptians. Because of the above, I have with today's outline given two tables relating to some of the false gods of the Egyptians and the calendar of the Hebrews based upon God's directive to Moses and Aaron regarding having the year begin with the month Abib, Exod. 13:4. As you observe the pre-exilic name of the months, you will note that many months have no names given. However, these months were designated by numbers only, elsewhere in the Old Covenant: third, Exod. 19:1; fourth, II Kings 25:3; fifth, Numb. 33:38; sixth, I Chron. 27:9; ninth, Ezr. 10:9; tenth, Gen. 8:5; eleventh, Deut. 1:3; and twelfth, Est. 3:7. Note at the last month cited in Est. 3:7, that post-exilic names of months are also given for Abib (Nisan) and for the twelfth month, Adar. For the most part in the New Covenant, calendar references are to the current Jewish calendar. It is important to remember that all Hebrew calendars, in every case, uses Abib as the base month, month one, Exod. 12:13; 13:4, the month when God's superiority over pagan (false) gods had been thoroughly demonstrated once and for all in the earth, for all humanity to know forever thereafter, Exod. 20:1-7; Deut. 6:5; 10:12; 30:6; Jer. 25:6; Matt. 22:34-40.

II. God's Word, in connection with the Passover Feast, lays down a provision which makes clear what is to happen eight days following our Lord Jesus' birth, God's Messiah (Savior), Lk 2:21-24. The Lord told Moses, "Set apart (sanctify) for me all the firstborn, whosoever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: such a son is mine," Exod. 13:2. Further, every Israeli is to remember what the Lord did for their nation in bringing them from slavery beginning in the month of Abib. To indicate that they have not forgotten, their bread is to be prepared without leaven (yeast) for seven days. On the seventh day of unleavened bread the Hebrews are to proclaim it a holy Feast Day. This is to be an annual observation in the month of Abib. Even after the Lord has brought the nation of Israel into the land of the Canaanites and their neighbors, the Passover Feast is to be practiced annually. To their children who are born through all the years which follow are to be told with proper solemnity the meaning of the

special diet of unleavened bread which is eaten for seven days. Every year at Passover time tell your children, "This is done because of what the Lord did for me to free me from Egypt," Exod. 13:8. Observance of the Passover is to be a perpetual regulation for my people, the Hebrews. Every male which is born a Hebrew is to be redeemed by the shedding of a lamb's blood. The same redemption rite is to be performed with a lamb for the firstborn of all beasts. When a lamb is not available for a beast's firstborn, that firstborn's neck is to be broken, Exod. 13:13. Tokens of remembrance are to be placed upon the hands and between the eyes of the Hebrews to indicate that they were freed from Egypt by God's strong hand. The chief point to be remembered about Passover is that the Hebrews' freedom from slavery in Egypt would not have happened without the Lord's instruction and action. Their becoming a nation in the earth was due solely to God's choice and power.

III. With the above groundwork laid the time has come for the exodus of God's people from Egypt. No map was needed, because "God led them." God had a method and route for the Hebrew nation to follow, for the Lord knew the weakness of humanity and the inadequacy of the young nation to defend itself militarily at this time. They could have gone directly from Goshen to Canaan, but God led them across the Red Sea out into the barren desert. They were so led because, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds (repent) when the Philistines opposed them, and return to Egypt," Exod. 13:17. At Gen. 50:24-26 Joseph, when dying, took a sworn oath from the Israelites that they would take his body with them when they would be leaving Egypt for Canaan. (His prophecy is now being fulfilled!) Moses kept the oath and took Joseph's body with them when they left. After the Hebrew people had left Egypt, Pharaoh believed that as soon as they were struggling through the desert, he would be able to overtake them and implement his change of mind not to let the Hebrews leave Egypt after all, Exod. 14:13. When Pharaoh learned that God's people were actually leaving Goshen and leaving all their work for the Egyptians to do, they complained, "Why have we done this, letting the Hebrews go from serving us?" (Exod. 14:5) Before Israel reached the Red Sea, Pharaoh went toward them with his entire military force. Israel was encamped on the west side of the sea when they saw Pharaoh's troops coming. When the Hebrews saw their predicament, the sea on the east and Egyptian troops on the west, they became filled with dread and fear. They cried unto the Lord and accused Moses of taking them to the desert for burial. They reminded Moses that they were better off back in Egypt as slaves, rather than die in the barren desert! Moses told them to settle down and observe the Lord's deliverance from their danger. God's messenger had led his people with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The Egyptians pressed hard upon them, but God's cloud moved between the two groups while Moses, at the order of God, stretched his hand over the sea which divided to permit the host of Israel to cross through the sea on dry ground with the water walled up on their right and left. The Egyptians followed, but when the Hebrews were on the east bank, God closed the sea which completely covered Pharaoh and his army. Israel witnessed God's miracle, feared and believed their Lord, and Moses, his servant.

Pagan Gods of Egypt

Name	Responsibility	Form or Sacred Animal
Aker	Earth-god • Helper of the dead	Two lion heads
Amon	Wind-god • God of Thebes • Helper of the pious	Human (ram and goose sacred)
Anubis	Glorifier of the dead	Jackal-headed, black-skinned
Apis	Ensures fertility	Bull
Aton	Sun-god	
Atum	Primordial creature-god	Serpent-human
Bes	Protection at birth • Dispenser of virility	Group of demons
Edjo	Goddess of Delta/Lower Egypt	Uraeus serpent
Geb	Earth-god • Consort of Nut • Begetter of Osiris	Human
Hathor	Sky-goddess • Goddess of love, dance, alcohol	Cow
Heket	Primordial goddess	Frog
Horus	Sky-god	Falcon
Isis	Goddess of life, healing • Daughter of Geb Consort/sister of Osiris • Mother of Horus	Human
Khepri	Primordial god • Rising sun	Scarabaeus
Khnum	Giver of the Nile • Creator of mankind	Human with ram's head
Khons	Moon-god	Human
Maat	Justice • Daughter of Ra	Human
Meskhenet	Goddess protector of newborns and of destiny	
Min	God of virility and reproduction	
Mut	"Eye of the sun," consort of Amon	Vulture or human
Nekhbet	Goddess of Upper Egypt	
Nut	Sky-goddess • Consort of Geb Mother of Osiris and Seth • Mother of heavenly bodies	
Osiris	Dead pharaohs • Ruler of dead, life, vegetation	
Ptah	Creator-god • Lord of artisans	
Ra	God of sun, earth and sky • Father of Maat • National god	Human with falcon head
Sekhmet	Goddess of war and sickness	Human with lion head
Selket	Guardian of life • Protector of dead	Scorpion
Seshat	Goddess of writing and books	
Seth	God of chaos, desert and storm, crops • Brother of Osiris	
Shu	God of air, bearer of heaven	
Sobek	Creator-god	Crocodile
Sothis	God of Nile floodwaters	
Thermuthis	Goddess of fertility and harvest; fate	Serpent
Thoth	God of wisdom, moon, chronology • Messenger of gods	Ibis or baboon
Thoueris	Goddess of fertility and women in labor	Hippopotamus

	Month	Pre-exilic name	Post-exilic name	Modern equivalent	Season	Festivals
Rain	1	ABIB Ex. 13:4; 23:15; 34:18; Dt. 16:1	NISAN Est. 3:7 Ne. 2:1	Mar.-Apr.	Spring Latter rains Barley harvest Flax harvest	14 Passover (Ex. 12:18; Lv. 23:5) 15-21 Unleavened Bread (Lv. 23:6) 16 Firstfruits (Lv. 23:10f.)
	2	ZIV 1 Ki. 6:1, 37	IYYAR	Apr.-May	Dry season begins	14 Later Passover (Nu. 9:10-11)
Dry	3		SIVAN Est. 8:9	May-June	Early figs ripen	6 Pentecost (Lv. 23:15ff.) Feast of Weeks Harvest
	4		TAMMUZ	June-July	Grape harvest	
	5		AB	July-Aug.	Olive harvest	
	6		ELUL Ne. 6:15	Aug.-Sept.	Dates and summer figs	
	7	ETHANIM 1 Ki. 8:2	TISHRI	Sept.-Oct.	Early rains	1 Trumpets (Nu. 29:1; Lv. 23:24) 10 Day of Atonement (Lv. 16:29ff.; 23:27ff.) 15-21 Tabernacles (Lv. 23:34 ff.) 22 Solemn assembly (Lv. 23:36)
	8	BUL 1 Ki. 6:38	MARCHESVAN	Oct.-Nov.	Ploughing Winter figs	
Rain	9		CHISLEV Ne. 1:1	Nov.-Dec.	Sowing	25 Dedication (1 Macc. 4:52f.; Jn. 10:22)
	10		TEBETH Est. 2:16	Dec.-Jan.	Rains (snow on high ground)	
	11		SHEBAT Zc. 1:7	Jan.-Feb.	Almond blossom	
Cold						
Rain	12		ADAR Est. 3:7	Feb.-Mar.	Citrus fruit harvest	

The Hebrew calendar, showing seasons and festivals with modern equivalents.

Dec. 6, 1998

"Israel Sings And Complains"
Exod. 15-16

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. From the last two verses of Exod. 14 we learned that after God delivered his people, the Israelites, by blood (the Passover) out of Egypt, he exercised his power again by safely taking them through the Red Sea. In both instances God exercised miraculous power. This exercise of power reminds me of what our Lord told the early believers in his messiahship at Acts 1:8, "But you (disciples) shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." These words were the Lord's last before he was taken up into heaven. Jesus' messengers told the disciples, as they witnessed the Lord's ascension, that he would return in a like fashion. Jesus stated that after all nations of the earth have heard the Good News, "then shall the end come," Matt. 24:14. We who are enthusiastically awaiting the Lord's return should work diligently to spread the Gospel of God's good news! (I Cor. 15:58) The Hebrews under God's miraculous power were so happy about God's deliverance from Egyptian bondage that they sang a song of exuberance, "I will sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider [the Egyptians] has he thrown into the sea [Red]. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God and I will praise him [with my living], my fathers' [Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob] God, and I will exalt him - - Thy right hand, O Lord, has become glorious in power: your right hand, O Lord, has dashed in pieces the enemy," Exod. 15:1-6. Why were the people of Israel so marvelously elated? I believe we can better understand their happiness when we relate their immediate past experience with ours. A key to that understanding is found at I Cor. 10:1-4, "Moreover, brothers [believers in Jesus Christ], I would not have you without understanding how our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea [Red] and were all immersed [baptized] with Moses in the cloud and in the sea." We should see clearly how Paul (God's Word) relates the Israelites as having been uniquely immersed "in" the Red Sea, although they came through the sea completely dry! Immersion (baptism) is a symbol or sign of establishing a relationship, in this case, through their faith in God's power to deliver them from impending danger. How do we know that they were exercising faith in God in their willingness to walk through the Red Sea? Because we are told at Heb. 11:29, "By faith they [the Israelites] passed through the Red Sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians attempted [and] were drowned." Immersion of a believer in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit does not save a person (make him or her spiritually redeemed by God), but rather is a symbol of what has already happened when a person trusts God's Messiah (Savior), Jesus Christ, for eternal life and the direction and power of his Holy Spirit, to escape, not the Egyptians, but rather the danger of eternal separation from God (spiritual death). Immersion was chosen by our Lord Jesus as the proper method to identify with or relate to himself, personally and spiritually, Matt. 3:13-17; 28:18-20, "Be immersed [baptized], and I will be [identified with or related to] you throughout the current age."

Today, being right with God depends upon establishing, through individual faith, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This relationship begins when one first yields to God's Holy Spirit (being born again, spiritually) from above, John 3:5-7; I Cor. 12:13-14). The Holy Spirit is the one who connects or joins us to Christ, causing us as individuals to become one with him. This relationship is the very best thing that can happen to a person in his or her lifetime.

II. The song of Moses, sung by Moses and the Israelites, raises questions in the minds of some Bible students about God's involvement in using the force of battle. Recently I stated that God does not trespass an individual human's will, ever. God's Word states that God is love, I John 4:14-19. Note that love will be completed when we, who are trusting Jesus as Savior, have boldness (assurance) in the day of judgment, I John 4:17. We believers who are sons of God through spiritual adoption, Gal. 4:4-7, do not escape punishment by our Holy Father, God, Prov. 3:11-12; 13:24; Heb. 12:5-11. Further, as God's children, we believers must stand before God and give an account of our service (not spiritual salvation) as his children, Rom. 14:8-12. Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth - - but a sword," Matt. 10:34. I believe that that promise will be fulfilled at Rev. 19:11-16. The earth's humanity will become so utterly despicable and contemptible to God that the Spirit will cease (Gen. 6:3) finding willing hearts to do God's will. Destruction to renew the earth will be God's choice as at Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. 19:24-25; II Pet. 3:10-13; Jude 7. God is love, but Godly love corrects error, i.e., love calls for judgment of and retribution for sin, John 16:6-13; Rev. 20:9-10.

III. Moses led the nation of Israel away from the Red Sea after his sister Miriam led the women in singing and dancing accompanied with tambourines, Exod. 15:20-21. As the Hebrews went out into the desert another three days, they found no life-sustaining water for themselves or their animals. At Marah they found no potable, but bitter water. The people looked to Moses for a solution, "What shall we drink?" Moses found a plant which sweetened the water. After advancing to Elim, they found twelve wells, an oasis. They camped there, and Moses cautioned the people that unless they followed God's leading, they could be overcome with plagues as befell the Egyptians. The nation advanced from Elim southward to the Sin Desert toward Sinai. After two months from Egypt, Israel was dissatisfied and grumbled against Moses and Aaron. Without adequate food they said that it would have been better to have died back in Egypt than die from hunger here. The Lord told Moses that he would furnish food directly from heaven for his people. Only a day's supply would come down daily except for the sixth day when a two-day portion would come down. They were to gather on that sixth day enough for the seventh. This arrangement was to test the people regarding God's law of supply and demand and God's law concerning the Sabbath, God's memorial day of rest. Greed tempted some, and Paul referred to this problem at II Cor. 8:7-15. God appeared to the Hebrews there in a cloud and supplied manna for forty years until they reached Canaan, Exod. 16:10,15,35.

