

The Second Book Dictated to Moses

Exodus

a commentary by R.F. (Bob) Knox, Jr.

Main Events of Exodus

Chapter one

1. Children of Israel multiply.
2. Pharaoh increased the oppression of Israel.
3. Male children ordered to be killed by Pharaoh.

Chapter two

1. Moses is born.
2. Moses' upbringing.
3. Moses kills an Egyptian and flees to Midian.
4. Moses marries Zipporah.

Chapter three

1. Moses is a shepherd for Jethro.
2. GOD appeared to Moses in the burning bush.
3. Moses declared by GOD to be the deliverer.

Chapter four

1. Moses given signs to prove his role as GOD's messenger.
2. Aaron appointed as Moses' assistant (mouth piece).
3. Aaron sent to meet Moses in the wilderness.

Chapter five

1. GOD's message delivered to Pharaoh by Moses and Aaron.
2. GOD's message rejected by Pharaoh.
3. Pharaoh increased the burden of the Israelites.

Chapter six

1. GOD renewed His covenant with His people.
2. Genealogies of Reuben, Simeon and Levi given.

Chapter seven

1. Moses again sent to Pharaoh to demand the release of the Israelites.
2. Moses' rod turned into a serpent.
3. First plague sent on Egypt — water turned to blood.

Chapter eight

1. Second plague sent on Egypt — frogs.
2. Third plague sent on Egypt — lice.
3. Fourth plague sent on Egypt — flies.
4. First compromise offered by Pharaoh — sacrifice in the

land.

5. Second compromise offered by Pharaoh — do not go far.

Chapter nine

1. Fifth plague sent on Egypt — murrain.
2. Sixth plague sent on Egypt — boils and blains.
3. Seventh plague sent on Egypt — hail.

Chapter ten

1. Eighth plague sent on Egypt — locusts.
2. Third compromise offered by Pharaoh — men can go but leave their families behind.
3. Ninth plague brought on Egypt — darkness.
4. Fourth compromise offered by Pharaoh — leave your possessions behind.

Chapter eleven

1. Tenth plague brought on Egypt — death of all first-born.

Chapter twelve

1. Passover feast instituted.
2. Death of the first-born comes to pass.
3. Israelites driven from the land.

Chapter thirteen

1. Joseph's bones taken with Israel.
2. Israel camps at Etham.
3. GOD leads with a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire.

Chapter fourteen

1. Red Sea parted for the Israelites to escape.
2. Pharaoh and his army drowned in the Red Sea.

Chapter fifteen

1. Bitter waters at Marah.
2. Twelve wells of Elam.

Chapter sixteen

1. Israel murmurs at the Wilderness of Sin.
2. Israel fed with quail.
3. Israel given manna.

Chapter seventeen

1. Israel murmurs for water at Rephidim.
2. Amalekites defeated.

Chapter eighteen

1. Jethro brings Moses' family to him.
2. Jethro's counsel for administration.

Chapter nineteen

1. GOD spoke to the people at Sinai.
2. The people promise to obey all of GOD's commands.

Chapter twenty

1. The heart of the law given to Israel (ten commandments).
2. Idolatry forbidden.

Chapters twenty-one and twenty-two

1. Laws given regarding interactions of the people with each other.

Chapter twenty-three

1. Laws given regarding interaction of people in society.
2. Three Jewish feasts announced:
 - a. Passover
 - b. Pentecost
 - c. Tabernacles

Chapter twenty-four

1. Moses called to the top of Mount Sinai by GOD.
2. Glory of GOD appeared.
3. Aaron and Hur left in charge of the people.

Chapters twenty-five through twenty-seven

1. Instructions given for the Tabernacle and its furniture.
2. Instructions given for the outer court.

Chapter twenty-eight

1. Aaron and his sons set aside as priests.
2. Urim and Thummim given.
3. Priestly clothes specified.

Chapters twenty-nine and thirty

1. Directions given for sacrifices, incense, et cetera.

Chapter thirty-one

1. Workmen appointed to build the Tabernacle.
2. Moses received the tables of stone.

Chapter thirty-two

1. Aaron built the golden calf.
2. Idolaters slain.
3. Moses prayed for the people.

Chapter thirty-three

1. GOD talked to Moses.
2. Moses allowed to see the glory of GOD.

Chapter thirty-four

1. Tablets of stone given a second time.
2. GOD's glory seen by the people in the face of Moses.

Chapter thirty-five

1. Gifts given for the construction of the Tabernacle.

Chapters thirty-six through forty

1. Tabernacle and all its furniture and utensils built/made.
2. Aaron and his sons sanctified.
3. GOD's glory filled the finished Tabernacle.

King James Version used unless otherwise noted.

ASV — American Standard 1901

YLT — Young's Literal Translation

The word “**Exodus**” literally means “*the going out.*” Thus, here it means the going out of the people of Israel from Egypt.

“The name Exodus was apparently first given to this book in the LXX, some 250 years B.C., the same being the theme of the first fifteen chapters. Prior to that time, the Hebrews called it, We Ellah Shemoth, from the first two words of the book which mean, ‘And these are the names’” (Coffman, p. 2).

Exodus Chapter One

Ex. 1:1-6 “Now these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already. And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.”

“Now these are the names of the sons of Israel, who came into Egypt (every man and his household came with Jacob): Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: and Joseph was in Egypt already. And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.” (ASV)

“And these are the names of the sons of Israel who are coming into Egypt with Jacob; a man and his household have they come; Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. And all the persons coming out of the thigh of Jacob are seventy persons; as to Joseph, he was in Egypt. And Joseph dieth, and all his brethren, and all that generation;” (YLT)

The book of Exodus is a continuation of Genesis, approximately four hundred years after the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt. The first six verses bridge the gap between the two accounts.

At the time the Israelites migrated to Egypt, Jacob was still the patriarch of the family. The text does not say that he went with them (his family), but that they went with him. The list of names in these verses deals with the tribes which will come into existence, except for Joseph and his descendants. This is obviously due to the fact that Joseph was already in Egypt, whereas this passage deals only with those who came with Jacob. The text reveals that the “**household**” of each of these men went down with them. This would not only have included immediate family members but would have also included any of their servants. **How many immediate family members went down with Jacob?** Verse five states that, of those born to

Jacob, there were seventy. But the total number which went down is not given. Seventy does not speak to the servants they had. Consider that Abraham's household included three hundred and eighteen fighting men (Genesis 14:14). In the general sense in which the word **"household"** is used, Jacob and his sons would have contained many more men than that, plus women and children.

Verse six shows that a time had come when all of the immediate generations of Joseph had died off, and there was no one left who personally knew him. This is important for the purpose of showing how a ruler could arise who did not **"know"** Joseph. This ruler would not have had first-hand knowledge of the situation of the one who had saved Egypt. Further, if he had read the written record regarding Joseph, he ignored it.

Note should be made that the present text numbers those of Jacob's family as seventy who came with him to Egypt. Whereas, Stephen gave the number of seventy-five in Acts 7:14. The present number comes from the Hebrew Bible, whereas Stephen's number is quoted from the Septuagint.

Ex. 1:7 "And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them."

"And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them." (ASV)

"and the sons of Israel have been fruitful, and they teem, and multiply, and are very very mighty, and the land is filled with them." (YLT)

This verse shows the tremendous growth of the children of Israel during their sojourn in Egypt. Further, it shows that GOD kept His promises to Abraham.

"I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing" (Genesis 12:2).

"I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered" (Genesis 13:16).

"in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies" (Genesis 22:17).

They were a mighty people, and yet they would become even mightier.

Note should be made of the five words which are used to signify their growth — each one showed greater growth than the one before it. Some critics have questioned the numerical strength of the Israelites when they left Egypt.

“It is pointed out by the demographic specialists that without artificial checks against it, populations tend to double every twenty five years” (Coffman, p. 3).

“Even supposing the ‘seventy’ with their ‘households’ to have numbered no more than 500 persons when they went down into Egypt, the people, unless artificially checked, would have exceeded two million at the expiration of three centuries — that is to say, 130 years before the Exodus” (George Rawlison as quoted by Coffman, p. 3)!

Using the calculations of Coffman and Rawlison, and figuring in the 130 years, that means the Israelites would have grown to 64,000,000 by the time of the Exodus, **IF** they had not been killed off by Pharaoh’s orders. It should be remembered that GOD was influencing this tremendous growth. Also, it was not until within the last one hundred years of their captivity that this new king who did not know Joseph came to power. Using human standards, there is little wonder that Pharaoh was becoming alarmed at their numbers.

Ex. 1:8 “Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.”

“Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph.” (ASV)

“And there riseth a new king over Egypt, who hath not known Joseph,” (YLT)

One is now introduced to a **“new king”** who did not know Joseph. This could mean several things. (1) He did not know what Joseph did for Egypt, saving them during the time of drought. (2) He did not know Joseph, because he did not want to know what he had done — wilful ignorance. Whatever the case may be, this verse sets the stage for all that follows. (3) Keil believes that his being called a **“new king”** referred to his governing in a way different from all who went before him. This could be accounted for by three possibilities. (a) He simply governed in a different manner or style. (b) He may have been a foreign king (Hyksos), with foreign styles. (c) It could have simply been a change in Egyptian dynasties.

Who was this new king? No one knows with a degree of certainty. The information below is offered for consideration.

“Regarding the identity of this Pharaoh, there are two main possibilities. If the late date for the exodus (1290 B.C.) is accepted, then the pharaoh when Moses left

Egypt was Seti I and the pharaoh of the exodus was Raamses II. If the early date. (1445 B.C.) is accepted, then the pharaoh at the time when Moses fled from Egypt was Thutmose IV and the pharaoh during the exodus was Amenhotep II" (Roper, p. 24).

Ex. 1:9 "And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we:"

"And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we:" (ASV)

"and he saith unto his people, Lo, the people of the sons of Israel is more numerous and mighty than we;" (YLT)

This is a puzzling statement, considering that the Egyptians would have been doubling in number every twenty-five years, just like the Hebrews. It could be that Pharaoh said this to drum up support for his planned persecution of the Hebrews. **Why was Pharaoh fearful of the Israelites? Could it be that this was the time after the Hyksos had ruled over them and they were fearful that, in the event of another foreign power's trying to invade them, the Israelites would join them?**

Some think they see an opening here for the Hyksos ruling Egypt during this time. **But why would the Hyksos try to enslave a people whom they had more in common with than the Egyptians whom they had conquered?** Further, the Hebrews were a peaceful people who were untrained in war. They would not have been a threat. To this author's way of thinking, this does not make sense. It makes far more sense that this speaks about the Egyptians' subjugating the Israelites.

Ex. 1:10 "Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land."

"come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land." (ASV)

"give help! let us act wisely concerning it, lest it multiply, and it hath come to pass, when war happeneth, that it hath been joined, even it, unto those hating us, and hath fought against us, and hath gone out up of the land." (YLT)

The context shows that they intended to enslave the Israelites. **How could such a thing be considered a wise thing to do?** Looking at it from their perspective, they had a problem, and after probably considering possible alternatives, they chose to place them in bondage. If the Israelites were enslaved, it would make it even harder for them to join the Egyptians'

enemies against them. Note that it does not appear to Pharaoh that there was any danger of the Israelites' rebelling against him. He seems to be considering that an enemy might use them and encourage them to join its actions. After all, there are always enemies at the border of any great nation.

It might also be noted that the Hebrews are not the only ones now facing conflict. In essence, Pharaoh has now declared war on GOD. Saul was told by Jesus on the road to Damascus, **"Why persecutest thou Me"** (Acts 9:4)? It is remembered that, in that context, Saul (Paul) was on his way to Damascus with letters of authority to persecute Christians. Jesus' words showed that to persecute the followers of Jesus was the same as persecuting Himself. Pharaoh had a major problem, though he did not know it at the time.