Dec. 13, 1998

"Israel Murmurs, God Supplies"
Exod. 17-18

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

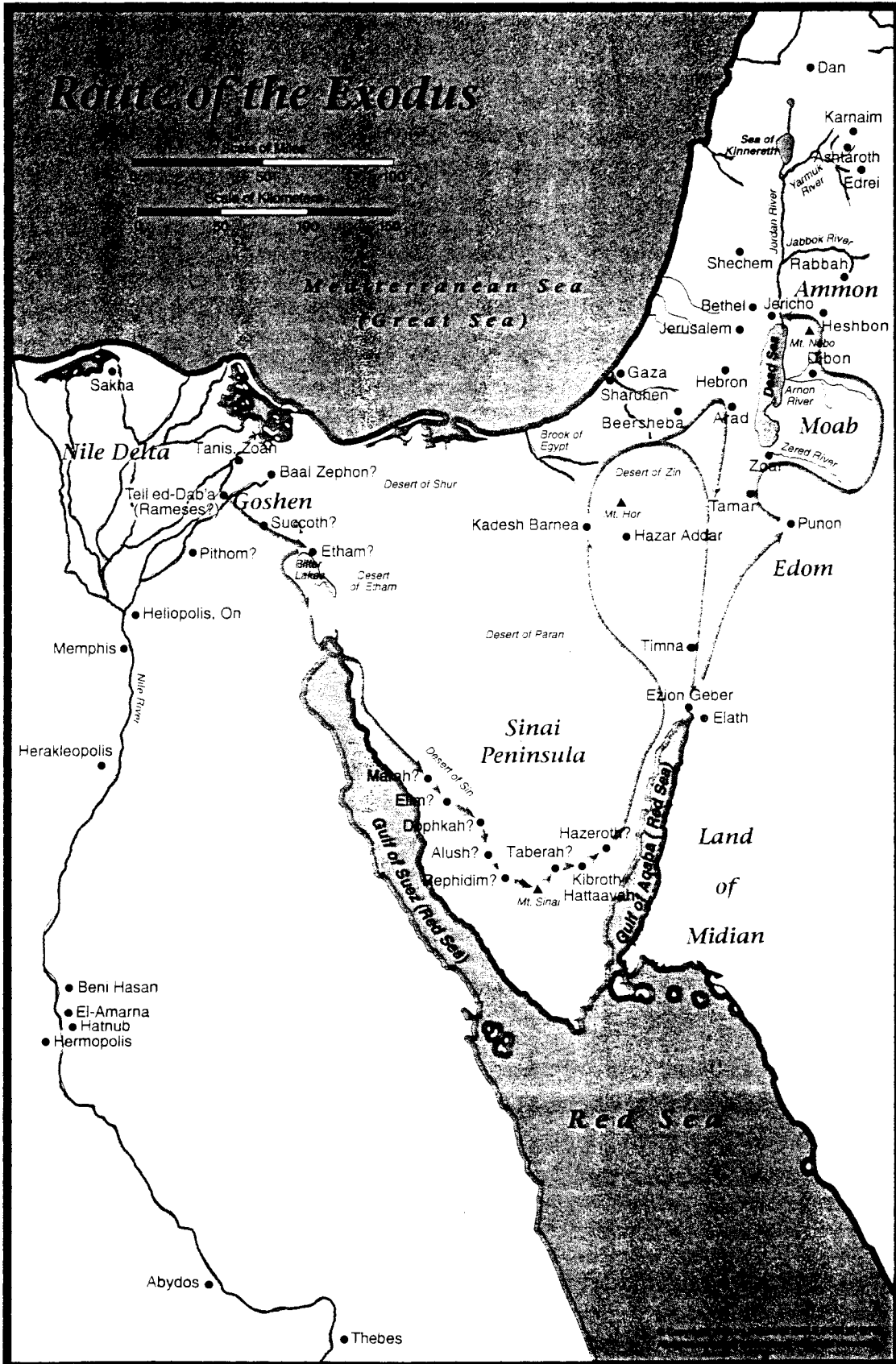
I. Last week we left Israel in the Sin Desert, and today they follow the Lord's directive on south to Rephidim where they set up camp. If Moses had not planned to rely upon God's providing their need for water, I do not believe that he would have set up camp for about two million of God's people to pause on their journey to the land of Canaan. The animals also required water daily. All of the Israelites, however, did not have Moses' faith in God. Moses was the obvious leader of the people, for he it was who had instigated the grand Exodus from Egypt where they had been for over four hundred years. The difference in Moses' faith and the nation at large caused the people to contend strongly with their leader. Moses told the people not to test the Lord, because it was the Lord, after all, who had given directions to Moses and Aaron to implement God's promise back through the generations to Abraham. At Gen. 15:18 God had made a covenant with Abraham, "Unto your descendants I have given this land from the river of Egypt [Nile] unto the great river, the river Euphrates." The evidence is that Moses accepted the terms of this covenant for the Israelites. The people's complaint to Moses was both practical and direct, "Why have you brought us out of Egypt to this barren land to kill us, our children, and our herds with thirst," Exod. 17:3. Moses, in turn, turned to God telling him that the people were "ready to kill me with stones." The Lord told Moses to convene the elders (leaders) of the nation and use the sanctified rod which you used back in Egypt on the Nile. Take the rod (staff) and I will show you a particular peak in the Horeb mountain range. Be sure that the leaders all see what you are doing, i.e., following the instructions of the Lord. When you strike the mountain of rock, water will gush forth, enough for the people and the animals. God promised that his (God's) presence would be evident in the process of water production, Exod. 17:6. Moses followed the Lord's instructions explicitly, and thereafter named the peak, as it produced ample water, Messah and Meribah which mean "tested" and "contention," because there the people of Israel tested God and contended with his leader Moses.

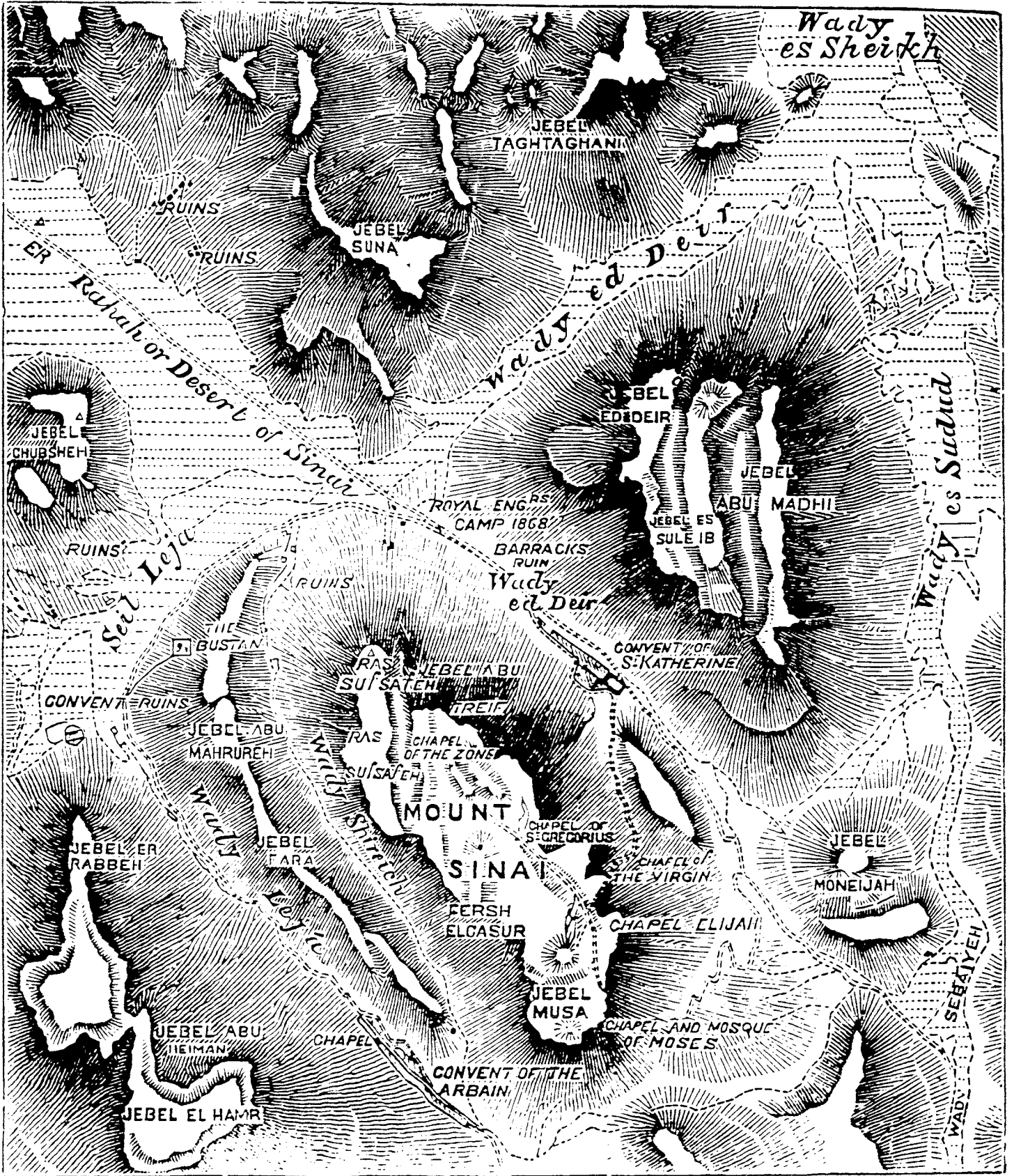
II. With the need for water satisfied, the next challenge for the Israelites was an encounter with the Amalekites. The Amalekites were a nomadic tribe whose wealth was their vast flocks and herds. They were the descendants of Esau, Gen. 36:12. Jacob's twin brother Esau had a son Eliphaz whose concubine Timna bore him the son Amalek. Esau (Edom) deliberately took his wives and concubines from among the Canaanites (Gen. 26:34-35) whereas Isaac made sure that Jacob took a wife from his own people, Gen. 24:1-7, 37-38, 67. Now on the Sinaitic Peninsula Jacob's and Esau's descendants meet in conflict again hundreds of years later! The Israelites were certainly not prepared for military endeavors as they were later, but Moses knew that their passage to Canaan could not be deterred. So Moses selected Joshua to conscript and command a group of men to overcome the Amalekite objection to their passage toward Canaan. Moses acted as a lookout on a nearby hill and with hand signals kept Joshua informed of how to engage in the fight. The signals were given

by Moses' arms, and during the day his arms became so tired that Aaron and Hur needed to help Moses by supporting his arms. The result was that the Amalekites were defeated. The Lord told Moses to include this incident in his writing of the Pentateuch. Also, Moses built there an altar, "Because the Lord has sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek's descendants from generation to generation," Exod. 17:14-16.

III. By this time Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had heard of Moses' leading the Israelites out of Egypt under the Lord's instructions and power. The Biblical evidence is that Moses' wife Zipporah and their two sons had stayed with Jethro while Moses had gone from Midian to Egypt to extricate the Israelites. We last knew of Zipporah's presence at Exod. 4:25-26 when she, at Moses' insistence, had circumcised their son. Apparently, Zipporah did not approve of the circumcision, for she, in disdain, said at the time, "You are a bloody husband, because of the circumcision." (See Gen. 25:1-4 regarding how the Midianites related to the Israelites.) Zipporah was willing at that time to leave Moses and return with their sons to Jethro's home back in Midian. Now when Jethro comes from Midian to Rephidim, he brings Zipporah with the two sons, Gershom and Eliezer. It appears to me that Moses and Zipporah do not seem to be on very close terms, for when they met no mention is made of their greeting each other after being apart for over a year. Moses' attention was devoted entirely to his father-in-law whom he bowed to, ushered into his tent and asked, "How have you been?" Moses and Zipporah could have reconciled, and he simply did not choose to give an account of the incident when he wrote about it later.

IV. Jethro appears to have undergone a change of heart about Moses' God with the deliverance of the Israelites from the strong nation of Egypt. Although Jethro was a religious person (a priest in Midian, Exod. 2:16), he did not recognize Moses' God as the one true God of the universe. Now at Exod. 18:11 Jethro states explicitly that, "Now I know that the Lord [Moses' God] is greater than all gods, for the things which he has displayed over the gods of Egypt." To emphasize his newfound faith, Jethro took a burnt offering and sacrificed to Moses' God. Moses, Aaron and the elders of Israel attended the sacrifice to God, and ate together with Jethro. The next day Jethro stayed with Moses as he conducted his affairs as God's leader of God's people. Moses acted as a judge representing God to the people of Israel from sunrise until sundown. When Jethro noted the amount of work and stress Moses encountered that day, he suggested to his son-in-law that he, rather than do all the work alone, select leaders to help lighten his own load. They can make decisions on less serious matters and refer the major problems to you (a multiple judicial system). Jethro's suggestion appealed to Moses so he instituted the change. God must approve the plan, Exod. 18:23, but Moses did not ask him. We should note also that this same type of judging the affairs of Israel continued on even through the Lord's days on earth in human flesh. The Sanhedrin (a council-chamber) was the Jewish leaders who condemned our Lord Jesus to physical death and his immediate followers, Matt. 26:57,59; Mk 15:1; Lk 22:66; Acts 4:1-31; 5:21.





Outline Map of Mount Sinai.

Dec. 20, 1998

"God's Ten Commandments"
Exod. 19-20

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. Up to Chap. 19 the new Israelite nation had been directed by God's presence. In the third month after fleeing Egypt, the Hebrews reach Mount Sinai in the Horeb range where they are to be given by God the option of continuing to be directly under God's leadership (grace) or serve the Lord by keeping a law given by him to Moses, Exod. 19:3-4. Now the great host of Judah's descendants have pitched their camp in the desert near the foot of Sinai. After the camp was set, Moses went up the mountain, and the Lord spoke to him out of the mountain. The Lord recalled to Moses what he had done in delivering the Israelites from bondage by destroying the Egyptian military force. God wanted Moses to remind the Hebrews of God's direct intervention against the Egyptians on their behalf. The Lord had sustained his people as an eagle and delivered them as a distinct entity (nation) for his own purpose. If you (the Hebrews) will continue to do my bidding, "you shall be a special people for me above all people, for all the earth is mine. And you shall be for me a kingdom of priests, a sanctified nation," Exod. 19:5-6; I Pet. 2:1-5. Moses went down from Sinai and told the nation what the Lord had said. The people gave unanimous consent to the Lord's proposition. This agreement meant that the Hebrews agreed to relate to all peoples (nonHebrews) as representatives (priests) of God. They were to influence all peoples of the earth by precept and example what God wanted the entire earth's peoples to be and do. God is now ready to proclaim for the Hebrews what lives they must practice to fulfill the covenant to which they had agreed.

II. In preparation to receive the precepts of God the Israelites were to prepare (sanctify) themselves for two days. They were to consecrate themselves and wash their clothes in preparation for the third day when the Lord himself will appear in fire, smoke and an earthquake. It is important to keep in mind that the people, including Moses, did not actually see God but the effects of his presence, Exod. 33:20; John 1:18. The Lord "set bounds" for the people in their approaching Sinai as God prepared for the third day of their encampment. The people were to keep a safe distance from the mount, for a touch of the surface of the mount would mean certain, instant death. An instrument was to be blown to indicate when the time was right for the people to come near the mount. Until after the Lord appeared, no sexual intercourse was to be practiced, Exod. 19:15. (Compare with I Cor. 7:1-6.) Early in the morning of the third day, the mountain was covered with fire and smoke, and Moses brought the people near the mount. The fire was as intense as fire in a furnace and Mount Sinai quaked. A trumpet sounded long and loud, and Moses and Aaron went up while the people, including the priests, were again cautioned not to approach the sacred mountain.

III. At the beginning of Exod. 20 Moses addresses the nation of Israel repeating the words of the Lord God of Israel. First, the Lord laid the foundation for all the law which was to be observed by the people. Exod. 20:2 is the key verse in the entire book of

Exodus: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves." Upon this foundation God then outlined what has become known as "God's Ten Commandments." I am the Lord your God, and, therefore, with the authority to expect you to observe the following commands. I am your only God, and there are to be no other gods recognized by you. This singular recognition is to exclude the making for yourself any graven image (likeness for a false god) of any thing in heaven, on earth or in the water below the earth. You are not to bow down (worship) such false gods nor serve them, for I (Jehovah, I AM, the only eternal living One) am a jealous God who will punish through the fourth generation those who hate me (by honoring false gods). On the other hand, I will be merciful to the many who love me by doing my will. You are never to associate my name with vanity (worthless, deficit, diminishable), because God will not hold anyone who does so, guiltless. The seventh day of every day or period is to be honored with special respect. This day is the Sabbath of God, for it was the day or period during which God rested after creating the heavens and the earth. You or any one under your jurisdiction is not to labor on that day, because the Lord has hallowed (made holy, dedicated) it as especially related to his being the only Creator. These first four commandments are the bases for the other six commandments, for without recognizing the authority of God over ones choices in life, nothing else will please God. Jesus our Lord said that this concept of God is the most important commandment of all, and the last six have a positive relationship with that concept, Matt. 22:34-40; Mk 12:28-31.

IV. If one would seek physical longevity in the flesh, he or she should bring honor to their parents, and God controls longevity. A person should not terminate another's physical life, i.e., murder is against God's will. I do not believe that this commandment is to control a nation's actions as compared to an individual's. Nations conduct war and punish with death its citizens who are a threat to the life of others in society. Jesus commended a soldier's faith at Matt. 8:5-13. God's Word states that a certain soldier was "a just man, and one that feared God." Human sexual activity with other than one's spouse displeases God. (See also Rom. 7:1-3.) To take another's property for one's own use is displeasing to God and therefore wrong. This also, does not apply to a government's collecting taxes, Rom. 13:5-7. In a dispute between individuals, one is not to testify an untruth, because such false testimony is against God's will. To please God one must not enviously desire anything belonging to others. The Israelites, after hearing the voice of God directly along with the unnatural phenomena, begged Moses to speak for God and not God himself, because they feared for their lives. God again emphasized that the Hebrews should not create for themselves false gods. Even their altars were to be built of natural material and not adorned to emulate human pollution. The law is evidence that we are dependent upon God's grace rather than our ability to keep God's law, Rom. 7:22-25; Gal. 2:16; 3:24-29. Law demands, Grace gives; Law says "do," Grace says "believe;" Law says, "Do, and thou shalt live;" Grace says, "Live (spiritually), and thou shalt do (God's will)."

Jan. 10, 1999

"God's Laws For Living"
Exod. 21-22

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. Following the Ten Commandments given by God to Moses in Exod. 20, the Lord gives to the Hebrews, through Moses, a list of ordinances which the Israelites are requested by God to keep. Today we would categorize these ordinances as basic human rights of individuals. One can see immediately that the tenor of the requirements relate to the recent history of the Hebrew experiences, i.e., living as slaves under a dominating people, the Egyptians. It is notable that the Lord does not condemn slavery, per se, but gives restrictions relating to the relations of slaves to their owners and vice versa. (See also Philemon in the New Covenant.) If a Hebrew should purchase another Hebrew as a slave, the slave is considered a free person after six years without further obligations to the owner. The family members which a bought slave brings to the owner originally are considered to be free after the six years with the slave head of household. However, if a male slave marries and has children during the six years, he himself is free after the six years, but his family belongs to the slave owner (master). If, on the other hand, at the end of six years this slave announces that he loves his owner, wife and children and wants to remain in servitude, the owner-slave relationship becomes a matter of law. The slave and owner are to appear before the judges (court) who declare that the owner must publicly, with an awl, punch a hole in the slave's ear which indicates that the owner owns the slave until the slave's death (forever). There follows procedures when there is intermarriage between the owner's family members and the slave's family.

II. Exod. 21:12-32 contain instructions relating to physical violence between individuals and between animals and people. The threshold of this discussion (vs. 12) is the most explicit biblical information about what we call "capital punishment." Here we must make a clear distinction between individuals and the duties of a sovereign nation. To understand the individual versus national responsibilities in human affairs, we should note the instructions of our Lord Jesus at Matt. 25:31-46. There Jesus states that when the end of the age comes he, as King on his throne, will gather the nations together and judge them. The Greek word for "nations" is ethnos which in today's population would mean ethnic groups. Our nation has been and is attempting to produce a conglomerate of all its citizens, as simply Americans, which ignores various groups of historical ethnic variations. In recent years there appear to be emerging, emphases by the different groups to sustain the differences of their ethnic people. Examples of the separateness appear on large university campuses where unions, places for meetings, for Christians, Muslims, Blacks, Spanish speaking, homosexuals, and, yes, females, are being demanded and granted by university administrations. Some requests, along with academic curricula, are being granted also, even with discipline majors in ethnic strengths. I believe that in the Matt. 25 passage cited above, Jesus is referring especially to adverse Gentile treatment of his own people, the Jews according to the flesh, Rom. 1:3; Gal. 4:4 ,

especially at the time referred to at Rev. 7:1-4, 14. At that time some nations will heed the proclamation of the Jews who will be proclaiming Jesus to be God's Messiah (Savior) while other nations will reject that evangelism. In Exod. 21:21 a slave (servant) is reckoned as his owners property. We believers were once servants of sin, Gal. 4:7.

III. At Heb. 10:1-18 direct reference is made to the contrast of offerings to God for people's sin through the blood of animals with God's sacrifice of the blood of his own Son. The overwhelming difference is because God promises to, when one places his or her faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, dwell in each believer in the person of his Holy Spirit, Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:15-18; Heb. 10:15-16. I mention this eternal freedom from spiritual separation from God by believers, because of the listing of the various relief from various penalties in human relationships in Exodus. Note, for example, in Exod. 21:22-27, the often quoted expression, "thou shalt give [take] life for life - - eye for eye and tooth for tooth - - ." In the Heb. 10:9-10 verses noted above, God tells us that he was [in Christ] coming to earth to make holy (sanctify, make whole) those who put their trust in the sacrifice of Jesus' human body "once and for all [time]." Note the same sentiment of God expressed in his Word at Psa. 40:6-8 which should be compared with Heb. 10:5. God's grace of forgiveness is available continually to us believers through Jesus Christ in our daily lives, I John 1:8-10. The initial trusting in Jesus as Savior and Lord is the beginning of our spiritual journey, for we serve him and trust him through our individual faith for the coming culmination of our reward, Psa. 110:1; Matt. 22:41-46; John 14:1-3; I Cor. 15:25-28; Rev. 21:1-7.

IV. At Exod. 21:33 through Exod. 22:15 God gives, through Moses, the rights of the Hebrews to possess property. The "common sense" element of these rules is apparent. For example, if a man digs a hole or well and does not cover it and another's ox or donkey falls therein and is killed, the one who dug the hole pays the owner of the animal for the dead stock, but the dead carcass then belongs to the payee of the money. If one person's ox kills another's ox, the owner of the killer ox is to be sold and the money and the dead ox is to be equally divided between the two. However, if the killer ox is known to be a repeat offender, and its owner has not controlled it, he shall pay the killed ox's owner another ox and keep the dead ox. If one steals an ox or a sheep and kills or sells it, he shall restore to the owner five oxen for an ox or four sheep for a sheep. If a thief is discovered in ones household, and the thief is killed in the process, the owner is free from reciprocity. In some instances shades of difference can exist which are not explicit, and in those cases judges were available to make decisions. In other cases there were places where one could go and escape immediate punishment, "cities of refuge," Num. 35:11-15. The cities of refuge were for those who killed or harmed another accidentally or without intent. Families could not avenge one of its members so killed or harmed. Such an arrangement provided a "cooling off" period while all details were being considered. These cases were settled by the congregation, Num. 25:24-34. Exod. 22:16-31 will be considered with Chap. 23 next Lord's Day.

Jan. 17, 1999

"God Continues His Law"
Exod. 23-24

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. Recall that at the end of our discussion of Exod. 22 we noted that our lesson today would include the last part of Exod. 22 (vss. 16-31) in today's study. Those verses relate to what appeared on many of our report cards when we were in grammar school as "Citizenship," "Conduct," or "Social Habits," how do people "get along" with one another? For example, if a man "entice a young woman who is not engaged, and they have sexual intercourse," he is required to endow her (engage her) to become his wife." However, if her father will not permit the marriage, the male sexual offender is "to pay the going price of virgins," anyway. (See Gen. 34:11-14 for a specific example of the application of this principle concerning Shechem and Dinah, the only daughter of Jacob and Leah.) Sorcery was not to be allowed among the Hebrews. Practicing witchcraft or sorcery was a form of idolatry in that the practice "replaced" God as a source of guidance and strength. The Egyptians relied upon witchcraft. (See Exod. 7:11 where sorcerers, "wise men," Magicians, or soothsayers were consulted by the Pharaoh.) Another outstanding example of idolatrous witchcraft is shown at I Sam. 28:3-25. Here Saul, Israel's first king, had disobeyed God's command concerning the Amalekites at I Sam. 15:1-11. After Samuel had died, Saul who had by his own direction put away those who had familiar spirits out of the land, now turned himself to a witch at Endor for instructions in how to defeat the Philistines who were in array for battle with Israel. God told Moses to instruct the Hebrews at Exod. 22:18 not to permit such a witch to live among them. Bestiality, sexual relation of a human with a lower animal, is forbidden and is to result in the death of the person involved. (Also Lev. 18:23; 20:15-16) Both male and female persons are included in this admonition, and such activity is regarded by God as a perversion of appropriate human behavior, i.e., a deviation from how God created humans and beasts originally. Homosexuality is likewise also considered such a perversion of appropriate human behavior as noted in God's Word at Gen. 19:5,13,24-25; Judg. 19:22-24; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:24-28. Only the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is to be recognized by the Israelites (sacrificed to). Idol worshipers are to be "utterly destroyed." Aliens (strangers) are to be treated kindly, because the Hebrews were also strangers back in Egypt. Widows and orphans are to be respected. God will honor the cries of mistreated widows and orphans (fatherless ones). Money lent to another Hebrew is not to draw usury (interest). However, if a neighbor's clothing is received as a pledge, that clothing is to be returned before sundown for warmth during sleeping hours. All should keep in mind that all possessions are to be considered as God's, and persons are only stewards of such possessions. "Road kill" (by other beasts) is not to be consumed by Israelites.

II. Exod. 23:1-9 gives principles of justice which please God as the Hebrews live their daily lives. A mob spirit should not encourage an individual to give an untrue report about any situation. In other words, "do not follow a multitude to do evil, even if the accusation is against a poor person." When an animal has strayed

from its owner, take the stray back to its owner, even if the owner is your enemy. (See Jesus' instruction to us believers in him at Matt. 5:43-48.) A person's economic status should not alter a right justice for or against him, and never should a bribe be honored to "change" the facts for or against one accused. Strangers are not to be treated with abuse simply because of their alien status. Beginning at Exod. 23:10 and through Verse 19 God repeats some matters about the Sabbatical Year and the three national feasts to be observed to honor their continuing relation with Jehovah God. Other gods' names should never even be pronounced by a Hebrew! Every year three feasts are to be held: The Feast of the Passover (unleavened bread) to honor God's having delivered the Hebrews from the tenth plague back in Egypt; the Feast of Pentecost (harvest); and the Feast of Tabernacles (ingathering). Each feast recognized God's part in establishing and saving the nation of Israel. These gatherings were to maintain mutual encouragement within the nation to remember God's part in their history as well as their present circumstance. (Note a similar admonition for us believers from the beginning of the ecclesia even to the present at Lk 22:19-20; Heb.10:19-25.)

III. In Exod. 23:20-33 God assures the Hebrews that he will send an angel as they continue on to Canaan. God's direction and protection will depend upon their following the instructions of God's messenger (angel). God's promise to Israel, as they follow his messenger's instructions, is that he will be an enemy to their enemies and an adversary to their adversaries. Here God's Word notes some of the enemies whom they will encounter as they attempt to capture the land in Canaan which God had promised them. This promise had been made hundreds of years before to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and to their descendants who will follow. The inhabitants in Canaan were listed by name: Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites,, Hivites, and the Jebusites. For us to understand better the years that followed during which the Israelites sought to conquer Canaan, we should pay close attention to the background of these people who occupied Canaan at the time God is promising to dispose of them in favor of the Israelites. Most of these people were descendants of the grandson of Noah, Ham's son Canaan. For some reason not explicitly given in the Bible, Noah placed a curse upon Ham's son Canaan rather than directly upon Ham himself. Recall that Ham's sin was uncovering his father Noah when the latter was drunk in his tent just after the Flood, Gen. 9:20-24. The Amorites, Hittites, Canaanites, Hivites, and Jebusites were of the family of Canaan as given in Gen. 9:25-27; 10:13,15-16. The Perizzites are noted in Gen. 13:7; 15:18-21. We should emphasize the importance of the Jebusites in this promise of God to Moses through the Lord's angel at Exod. 23: 22-23. Jerusalem was earlier a possession of the Jebusites and was named Jebus before Jerusalem, Judg. 19:10-11. Later, when David was king of Israel, he bought Mount Moriah at Jebus from a Jebusite named Ornan for six hundred shekels of gold, I Chron. 21:(25)18 - 22:10. On Mount Moriah is the place upon which David's son Solomon built a temple to honor God. Another emphasis: God commanded his people, "Thou shall not bow down to the Canaanites' gods, nor serve or covenant with them," Exod. 23:24-33.

Jan. 24, 1999

"The Covenant And Tabernacle"
Exod. 25-26

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. Just as content placed the last verses of Chap. 22 (vss. 16-31) with Chap. 23, so Chap. 24 leads into Chaps. 25 and 26. Therefore, we are examining Chap. 24 with the next two chapters. The scene set at the beginning of Chap. 24 is the Lord instructing Moses to come to him up on Mount Sinai along with Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and seventy of the elders. However, all except Moses were to worship God at a distance from God's presence. When the group had ascended the mount and then descended again to the host of Israelites, Moses announced to the people the ordinances which the Lord required of them. The peoples' response was, "All the words which the Lord has said will we do," Exod. 24:3. The response was unanimous. Moses then wrote the laws of God and built an altar at the foot of Mount Sinai fronted by twelve pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Before the altar Moses offered burned and peace offerings to the Lord with the blood of some oxen which a group of young men had slain for that purpose. Moses took half of the blood from the oxen and sprinkled it upon the altar, and took the other half and sprinkled it upon the people after he had read to them God's requirement in the law. The people again confirmed their commitment to do what God wanted of them. In other words, the covenant of God with the people was sealed with the blood of the slain animals, Heb. 9:22. After this offering of the blood sacrifice, Moses and the special group noted above went again up the mount to see and feel the awesomeness of God and also to receive from God his ordinances which God himself had written upon stone, Exod. 24:12. After six days the others returned to the people, and Moses went alone up the mount where a cloud covered him. Moses had told the nation to rely upon Aaron and Hur considering any questions which arose during his absence. The instructions which Moses received during the next forty days and nights on the mount begin at Exod. 25:1 and continue through Exod. 31. The purpose of these instructions was to outline procedures for the design and construction of a tabernacle (where one dwells temporarily, II Cor. 5:1; II Pet. 1:13-14) which will be a center where Israel will worship their God while en route to Canaan, the land promised to them through Abraham.

II. The financial requirements for the materials needed for the building of the tabernacle was to come from all the Israelites who had agreed to the covenant with God. Each person giving should do so of a willing mind and heart. The specific items required are listed in Exod. 25:3-7. Remember that, as the Hebrews left Egypt, they were asked by Moses to receive from the Egyptians much gold, silver and clothing materials, Exod. 12:35-36. After the terrible ten plagues, the Egyptians were happy to see the Hebrews leave Egypt! There was to be built an ark of wood from the shittah tree which is a gnarled, rough-barked, thorny tree of the acacia genus. Its wood is yellow when first felled but turns dark over time. It is mentioned once in the Bible as a tree, Isa. 41:19, but wood from the tree is noted many times. The ark's dimensions and other details are given in Exod. 25:10-22. It was to be overlaid

with pure gold within and without. The ark was about four feet long, and the height and width were about two feet each. On each corner was to be attached a gold ring through which two staves could be placed for carriage from place to place. The staves, also made of shittim wood, were to be overlaid with gold, and never removed. In the ark were to be placed the written testimony (tablets) of God's covenant with Israel to which Israel had agreed. At one time or another the ark also carried manna in a gold pot and Aaron's rod which had budded after dying, Exod. 16:32-35; Num. 17:7-10; Heb. 9:4. The top of the ark was a mercy seat on which was mounted a cherub on each end of the ark. These two cherubs were to have wings held heavenward. God promised to meet and commune with the Hebrew worshipers "above the mercy seat," Exod. 25:22.