"and so get them up out of the land" This shows that Pharaoh was afraid the Israelites might try to leave Egypt. **From where did this fear arise? Did he possibly know about the Hebrews' beliefs that their homeland was in Canaan and that they would return there some day?** This phrase also seems to indicate that he saw value in the Israelites remaining in the land. It should also be considered that there is no indication at this time that the Israelites' desired to leave Egypt. But by placing them in bondage and making their burdens great, it would give them cause to desire freedom. The very thing he did not seem to want was the thing he was promoting in their hearts. His bondage would cause them to remember the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Ex. 1:11 "Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses."

"Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses." (ASV)

"And they set over it princes of tribute, so as to afflict it with their burdens, and it buildeth store-cities for Pharaoh, Pithom and Raamses;" (YLT)

"Therefore they did set over them taskmasters" These were the overseers, or as one might call them today, superintendents. These men would have had officials under them to manage smaller groups, which we might call foremen.

What was the purpose of these taskmasters? "to afflict them with their burdens"

"afflict" — *anah* — *"to depress...deal hardly"* (Strong); *"To afflict, oppress, humble, be afflicted, be bowed down"* (BDB); *"a verb indicating to be afflicted, to be oppressed, to be humbled...to subdue...deal with persons harshly"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 222).

The Israelites' work was to be made very hard so that they would suffer. Such hard labor often reduces the number of those placed under it. Pharaoh wanted them reduced to such a servile position so that their spirits would be broken. When one reaches this condition he will lack confidence in himself and tend to believe there is nothing he can do about his afflictions, therefore he will be submissive — even to an extreme measure. Pharaoh wanted them to become totally dependent upon support from himself.

“they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses”

“treasure” — miskenah — *“a magazine: store house”* (Strong); *“supply, storage, storage house, magazine”* (BDB); *“a feminine noun referring to storehouses, storage areas. It indicates a structure or even a city used for storage or supplies of various kinds, chiefly military supplies; grain; or wine and oil”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 635).

In America, one usually places things he either does not need right now or his excess in storage facilities. In the time of the above text, these would have been necessities for war, trade, or for necessary use in the near future. This would also tend to indicate that the nation was thriving or prospering.

“Pithom” — *“house or temple of Tum,” the sun god of Heliopolis* (Barnes, p. 8). *“It was situated, according to Herodotus, upon the canal which commenced above Bybastus and connected the Nile with the Red Sea”* (Keil/Delitzsch, p. 422); *“the city of justice’ one of the store-cities which Pharaoh made the Israelites build”* (BDB).

“Raamses” — *“is generally assumed to have been derived from Raamses II, the Sesostris of the Greeks, but it was previously known as the name of the district”* (Barnes, p. 8).

Some believe that, if the city was named after Raamses the king, then this dates the exodus. That is why this writer believes the city was named after the province and not the king. Note the following comments by Fields.

“Raamses II, a great builder and warrior, ruled 1301 - 1234 B.C. If we accept rather literally the scriptural information about the date of exodus given in 1st Kings and Judges 11:26 (and we do take it rather literally), we must date the exodus about 1446 B.C., long before the time of Raamses II” (p. 64).

It should be noted that the exact location of these cities is disputed.

Ex. 1:12 “But the more they afflicted them, the more they

multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.”

“But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.” (ASV)

“and as they afflict it, so it multiplieth, and so it breaketh forth, and they are vexed because of the sons of Israel;” (YLT)

Things did not work out the way that Pharaoh hoped they would. In spite of the vigorous labor meant to diminish the number of the Israelites, their numbers increased. Naturally, as they increased, they needed more land upon which to live (they did not have sky-scraper apartment buildings then).

“The multiplication of Israel went on just in proportion to the amount of the opposition” (Keil/Delitzsch, p. 423).

They must have wondered how this could be. Clearly, the hand of GOD is seen in these affairs. When the Egyptians saw the Israelites’ continued growth in spite of their efforts to curtail it, the Bible says it **“grieved”** them.

“grieved” — guts — *“to be grieved, loathe, abhor, feel a loathing or abhorrence or sickening dread”* (BDB); *“a verb meaning to loathe, to be disgusted, to be sick of...the loathing felt by Israel’s enemies towards Israel’s prosperity”* (Baker/Carpenter); *“the Hebrew word is very strong: it means ‘to have a disgust, to feel horror, or fear’”* (Author unknown).

The Egyptians had already begun to fear the Israelites, but as they observed them continue to grow under severe persecution, they became even more afraid of them.

“He turned their heart to hate His people, to deal subtilly with His servants” (Psalm 105:25).

GOD had a plan for the Israelites, and it did not matter how hard the Egyptians tried to overthrow it — **they would fail**. There is a lesson here for Christians today. If Christians hold fast to the course GOD has set for them, then they will be victorious, and all the forces used by Satan against them will fail.

Ex. 1:13 “And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour:”

“And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor:” (ASV)

“and the Egyptians cause the sons of Israel to serve with rigour,” (YLT)

“rigour” — perek — *“From an unused root meaning to break apart; (fracture), i.e., severity: rigour”* (Strong); *“harshness, severity, cruelty”* (BDB); *“a masculine noun referring to ruthlessness, cruelty. It refers to a manner*

in which something is carried out. Israel was made to labor without mercy, cruelly by Egypt” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 919).

The emphasis here is upon making their lives bitter by excessive work that would wear them down. Further, though not revealed as to extent, they were treated cruelly. This will be emphasized in the next verse.

“Making bricks involved carrying water; digging earth; mixing earth, water, and straw; filling molds with the mud; removing bricks from the mold; and transporting bricks by unaided power” (Fields, p. 65).

Ex. 1:14 “And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.”

“and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor.” (ASV)

“and make their lives bitter in hard service, in clay, and in brick, and in every kind of service in the field; all their service in which they have served is with rigour.” (YLT)

The repetition in this verse is meant to emphasize how hard their lives were made through their labors. Yet, as hard as the labor was, it did not have the effect desired by Pharaoh. Thus, Pharaoh will step up his attempts to reduce Israel’s numbers in the coming verses.

“service in the field” Josephus and Philo state that the Israelites were used to dig canals and to build walls and ramps of various sorts. This was very hard labor, and some of it was probably unhealthy (digging canals). Some of this labor would have resulted no doubt in early death.

“God’s people, sooner or later, must reckon with the savage hatred of that whole portion of humanity who are not God’s people. No matter how long the saints may swell in peaceful coexistence with those who are of this world only, at last and finally the issue must be faced; and the inevitable result is stated here. ‘They made their lives bitter’” (Coffman, p. 7).

Ex. 1:15-16 “And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiprah, and the name of the other Puah: And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.”

“And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of the one was Shiprah, and the name of the other Puah: and he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew

women, and see them upon the birth-stool; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.” (ASV)

“And the king of Egypt speaketh to the midwives, the Hebrewesses, (of whom the name of the one is Shiphrah, and the name of the second Puah), and saith, When ye cause the Hebrew women to bear, and have looked on the children; if it is a son—then ye have put him to death; and if it is a daughter—then she hath lived.” (YLT)

The text now introduces two midwives for the Hebrews.

“Hebrew” — *“one from the other side”* (Roper, p. 27).

It may be that this refers to Abraham’s leaving Ur on the east of the Euphrates River. First is **“Shiphrah.”**

“beauty” (Fields, p. 66); *“prolific or to pro-create”* (Lockyer, p. 161); *“fair”* (BDB).

The second, was **“Puah”**

“splendor” (Fields, p. 66); *“child bearing or joy of parents”* (Lockyer, p. 125); *“splendid”* (BDB); *“Glitter, brilliancy”* (Strong).

The nationality of these women is somewhat hidden. Some (Josephus, Barnes, Clarke) believe their names are non-Hebrew names, while others (Fields, Coffman) say they are Semitic names. It can safely be said that no one of this age or recent past can safely say what their national background was. It might appear from their initial reaction to the king’s command that they were Hebrews; yet, it may have been that they were of some other nationality or even some Egyptians whose close contact with the Hebrews had brought them to an obedient faith in the GOD of Israel. For all practical purposes, their nationality is unimportant. What is important is their refusal to obey Pharaoh’s command.

Why are only these two mid-wives mentioned? Could two serve a nation of millions who were filling the land (v. 7)? One solution is that they may have been the overseers of the mid-wives. Some have offered as a solution the thought that these were the only two Pharaoh thought he could approach to do his bidding. But, viewing the power and arrogance of the Pharaohs, *Would he be afraid to tell all the midwives his plans, whether they were Hebrews, Egyptians or some other nationality?* He expected everyone to obey his commands. Strictly speaking, it is not revealed why he approached only these two. There is also the possibility that these women oversaw the midwives who attended the Hebrews and that they simply did not relay Pharaoh’s message to them. Whatever the case, the Hebrew babies were spared.

“stool” — oben — *“This was a form of chair upon which women in labor sat during the act of giving birth. ‘The Hebrew word obnaim, meaning two stones,’ has two meanings, the stool itself, and the double stone of the potter’s wheel”* (Coffman, p. 9).

Medical authorities report that this method of giving birth is much easier on the woman and on the baby. One wonders why, then, it is not commonly used in the West.

The murder of these babies would have been an easy thing to accomplish, and they could have called it an accident with no one the wiser. Yet, after a time, a pattern would have been revealed if they had obeyed Pharaoh. Just here this author would like to point out the hypocrisy of the pro-abortionist crowd. One of the reasons they claim it is all right to abort a “fetus” is that the “fetus” is not **viable**.

[“viable” – *“capable of living; especially: having attained such form and development as to be normally capable of surviving outside the mother's womb”* (Webster's 11th Collegiate Dictionary)].

The **baby** in the womb is being **nourished** and **protected** by its mother so that it may grow and be healthy. Question: **Without nourishment and protection provided by someone outside the womb, how long would that baby live?** Yet, these same people will say it is murder to kill the baby once it is born, or it is double murder at a trial of a pregnant woman and her baby who was murdered, but it is not murder to kill it while it is within its mother's womb. Can we shout **Hypocrite!** Can this writer hear an “Amen” from his readers? (The news declared that the governor of New York has signed a bill which allows “abortion” up until the time of birth. Further, the governor of Virginia said if a baby is in the birth canal and the mother then decides she does not want it, they can let the baby be born, keep it comfortable, and then decide whether to let it live. If the mother does not want the child — give it up for abortion — do not murder it!)

Why save the baby girls and not the baby boys? The answer has been given that the boys could grow up to be warriors. **But what if Pharaoh had ordered the deaths of all the baby girls? Would that have not eventually accomplished the same thing?** Plus, he would have had the use of the males for the hard manual labor. This writer has also considered that Pharaoh's plan of murdering the baby boys would have failed, because in that time, having multiple wives was still acceptable. So the girls produced would have eventually given birth to more people. Interesting speculation, but that is all it is — speculation. Another thought comes to mind, i.e., they may have hoped that the shortage of men would eventually lead to inter-marriage, which would have broken down the Israelites.

Ex. 1:17-18 “But the midwives feared GOD, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive?”

“But the midwives feared GOD, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men-children alive. And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men-children alive?” (ASV)

“And the midwives fear GOD, and have not done as the king of Egypt hath spoken unto them, and keep the lads alive; and the king of Egypt calleth for the midwives, and saith to them, Wherefore have ye done this thing, and keep the lads alive?” (YLT)

The mid-wives **“feared GOD.”** The Hebrew word for **“feared”** is *yare*, which refers not only to fear but also to reverence. It should be noted that one cannot have proper reverence for GOD without an aspect of fear. It should also be noted that they were not in abject fear (terror) of GOD, but rather a healthy fear. Reverence for GOD caused them to disobey the ruler who had the power of physical life or death over them. It would require a healthy dose of faith on their part to disobey Pharaoh.