III. The furniture which was to be placed in the tabernacle are given and described in Exod. 25:10-40. After the ark, which was so holy that only the high priest was allowed to see or approach it annually, the table of showbread is described. This table was also made of shittim wood and overlaid with pure gold. It too had staves for carriage with four gold ring holders. The dishes and utensils used on the table were made of pure gold. The gold used in the tabernacle and its furnishings was considerable. Someone had estimated the current, total value of the materials used to have been over five million dollars! The bread on the table was renewed each week and placed on the table in two heaps or stacks. Since the table was three feet long and eighteen inches wide, it could hold enough unleavened bread for the week. Golden snuffers were kept with a pure gold candlestick which sat across the holy place entry from the table of showbread. An eighteen inch square by three feet high altar of incense was to be placed just outside the entrance to the most holy place (holy of holies). These instructions which Moses received while alone with God up on the mount provided for an outer fenced courtyard one hundred fifty feet long by seventy-five feet wide. The tabernacle itself measured fifteen by forty-feet and was located within the outer fence near the end of the courtyard farthest from the courtyard entrance. The holy and most holy places were located together under a temporary shelter (tent) separated from each other by a rich drape so that those who serviced the holy place with showbread, etc., could not view the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies. Chap. 26 contains God's instructions to Moses about those items which were to afford the divisions within the tabernacle, i.e., curtains, boards (framing), sockets (bases) and the veil which separated the outer holy place and the most holy place. Remember that this outline is only the instructions of how and of what the tabernacle would be made, and are contained in Exod. 25-30. Actual implementation of the instructions (blueprint) begin at Exod. 31. Curtains of fine twined linen were connected together to make the first of four covers to be placed over the holy place and the holy of holies. A second covering was to be made of goat hair and consisted of eleven curtains sewn together to fit over the holy and most holy places. A third cover of ram's skin dyed red, and a fourth cover of badger skins all protected the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle.

Jan. 31, 1999

"The Altar And Priesthood"
Exod. 27-28

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

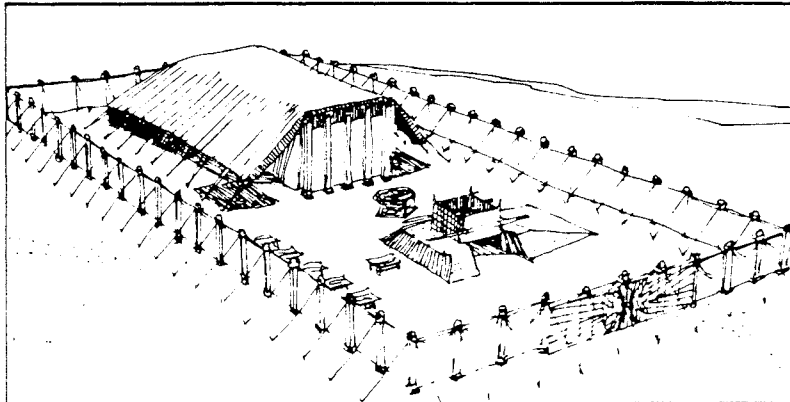
I. I have stated before that I believe that the messenger of God the Father who is with the Israelites as they left Egypt to return to Canaan is none other than the preincarnate Christ. Moses was not permitted to see the Lord, but could only see the effects on natural phenomena such as the heat, smoke and the earth quaking (earthquake). Moses was curious to see the Lord during this journey as noted at Exod. 33:18-23. Moses specifically requested to see God face to face, but the Lord said to him, " - - you may see my back parts, but not my face." Just before this statement of God, he told Moses, "There shall no man see me and live," Exod, 33:20. However, as God provided his New Covenant through Jesus, his Son and Messiah, Moses was finally permitted to see God, Matt. 17:1-8; John 14:8-9; II Cor. 5:19. As we begin to examine the items in the outer court surrounding the tabernacle proper, we see the use of a different metal, brass, which is and was much less valuable than the gold used in the location of the tabernacle wherein the Ark of the Covenant was to be kept. God had told Moses as he prescribed the plans (blueprints) of the tabernacle that he (the Lord) would commune with the Israelites directly above the mercy seat which formed the cover of the ark. The brass in the outer court represents God's judgment of sinful mankind. The people who approached God's presence must be judged by God and forgiven before they were allowed to approach the Most Holy Place where God would show mercy at the Mercy Seat. Even so, this forgiveness came only through priests who represented God. This priesthood was faulty because of mankind's proneness to sin, Heb. 8:7-13. The priests of the Old Covenant were ranked, with Aaron a high priest who was Aaron at first with his sons as lower ranked priests. Aaron's selection as the first high priest was his association with Moses his brother, Exod. 28:1-2. Also, they were from the family of Levi from whom came the priestly tribe of the twelve tribes of Israel (Jacob), Exod. 6:16-20; Num. 1:47-53; 8:6,14,18,20. Later in Canaan, when the land was divided among the tribes of Israel, the tribe of Levi was apportioned no land. Instead, the Levites lived among the other tribes and performed their priestly functions among all the tribes, Josh. 14:3; 21:41-42. The Old Covenant required a present priesthood between Almighty God and sinful mankind. God was greatly disappointed when at Exod. 32 Aaron, the first high priest of Israel, fulfilled the people's request to brake their covenant with God by fashioning a false god to worship and "lead them."

II. In the first two or three centuries after God instituted the Second (and final) Covenant, the believers, especially those Jews who accepted Jesus as their Messiah (Savior) of God, felt uneasy without a priest present to give detailed attention to God's directions as well as a pronouncement of forgiveness of confessed sins. God's Word in Hebrews speaks to how God had replaced the old priesthood with his own Son, Heb. 5. In fact, Heb. 6 admonishes the first Jewish believers (and us) to discount even the mechanics of believers entering God's Way, immersion, laying on of hands, the coming resurrection, and eternal judgment, Phil. 3:20-21. Lay

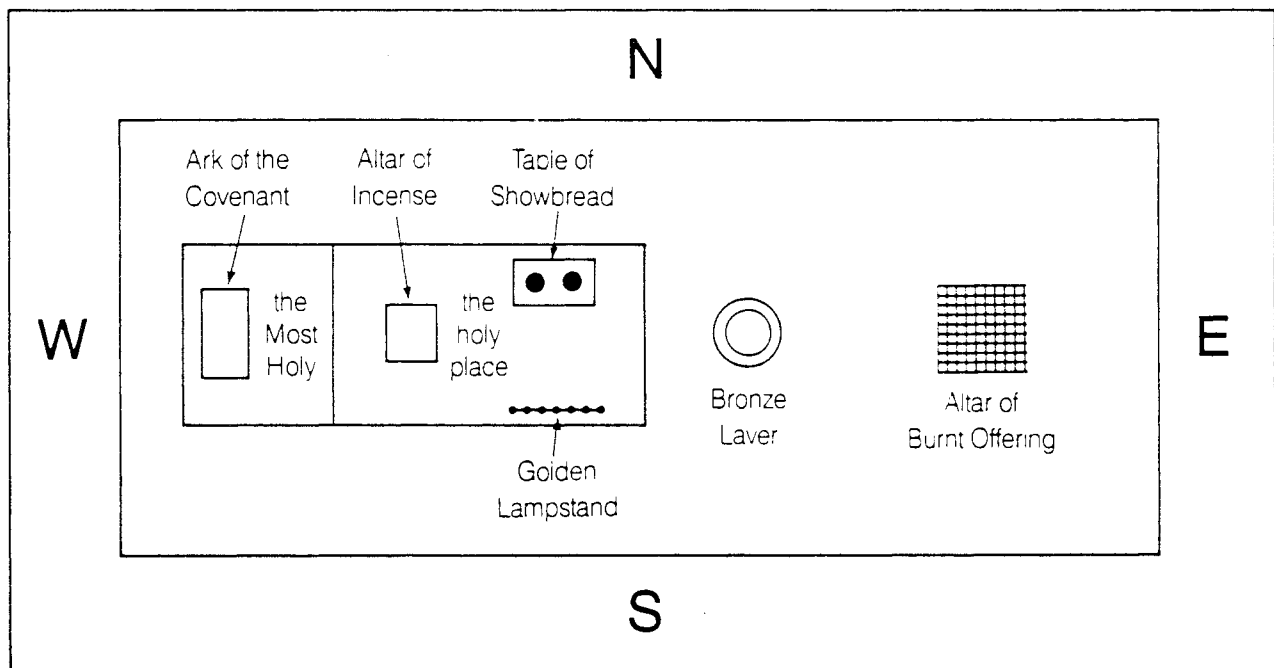
these aside and be anchored "within the veil (where God is)," because Christ Jesus has become our forerunner to enter into the very presence of God the Creator where he is our active high priest without end (after the order of Melchizedek, without beginning or end). Jesus is ever on duty on our behalf in the very presence of God the Father, Heb. 7:25. Further, he has sent God's Holy Spirit to live within us (John 14:26), as individual believers, to have forever God's direct and immediate attention of our every concern about our relationship with God, our Spiritual Father, I John 1:8-2:2. We need no other priest than Jesus himself, and it is this truth that makes us believers in Jesus a priesthood, Heb. 7:18-28; I Pet. 2:1-10. Note especially at I Pet. 2:12 that Peter (God's Word) is addressing Jewish believers since he refers to the Gentiles (unbelievers) in the third person.

III. The design and plans for placement to the items in the outer court were for definite purposes. The geographic directions were noted to assure that the arrangement was the same each time the Israelites moved to a new camp site. At the east end was the entrance to the outer court. The first item located inside the entrance was the brazen altar. This altar was made of shittim wood and covered with brass. Bronze is a metal made of copper alloyed with another metal, usually tin. Brass is an alloy of copper and zinc and was the metal used in making the brazen altar. In our day it is much easier to understand the significance of the tabernacle and the items therein if we relate them to our faith in Jesus Christ as noted in the New Covenant portion of the Bible entitled "Hebrews." Heb. 10:1 states that "the law (of which Exodus is a part) having a shadow of good things to come [through Jesus Christ], and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year after year continually make the comers to them perfect (whole)." So how does the brazen altar relate to our faith in Jesus as Savior? When we believers were first led by God's Holy Spirit (John 3:3; 6:44) to see our sin and how that sin keeps us separated from our loving Creator, the cross represents the law's brazen altar. As Paul makes clear at Gal. 6:14, only the way of the cross can lead us to our final home, to heaven, I Cor. 1:18-31. When the Israeli priests were approaching God toward the mercy seat in the tabernacle, the first step was to pass the altar of sacrifice. Before any person can approach God, there must be a sacrifice. The cross (Jesus' spilled blood, his life) was and is the final and only altar of sacrifice which God will honor today to make mankind righteous enough to fellowship with himself. Jesus is God's only Lamb of God that takes away the sins of anyone who will believe, John 1:26; 14:6. "[Jesus] was delivered by the determinate and foreknowledge of God," to the brazen altar for the sins of the whole world, Acts 2:23; I John 2:2. Exod. 27:9,16 give instructions about the court of the tabernacle with specific colors for the hangings which are to drape over the entry gate, blue, purple and scarlet which signify an entry to a royal palace. The remainder of the fence was to be draped over by fine twined linen. This linen was made of flax from which linen thread and linseed-oil are produced. Exod. 27 also tells of the olive oil which represents the Holy Spirit and was used in the lamp stand in the tabernacle.

The Plan of the Tabernacle

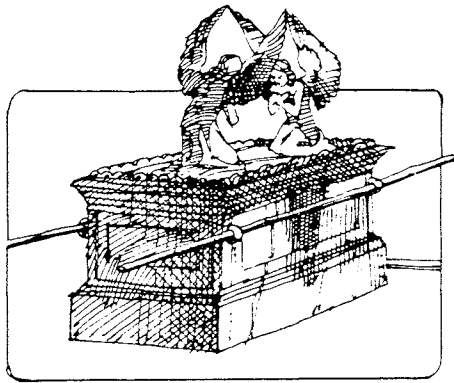


The tabernacle was to provide a place where God might dwell among His people. The term *tabernacle* sometimes refers to the tent, including the holy place and the Most Holy, which was covered with embroidered curtains. But in other places it refers to the entire complex, including the curtained court in which the tent stood.



This illustration shows the relative positions of the tabernacle furniture used in Israelite worship. The tabernacle is enlarged for clarity.

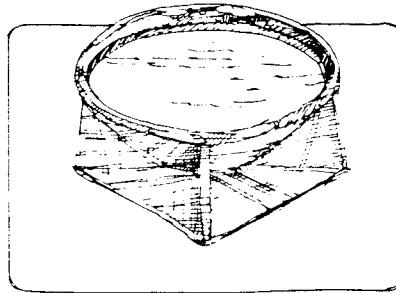
The Furniture of the Tabernacle



Ark of the Covenant

(Ex. 25:10-22)

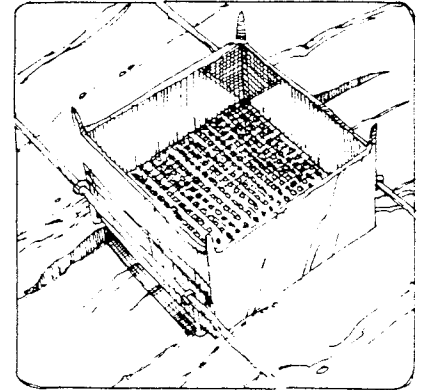
The ark was most sacred of all the furniture in the tabernacle. Here the Hebrews kept a copy of the Ten Commandments, which summarized the whole covenant.



Bronze Laver

(Ex. 30:17-21)

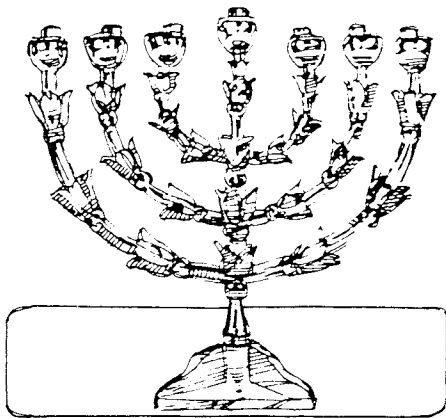
It was to the laver of bronze that the priests would come for cleansing. They must be pure to enter the presence of God.



Altar of Burnt Offering

(Ex. 27:1-8)

Animal sacrifices were offered on this altar, located in the court in front of the tabernacle. The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the four horns of the altar.



Golden Lampstand

(Ex. 25:31-40)

The gold lampstand stood in the holy place, opposite the table of showbread. It held seven lamps, flat bowls in which a wick lay with one end in the oil of the bowl and the lighted end hanging out.

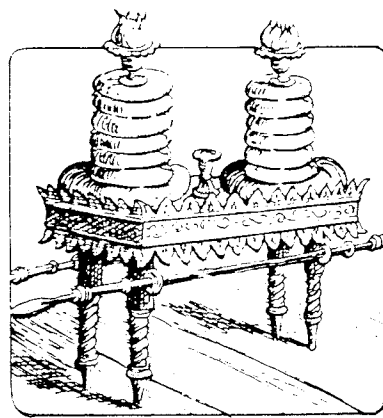
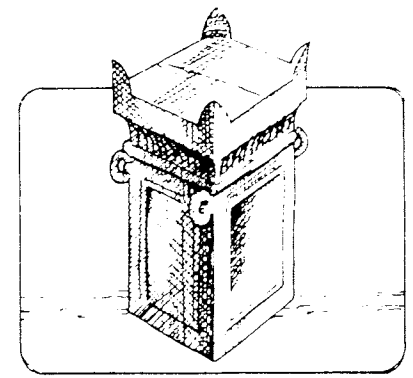


Table of Showbread

(Ex. 25:23-30)

The table of showbread was a stand on which the offerings were placed. Always in God's presence on the table were the 12 loaves of bread representing the 12 tribes.