“reverence” — *“honor or respect felt or shown: DEFERENCE; especially: profound adoring awe respect”* (Webster, 11th edition).

Note that the text says the mid-wives saved the **“men children alive.”** It was not simply a matter of the children’s being born before the mid-wives arrived on the scene. **They intentionally saved the boys!**

“By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil” (Proverbs 16:6).

They knew murder was wrong, and they did not intend to become involved in such no matter who ordered it. Pharaoh demanded to know why they had disobeyed him.

Ex. 1:19 “And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them.”

“And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwife come unto them.” (ASV)

“And the midwives say unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women, for they are lively; before the midwife cometh in unto them—they have borne!” (YLT)

This passage clearly brings the question to mind, **“Is it right to disobey civil authorities, as the mid-wives did?”** The answer is an emphatic **YES!** The Bible clearly teaches that civil authorities are to be obeyed.

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of GOD: the powers that

be are ordained of GOD. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of GOD: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation” (Romans 13:1-2).

So how is it that this author could answer the above question with a resounding YES? When civil authorities make laws which are contrary to GOD’s law, then the citizen has to make a choice. **Whom does he obey? GOD or man?** If one wants to have any hope of going to Heaven, he must obey GOD and not man. When the Sanhedrin commanded the apostles not to speak in the name of Jesus anymore, **how did they answer these men?**

“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey GOD rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

In Daniel chapter three, Shadrack, Meshach and Abed-nego were order by Nebuchadnezzar to bow before his idol. Note their reply.

“O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our GOD whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up” (Daniel 3:16-18).

The midwives answered Pharaoh by proclaiming that the Hebrew women were not as delicate as the Egyptian women. When it was time for their babies to be delivered, the Hebrew women quickly delivered them before the midwives had a chance to assist them. In Vietnam, during the rice harvest, American soldiers were often assigned to guard the harvest. It has been reported many times that a woman would walk out of the rice paddies, go into the jungle, and in less than an hour return to work in the paddies with a cradled new born.

Ex. 1:20-21 “Therefore GOD dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared GOD, that He made them houses.”

“And GOD dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared GOD, that He made them households.” (ASV)

“And GOD doth good to the midwives, and the people multiply, and are very mighty; and it cometh to pass, because the midwives have feared GOD, that He maketh for them households;” (YLT)

Many have stated that here is a GOD-approved example of situation ethics. Their claim is that GOD rewarded a lie (sin) for the greater cause. **GOD does not reward sin.** This is a case

of GOD's rewarding them in spite of their sin, not because of it.

"God rewarded those midwives, not for their falsehood to Pharaoh, but for their fear of God and for their aiding His purpose of multiplying the Israelites" (Coffman, p. 10).

"...in the past God overlooked some irregularities in conduct, He now requires all men to adhere to the right (Acts 17:30-31)" (Zerr, p. 105).

This may have been one of those "irregularities," since they clearly lied, and lying has always been contrary to GOD's will. This author believes their reward was based on the fact that they were willing to disobey a man-made law which was contrary to GOD's law. Instead of committing murder, they obeyed GOD's law against murder.

The Israelites were growing rapidly, and Pharaoh was trying to stop that growth. But, no matter what he did, they kept multiplying at great rates. They **"multiplied and waxed very mighty."** GOD was fulfilling the promise He had made to Abraham and their forefathers.

"because the midwives feared GOD, that he made them houses" How did GOD make them "houses?" Is it possible that they could not have children before this time? Did they, as Fuller believed, marry Hebrew men and have children? If it were the case that they married Hebrew men and were not themselves Hebrews, they became Hebrews through assimilation. Whether it was children or their assimilation into the family of GOD, they were blessed by GOD.

"Through not carrying out the ruthless command of the king, they had helped to build up the families of Israel, and their own families were therefore built up by God. Thus, God rewarded them 'not, however, because they lied, but because they were merciful to the people of God; it was not their falsehood therefore that was rewarded, but their kindness (more correctly, their fear of God), their benignity of mind, not the wickedness of their lying; and for the sake of what was good, God forgave what was evil'" (Kiel/Delitzsch, p. 425).

Ex. 1:22 "And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive."

"And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive." (ASV)

"and Pharaoh layeth a charge on all his people, saying, Every son who is born--into the River ye do cast him, and every daughter ye do keep alive." (YLT)

Who were the people who were given this command of Pharaoh? Considering the context, it was probably the Egyptians; yet, it may also have included the Hebrews. Whose baby boys were to be cast into the river? Since the context is dealing with the diminishing of the Hebrew nation, then it dealt with the Hebrew boys. His purpose to weaken the Hebrews would have been compromised if Egyptian boys were to be killed. This plan would have had far more opportunity of success, because there are always those who are willing to do evil, especially if the government sanctions that evil. Consider the attempt to exterminate the Jews by Hitler. Consider abortion in America at this time. Evil men and women will take advantage of every opportunity to do that which is contrary to GOD's will.

The river spoken of here is probably the River Nile. Yet, one should consider that the idea was to drown them, so any river would do.

"The Egyptians worshipped many things both living and inanimate. And one of their chief gods was the River Nile (Ezekiel 29:3, 9). Thus, to cast the infants into the river would be like making a sacrifice to their god" (Zerr, p. 105).

"The most astounding thing about this event is that the very action which Pharaoh took in his purpose of destroying Israel was exactly the thing that placed a Hebrew man-child in the very bosom of the king's family, making him, at last, the heir to Pharaoh's throne" (Coffman, p. 11).

Exodus Chapter Two

Ex. 2:1-2 “And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.”

“And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.” (ASV)

“And there goeth a man of the house of Levi, and he taketh the daughter of Levi, and the woman conceiveth, and beareth a son, and she seeth him that he is fair, and she hideth him three months,” (YLT)

“house of Levi” This signifies the descendants of Levi who would later be named the family from which the priests came. The names of this man and woman are not named here but will be in Genesis 6:1 — Amram and Jochebed. It is also noted that there is nothing said here about two children who were born before Moses. **Why?** Though Aaron and Miriam (Mary) were important personages in the development of the nation, their importance pales in contrast with Moses’. He will be the one who frees the Hebrews and gives them the law from GOD.

“goodly” — tobe — *“good, pleasant, agreeable...a good thing, benefit, welfare”* (BDB); *“an adjective meaning good, well-pleasing, fruitful, morally correct, proper, convenient...it describes that which is appealing and pleasant to the senses; is useful and profitable; is abundant and plentiful; is kind and benevolent; is good in a moral sense as opposed to evil; is proper and becoming; bears a general state of well-being or happiness; is better of two alternatives”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 221).

“goodly child”

“Acts 7:20 says he was ‘exceeding fair’ (literally ‘fair to God,’ or ‘fair like God’)” (Fields, p. 74).

Keil and Delitzsch talk of the beauty of the baby Moses as seeming to be a token or a sign of GOD’s approval of Moses, with his beauty being the evidence that GOD had some special task ahead for this child.

There is no doubt that something about the appearance of this child had something to do with why Jochebed hid him for three months. His beauty would probably also have something to do with Pharaoh’s daughter’s rescuing him, despite her father’s edict to drown all the Hebrew male babies.

“The Jewish Midrash (Interpretation) of Exodus says that the Egyptians would go from house to house where they suspected a Hebrew child might have been born” (Fields, p. 74 — It should be remembered that the

Midrash was not an inspired book.).

Why did Jochebed not hide him longer than three months? Would it be hard to hide a child of three months with a healthy set of lungs? His only recourse to declaring that he was hungry, had a dirty diaper, or was hurt would be a sharply pitched wail. Further, what about the laundry problem?

Note what the New Testament says about Moses being hidden.

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment” (Hebrews 11:23).

“proper” — *astios* — *“Handsome: fair”* (Strong);

“Elegant (of body), comely, fair” (Thayer).

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD” (Romans 10:17).

It seems reasonable from the cited passages in Hebrews and Romans that GOD revealed His plans to Amram and Jochebed. It is also possible that they were simply told by GOD to save this child and nothing more. Yet, if this were the case, then how did Moses know that he was to deliver GOD's people from Egypt? Remember the incident of Moses' killing the Egyptian because he abused a Hebrew. The next day, two Hebrews were fighting, and Moses confronted them. Note what Acts reveals about that incident.

“And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that GOD by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not. And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday” (Acts 7:23-28, emphasis mine, RK)?

Ex. 2:3-4 “And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.”

“And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch; and she put

the child therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him." (ASV)

"and she hath not been able any more to hide him, and she taketh for him an ark of rushes, and daubeth it with bitumen and with pitch, and putteth the lad in it, and putteth it in the weeds by the edge of the River; and his sister stationeth herself afar off, to know what is done to him." (YLT)

"took for him an ark of bulrushes" Note that she **"took"** an ark. She is not said to have "made" the ark, like some of the children's songs and stories have portrayed.

"This was a chest made of the stalks of the papyrus reed which grows profusely along the banks of the Nile" (Dummelow, p. 50).

"Papyrus was widely used in the manufacture of such things as baskets, boats, mats, ropes, sails, and even paper" (Coffman, p. 15).

"ark" — tebah — *"a box: ark"* (Strong); *"ark, basket in which Moses was placed"* (BDB).

The word **"ark"** (tebah) is found in only one other place in the Bible — Genesis 6-9. In those chapters, it is clearly seen by the dimensions given that a box was indicated by the word; not a boat. See this author's notes on Genesis.

Papyrus — *"A kind of rush which was very common in ancient Egypt, but has almost entirely disappeared, or, as Prunner affirms, is nowhere to be found. It had a triangular stalk about the thickness of a finger, which grew to the height of ten feet; and from this the lighter Nile boats were made, whilst the peeling of the plant was used for sails, mattresses, mats, sandals, and other articles, but chiefly for the preparation of paper"* (Keil, p. 427).

Jochebed coated the ark with **"slime"** and **"pitch,"** thus making it watertight. Slime was bitumen or asphalt which was imported into Egypt from the area of the Dead Sea. Coffman states it was also used for mortar and also in the preservation process of embalming (p. 15). Pitch is tar. After placing Moses in the ark, Jochebed laid it in the **"flags"** in the edge of the water. This would keep the ark from drifting away.

"flags" — suph — *"This is apparently a general name which includes both the fresh-water weeds growing along a river bank and 'seaweeds'"* (ISBE, Vol. 2, p. 1117).

It is interesting to note that Jochebed's actions seem to be well thought out. *Is it possible that she knew when and where the princess bathed at the river so that she could be sure the princess would see the ark? Did she realize that only one in*

Pharaoh's house could save her baby? All of the details will never be known, for only highlights are given in the text. However, this writer would like to believe that GOD directed her actions and yet realizes he cannot know whether He did or did not. Another question arises: *Where was Jochebed as her son floated in the river?* One can only speculate, but this writer sees her on her knees praying for GOD to protect her child.

“his sister stood afar off” She probably did this in such a way so as not to be conspicuous that she was watching the ark. This writer assumes this was Miriam, because the written record does not name any other siblings in Moses' family. But it should be remembered that that is an assumption. The Bible often leaves out the names of women and those who played lesser parts in the context. Moses, Aaron and Miriam will have major parts to play in the Exodus and in the training of the people to follow GOD.

Ex. 2:5-6 “And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.”

“And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river-side; and she saw the ark among the flags, and sent her handmaid to fetch it. And she opened it, and saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.” (ASV)

“And a daughter of Pharaoh cometh down to bathe at the River, and her damsels are walking by the side of the River, and she seeth the ark in the midst of the weeds, and sendeth her handmaid, and she taketh it, and openeth, and seeth him—the lad, and lo, a child weeping! and she hath pity on him, and saith, This is one of the Hebrews' children.” (YLT)

In modern Arab countries, only the lowest classes of people will bathe in the river, and even that is a rare event. But in ancient Egypt, the Nile was considered to be sacred, a god in itself. It was believed that bathing in the Nile would bring fruitfulness to the womb (as it did the land), and long life (Keil, p. 428). This reminds one of India, where the Ganges is considered sacred, and many involve themselves in religious bathing.

Barnes made the following observation about the danger of bathing in the Nile.

“Many facts concur in indicating that the residence of the daughter of Pharaoh and of the family of Moses, was at Soan, Tanis, now San, the ancient Avaris, on the

Tanitic branch of the river, near the sea, where crocodiles are never found, and which was possibly the western boundary of the district occupied by the Israelites” (p. 9).

The princess seems to have walked along in the water, while her maids walked on the shore. She saw the ark and, probably out of curiosity, sent her maid to fetch it. When she opened the box, she found a crying baby and had compassion on it, even though she could tell it was a Hebrew child. Barnes states that the Egyptians believed that when they died, they had to stand before the “Lord of Truth” and make this statement.

“I have not afflicted any man, I have not made any man weep, I have not withheld milk from the mouths of sucklings” (p. 9).

The compassion of the princess caused her to save this child. *But how did she know this was a Hebrew child? Would the facial features have given its nationality away?* Probably not at such an early age. The movie “Moses” would have us to believe it was the fabric and pattern of his wrapping which signified this was a Hebrew child. In Romans 4:11, the Bible tells one of a sign which was given Abraham to designate those of his family. *What was that sign?* Circumcision.

“Since the descendants of Abraham still followed the ordinance received through him it furnished the sign or clue by which the child was recognized as a Hebrew” (Zerr, p. 106).

This writer believes that by this time in Israel's history, many may have neglected this act, for in Joshua it is learned that after they crossed the Jordan River, they had to stop and reinstate this procedure.

Who was this princess? The Bible does not disclose that information.

“Josephus called her Thermutis, and Eusebius called her Merris. Unger suggested that her name might have been Hatshepsut. She was the only woman known to have become a Pharaoh” (Coffman, p. 17).

Over the years, three basic reasons have been given as to why Pharaoh's daughter had compassion on the baby Moses. (1) Natural female tenderness, (2) Religious teaching among the Egyptians which required tenderness toward the suckling infant, and (3) The providential control of GOD. It would seem obvious to this writer that GOD was the controlling factor in these events.

Ex. 2:7-9 “Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her,

Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it.”

“Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maiden went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it.” (ASV)

“And his sister saith unto the daughter of Pharaoh, Do I go? when I have called for thee a suckling woman of the Hebrews, then she doth suckle the lad for thee; and the daughter of Pharaoh saith to her, Go; and the virgin goeth, and calleth the mother of the lad, and the daughter of Pharaoh saith to her, Take this lad away, and suckle him for me, and I—I give thy hire; and the woman taketh the lad, and suckleth him.” (YLT)

Moses' sister (probably Miriam) had probably been told by Jochebed to watch discreetly to see what happened to her child. Apparently, there was not as much separation of the Hebrews from the Egyptians, because “Miriam” was able to walk right up to Pharaoh's daughter and address her. “Miriam” asked her if she would like her to find a nurse for the baby. It was not an uncommon thing for royalty to hire nurses for their children. In the Old South (America), it was not uncommon for slaves to be the wet-nurse of their master's children. In the original, the word nurse (*yanag*) means *“to suckle, give suck.”* **Who would she naturally get?** Moses' own mother!

The princess hired Moses' own mother to care for him in these very formative years. It should be considered that, in those times, children were often suckled for a number of years. One can point to the example of Hannah with Samuel, who would have been possibly seven years old, or maybe older, before she took him to the Temple to be schooled by Eli. She had promised to give Samuel to the Lord all of his days, which she did after he was weaned (1 Samuel 1:24).

It should be considered that women have **always** been given wages for the way they have raised their children — either weeping or rejoicing.

“Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her” (Proverbs 31:28).

“Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates” (Proverbs 31:31).

“A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him” (Proverbs 17:25).

“A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son

is the heaviness of his mother” (Proverbs 10:1).

“Observe also how important the women were in the life of Moses. His mother, his sister, Pharaoh’s daughter — all played vital roles in his career. All honor to the wonderful women of all ages who fear the Lord! Moses’ wise mother knew what some ‘emancipated’ women of our times do not know, namely service at home to her family will have more powerful influence on the world than competing with men for authority. Who had a more lasting powerful influence on the world, the Egyptian queen Hatshepsut or Moses’ mother” (Fields, p. 77)?

Hatshepsut was the only woman who ever served as Pharaoh. Even today, hardly anyone knows about her except Egyptian scholars. But much of the world knows about Jochebed and her son Moses.

When did Moses’ education begin? The answer might seem to be like any other child — at birth. Yet, scientific studies in recent years indicate that a child’s education begins in its mother’s womb.

“A wise teacher was asked, ‘When should a child’s education begin?’ He replied, ‘In the life of his great-grandmother.’ Observe the effects of Eunice and Lois upon Timothy (2 Tim. 1:5)” (Fields, p. 77).

Ex. 2:10 “And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.”

“And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses, and said, Because I drew him out of the water.” (ASV)

“And the lad groweth, and she bringeth him in to the daughter of Pharaoh, and he is to her for a son, and she calleth his name Moses, and saith, Because—from the water I have drawn him.” (YLT)

After Moses was weaned, his mother took him to the princess. One might call her his step-mother; yet, this writer prefers to call her his protector. The princess named him Moses, because she **“drew him out of the water.”**

“This was, of course an Egyptian name. ‘They called water mo, and those who were rescued from water uses’” (Coffman, p. 18).

The Hebrew for Moses is Mosheh, which means *“drawing out”* (Strong); *“drawn”* (BDB).

Little is known about the early life of Moses, because the text basically skips over it and, in the next verse, deals with him at the age of forty (Acts 7:23). Acts 7:21 states that he was

nourished by his protector, which included an education.

“Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds”
(Acts 7:22).

Note that he was **“learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,”** which would have included the knowledge of the Egyptian gods. Yet, he did not allow this **“wisdom”** to seduce him — he followed Jehovah. Further, the text in Acts reveals that he was **“mighty in words and in deeds.”** This is interesting considering that, later in this book, he tried to beg off his responsibilities by telling GOD he was **“slow of speech and of a slow tongue”** (Exodus 4:10).

“Josephus tells of Moses’ leading a victorious war against the Ethiopians, and consummating a marriage with an Ethiopian princess” (Fields, p. 78).

One wonders if this might have been the Cushite woman of Numbers 12:1.

When one views the events recorded in this text, he cannot help but note the hand of GOD in these affairs. The very act decreed by Pharaoh to, at the least, weaken the Israelites, led to the one who would free them from bondage being nurtured in his own house.

Ex. 2:11 “And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren.”

“And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown up, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren.”
(ASV)

“And it cometh to pass, in those days, that Moses is grown, and he goeth out unto his brethren, and looketh on their burdens, and seeth a man, an Egyptian, smiting a man, a Hebrew, one of his brethren,” (YLT)

The text begins by letting one know that Moses was not an impetuous youth when these events took place. There is no indication that he acted on impulse without realizing the possible consequences for his actions. In fact, the text leans to a premeditated action. Further, the text does not condemn his actions and neither does it condone his actions. One should not conclude from this text that it is all right to use violence to “right” a wrong.

How did Moses know these Hebrews were his brethren?

There are at least two possibilities: (1) The princess may have told him from the very start that he was adopted from the Hebrews; or (2) He may have stayed with his natural mother during the weaning process long enough to learn about his

people and their GOD. The second is not improbable and is highly likely, since women in that time nursed a child for a number of years. (One should consult the case of Samuel as already noted in this study.) If she kept him for a number of years, he would have easily known that these were his people.

Moses went out and saw the tremendous burdens his people were required to endure. Further, he saw an Egyptian **“smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren”** (generic sense). This was a conscious decision he was about to make regarding whose side he was on.

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of GOD, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Hebrews 11:24-25).

It is also obvious from the Scriptures that he had a concept of his GOD-given mission in life.

“seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that GOD by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not” (Acts 7:24-25).

Being a mighty man of Egypt, he apparently thought the only way to resolve this issue was to use force and violence. He needed to learn, as do all of GOD's servants, that GOD was going to deliver His people through His own mighty works, in His own way, in His own time, rather than in a military-style deliverance.

Ex. 2:12 “And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.”

“And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he smote the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.” (ASV)

“and he turneth hither and thither, and seeth that there is no man, and smiteth the Egyptian, and hideth him in the sand.” (YLT)

Moses had been trained to be a leader in the Egyptian court and knew he was to lead Israel out of bondage. He, no doubt, thought this was the time and this was the event which would cause his brethren to understand what he knew. After all, they had been told over and over that the day would come when they would be led out of bondage. But Moses' timing was off. It is obvious that Moses had not received instructions from GOD in this matter. Otherwise, there would have been no need for him to look around to see if anyone was looking. When the time for Israel to be led from Egypt came, it would be

done openly, and GOD would clearly lead Moses. There would be no need for sneaking around and secret burials. Christians should learn a lesson from this. GOD has spoken through His word, and when He tells one what to do, it should be done openly (transparently). There should be no sneaking around the bush to “con” folks into obeying the Gospel. The gimmicks of men are not to be used to entice them, but rather, the only thing which can lead them to salvation is the tool GOD has given — His word.

“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for IT is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”

(Romans 1:16, emphasis mine, RK).

It should be noted again that what Moses did on this occasion was premeditated murder. He was guilty not only of a crime against the Egyptian, but was also in violation of GOD’s law. If GOD had ordered this man’s death then you have a different story.

“Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of GOD made he man” (Genesis 9:6).

Ex. 2:13 “And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?”

“And he went out the second day, and, behold, two men of the Hebrews were striving together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?” (ASV)

“And he goeth out on the second day, and lo, two men, Hebrews, striving! and he saith to the wrong-doer, Why dost thou smite thy neighbour?” (YLT)

The next day, when Moses went out among his brethren, he saw one of them beating a fellow Hebrew. Remember, that he thought they would recognize him as their deliverer (Acts 7:25). Moses did not understand how a Hebrew could be treating a fellow Hebrew this way, when they were suffering the same things from the Egyptians. Also note that only one of them was to blame. This shows that it does not always take “two to tangle.” It would seem that they would appreciate their fellow sufferer; yet, it is too often the case that one who is oppressed will become the oppressor if given the opportunity. Moses was trying to act as a mediator, but as will be seen, the instigator would have none of it.

Ex. 2:14 “And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing

is known.”

“And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Thinkest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely the thing is known.” (ASV)

“and he saith, Who set thee for a head and a judge over us? to slay me art thou saying it, as thou hast slain the Egyptian? and Moses feareth, and saith, Surely the thing hath been known.” (YLT)

Notice that it is the one who was smiting his fellow Hebrew who does not want Moses to interfere and is resentful toward him. Usually in these matters, it is the one who is in the wrong who objects to mediation, who wishes to continue his abusive behavior or illegal activity. The aggressor was basically telling Moses to stop interfering and trying to lord it over them.