Altar of Incense

(Ex. 30:1-10)

The altar of incense inside the tabernacle was much smaller than the altar of burnt offering outside. The incense burned on the altar was a perfume of a sweet-smelling aroma.

Feb. 7, 1999

"The Priests And Incense Altar"
Exod. 29-30

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. Last week we discussed the brazen altar which was the first item inside the east end of the courtyard surrounding the tabernacle proper. Today we examine the physical make up and significance of the last piece of furniture sitting immediately in front of the veil which covered the entrance of the most holy place that housed the ark of the covenant. Before we look at the altar of incense, we should note further the priests who served God and the people as intermediaries between the Lord and his people. Recall that last week we stated that Jesus alone serves in that capacity now during the New Covenant period. The Holy Spirit makes this blessing possible, John 14:26; Rom. 8:16; Rev. 1:5-6. The Old Covenant priests were dressed in the finest garments available as commanded by God to Moses. The high priest, Aaron, wore garments "for glory and for beauty," Exod. 28:2. The high priest wore a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, an embroidered coat, a turban (mitre), and a girdle (sash). The other priests were likewise dressed in grandeur and splendor, because God wanted his mediators to appear without ordinariness. The ephod consisted of two long pieces of cloth held together on each shoulder by an onyx stone. On one onyx stone was etched the name of six tribes of Israel and on the other, the names of the other six tribes. The breast plate was a beautiful vest which represented God's judgment of sin. The breast plate had pockets in which were kept the urim and thummin, devices which enabled the high priest to settle questionable propositions, I Sam. 14:3-4, 14, 17, 24, 37-45.

II. With the garment particulars given in Exod. 28, we come now to God's instructions to Moses concerning the consecration and dedication of Aaron and his sons to serve in the offices of the priesthood. This ceremony was a very meticulous and intricate series of actions which separated the duties of the Levitical priests from other types of activities of the other tribes of Israel. After the outer court fences, the tabernacle holy place and holy of holies where the ark was to be kept are constructed, is to follow the consecration of Aaron and his sons as God's serving priests. We should note that this information associated with this rite is given also at Lev. 8 and Heb. 4:14-5:4; 7:11-8:13. Exod. 29 gives the specific instructions from God to Moses regarding the consecration ceremony of the priests. The instructions for building the tabernacle are given at Exod. 31 (work assigned), finished at Exod. 39:32, and erected first in Exod. 40. To hallow the priests (separate them for exclusive service for God), first a choice is made of one young, male bullock and two male sheep. These animals must be without blemish and young (under one year). The animals are dressed and placed in a large basket with unleavened bread made with wheat flour and anointed with olive oil. The priests (Aaron and his sons, Nabab, Abihue, Eleazar, and Ithamar) are to do this and bring the basket to the door of the tabernacle. There they will wash the sacrificial elements in water, a symbolic cleansing for regeneration. In the New Covenant this process is noted at Titus 3:4-9. See especially vs. 5, "Not by works of righteousness which we [believers

in Jesus Christ] have done, but according to his [the Lord's] mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration [symbolically by immersion in water], and renewing of the Holy Spirit," John 3:3-6. After the Old Covenant priests had washed the elements clean, they donned their priestly regalia which included the mitre (turban) on their heads. Around the turban was a band of pure gold on which was inscribed HOLINESS TO THE LORD. These priests were representing God to the people and the people to God. They were special servants of God serving in God's place, not God, Exod. 28:3. This priesthood does not, nor has any ever, existed in that capacity in the New Covenant. A believer in Jesus Christ is a member of the ecclesia who are a priesthood of believers, I Pet. 2:4-5. When a believer witnesses to an unbeliever of God's Gospel, he or she is acting as a priest of God through his Messiah, Savior. We have only one priest between us and God the Father, and that priest is Jesus whose human mother was Mary and whose Spiritual Father was God's Holy Spirit. The Old Covenant priests' duties included instructing the people, sanitary and medicinal care for the Israelites' welfare, as well as the worship services at the place of worship, (tabernacle or temple). When God instituted the New Covenant, he came to live within those who are trusting Jesus Christ for eternal life, and daily instructions. Believers themselves are God's temple or tabernacle, I Cor. 6:19; II Cor. 6:16-18. We believers are God's dwelling place solely because of God's grace, not because we have consecrated ourselves to God, Rom. 3:21-31; Eph. 1:13-14; 2:4-10. Aaron and his sons were to bring a bullock to the tabernacle entrance, place their hands on the bullock's head, and kill it for their own sins. They were then pure enough to sacrifice animal blood for the peoples' sins. They offered two lambs each day. These burnt offerings continually reminded the Israelites of their sins. The Levitical priestly tribe received food from the various burnt offerings.

III. In Exod. 30 the description and purpose of the altar of incense are given. This altar was made of shittim wood and covered with pure gold. Staves were provided for rapid carriage also. On each of the top four corners were cornices (KJV, horns) which simulated a gold crown. This small altar, had a top of about eighteen inches square and was thirty-six inches high. This altar of incense was placed close to the beautiful veil which separated the holy place from the most holy place where the ark of the covenant was. Aaron was to burn incense thereon every morning and evening. Lighting incense twice each day kept a most pleasant aroma there at all times. Only the finest incense was to be burned which made this offering expensive, denoting deity. I believe that this aroma depicted the presence of Jesus there. Heb. 9:3-4 states that the altar of incense was located in the holy of holies with the ark, but in the tabernacle that altar stood outside the holy of holies beyond the veil covering the sacred ark with the mercy seat, God's presence. Why the difference? After Jesus' sacrificial death that veil was opened, Matt. 27:50-51, and Jesus had entered into the presence of God the Father. Today we believers can approach God directly only in the fact that Jesus is God, John 10:30; 14:9; 17:11,20-24 and is now with The Father for us believers, Heb. 9:24.

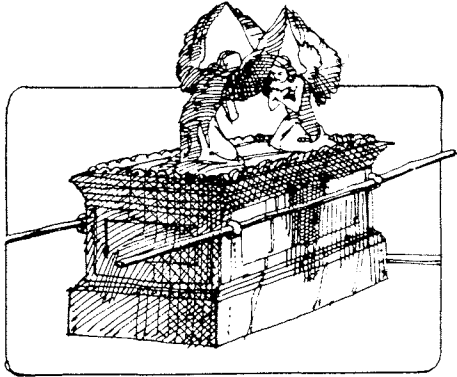
I. Moses is still up on Mount Sinai receiving instruction from God in Exod. 31. The Lord is completing his word to Moses about the construction of the tabernacle and its furnishings. God names two men in particular who are to oversee the fine workmanship necessary to implement his details of construction. The two men named are Bezeleel and Aholiah. The former is the grandson of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. His task is primarily in metal work, carpentry and masonry. He is a person of artistic ability with superior accomplishment in detailed craftsmanship. Aholiah of the tribe of Dan was skilled in weaving and embroidering. Together these two artisans participated in and taught others how to design and erect the tabernacle and its furnishings, Exod. 35:30-35, according to God's instructions to Moses. It is well, I believe, that we consider here the diversity of gifts which the Lord creates in each individual as distinct from others. Moses was very intelligent with a well-trained mind, the best training available in advanced Egypt (except for their religion). Moses, on the other hand, was not an artisan who could design and perform the skills to erect a tabernacle which would please God as a place where he (the Lord) would commune with his chosen people, the Hebrews. God gave Moses the design and types of materials to use for the worship place, but did not expect Moses to do the work or even serve as a priest in the new priestly functions. Aaron and his sons were not chosen by God to build the tabernacle but serve as priests. Moses and Aaron were both of the tribe of Levi. The emphasis being noted here is that God does not call all individuals to be good speakers, musicians, workers with ones hands, but distributes to each person special gifts which are all needed to glorify the Lord and Creator. The same principle is carried over into the New Covenant for the ecclesia, God's called out ones by his Holy Spirit. Such assignments of individuals in God's service are done in the same way. Notice that, concerning Bezaleel, God told Moses, "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and all manner of workmanship," Exod. 31:3. Now, look at I Cor. 12:2-11 ff where that same Spirit of God works with each individual in the ecclesia so that God's work is accomplished. Nor can any one individual claim a superior contribution in building and serving in God's ecclesia, I Cor. 12:22-31. In the ecclesia today not every person can serve in proclaiming God's Word, teaching, music, administration, giving the same offering, performing miracles, and speaking in a language other than ones own, etc., Rom. 12:8,13; Eph. 4:1-16.

II. Interesting is the fact that the Lord specifically emphasizes again to Moses one of the ten commandments (No. Four) which God had instituted at the beginning of creation, the importance of relating God to every seventh day. Here God had just established the Jews as a nation, and he wanted to identify his new nation, Israel, as a distinctive people on the earth. One of those distinctives was for them to honor the Sabbath Day. The emphasis in this relationship is that, "In the beginning God created the heaven and

the earth." The God of the Hebrews was and is the only Creator of all that exists, the only true God. God as Father, Holy Spirit, and Only Son are involved in this creation, Gen. 1:1,2; John 1:1-3,10,14. God wanted Moses to tell his people, the Israelites, that the Sabbath held special meaning concerning God and the Israelites. I do not believe that the Sabbath of the Old Covenant is the same as "the first day of the week" in the New Covenant, Exod. 31:13,17. Exod. 31:14 calls for the death of any Israelite who profanes the Sabbath of the Old Covenant. Many people today, who call themselves Christians, want to make the Christian "first day of the week" (Sunday) equal to the Jewish Sabbath of the Old Covenant. I do not subscribe to this position. The ecclesia reveres and honors "the first day of the week," because it is the day on which God the Father raised our Lord Jesus from physical death, Mk 16:9. Believers from the first century have worshiped God through Jesus, God's Messiah (Savior), on "the first day of the week (Sunday)," Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2. There is a distinct difference between the Old Covenant's Sabbath and the New Covenant's Lord's Day, although in both, the only Creator is One and the Same, of course.

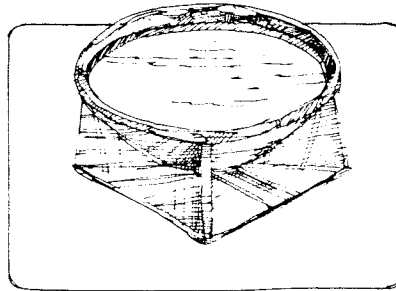
III. We come now in Exod. 32 to see the thin, shallow faith held by the host of Israel, God's new national entity. Our thinking, to be fair, must take into account that the Hebrews had been slaves for hundreds of years to a strong people who did not recognize Jehovah God, the only true God. The Egyptians had thousands of gods. Two of the main ones were the sun god Ra and the god of strength for fertility, Apis, represented by a bull. Moses had been up on Mount Sinai for weeks, and the people became weary about whether Moses would return. They looked to Aaron for leadership, rallied around him, and asked him to make them a god to lead and to protect them! The Bible does not indicate that Aaron gave any counsel to the people of a contrary opinion. We are told that the peoples' concern was whether Moses would return as leader. They looked to Aaron as leader as Moses had told them, Exod. 24:14. We can ponder the question: If Aaron would not seek to dissuade the people from ignoring their promise to God to follow him only, why did the Jewish elders not object to idolatry? According to the Bible's revelation, Aaron immediately asked the people to bring together their golden earrings to him. The people did as Aaron requested, and he cast from their gold a calf (bull). The people then, with utter sacrilege, pronounced, "This be our god who brought us out of Egypt!" Aaron even built an altar for the false god, and proclaimed, "Tomorrow there will be a feast "unto the Lord," Exod. 32:5. Exod. 32:6,19,25 can mean that the "feast to the Lord" was a lustful display of idolatrous reverence to the Egyptian fertility god, Apis the bull. (The American movie industry has made much of this incident, because human lust and debauchery sells in this nation and around the world, unfortunately.) The Lord God told Moses up on the mount what was happening among his people and pronounced them to be a stubborn people. Referring to their faithful forefathers, Moses begged God not to give the Egyptians reason to say that God did not answer their prayer to him. God agreed not to destroy them, but Moses disciplined them by having the Levites kill about three thousand men. A plague came upon them, because of their sin of idolatry.

The Furniture of the Tabernacle



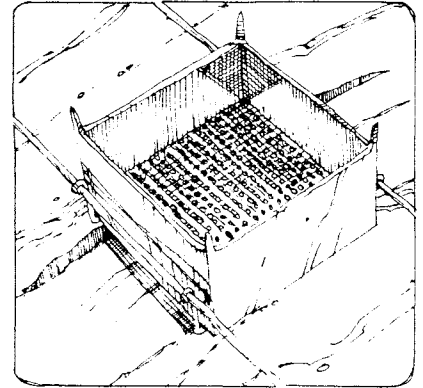
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(Ex. 25:10–22)

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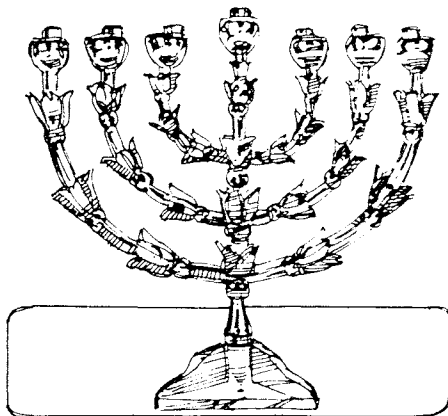
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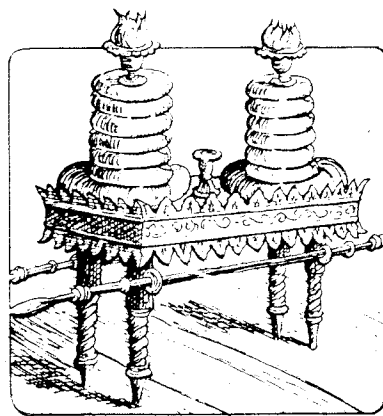
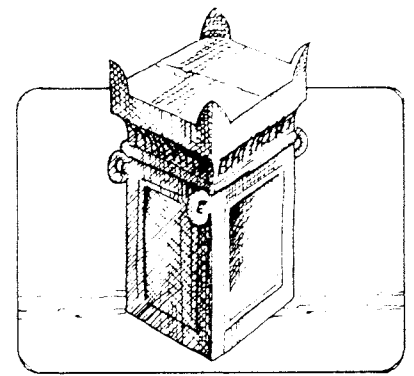


Table of Showbread
(Ex. 25:23–30)