“If a peacemaker offers to act in a difficulty so as to settle it according to justice, the ones in the wrong often resent it and accuse the would-be arbitrator of being a tyrant” (Zerr, p. 107).

Since Moses had looked around and saw no witness for what he proposed to do, **How was it that it was known that he murdered the Egyptian?** There seem to be two possibilities: (1) The one who had been oppressed by the Egyptian and delivered by Moses told this man, or (2) The one oppressing his fellow Hebrew was the one Moses had rescued from the Egyptian. Considering the time sequence, this writer believes it was probably the latter.

At any rate, Moses realized that his deed was not done as secretly as he had thought. This caused Moses to be fearful. **Is there a contradiction with what is said here and what is said in Hebrews 11:27?** The answer is no, for the passages are speaking of two different things. In Exodus, it is speaking of Moses’ fleeing after it was discovered that he had murdered an Egyptian. In Hebrews, it is speaking of the time when he took his stand before Pharaoh to free his people. (It might also refer to his decision to refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter — choosing rather to suffer with his brethren.)

“Hebrews does not deny that Moses was afraid but says that it was faith, rather than fear, that caused him to abandon Egypt” (Roper, p. 41).

Ex. 2:15 “Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.”

“Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.” (ASV)

“And Pharaoh heareth of this thing, and seeketh to slay Moses, and Moses fleeth from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelleth in the

land of Midian, and dwelleth by the well.” (YLT)

One of the things ancient rulers had in common with modern times is that others would arise who would replace them. But in ancient times, this would have been through overthrowing their governments, forcibly taking their thrones. History shows a great deal of intrigue among royal families, sometimes leading to wholesale murder of an entire royal lineage to prevent any of them from reaching the throne. Moses’ act of killing the Egyptian could have been considered an act of one who would lead these Hebrews whom Pharaoh feared into an attempt to overthrow his kingdom. So, in spite of the fact that Moses was a prince of Egypt, the death warrant was issued.

Before Pharaoh’s decree could be executed, Moses fled to Midian. It is known that the place to which he fled was in the Sinai Peninsula, because Moses tended the flocks of Jethro near Horeb. It is also known that the Midianites were related to the Hebrews through Abraham’s second wife, Keturah (Genesis 25:2-4).

Ex. 2:16-17 “Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.”

“Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.” (ASV)

“And to a priest of Midian are seven daughters, and they come and draw, and fill the troughs, to water the flock of their father, and the shepherds come and drive them away, and Moses ariseth, and saveth them, and watereth their flock.” (YLT)

Moses had arrived at a well in Midian, no doubt tired and thirsty from his travels. This was the well where the priest of Midian’s daughters would water his flocks. Apparently, this was a common well which was used by all in the vicinity. When they arrived, they began filling the troughs from which the animals drank, but then the “shepherds” arrived and drove the women away from the well, presumably so that their animals could be watered first. This did not sit well with Moses, who rescued them and then drew the water for them.

One can observe that it seems to be a trait of Moses to help those who were being treated unfairly. Note: (1) a Hebrew was being abused by an Egyptian, so he stepped in to help the Hebrew, (2) a Hebrew was being abused by another Hebrew, he stepped in to help the abused Hebrew, and (3) these women were being abused by the shepherds, and he stepped

in to help them. Moses seems to be one who could not sit back and allow an injustice to take place.

Ex. 2:18 “And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to day?”

“And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to-day?” (ASV)

“And they come in to Reuel their father, and he saith, Wherefore have ye hastened to come in to-day?” (YLT)

Reuel, the priest of Midian, was surprised that his daughters had returned from their task so early. This seems to indicate that the incident with the shepherds was not an isolated occurrence, but was probably a daily one.

The name **“Reuel”** means *“friend of GOD”* and suggests that he was a faithful follower of GOD. This reminds one of someone else who was called the **“friend of GOD.”**

“And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed GOD, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of GOD” (James 2:23).

Since the Midianites were related to Moses through Abraham and Keturah (Genesis 25:2-4), it is not much of a surprise that there were those who had maintained the religion of Abraham down through time.

It is disputed by some that Reuel and Jethro (who is seen later in the text) are the same person. It is suggested by some that Reuel was the father of Jethro, the grandfather of these ladies, based upon the fact that Jethro means *“excellency.”* But “excellency” may have been a title for this “friend of GOD” (see 3:1, where Jethro will be called **“the priest of Midian”**). At any rate, Moses is being introduced into this family.

It is observed that Reuel was surprised that his daughters had finished watering the sheep so early. This indicates that the harassment of his daughters by the shepherds had been a daily affair.

Ex. 2:19-20 “And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock. And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread.”

“And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and moreover he drew water for us, and watered the flock. And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? Why is it that ye have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread.” (ASV)

“and they say, A man, an Egyptian, hath delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also hath diligently drawn for us, and watereth the flock; and he saith unto his daughters, And where is

he? why is this? --ye left the man! call for him, and he doth eat bread." (YLT)

In answering their father's question, they told him about the Egyptian who had delivered them from the shepherds. His mode of dress probably signified him as such. The idea is not a military one, but rather that he delivered them from the harassment of the shepherds.

One can see the embarrassment that Reuel's daughters have brought him. Here was a man who had befriended his daughters and thus himself; yet, they had left him at the well. By sending his daughters to bring him back for a meal, he showed the gratitude, hospitality and courtesy his daughters had failed to give.

One might recognize that gratitude is a very important aspect of being a servant of GOD. The Bible teaches one to be thankful for all that is done for him, whether one speaks of a human being or, especially, of GOD.

"O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever" (1 Chronicles 16:34).

On one occasion, the Bible teaches that Jesus healed ten lepers and sent them on their way. While they went their way, they suddenly realized that they were healed. Yet, only one of them returned in gratitude to thank Jesus.

"Jesus answering said, Were not the ten cleansed? but where are the nine? Were there none found that returned to give glory to GOD, save this stranger"

(Luke 17:17-18 — ASV)?

One should never allow ingratitude to be a part of his life.

Ex. 2:21-22 "And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land."

"And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. And she bare a son, and he called his name Gershom; for he said, I have been a sojourner in a foreign land." (ASV)

"And Moses is willing to dwell with the man, and he giveth Zipporah his daughter to Moses, and she beareth a son, and he calleth his name Gershom, for he said, A sojourner I have been in a strange land." (YLT)

The word **"content"** has nothing to do with happiness or the lack thereof; it simply shows that Moses was agreeable to stay with this family. At this point in time, Moses was a man without a nation or a place to call home. Human beings have a built-in desire to have a place they call home. When he was given the opportunity to consider this place and family his home, he accepted it. It should be remembered that, at this

time Moses must have been quite confused. He had thought he was the one who was to deliver Israel from Egypt, and he was. The problem was his timing — it did not match GOD's timetable. He must have wondered if he really was the chosen one, or did he just think he was, and it was actually somebody else. **If he was the chosen one, then why did not GOD help him deliver Israel at that time?**

It is not known how long Moses stayed with Jethro before he gave him Zipporah to wife. One cannot help but wonder if she was given to him in the same way Rachel was given to Jacob, i.e., as wages. Cole states that the name **"Zipporah"** means *"bird (perhaps 'warbler,' 'twitterer'" (p. 54). Note how history is given here in capsule form without further details.*

Moses named his firstborn son **"Gershom."** His name means *"a stranger there"* and carries the additional meaning of *"banishment."*

"This name is related to the Hebrew word ger, which means 'alien' or 'stranger,' emphasizing that Moses saw himself as a 'stranger in a strange land' during his years in Midian" (Roper, p. 43).

"Though Moses had safety and a wife and children, the name Gershom suggests that he felt a feeling of banishment in Midian" (Fields, p. 85).

It should be added that a second son was born (Exodus 18:4) who was named **"Eliezer,"** which means *"my GOD is a help."*

"This name suggests that as time passed Moses came to be more content, and to rely more fully on GOD" (Fields, p. 85).

Ex. 2:23-25 "And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto GOD by reason of the bondage. And GOD heard their groaning, and GOD remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And GOD looked upon the children of Israel, and GOD had respect unto them."

"And it came to pass in the course of those many days, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto GOD by reason of the bondage. And GOD heard their groaning, and GOD remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And GOD saw the children of Israel, and GOD took knowledge of them." (ASV)

"And it cometh to pass during these many days, that the king of Egypt dieth, and the sons of Israel sigh because of the service, and cry, and their cry goeth up unto GOD, because of the service; and GOD heareth their groaning, and GOD remembereth His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob; and GOD

seeth the sons of Israel, and GOD knoweth.” (YLT)

These three verses act as an introduction to chapter three. The king who had sought Moses’ life was dead, and the Israelites were crying out for relief from their burdens. Their condition had grown progressively worse. It seems that they possibly could have hoped that, when a new king came upon the throne, their burdens would be made lighter. If so, they were sadly disappointed. Their cries to GOD for deliverance grew stronger and more frequent.

“and GOD remembered His covenant” This is not saying that GOD had forgotten His promises to them. GOD only forgets one thing — sins of which one repents.

“For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 8:12).

“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 10:17).

“What is indicated is that the time had almost arrived when God would act decisively to aid and deliver them. As Ellison put it, ‘This is a classic example of the attribution of human terms and attributes to God, who, in fact, never forgets a promise’” (Coffman, p. 23).

A **“covenant”** is an agreement made either (1) between two parties, both of which have a say in the conditions of the covenant, or (2) One made by a superior for both parties, in which the inferior party only has the option of following or rebelling against it. The latter of these two is what GOD had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (and consequently with the nation of Israel).

“There are two shades of meaning, somewhat distinct, of the Hebrew word. One in which it is properly a covenant, i.e., a solemn mutual agreement, the other of which it is more a command, i.e., instead of an obligation voluntarily assumed, it is an obligation imposed by a superior upon an inferior” (ISBE, p. 727).

GOD has **never** broken an agreement He has with man. He has always fulfilled His end of the covenant, but on His own timetable — not man’s. Man is often impatient in wanting GOD’s promises to fit his own timetable.

Exodus Chapter Three

Ex. 3:1 “Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of GOD, even to Horeb.”

“Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of GOD, unto Horeb.” (ASV)

“And Moses hath been feeding the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, priest of Midian, and he leadeth the flock behind the wilderness, and cometh in unto the mount of GOD, to Horeb;” (YLT)

There are several interesting terms here. The term **“father in law”** was used much like the Hebrews used the word “father.” “Father in law” was used of any relationship which came about through marriage, i.e., it could be used of a son-in-law, brother-in-law, et cetera. It is from this information that some have tried to explain the use of the two names, Reuel and Jethro. They make the assertion that Jethro was the son of Reuel and thus the brother of Zipporah. This assertion is based solely upon the possible definition of the original word. [One cannot help but wonder where this “brother” was when the shepherds had apparently made a practice of driving his sisters away from the well daily (2:16-19)].

As the shepherd for Jethro’s flocks, Moses took them to the backside of the desert.

“backside” — *“the west or northwest of the area. ‘Among the Hebrews the east is before a man, the west behind him, and the south and the north on the right and left hand’”* (Coffman, p. 26).

Using this information, one learns that the place to which Moses had fled from Egypt was east or south east of Horeb.

One should also be aware that the word **“desert”** does not mean the same thing today that it did in those days. Today, when the word “desert” is mentioned, one thinks of a sandy and dry region where very little lives. But to the ancients, it simply meant a desert place; that is, a place where people were few and far between. When Jesus fed the five thousand men, plus women and children, the place was called a **“desert”** place; yet, He commanded them to sit down in the **“grass”** (Matthew 14:15-21).