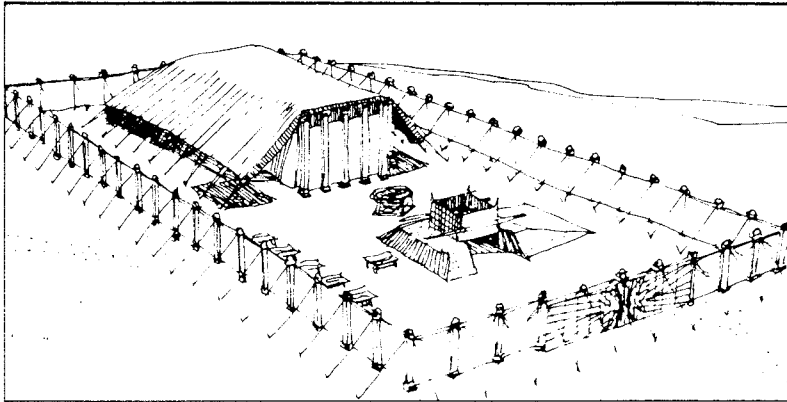
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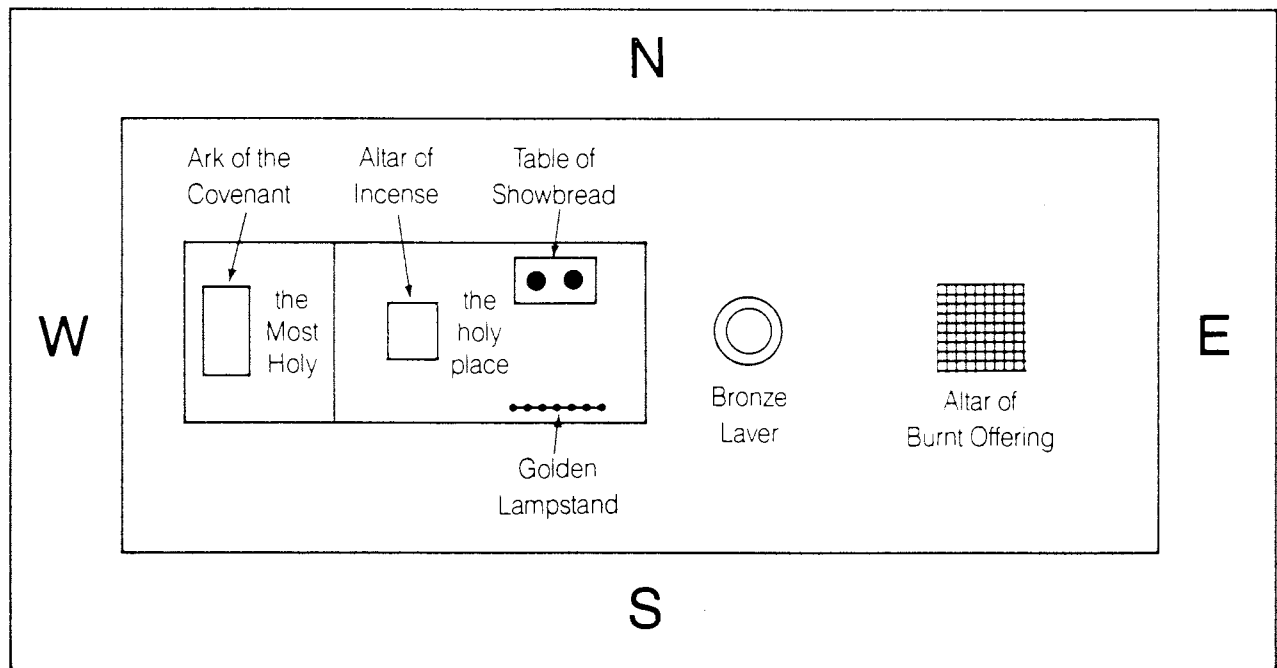
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The altar of incense inside the tabernacle was much smaller than the altar of burnt offering outside. The incense burned on the altar was a perfume of a sweet-smelling aroma.

The Plan of the Tabernacle



The tabernacle was to provide a place where God might dwell among His people. The term *tabernacle* sometimes refers to the tent, including the holy place and the Most Holy, which was covered with embroidered curtains. But in other places it refers to the entire complex, including the curtained court in which the tent stood.



This illustration shows the relative positions of the tabernacle furniture used in Israelite worship. The tabernacle is enlarged for clarity.

Feb. 21, 1999

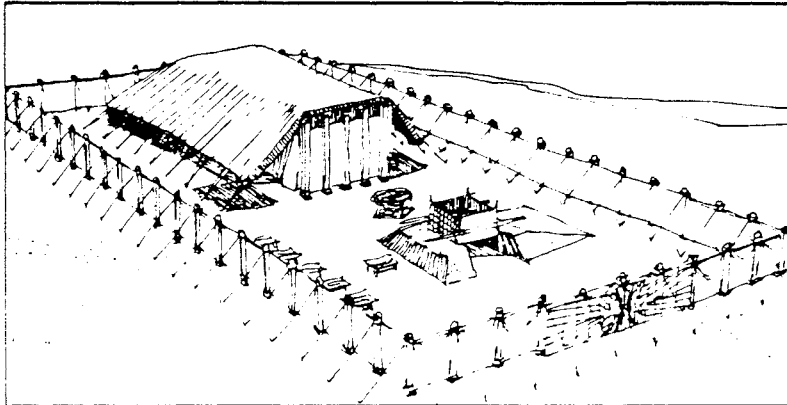
"The Tabernacle And The Law"
Exod. 33-34

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

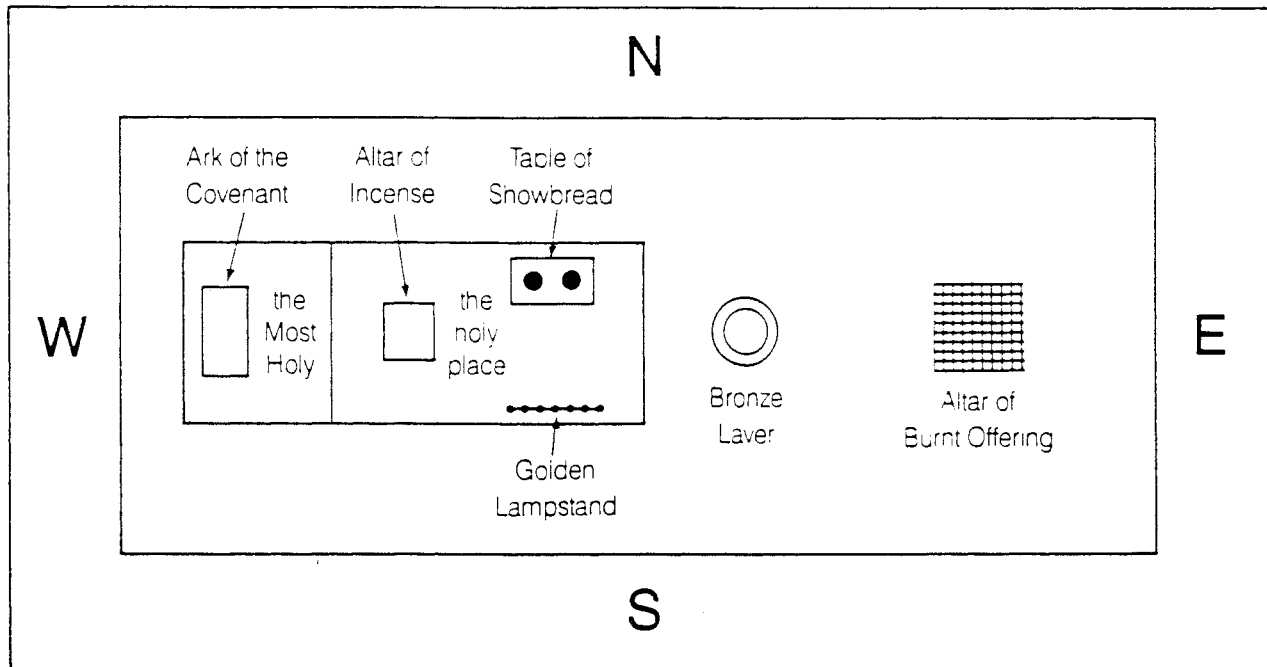
I. Now the people of Israel have the reputation of being "stiffnecked," because they had practiced idolatry under Aaron's leadership. They had given an idol credit for having delivering them from servitude under the Egyptians! God reminds Moses of the purpose of their journey through the desert. They were on their way to the land which God had promised to their forefather, Abraham, hundreds of years before. (God is faithful even though his people were and are stubborn, Rom. 3:4.) God told Moses to continue on the journey and promised to send an angel on ahead to prepare for the Israelites' arriving in Canaan, the "land flowing with milk and honey," Exod. 33:3. God promised to distance himself from the Israelites, "lest I consume you as you travel." The people feared God's reprimand and removed their body ornaments, especially their earrings (See Gen. 35:1-5;), because they had displeased God with their idolatry. The tabernacle was now being constructed, and Moses took the raw materials some distance from where the people were camped. The site where the tabernacle was being erected was on a ridge where it could be seen by the people at their tents. Moses went up and entered the tabernacle area, the people observed him from their tents as he neared the holy tent. I believe that the preincarnate Messiah (Jesus, the Christ) was the "Angel of the Lord" who spoke before to Abraham at Gen. 22:11, Jacob at Gen. 32:30, and is the same one who is now talking with Moses at Exod. 33:9. A pillar of cloud overshadowed the tabernacle, and the people could not see Moses and the Lord. However, the sight was so magnificent that every Israelite stood and worshiped the Lord who was with Moses, Exod. 33:8-11. Exod. 33:11 states explicitly that, "the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." This revelation, I believe gives credence to the Lord's being God's Messiah before his coming to earth to be sacrificed, II Cor. 5:19. Moses was not talking face to face with God the Father, but to God the Son, Exod. 33:20-23; John 1:18.

II. When Moses came down with the ten commandments and witnessed

The Plan of the Tabernacle



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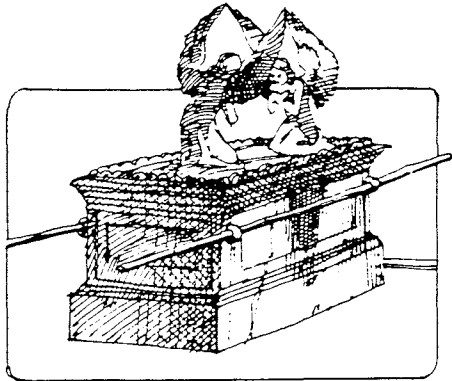
This illustration shows the relative positions of the tabernacle furniture used in Israelite worship. The tabernacle is enlarged for clarity.

2-21-99

the idolatry of the people, he was angry and broke the plates at the base of the mount, Exod. 32:19. Now the Lord told Moses to prepare another two plates, take them up the mount, and God promised to rewrite the ten commandments there. God came in a cloud and proclaimed the Lord's mercy and forgiveness, Exod. 34:6-7. The Lord did not promise to "clear the guilty" for the consequences of such sexual diseases as could be taken during such orgies as had happened in Exod. 32. In fact, such sexual diseases could affect the offspring even to the fourth generation. What God is telling Moses is that the physical results of sinful practices can be painfully evident even though God cleanses a person's spirit, i.e., God can forget confessed sins against him, but the physical consequences will, nevertheless, remain in effect, Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:12. In Exod. 34:6 an interesting point can be noted: the double use of "the Lord" as though there are two persons involved. I believe that the two Lords are God the Father and God the Son. Jesus quoted Psa. 110:1-4 at Matt. 22:41-46 to challenge the Jewish leaders, the Pharisees, concerning the Messiah's relationship to his heavenly Father.

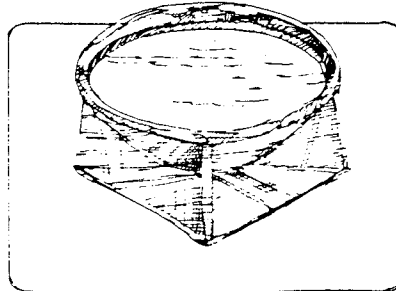
III. God's appearance to Moses with mercy and forgiveness humbled Moses who quickly bowed his head in humility. He then prays to God to accept his worship and continue with Israel even though they are stiffnecked with a proneness to disobey God. He asked the Lord to accept the Israelites as his (the Lord's) own inheritance. When God chose Israel as his own nation in the earth, he did not do so because they were better morally or otherwise superior, obviously. (Lest we should feel spiritually superior to the Jews, we should read Isa. 53:6; Rom. 3:21-23.) God renews his covenant he had made with the Israelites and claims Israel as his own nation. He commands his people not to make a covenant with the people of Canaan. The Hebrews are to eliminate every vestige of those peoples' religious activities. Israel's God is a jealous God, and his people are to continue to observe the Sabbath and the feasts. After weeks Moses returned to the people with the new commandment stones, and a gleaming face reflecting having been in God's presence.

The Furniture of the Tabernacle



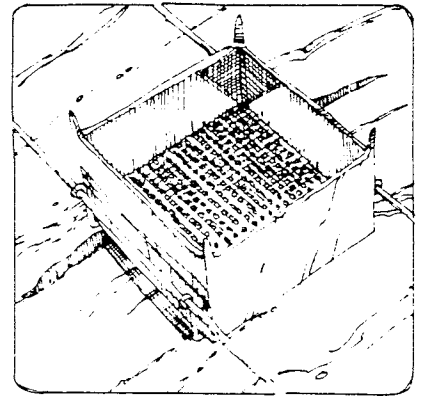
Ark of the Covenant
(Ex. 25:10-22)

The ark was most sacred of all the furniture in the tabernacle. Here the Hebrews kept a copy of the Ten Commandments, which summarized the whole covenant.



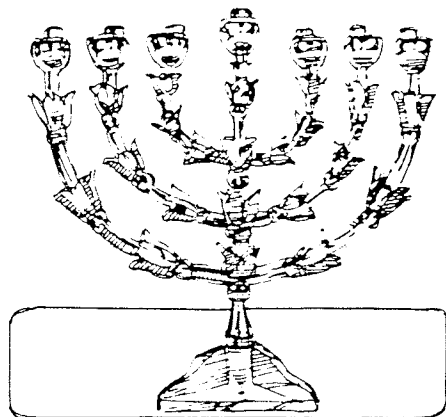
Bronze Laver
(Ex. 30:17-21)

It was to the laver of bronze that the priests would come for cleansing. They must be pure to enter the presence of God.



Altar of Burnt Offering
(Ex. 27:1-8)

Animal sacrifices were offered on this altar, located in the court in front of the tabernacle. The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the four horns of the altar.



Golden Lampstand
(Ex. 25:31-40)

The gold lampstand stood in the holy place, opposite the table of showbread. It held seven lamps, flat bowls in which a wick lay with one end in the oil of the bowl and the lighted end hanging out.

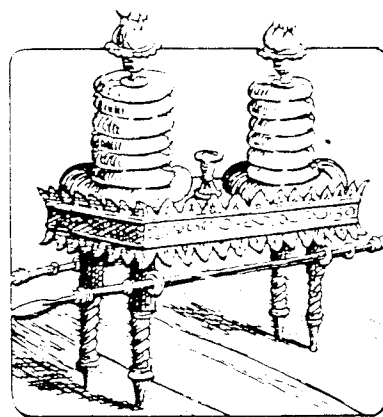
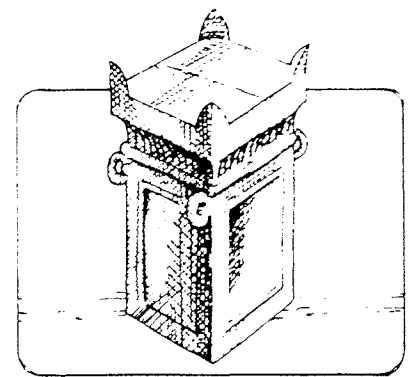


Table of Showbread
(Ex. 25:23-30)

The table of showbread was a stand on which the offerings were placed. Always in God's presence on the table were the 12 loaves of bread representing the 12 tribes.



Altar of Incense
(Ex. 30:1-10)

The altar of incense inside the tabernacle was much smaller than the altar of burnt offering outside. The incense burned on the altar was a perfume of a sweet-smelling aroma.

Feb. 28, 1999

"The Sabbath And The Tabernacle"
Exod. 35-36

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. When Moses had descended from Mount Sinai with the second copy of the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments, he called a general meeting of "all the congregation of Israel." He had been up on the mount with the Lord for forty days and forty nights for a second time, Exod. 24:18; 34:28. The Israelites had seen the glory of God still shining from Moses face. His reason for assembling the entire nation was to outline for them God's instructions which he had given to Moses on the mount. The first word from God was to reemphasize the nation's special relation with the Creator, as Creator. They were to maintain this relation by perpetually observing that their God created everything and rested on the seventh day, the Sabbath, Gen. 2:1-3. The people were to reverence every seventh day with their very lives, i.e., if one did not keep that day holy (separate, distinctive), he or she was to be put to death, Exod. 31:14; 35:2, or separated from the congregation (put outside the encampment). Not even a fire was to be kindled on the Sabbath, either for warmth or cooking, Exod. 35:3. This recurring reference relating the new nation of Israel with God as the Creator, and only God, should tell any serious student of the Bible how important God considered observance of the Sabbath Day by Israel to be, and they were to become God's special Law keepers, Deut. 4:5-9; Rom. 3:1-2.

II. Next on Moses' agenda relating God's instruction to Israel, after the Sabbath, was an offering of their material possessions. The specific purpose of these offerings was to build a stockpile of necessary materials for erecting the tabernacle and its furnishings. God had already assigned the tasks of supervision and teaching of others to Bezaleel of Judah and Aholiab of Dan. The former excelled in working with brass, wood and masonry, and the latter in cloth and needle work, Exod. 31:1-6. At this point in the Exodus account, a detailed list of items to be donated by the people is given, Exod. 35:5-36:3. These offerings were to be given by "whoever is of a willing heart," Exod. 35:5,29. We should note that, not only was the materials to be brought, but volunteer work was also a contribution to the building of the tabernacle. God's Word makes specific mention of the women's contribution to the work of the house of worship, Exod. 35:25-26,29. Most of these materials and instructions for the tabernacle was given earlier in Exod. 25-27 as well as the request for offerings from the people, Exod. 25:1-2. However, the inventory list of the materials is more detailed and complete in Exod. 35-36. It appears strange to us that these Israelites could possess so much valuable precious metal and expensive materials in cloth. We should keep in mind that God had promised his people that they would leave Egypt with great wealth, Gen. 15:14, "-- that nation [Egypt], whom they will serve, will I judge: and afterward they [the Israelites] will come out with great possessions." And this promise was made hundreds of years earlier to Abram for his descendants, even before Abram and Sarai were parents! This promise was kept by means of the ten plagues brought upon the Egyptians by God in Moses' day, especially the

tenth plague during which every Egyptian family lost its eldest child. This event led to the establishing of the Passover observance which the Jews have practiced perpetually ever since. The actual transfer of the possessions from the Egyptians to the Israelites is described at Exod. 12:29-36. The worth of all the materials which were used for the tabernacle was in excess of six million dollars at today's prices. A calculation was made several years ago which exceeded five million dollars. Noted should be the fact that the Israelites' gifts were free will, not the tithe which was first established in Gen. 14:20 when Abram gave the mysterious Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of the most high God (Jehovah), a tenth of the spoils of Abram's victory over the kings of the Sodom and Gomorrah area in rescuing his nephew Lot, Heb. 7. The tithe was later made a regular requirement for the Jews in the Law at Lev. 27:30-34. Free will giving is not "giving 'til it hurts," but rather, "if it hurts, don't give." In other words, "give gladly with joy, or not at all," II Cor. 9:7. The Israelites, on this occasion, were glad to give, because the two construction engineers, Bezaleel and Aholiab, informed Moses, "The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make." Moses put out the word that, "Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering for the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from giving. For the stuff they made was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much," Exod. 36:6-7. Fantastic, what a generous people they were! When did we ever see such an example of generosity for the Lord's work? Undoubtedly the people were remembering the Lord's forgiveness at Exod. 34:5-9 after their idolatry at Exod. 32:1-10,14.

III. The remainder of Exod. 36 is given to another explanation of the items made for the holy tabernacle including the court around the tent within the fenced in area. I say "another," because these items were described earlier in Exodus when Moses was given by God the original instructions on Mount Sinai, Exod. 24-27 and 30-31. The reason for the repetition is that the instructions for materials and workmanship were first given, and now in Exod. 35-36 the actual building is being done. Exod. 28-29 are the giving of instructions for the priests' regalia and purification. Exod. 39 relates the implementation of the priests' apparel from the instructions given earlier. I believe that when Moses was writing the Law (Pentateuch, first five books of the Bible), he repeated the details of the first national worship place for the Israelites because of its significance in the ultimate plan of God for humanity, not just for the Jews. The symbolism of the tabernacle and its furnishings found in the New Covenant and the final plans of God are evident when one gives careful attention to these relationships. We touched on this fact in Paul's second Letter to the Corinthians last Lord's Day. And, of course, the letter (Hebrews) to the Jews who had accepted Jesus as their Savior (Messiah) and Lord, spells out, in considerable detail, the relationship of the Old Covenant with the last, New Covenant, e.g., Hebrews Chapters 8-10, et al. "Therefore has he [God] mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens. You will say then to me Paul (God's Word) why does God still find fault? God is The Potter, humanity is the clay," Rom. 9:18-21.

Mar. 7, 1999

"Review Of The Tabernacle"
Exod. 37-38

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

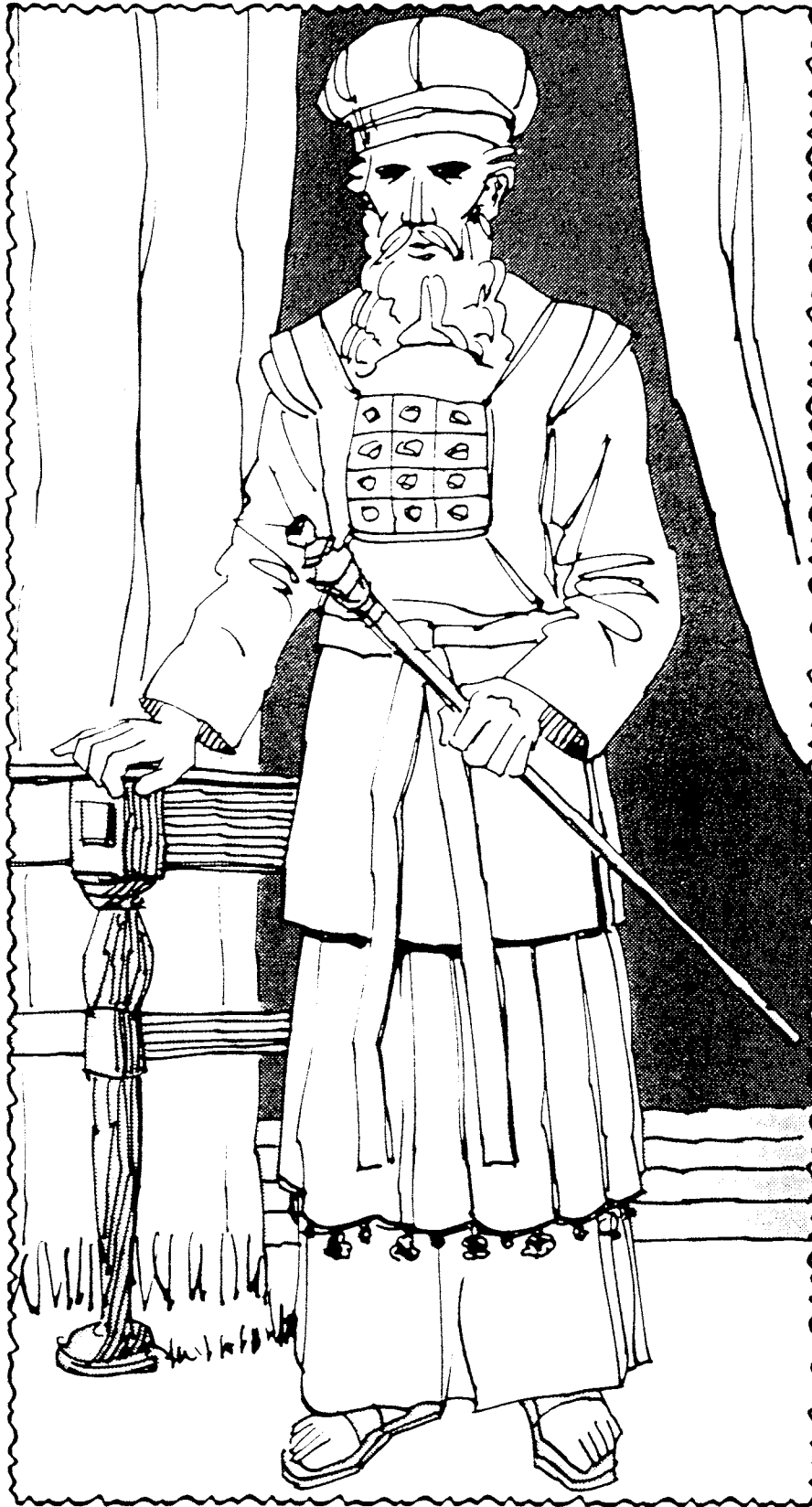
I. I have stressed several times in our study of Exodus the importance of the design of the first tabernacle and the furnishings used for worship in and around the tabernacle. Because of that importance I have elected to relate in Exodus 36:8-38:31 a detailed explanation of the significance of the tabernacle and its associated items to God's communicated will to mankind. There were two items of furniture in the outer court on the east end of the tabernacle installation. When one entered the linen entrance to the tabernacle outer court, the first item encountered was the altar of burnt offering. The concept of burning animal flesh was first given in the Bible at Gen. 22:2-19 when God asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, to test Abraham's loyalty to God. Recall that when Abraham was following God's command here to the letter (Even though Abraham could believe that to do so would sever the possible fulfillment of God's promise at Gen. 15:6,18.), he was pleasing God, because God's plan was to do the same thing thousands of years later for the sins of the whole world, Isa. 53:10; Acts 2:22-23. Of course, God stopped Abraham and provided a lamb for Abraham to sacrifice after the Lord knew that his servant was sincere in sacrificing his only son. Burnt offerings are mentioned by a scribe at Mk 12:28-34 when Jesus was asked by the scribe, "Which is the foremost commandment?" Jesus commended the scribe for stating that, "Loving God above all else and ones neighbor as oneself is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." At Heb. 10:1-10 the burning of animal flesh for sacrifice is mentioned in vs. 6 as the writer quotes Psa. 40:6-8 and relates such burning to God's own sacrifice, Jesus the Messiah, God's Savior for all who will believe, John 1:16; 3:17-18. One can see that, by understanding the significance of the altar of burnt offerings, every item connected with the tabernacle held an important place in God's communication with mankind. Communication from God to mankind was and is extremely significant for mankind's welfare, because, "In the beginning was the Word [Communication], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us [humanity], (and we beheld, Matt. 17:1-3, his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth," John 1:1-2,14.

II. The second item of furniture inside the outer court of the tabernacle was the bronze laver. After the priests passed the burnt sacrifice in the altar of burnt offering, they were required to cleanse themselves in the bronze laver. This cleansing in the New Covenant is represented by the cross on which God's Lamb died for spiritually cleansing every believer in Jesus as God's Messiah (Savior). Jesus was "the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world," John 1:29. It is not insignificant that when John the Immerser was immersing his followers in the Jordan River and elsewhere because "there was much water there," the question of water purification came up for discussion, John 3:22-25. On that occasion the Jews asked about Jesus and John's immersing his disciples in water. John then made a clear distinction between

cleansing by water and receiving God's favor, because, he said, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven," John 3:27. The substance of what John was saying was, "He that believes not the Son shall not see [spiritual] life, but the wrath of God remains with him," John 3:36, which is a repeat of John 3:3,8 where Jesus told Nicodemus, "Truthfully, truthfully, I say to you, 'Except a person be born from above [spiritual rebirth through God's Spirit], he or she cannot see (understand) the kingdom of God.'" As the priests washed at the bronze laver for purification, they were depicting what the symbol of immersing in water to identify with God's sacrifice of Jesus, God's Lamb, on the cross, means to believers in Jesus in the New Covenant.

III. After the burnt offering was finished and the priests had cleansed themselves symbolically by washing themselves in the water in the bronze laver, they were then, and only then, qualified to enter the holy place within the tabernacle building (tent). The priests had daily duties in maintaining the holy furnishings kept there. One of these furnishings was the table for showbread to the right (north) as they entered the holy place. The showbread on this gold table consisted of twelve baked cakes, made of fine flour. It was the duty of the priests each Sabbath Day to place fresh, hot bread on the table. In the time of David, when King Saul was attempting to kill him, David approached the priest in the tabernacle for bread for himself and his men. The priest, Ahimelech, was reluctant to let David have the holy showbread, and he had no ordinary bread. However, he relented and let David take the hallowed bread for food, I Sam. 21:2-6. Our Lord Jesus answered the criticism of the Pharisees for not keeping the Jewish Sabbath law. Jesus stated that David broke a strict interpretation of the law regarding the eating of showbread by one who was not a priest, the profaning of the Sabbath by the priest, and omitting of mercy for the sake of a mechanical sacrifice. Jesus stated simply, "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day," Matt. 12:1-8. The showbread is a foretelling of Jesus as the bread of life without error (yeast), perfect as God's sacrifice for all sin of those who will trust him as God Messiah (Savior) and Lord.

IV. The gold candlestick sat across the aisle from the table for showbread just inside the holy place. The "candlestick" was really not a stand for candles, but it held seven richly-adorned oil lamps. The lampstand was not molded, but "of beaten work," and was worth tens of thousands of current dollars since it was made of solid gold. It consisted of a central stem with six branches, three on each side of the stem lamp. The lampstand was about five feet high and was lighted every evening and dressed every morning. Each of the seven lamps was supplied with cotton and about two glasses of the purest olive oil, sufficient to keep it burning during a long night. This bright light (in its day) was the forerunner of our Lord as the light of the world, John 1:35; 8:12; 9:5. Next Lord's Day we should finish our study of Exodus. We shall continue examining the completion of the tabernacle, look again at the priest's dress, the inspection by Moses of the tabernacle, and the glorification (dedication) with the Lord's presence.



The high priest's dress represented his function as mediator between God and people.

Mar. 14, 1999

"The Grand Finale"
Exod. 39-40

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. Today we will continue the theological significance of the tabernacle furnishings. Last week we examined the provisions for burnt offerings, cleansing by water (laver), unleavened showbread, and the gold stand for light. We now look at the altar of incense, the veil between the holy place (room) and the most holy place and the ark of the covenant with its mercy seat behind that veil. The altar of incense was the last item before the veil which restricted the priests from the symbolic presence of God Almighty. This incense burning made the holy place pleasant, because it contrasted with the harsh odor emitted from the burned animal flesh outside the entrance to the tabernacle. The incense burned on this altar was unique and was used nowhere else by the Hebrews. The altar was small (1.5 feet square and 3 feet high), but the rim around the top four sides was peaked on all four corners and therefore appeared as a crown for a king. Israel's priests at this time (Aaron and his two sons) were mediators between the Israelites and their God, Jehovah, and vice versa. With the exception of the annual visit by the high priest, no one was allowed into the holy of holies. I believe that the incense aroma and stand were a figure of the presence of God the Son and a place of prayer, Psa. 141:2; Lk 1:5-10; Rev. 8:1-5. At this time our Lord had not been sacrificed for the sins of all who will believe in and trust him. Jesus still stands between God the Father and God's people, the ecclesia, John 17:9; I Tim. 2:5.