“Horeb” There is a chain of mountains called Horeb, of which one particular peak was called Horeb. This is similar to the **“mountains of Ararat,”** where one particular peak was called Ararat. At times, the words **“Horeb”** and **“Sinai”** are used interchangeably. There are basically two opinions as to how this place came to be known as **“the mountain of GOD.”**
(1) Some believe the natives had formerly called this mountain

by that name. (2) Others, including this author, believe it was probably called that at the time this was written because of the events which transpired there, i.e., the burning bush, Moses' call there, the laws which were given there, et cetera.

Ex. 3:2 “And the Angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.”

“And the Angel of Jehovah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.” (ASV)

“and there appeareth unto him a messenger of Jehovah in a flame of fire, out of the midst of the bush, and he seeth, and lo, the bush is burning with fire, and the bush is not consumed.” (YLT)

“Angel of the LORD” A study of the word “angel” shows that it simply refers to a messenger. It can signify either a heavenly messenger or an earthly one. In this case, the evidence should be enough to convince anyone that this was a heavenly messenger. Further, in verse four of this text, the messenger is referred to as **“GOD.”** This writer believes that, in particular, it is referring to the second person of the GODHEAD — **“the Word”** (John 1:1-3). This appearance is what is called a “Theophany” (*“a visible manifestation of a deity”* – Webster). In Deuteronomy 33:16, the blessings of GOD are stated as coming from **“Him that dwelt in the bush.”**

“Although this verse does not indicate it, there is reason to believe that the angel of Jehovah should be identified with our Lord Jesus Christ” (Coffman, p. 27).

“The angel of the Lord was the same personality that later came into the world as Jesus of Nazareth” (Fields, p. 94).

Moses saw a bush that appeared to be one fire, and yet, the bush was not consumed by the fire, as would normally happen. This would be a strange sight which would stroke the curiosity of anyone, and Moses was no exception. **Why was this bush not consumed by what appeared to be fire?** Because the fire was not an earthly fire — it was GOD! Many times the Scriptures use the term **“fire”** in connection with GOD.

“And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians” (Exodus 14:24).

“And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and

the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly”

(Exodus 19:18).

Some have looked at this event and believe that they see a parallel to the bondage of the Israelites. Although they suffered a severe persecution which was meant to consume them, they endured to see a better day. This seems to be a stretch to this writer.

Ex. 3:3-4 “And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, GOD called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.”

“And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, GOD called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.” (ASV)

“And Moses saith, Let me turn aside, I pray thee, and I see this great appearance; wherefore is the bush not burned? and Jehovah seeth that he hath turned aside to see, and GOD calleth unto him out of the midst of the bush, and saith, Moses, Moses; and he saith, Here am I.” (YLT)

The curiosity of Moses drew him to investigate the burning bush which was not consumed. As he began to draw near, GOD called to him out of the bush — **“Moses, Moses.”** When spoken to, Moses answered, **“Here am I.”** This reminds one of other great men of GOD who were willing to listen to GOD and who responded to Him.

“the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I” (Genesis 22:11).

“the angel of GOD spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I” (Genesis 31:11).

“the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I” (1 Samuel 3:4).

“I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

GOD is constantly calling for man to hear Him, and man ought always to answer in the affirmative, **“Here am I.”** Further, man should always be willing to be used as GOD’s instrument — **“Send me.”**

Ex. 3:5 “And He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”

“And He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” (ASV)

“And He saith, Come not near hither: cast thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place on which thou art standing is holy ground.” (YLT)

As Moses advanced toward the bush, GOD stopped him. He told Moses to take off his shoes, because this was holy ground. It may have been an ancient custom to remove one's shoes when he approached a holy place. At any rate, this would have been an act of respect and reverence for GOD, Who was there at that time. (To this day, Muslims remove their shoes when they enter their “holy” places.)

What made this **“holy ground?”** Had it been designated at some time in the past as a particular sight which was deemed holy? The only thing which made this ground holy was because GOD was there at that time. After GOD left this place, it was no longer considered holy ground.

Ex. 3:6 “Moreover he said, I am the GOD of thy father, the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon GOD.”

“Moreover he said, I am the GOD of thy father, the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon GOD.” (ASV)

“He saith also, I am the GOD of thy father, GOD of Abraham, GOD of Isaac, and GOD of Jacob; and Moses hideth his face, for he is afraid to look towards GOD.” (YLT)

Notice should be made as to how GOD began this listing — **“I am”** (the only GOD). There seems to be little doubt that this is the “Jehovahistic” use of the term.

“GOD said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you” (Exodus 3:14).

It is the same phrase which Jesus used to identify Himself and which caused the Jews to try to stone Him, because they recognized what this term made Jesus — GOD.

“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the Temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by” (John 8:58-59).

It should also be noted that Moses' father is listed along with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This shows a direct link that He is the GOD of all of them and that this is a continuation of

the Genesis account. GOD has always portrayed himself as the GOD of the faithful, and that is what He did here with regard to Amram.

Also, GOD's statement is in the present tense. He was presently the GOD of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Abraham had been physically dead for approximately five hundred years, yet GOD was still his GOD. Abraham, like all human beings, lives beyond this present life.

“GOD is not the GOD of the dead, but of the living”

(Matthew 22:32).

When Moses realized that GOD was represented in the burning bush, he **“hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon GOD.”**

“afraid” — yare — *“to fear; morally to revere; causatively to frighten”* (Strong); *“to fear, revere, be afraid”* (BDB); *“a verb meaning to fear, to respect, to reverence, to be afraid, to be awesome, to be feared, to make afraid, to frighten. The most common translations are to be afraid, to fear, to fear God”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 470).

Why was Moses afraid to look at the representation of GOD in the burning bush?

“Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live” (Exodus 33:20).

No human being can look directly at GOD and live. Obviously, Moses thought that if he looked at the representation of GOD in the bush, he would die. If that had been the case, he would already have been dead, having previously looked at the bush. Though no physical being may look at GOD and live, thankfully the day is coming when the faithful will be able to look upon Him.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of GOD, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

Ex. 3:7 “And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;”

“And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith, I have certainly seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and their cry I have heard, because of its exactors, for I have known its pains;” (YLT)

“affliction” — only — *“depression, i.e., misery: afflicted, trouble”* (Strong); *“affliction, poverty, misery”*

(BDB); *“a masculine noun meaning affliction, misery. It refers to a state of oppression or extreme discomfort, physically, mentally, or spiritually”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 853).

“cry” — tsaagah — *“a shriek: cry (ing)”* (Strong); *“cry, outcry”* (BDB); *“a feminine noun indicating a cry, an outcry. It describes a call for help, a cry of wailing and despair”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 961)

“sorrows” — makob makob makobah — *“anguish or (figuratively) affliction: grief, pain, sorrow”* (Strong); *“pain, sorrow”* (BDB); *“a masculine noun referring to pain, suffering, sorrow”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 606).

The great things to be seen in this passage are the tenderness and compassion seen by GOD for His people. He saw their affliction and heard their agony brought on by their taskmasters. This is the same GOD who rules today. This fact ought to comfort GOD’s people when they must endure the afflictions brought upon them because of sin. He hears the cries for deliverance from this evil world. He knows and understands every sorrow endured by His people.

“we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:15-16).

Finally, the time for the deliverance of GOD’s people had arrived, and He chose Moses to be His instrument to accomplish this. His promise to Abraham would be fulfilled.

“He said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance” (Genesis 15:13-14).

Ex. 3:8 “And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.”

“and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the

Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.” (ASV)

“and I go down to deliver it out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to cause it to go up out of the land, unto a land good and broad, unto a land flowing with milk and honey--unto the place of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.” (YLT)

GOD said that now was the time to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage. He further described the land where He promised to settle them as having plenty of room for them (“**large**”). It was also described as a land “**flowing** (zub – “*to flow, gush, issue*” – BDB) **with milk and honey.**” The picture is of a land which would fulfill all of their needs and beyond their needs. The pastures where their flocks would graze would be abundant, thus, their animals could produce an abundance of milk for their young and plenty for human consumption. Such fields would also produce many blooms from which the bees would produce an abundance of honey. This would also seem to imply that everything in the land would produce abundantly, so that all their needs would be more than met.

“This was a homely metaphor widely used in antiquity with the meaning of a land rich in natural resources, with plenty of water and abundance of fruit trees” (Coffman, p. 30).

“The terms used in the text to express the fertility of this land, are commonly used by ancient authors on similar subjects. It is a metaphor taken from a breast producing copious streams of milk” (Clarke, Vol. 1, p. 305).

Six nations are mentioned by GOD as living in the land where He would take Israel. Often there were seven nations listed, including the Girgashites (Deuteronomy 7:1). It might also be noted that the name of one of these nations was used commonly to designate all of these nations — the Canaanites. The form of government for these people was often the “city-state,” where the strongest cities ruled as much territory (cities) as they could control.

Why would these nations be sub-planted for the Israelites? Was it simply the whim of GOD as to where He wanted the Israelites? The answer to these questions is found in Genesis 15:16-21.

“But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river

Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.” (Emphasis mine, RK)

Note particularly verse sixteen in this land promise, which designates all of these people under one heading — Amorites. The people of the land of Canaan were becoming more degenerate with time, so that their sins and iniquities demanded their overthrow. Some of them were even offering their children in the fires of Molech.

“When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire” (Deuteronomy 18:9-10).

Fornication was often a major part of their religious rituals.

“And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods” (Numbers 25:1-2).

Their overthrow was a judicial judgment by GOD because of their sins. Later, these same sins would cause Israel great difficulties.

“The Jews found it very difficult to remember it was the sensual wickedness of the Canaanites that caused God to dispossess them and give their land to the Jews, with the definite understanding that if the Jews followed their wickedness as had the Canaanites that the same fate awaited Israel” (Coffman, p. 30).

“Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy GOD is He which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire He shall destroy them, and He shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee. Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy GOD hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy GOD doth drive them out from before thee, and that He

may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob”
(Deuteronomy 9:3-5).

Ex. 3:9-10 “Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto Me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt.”

“And now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto Me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt.” (ASV)

“And now, lo, the cry of the sons of Israel hath come in unto Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them, and now, come, and I send thee unto Pharaoh, and bring thou out My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.” (YLT)

GOD restated the case of the Israelites: He had heard their cries for release and had seen the cruelty to which they were subjected. Their cries had become continual, which reminds one of Luke 18:1-8, where the woman was not getting justice, so she went all the time to the judge to seek it. One may have to approach GOD often to obtain the blessings He can give. It may be that the timing was not right when one first sought a thing, and thus the request was not granted at that time. If it is asked in faith and according to the Scriptures, do not give up. If the thing asked for is good and right, keep asking. These Israelites had been seeking GOD’s help for many years, and the time for it had now come. Remember — **“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”** (James 5:16).

GOD informed Moses that he indeed was the promised deliverer of the Israelites from Egypt’s bondage. Before Moses jumped at what he thought he should be doing. Now, he would be seen to be hesitant and unwilling to put himself in that leadership position.

Ex. 3:11 “And Moses said unto GOD, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

“And Moses said unto GOD, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” (ASV)

“And Moses saith unto GOD, Who am I, that I go unto Pharaoh, and that I bring out the sons of Israel from Egypt?” (YLT)

Where did the brave man of forty years prior to this go?

Then, he had been anxious to free his people by smiting the Egyptian. Now, Moses did not feel that he was capable of fulfilling such a mission, so he offered the first of his excuses as to why GOD should choose someone else.

1. **“Who am I, that I should go”** (3:11)?
2. **“What shall I say, when they ask, What is His name”** (3:13)?
3. **“They will not believe”** (4:1).
4. **“I am not eloquent”** (4:10).
5. **“Send someone else”** (4:13).