II. The veil which separated the holy place from the holy of holies, held a very special place in God's (our heavenly Father's through our faith in Jesus his Messiah, Savior) plan for humanity. The veil was a figure of Jesus Christ, because the only, exclusive way to know God the Father is by means of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the (eternal, spiritual) life, John 14:5-7. Throughout the Old Covenant period the way to please God was to keep his Law. The Old Covenant was imperfect, not because of God's provisions in the Law, but because of mankind's insufficient response in honoring God's commands, Heb. 7:11,19,25; 8:9; 9:12-15. At what point did the New Covenant become effective? I believe that it began at the instant Jesus said on the cross at his physical dying, "It is finished!." What is the antecedent of "It" in Jesus' affirmation? I believe it was God the Father's plan of spiritual salvation (eternal life) through the shed blood (physical life) of his Son, Jesus the Messiah. And what does God's new plan (Covenant) have to do with the tabernacle (then Herod's Temple)? The answer is given at Matt. 27:50-51, "Jesus, when he had cried with a loud voice [John 19:30, "It is finished!"], yielded up the ghost (his spirit, physical life). And, behold (perceive), the veil of the Temple was rent in twain [torn into two pieces, was opened] from the top to bottom - - ." The opening in the veil signified that Jesus had finished the work assigned to him by his heavenly Father, John 17:1-5, and joined his Father in heaven, Heb. 9:24-28.

III. Lastly, in our examination of the long range implication of

the tabernacle's furnishings, we look at the last but most important representation in the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant. The veil covering the entrance to the most holy place in the tabernacle where the Hebrews worshiped, covered the very spot representing the dwelling place of God as the Israelites traveled to Canaan. God had told Moses that the law which God himself had written was to be kept in a special container (about four feet long with the height and width about two feet each) made of shittim (acacia) wood and completely covered within and without with pure gold. This container was to have a cover made entirely of pure gold including two figures (cherubims) with two upstretched wings each. This cover on the ark of the covenant was to be the mercy seat to represent God's mercy for those who confessed their sins through the high priest to God. Once every year the high priest (Aaron) would enter the holiest place after having especially prepared himself to offer an atonement for the sins of himself and all Israel, Lev. 16:34; Heb. 9:7,24,28. The ark of the covenant contained (Heb. 9:4): manna representing God's prophet whom God the Father sent from heaven (John 6:32-33); Aaron's rod which had become alive after it had been dead, representing Jesus' resurrection, and his becoming the eternal high priest of God; the ten commandments of God which God had written himself on stones (a synopsis of the whole law of God) representing the kingship of Jesus whom God the Father would send, Rev. 1:5-6; 17:14.

IV. The regalia for the Israeli priests, Aaron and his two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, was given meticulous attention in God's instructions to Moses. The priests were conspicuous as they served God and the people in and around the place of worship, the tabernacle and later the temples. The high priesthood followed the lineage of Eleazar until the time of Eli who was of the house of Ithamar. However, Solomon returned the high priesthood line to Zadok of the house of Eleazar. As the high priest mingled with the people, the aroma in the holy place made his presence ever apparent as well as those of the other priests. Because of this condition their presence served as a role model for the citizens. Therefore, their garments also were very important, and the Lord gave explicit and forceful instructions to Moses concerning those garments. In Exod. 39 where the priests' regalia is reexamined, the phrase, "as the Lord commanded Moses," appears a total of nine times, vs. 1,5,7,21, 26,29,31,32, and 43. Today, when God has elected to dwell in the person of every believer he calls (the ecclesia) by the person of his Holy Spirit, there is no priest necessary except Jesus, our eternal High Priest, Acts 2:17; Heb. 7:22-28; I Pet. 2:5,9; Rev. 1:6. The last chapter of Exodus (40) tells us that the tabernacle was to be set up on the first day of Abib (March-April). The tabernacle was finished on the first month of the following year, and Aaron and his sons were dressed in splendor for the worshiping of God. Moses had done everything "according to all that the Lord had commanded him," Exod. 40:16. When Moses was done, immediately a cloud covered the tabernacle and the glory of the Lord (Shekinah) filled the new place of worship, Exod. 40:34. God's presence dwelt with the Israelites in this way as they continued toward Canaan. God's presence today is represented by God's Holy Spirit.

September 12, 1993

"Moses"
Exodus-Deuteronomy

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

I. Moses' life is the embodiment of Israel's becoming a nation. When the 70 Hebrews came into Egypt under the duress of a natural calamity, a dire drought which threatened their very physical existence, only the promise and power of Almighty God could have brought about the results which followed. Moses' birth and escape immediately thereafter were miraculous events. His parents and all of his relatives were slaves with their enslavement having been a result of a change in the leadership of the line of Pharaohs. The new Pharaoh became alarmed at the number and industry of the Hebrews. His tact in reducing the perceived danger was to increase the work load and to drown every newborn male among them in the river. His plan did not work and the Israelites multiplied immensely. Moses was born during this calamity and was saved, because the daughter of the Pharaoh wanted a baby. She adopted Moses, the Hebrew, as her own child and reared him with every royal advantage. However, Moses' most formative period (infancy) was tutored by his own mother and sister, because the infant needed his mother's milk for sustenance.

II. Moses' early training endeared him to the Hebrews, and at age 40 he witnessed daily how the slaves were being mistreated. One day, in a fit of anger, he slew an Egyptian who was abusing a fellow Israelite. Pharaoh learned of the incident and would have had Moses killed, but the adopted murderer escaped to Midian (Sinai Peninsula). There Moses endeared himself to a family by showing kindness to the prince's seven daughters. He later married one of them and had a son. During this time, the Hebrews in Egypt became so burdened in their slavery that God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. His reaction was to appear to Moses in the Horeb (Sinai) Mountain Range in a bush which was burning but was not consumed. God identified himself as the Lord of Moses' forefathers and said to him that he wanted Moses to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt back to Canaan. The Lord promised to be with him as he confronted Pharaoh. Moses expressed extreme reluctance with: they will not believe me; my speaking ability is not good; but God replied with: I will enable you to perform indisputable miracles; and Aaron can speak your messages from me.

III. After this tremendous experience, Moses returned to Jethro, his father-in-law, and asked to leave to return to Egypt and do God's bidding. God's new prophet reinstated circumcision, met with Aaron, his brother, returned to Egypt, and gathered the Israelite leaders together to hear God's plan. The descendants believed and worshipped God. Moses approached Pharaoh and requested that the Hebrews be permitted to go into the desert for three days to hold a feast to honor their God Jehovah. Pharaoh questioned the reality of Moses' God and told the Israelites to get back to work and produce even more than before. The chain reaction was that the slaves rejected Moses' position, Moses questioned God's plan, and God reassured Moses that he would condition Pharaoh so that Egypt's leader would end up begging the Israelites to leave. At this juncture God revealed that not only was he all-powerful

(Elohim) but also eternal (I AM, Jehovah), Ex. 6:1-9. God commissioned Moses to be his ambassador with Aaron to be his spokesman. With this new commission Moses went again to Pharaoh even after God told him that Pharaoh would not agree to let God's people leave Egypt. Now 80 years old Moses approached the king and performed a miracle, but Pharaoh refused his permission to permit the slaves to leave. Consequently, God brought ten plagues upon Egypt: river to blood, innumerable frogs, lice like dust, swarms of flies, disease of stock (cattle, horses, donkeys, camels, oxen, and sheep), boils (sores) on people and animals, hail, locusts, darkness, and finally, the death of the firstborn of every Egyptian family. The tenth and last plague was effected even though Pharaoh had agreed to release the Hebrews without their possessions earlier. God promised Moses that the Israelites would be spared the tenth plague if each household would sacrifice an unblemished lamb, prepare it for food in a special way along with specially prepared bread, eat the food, and place the blood from the lamb on either side of the entrance door to each home. This ceremony became the Passover and was proclaimed as a perpetual ceremony for the Israelites.

IV. During the last night the Israelites were in Egypt, every oldest child in every Egyptian home died, but the Hebrew families were passed over. God's people under the leadership of Moses took Joseph's bones and left Succoth in Goshen and went in a way not inhabited lest a confrontation encourage the group to return to Egypt. Pharaoh changed his mind and chased his slaves across the Red Sea. God opened the sea for his people and drowned the Egyptians. For the next 40 years Moses led the Israelites around the tip of Sinai where the people continually complained about the lack of food, water, and the general confusion associated with such a large number of people trying to travel under such adverse circumstances. To facilitate the latter, God gave to Moses the basic commandments which have become known as the Ten Commandments, the first four of which properly relate people to God and the last six properly relating people with people, Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:1-21.

V. God gave the people further instructions regarding their activities through Moses and established a covenant which was ratified with the blood of animals. Even so, the people rebelled against Moses and God by making an idol of gold and worshipping it, giving it credit for delivering them from slavery, Ex. 32:8. Only Moses' interceding to God in their behalf saved them from God's wrath, for God answered Moses' prayer, although all the males who rebelled died before reaching the promised land, Num. 14:22-23. Through Moses God gave the Israelites (and through them to all mankind) God's will as recorded in the Bible books we call Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. God did not allow Moses to enter the land promised to his people, the twelve tribes of Israel, but did permit him to see it across the Jordan River on Mt. Pisgah. He died at age 120 and was buried in Moab in a secret place. Moses was referred to by Jesus at John 5:45-47, and Moses was summoned by Jesus as the latter was transfigured at Matt. 17:3. Also, Moses prophesied of Jesus' coming at Deut. 18:15. Jesus' approval by God is likened to his approval of Moses through miracles, Acts 2:22.

September 12, 1993

"Moses"

Exodus-Deuteronomy

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

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As promised
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Remember
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I. Moses' life is the embodiment of Israel's becoming a nation. When the 70 Hebrews came into Egypt under the duress of a natural calamity, a dire drought which threatened their very physical existence, only the promise and power of Almighty God could have brought about the results which followed. Moses' birth and escape immediately thereafter were miraculous events. His parents and all of his relatives were slaves with their enslavement having been a result of a change in the leadership of the line of Pharaohs. The new Pharaoh became alarmed at the number and industry of the Hebrews. His tact in reducing the perceived danger was to increase the work load and to drown every newborn male among them in the river. His plan did not work and the Israelites multiplied immensely. Moses was born during this calamity and was saved, because the daughter of the Pharaoh wanted a baby. She adopted Moses, the Hebrew, as her own child and reared him with every royal advantage. However, Moses' most formative period (infancy) was tutored by his own mother and sister, because the infant needed his mother's milk for sustenance.

miriam, a prophetess Ex. 15:20-21 (Judges 4:4 - Deborah, a prophetess & judge of Israel)

II. Moses' early training endeared him to the Hebrews, and at age 40 he witnessed daily how the slaves were being mistreated. One day, in a fit of anger, he slew an Egyptian who was abusing a fellow Israelite. Pharaoh learned of the incident and would have had Moses killed, but the adopted murderer escaped to Midian (Sinai Peninsula). There Moses endeared himself to a family by showing kindness to the prince's seven daughters. He later married one of them and had a son. During this time, the Hebrews in Egypt became so burdened in their slavery that God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. His reaction was to appear to Moses in the Horeb (Sinai) Mountain Range in a bush which was burning but was not consumed. God identified himself as the Lord of Moses' forefathers and said to him that he wanted Moses to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt back to Canaan. The Lord promised to be with him as he confronted Pharaoh. Moses expressed extreme reluctance with: they will not believe me; my speaking ability is not good; but God replied with: I will enable you to perform indisputable miracles; and Aaron can speak your messages from me.

III. After this tremendous experience, Moses returned to Jethro, his father-in-law, and asked to leave to return to Egypt and do God's bidding. God's new prophet reinstated circumcision, met with Aaron, his brother, returned to Egypt, and gathered the Israelite leaders together to hear God's plan. The descendants believed and worshipped God. Moses approached Pharaoh and requested that the Hebrews be permitted to go into the desert for three days to hold a feast to honor their God Jehovah. Pharaoh questioned the reality of Moses' God and told the Israelites to get back to work and produce even more than before. The chain reaction was that the slaves rejected Moses' position, Moses questioned God's plan, and God reassured Moses that he would condition Pharaoh so that Egypt's leader would end up begging the Israelites to leave. At this juncture God revealed that not only was he all-powerful

Levi
Kohath
Jochabel - Aaron

miriam - Aaron
Moses - Zipporah

↑ In a sense the founder of the Jewish Religion

Ex. 7:11

Ex. 12:13-36
Ex. 12:13-36
Ex. 12:13-36

Ex. 12:13-36

(Elohim) but also eternal (I AM, Jehovah), Ex. 6:1-9. God commissioned Moses to be his ambassador with Aaron to be his spokesman. With this new commission Moses went again to Pharaoh even after God told him that Pharaoh would not agree to let God's people leave Egypt. Now 80 years old Moses approached the king and performed a miracle, but Pharaoh refused his permission to permit the slaves to leave. Consequently, God brought ten plagues upon Egypt: river to blood, innumerable frogs, lice like dust, swarms of flies, disease of stock (cattle, horses, donkeys, camels, oxen, and sheep), boils (sores) on people and animals, hail, locusts, darkness, and finally, the death of the firstborn of every Egyptian family. The tenth and last plague was effected even though Pharaoh had agreed to release the Hebrews without their possessions earlier. God promised Moses that the Israelites would be spared the tenth plague if each household would sacrifice an unblemished lamb, prepare it for food in a special way along with specially prepared bread, eat the food, and place the blood from the lamb on either side of the entrance door to each home. This ceremony became the Passover and was proclaimed as a perpetual ceremony for the Israelites.

Ex. 12:13-36

Ex. 12:13-36

IV. During the last night the Israelites were in Egypt, every oldest child in every Egyptian home died, but the Hebrew families were passed over. God's people under the leadership of Moses took Joseph's bones and left Succoth in Goshen and went in a way not inhabited lest a confrontation encourage the group to return to Egypt. Pharaoh changed his mind and chased his slaves across the Red Sea. God opened the sea for his people and drowned the Egyptians. For the next 40 years Moses led the Israelites around the tip of Sinai where the people continually complained about the lack of food, water, and the general confusion associated with such a large number of people trying to travel under such adverse circumstances. To facilitate the later, God gave to Moses the basic commandments which have become known as the Ten Commandments, the first four of which properly relate people to God and the last six properly relating people with people, Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:1-21.

Ex. 12:13-36

Ex. 12:13-36
Ex. 12:13-36
Ex. 12:13-36

V. God gave the people further instructions regarding their activities through Moses and established a covenant which was ratified with the blood of animals. Even so, the people rebelled against Moses and God by making an idol of gold and worshipping it, giving it credit for delivering them from slavery, (Ex. 32:8.) Only Moses' interceding to God in their behalf saved them from God's wrath, for God answered Moses' prayer, although all the males who rebelled died before reaching the promised land, Num. 14:22-23. Through Moses God gave the Israelites (and through them to all mankind) God's will as recorded in the Bible books we call Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. God did not allow Moses to enter the land promised to his people, the twelve tribes of Israel, but did permit him to see it across the Jordan River on Mt. Pisgah. He died at age 120 and was buried in Moab in a secret place. Moses was referred to by Jesus at John 5:45-47, and Moses was summoned by Jesus as the latter was transfigured at Matt. 17:3. Also, Moses prophesied of Jesus' coming at Deut. 18:15. Jesus' approval by God is likened to his approval of Moses' through miracles, Acts 2:22.

Ex. 32:1
Num. 14:15-23
John 5:45-47
Matt. 17:3
Deut. 18:15
Acts 2:22

Ex. 12:13-36

Conclusion: Num. 11:23-29

Ex. 12:13-36

Moses' Training: Family, Egyptian, Arabian
Moses' life: 40 yrs. - Pharaoh's household; 40 - Herbs; 40 - Sinai