Forty years in the wilderness had changed Moses. He no longer saw himself as a deliverer, as one capable of doing what has been asked of him. His attitude now was of one who had learned humility; yet, he had gone beyond humility to a crippling humility. Crippling humility causes a capable person to believe that he is not worthy or capable of committing some action — so he does not try.

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

“And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve GOD upon this mountain.” (ASV)

“and He saith, Because I am with thee, and this is to thee the sign that I have sent thee: in thy bringing out the people from Egypt--ye do serve GOD on this mount.” (YLT)

GOD’s answer to Moses’ objection was, **“I will be with you.”** With this simple statement, GOD gave Moses all the assurance he should have needed. GOD has always been with His people, as long as they obey Him, and He always will be.

“What shall we then say to these things? If GOD be for us, who can be against us” (Romans 8:31)?

“The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what man can do unto me” (Psalm 118:6).

GOD then gave a promise to Moses which would be his proof that he was capable and that GOD had chosen him to deliver Israel. In essence, GOD told Moses that he would not only be successful in his mission, but he would bring Israel to this mountain, where the people would worship Him. When that happened, his faith would become even stronger.

“Anyone might make a prediction. But not till said prediction came to pass would it prove the authority or

standing of the one making it” (Zerr, p.109).

“It cannot be absolutely clear in advance that God is the one who stands behind this call to action...When these events have taken place, God’s presence will have been seen to have been effective and Moses will know that it is indeed God who stands behind the commission”
(Fetheim, as quoted by Roper, p. 58).

It should be stated that GOD gave Moses many proofs that He was with him between the time of this text and when he returned and worshipped at this mountain.

Ex. 3:13-15 “And Moses said unto GOD, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The GOD of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them? And GOD said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And GOD said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD GOD of your fathers, the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations.”

“And Moses said unto GOD, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The GOD of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? What shall I say unto them? And GOD said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And GOD said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the GOD of your fathers, the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is My name forever, and this is My memorial unto all generations.” (ASV)

“And Moses saith unto GOD, Lo, I am coming unto the sons of Israel, and have said to them, The GOD of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they have said to me, What is His name? what do I say unto them? And GOD saith unto Moses, I AM THAT WHICH I AM; He saith also, Thus dost thou say to the sons of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And GOD saith again unto Moses, Thus dost thou say unto the sons of Israel, Jehovah, GOD of your fathers, GOD of Abraham, GOD of Isaac, and GOD of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; this is My name--to the age, and this My memorial, to generation--generation.” (YLT)

Moses offered his second excuse as to why he did not believe he could do this work. His reasoning is that the Israelites would question his authority by asking who sent him. It should be remembered that the Israelites knew that GOD had promised Abraham that He would free them.

GOD answered Moses with a strong statement: **“I AM WHO**

I AM.” This statement declares GOD’s great supremacy, the self-sufficient One. The simple statement, **“I AM,”** reappears a number of times throughout the Bible. Jesus used this term to show the Jews His eternal existence, i.e., that He was GOD.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58).

The term, **“I AM,”** has the effect of saying, **“I have always been and always will be who I am.”**

GOD continued by offering more assurance to Moses by saying that He is the GOD of the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Throughout the Bible, one finds these three names in connection with proofs that GOD is the same GOD now as He was for the patriarchs.

“I am the GOD of Abraham, and the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob? GOD is not the GOD of the dead, but of the living” (Matthew 22:32).

“as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush GOD spake unto him, saying, I am the GOD of Abraham, and the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob” (Mark 12:26)?

GOD made this statement to Moses to affirm that He was the same GOD who talked with, dealt with, and made promises to the patriarchs. Now He was going to help Moses deliver Israel out of bondage.

This writer believes that the idea behind the last portion of verse fifteen is **“Tell them the eternal One has sent you. And the fact that I am eternal is My memorial for all ages.”** Man needs to keep the eternal nature of GOD always before his mind. It brings one comfort to know that the same One he worships today is the same One Who has been worshipped by all saints from Adam forward.

Ex. 3:16 “Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD GOD of your fathers, the GOD of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt:”

“Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, Jehovah, the GOD of your fathers, the GOD of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt:” (ASV)

“Go, and thou hast gathered the elders of Israel, and hast said unto them: Jehovah, GOD of your fathers, hath appeareth unto me, GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, I have certainly inspected you, and that which is done to you in Egypt;” (YLT)

GOD told Moses that he was to go to the elders and tell

them what He had said. This means that Moses would be acting as a prophet. A prophet's job was to declare to men the message of GOD. The elders would have been older men, possibly the leaders of the tribes themselves. They were men who were to make decisions for the Israelites and would have been highly respected. Moses was to meet with them and give them assurances regarding the events which were about to happen. It will also be seen that they were to go with Moses when he first approached Pharaoh with the demand to free GOD's people (v. 18).

GOD wanted these elders to know that He had seen what was being done to them in Egypt. His concern for them should never be doubted, though the fulfillment of His promises had been delayed. They were to be assured that the day of their deliverance had come. The words, **"I have surely visited,"** point back to the dying words of Joseph.

"Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and GOD will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob" (Genesis 50:24, emphasis mine, RK).

The phrase in the present text does not mean that GOD had not known all along what was happening to His people. Rather, it refers to the time Joseph had prophesied about, when GOD would deliver Israel from bondage.

Ex. 3:17 "And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey."

"and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." (ASV)

"and I say, I bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt, unto the land of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." (YLT)

This verse is a repetition of verse eight. Note how GOD continued to repeat what He was about to do. This would be reassuring to all concerned — nothing has changed.

Ex. 3:18 "And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD GOD of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our GOD."

“And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, Jehovah, the GOD of the Hebrews, hath met with us: and now let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our GOD.” (ASV)

“And they have hearkened to thy voice, and thou hast entered, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye have said unto him, Jehovah, GOD of the Hebrews, hath met with us; and now, let us go, we pray thee, a journey of three days into the wilderness, and we sacrifice to Jehovah our GOD.” (YLT)

Moses was concerned that the Israelites would not listen to him, but GOD stated that they would listen. He needed to know that the elders would not only listen to him, but they would also back him (Ex. 4:29-31).

What were they to do when they came before Pharaoh? Plead with him to let them go into the wilderness for the purpose of worshiping GOD. Some have charged that this message was deceitful, since GOD intended for Moses to lead the people out of Egypt. Such critics need to remember that GOD knew Pharaoh's heart. He knew that even a reasonable request would be denied by heartless Pharaoh. GOD was setting the stage to show Pharaoh's stubborn denial of Himself. Further, Pharaoh seemed to understand that if he allowed the Israelites to do this, they would never return. Also, the instruction given to Moses which he was to give to Pharaoh never said anything about their returning to Egypt.

“God knew the hard heart of Pharaoh, and therefore directed that no more should be asked at first than he must either grant, or display the hardness of his heart”
(Keil/Delitzsch, p. 444).

Keil and Delitzsch also point out in chapter eight, verse twenty-seven, that Moses referred to worshiping GOD by saying **“as He shall command us.”** This seems to further imply that they would not be returning, since that was GOD's original intent.

Ex. 3:19 “And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.”

“And I know that the king of Egypt will not give you leave to go, no, not by a mighty hand.” (ASV)

“And I—I have known that the king of Egypt doth not permit you to go, unless by a strong hand,” (YLT)

GOD foretold what would happen when Moses made his request before Pharaoh. Pharaoh would not let them go, **“not by a mighty hand.”** Both the KJV and ASV render the original in this way, which is far more accurate than the NKJV and NASV renderings. The margin of this writer's Bible renders this phrase *“but by a mighty hand,”* which better captures the essence of what is said.

"The LXX, slightly changing the text, renders it thus: 'Unless I lay My hand heavily upon him'" (Coffman, p. 37).

GOD knew that it would take a mighty show of force to get Pharaoh to give in to His demands. It must be remembered here that the Pharaohs considered themselves to be gods. Thus, it would take strong actions to make him give in. When viewing the coming events, it might be said that a more stubborn man the world has never seen. Moses was being told that he would not be able to deliver his message, snap his finger, and walk out of Egypt without opposition. By informing Moses of this ahead of time, it would help keep him from becoming overly discouraged; and yet, even then, Moses would suffer from discouragement.

"Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that Thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all" (Exodus 5:22-23).

Ex. 3:20 "And I will stretch out My hand, and smite Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go."

"And I will put forth My hand, and smite Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go." (ASV)

"and I have put forth My hand, and have smitten Egypt with all My wonders, which I do in its midst--and afterwards he doth send you away." (YLT)

In essence, GOD told Moses what He was going to have to do to get Pharaoh to let them go. GOD said He was going to have to do **"wonders"** in Egypt to get Pharaoh to let them go. The word **"wonders"** is an extension of the idea of miracles. The miracles which He would use would cause great wonder among the people upon whom they were employed and upon the Israelites who observed them.

"stretch out My hand" This term emphasizes power, i.e., the power of GOD. It would be a good study to note all of the times the Bible uses the idea of stretching out the hand to emphasize the power of GOD.

"Compares God to a warrior extending his arm in readiness for combat. The record of GOD's stretching out his hand to deliver Israel is the story of the ten plagues in Exodus 7-13" (Fields, p. 103).

Field's allusion to GOD as a warrior is well illustrated in the Scriptures.

"Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay

My hand upon Egypt, and bring forth Mine armies, and My people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments” (Exodus 7:1).

“The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace” (Exodus 14:14).

“Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight” (Joshua 10:25).

“In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our GOD shall fight for us” (Nehemiah 4:20).

It is noticed that Pharaoh basically allowed Egypt to be ruined before he finally allowed Israel to leave. But then note how quickly he tried to get them back. Some people just have to learn the hard way that they cannot resist GOD when He decides to do something.

Ex. 3:21-22 “And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.”

“And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty. But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall despoil the Egyptians.” (ASV)

“And I have given the grace of this people in the eyes of the Egyptians, and it hath come to pass, when ye go, ye go not empty; and every woman hath asked from her neighbour, and from her who is sojourning in her house, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and ye have put them on your sons and on your daughters, and have spoiled the Egyptians.” (YLT)

GOD had told Abraham that the nation which was to come from his loins would be in bondage (Genesis 15:13). But notice what else He told him.

“also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance” (Genesis 15:14).

GOD now repeated that promise to Moses, which again would have been a great encouragement to Moses.

The word **“favor”** is the idea that the Egyptians would be

glad to honor any requests which might be made to them. The idea seems to be that they would be glad to do so because of the many things they had gone through. *“Take whatever you want, if you will just leave and take your GOD with you.”*

The word **“borrow”** is a bad translation in this passage. It signifies a loan which must be paid back. The Hebrew word for **“borrow”** here is shael shael.

shael shael — *“a primitive root; to inquire; by implication to request; by extension to demand”* (Strong); *“a verb meaning to ask...very rarely, the term could refer to borrowing or lending. But this is certainly not the meaning when the people of Israel asked goods from the Egyptians they plundered”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1085).

Consider that the Israelite women would have been asking for these goods at the very time the Egyptians would have been preparing their firstborn for burial. The Israelites were to place all these things which they received upon their children. This seems to suggest that the Israelite's children were to be honored while the Egyptian's children were buried.

“spoil the Egyptians” The original word for **“spoil”** here is natsal.

natsal — *“to snatch (away)”* (Strong); *“to snatch away, deliver, rescue, save, strip, plunder”* (BDB); *“a verb meaning to deliver. Deliverance indicated the power of one entity overcoming the power of another”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 749).

“The verb natsal signifies, not only to spoil, snatch away, but also to get away, to escape, to deliver, to regain, or recover” (Clarke, p. 308).

The military aspect of this seems to apply, as stated by Keil.

“As going forth, laden as it were with the spoils of their formidable enemy, trophies of the victory which God's power had bestowed on their weakness” (p. 447).

What happened to these spoils? Shamefully, some were used to make the golden calf at Mount Sinai. On the brighter side, some were used for the furniture and other items of the Tabernacle.

Exodus Chapter Four

Ex. 4:1 “And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.”

“And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, Jehovah hath not appeared unto thee.” (ASV)

“And Moses answereth and saith, And, if they do not give credence to me, nor hearken to my voice, and say, Jehovah hath not appeared unto thee?” (YLT)

Moses made his third excuse, **“they will not believe me.”** Note that this excuse follows GOD’s telling him that the Israelites would listen to him (Exodus 3:18). When looking at this from a purely human perspective, it can be understood why Moses might make these excuses. What GOD desired for Moses to do was, from the human perspective, impossible. **How could one man free an untrained (militarily) group of slaves?** But this was GOD speaking to Moses, and **“If GOD be for us, who can be against us”** (Romans 8:31)? **Who can hope to stand against GOD and achieve victory?** Only someone who is insane could hope to do such.

How many today reason the same way Moses did then? One may hear GOD say to go into all the world, but **how many use the same type of excuse to try to avoid responsibility to do such?** **How many do not bring up the subject of GOD to anyone because of the fear of rejection?** That was Moses’ problem. Today, our task is the same as was Moses.’ The message is to be delivered, and then one must leave the results up to the power of GOD’s word and the hearts of the hearers.

The patience of GOD toward Moses should also be noted. GOD knew he was offering these excuses through human weakness. So, He did not become angry with Moses just yet. GOD allowed Moses to put his doubts into words, while gently reassuring him that everything would work out. Yet, one should also notice that the time will come when Moses will go too far, and GOD will strongly rebuke him (v. 14). Honest excuses and doubts can turn into stubborn denial and rebellion, and Moses went there.

Ex. 4:2-4 “And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand:”

“And Jehovah said unto him, What is that in thy hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Put forth thy hand, and take it by the tail: (and he put forth his hand, and laid hold of it, and it became a rod in his hand:)” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto him, What is this in thy hand? and he saith, A rod; and He saith, Cast it to the earth; and he casteth it to the earth, and it becometh a serpent—and Moses fleeth from its presence. And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Put forth thy hand, and lay hold on the tail of it; and he putteth forth his hand, and layeth hold on it, and it becometh a rod in his hand--” (YLT)

Moses had said they would not believe him, to which GOD replied, **“What do you have in your hand?”** Moses replied that he held a rod or staff. There has been speculation that this was a special staff, the staff of a ruler. This is inconsistent with the text. Moses was a shepherd, and the staff he held would have been that common to all shepherds of his time. This staff was practical in nature. It was for work and not for show, like a ruler’s staff would be. These staves were generally carved from wood with a crook at one end which could be used to pull a sheep back into the flock or from danger. At the same time the other end, having a sharp point on it, could be used as a weapon against predators, or as a goad for the flock.

“How appropriate was such a choice on God’s part! The Egyptians despised shepherds: and now, it was a shepherd’s staff that would humble and overthrow the all powerful enemies of God’s people” (Coffman, p. 41).

The rod became a serpent. It has been assumed by most that the rod became a snake, but the Bible only says that it became a serpent. What kind of serpent it became does not matter. Whatever the serpent was, it caused fear in Moses and he fled from it. GOD then presented a test of faith for Moses by telling him to grab it by the tail. When Moses obeyed, the serpent was turned back into his shepherd’s rod.

When Moses’ excuse is analyzed with GOD’s response, it is seen that Moses was given a tool that was also given to the prophets and apostles. Miracles were to confirm that the speaker had been given the words he spoke by GOD, i.e., these were GOD’s representatives. They proved Moses to be the one whom GOD chose to deliver them, as the next verse shows.

“they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following” (Mark 16:20, emphasis mine, RK).

Ex. 4:5 “That they may believe that the LORD GOD of their fathers, the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac, and the

GOD of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.”

“That they may believe that Jehovah, the GOD of their fathers, the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.” (ASV)

“--so that they believe that Jehovah, GOD of their fathers, hath appeared unto thee, GOD of Abraham, GOD of Isaac, and GOD of Jacob.” (YLT)

Taken in context, GOD gave these miraculous abilities to Moses for the purpose of causing the Israelites to believe that GOD not only had visited him, but also was speaking through him. The signs were not for the Egyptians, but rather against them. When Moses exercised this sign for the Israelite fathers, they indeed believed him (4:29-31); yet, when the same sign was done before Pharaoh, he refused to believe (7:8ff).

The names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are again used to identify GOD to the people. Moses served the same GOD they served.

Ex. 4:6-8 “And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.”

“And Jehovah said furthermore unto him, Put now thy hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. And he said, Put thy hand into thy bosom again. (And he put his hand into his bosom again; and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh.) And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith to him again, Put in, I pray thee, thy hand into thy bosom; and he putteth in his hand into his bosom, and he bringeth it out, and lo, his hand is leprous as snow; and He saith, Put back thy hand unto thy bosom; and he putteth back his hand unto his bosom, and he bringeth it out from his bosom, and lo, it hath turned back as his flesh----and it hath come to pass, if they do not give credence to thee, and hearken not to the voice of the first sign, that they have given credence to the voice of the latter sign.” (YLT)

A second sign was given to Moses — his hand was made leprous and then returned to its former condition.

“The disease here called leprosy ‘was definitely not the same as Hansen’s disease, now called leprosy,’

because the 'whiteness' here mentioned (and elsewhere in the Pentateuch) is not found in Hansen's disease"

(Coffman, p. 42).

This would have been a very strong sign to ancient people. Most people of that time believed that leprosy was a punishment which came directly from GOD (or their gods) and could only be taken away by Him (or them). In the case of Moses, one can see that the first belief is not necessarily true. Here, a chosen vessel of GOD was inflicted immediately with this deadly disease, not as a punishment, but as a sign that this one was a chosen vessel of GOD. Second, it is true that only GOD could heal one of leprosy. It was done immediately, and his flesh was returned to him as it had been. Hansen's disease has no known cure to this day.

"if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign" Coffman has an interesting comment on this phrase.

"Here, in the mouth of God Himself, is the evidence that miracles alone cannot actually give faith. It was also true during the life of Christ that His miracles did not provide a lasting faith in those who witnessed them (at least, in countless examples)" (cf. John 12:37)"

"People whose faith depends upon seeing signs often requires a steady stream of miracles, or they forsake Christ (John 6:14, 30)" (Dummelow, p. 52).

"In exactly the same way today we meet those who believe that the power and love of God are inadequately displayed in his providence, preservation, and transformation of lives through the Gospel and so they demand that He show His favor and power by the gift of tongues and healing" (Ellison, p. 24).

Ex. 4:9 "And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land."

"And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe even these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land." (ASV)

"And it hath come to pass, if they do not give credence even to these two signs, nor hearken to thy voice, that thou hast taken of the waters of the River, and hast poured on the dry land, and the waters which thou takest from the River have been, yea, they have become--blood on the dry land." (YLT)

GOD gave Moses a third sign to identify him to the Israelites as His spokesman. When viewing these signs, each one should be considered as sufficient for the purpose it was assigned. Yet, human nature being what it is, many times man wants more proof before he commits himself to some action. Another example of this is Gideon (Judges 6:36ff). Gideon put the fleece out on two nights and asked for opposite results, which GOD granted. By these signs, Gideon was convinced that GOD had chosen him to deliver Israel from bondage. This was after the sign given him by the angel (Judges 7:17-21).

Moses was given the sign of turning water from the Nile into blood. This should not be confused with the plague of turning the water in the entire land into blood. There is no evidence that Moses needed this third sign to convince the Israelites of his GOD-given mission. Speaking of these signs, Roper made the following interesting comment.

“Each of the three involved destructive, negative consequences: For a staff to become a snake was dangerous, for a man’s hand to become leprous was horrible, and for water to be turned into blood was devastating” (p. 70).

In one sense this writer agrees with Roper, but there is another sense involved with these signs, and it was positive. They caused the Israelites to recognize GOD’s spokesman and to recognize that GOD was indeed about to free them.

The river spoken of here is the Nile. It was considered so sacred by the Egyptians that all one had to say was “the river,” and everyone knew which river was under consideration.

“The Nile received divine honors as the source of every good and all prosperity in the natural life of Egypt, and was even identified with Osiris” (Keil/Delitzsch, p. 450).

Since the Nile was considered a god by the Egyptians, this should have caused them to realize that the GOD of Moses was superior to their “man-conceived” god. By turning the life-giving force of this water into blood, it was shown that what they thought provided all life actually created death — for their souls. It showed the power of GOD to destroy both Pharaoh and his gods.

Ex. 4:10 “And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.”

“And Moses said unto Jehovah, Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.” (ASV)

“And Moses saith unto Jehovah, O, my Lord, I am not a man of words, either yesterday, or before, or since Thy speaking unto Thy servant, for I am slow of mouth, and slow of tongue.” (YLT)

Moses now offered his fourth excuse as to why GOD should choose someone else to do His bidding. Moses declared that he was not **“eloquent.”**

“eloquent” — dabar — *“speech, word, speaking, thing”* (BDB); *“a masculine noun meaning word, speech, matter”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 223); *“a man of words”* (Roper, p. 70).

“I neither possess the gift of speech by nature, nor have I received it since thou hast spoken to me” (Keil/Delitzsch, p. 450).

It is possible that through neglect of use, Moses did not feel comfortable with his speaking abilities. It is also possible that after forty years in the wilderness, living the lonely life of a shepherd, he had become rusty in the use of both the Egyptian and Hebrew languages.

“Most commentators seem to believe that there was some speech handicap. ‘According to Jewish tradition, Moses had difficulty in pronouncing the labials b, m, v, ph, and p’” (Coffman, p. 44).

“I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue”

“slow” — kabed — *“heavy, hard, thick”* (Strong); *“heavy, great...heavy, dull”* (BDB); *“an adjective describing something as heavy, great, grievous. It carries the basic feature of heavy, weighty upon things, but its sense is nuanced carefully by its context and usage”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 492).

Fields gives the meaning of the phrases **“slow of speech”** and **“a slow tongue”** as follows:

“slow of speech” — *“meaning he had a hard time recalling words.”*

“a slow tongue” — *“he had a hard time forming the words in his mouth”* (p. 112).

Sarna offers the following possibilities as to what Moses meant by using these phrases, two of which this author has already noted.

“He may have had a speech defect, may have lost his fluency in the Egyptian language, or perhaps just thought he was inadequate as a speaker” (p. 54-61).

The term **“O my Lord”** is the same term found in passages like Genesis 44:18; Numbers 12:11 (**“Alas, my Lord”**); and Joshua 7:8. It is a term which is used in forceful pleading or begging. Thus, it appears that Moses was begging GOD to release him from the responsibility of acting as His agent.

Moses needed to learn that the accomplishment of GOD’s purposes did not depend upon the abilities of a human being. Note here a statement made by the apostle Paul.

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto

you the testimony of GOD...And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of GOD" (1 Corinthians 2:1, 4-5).

Paul did not try to get out of the task GOD set before him, tough though it was.

"Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:15-16).

GOD would have, and did, provide the words Moses needed, as well as power through miracles to accomplish His goal.

Ex. 4:11-12 "And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."

"And Jehovah said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, Jehovah? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak." (ASV)

"And Jehovah saith unto him, Who appointed a mouth for man? or who appointeth the dumb, or deaf, or open, or blind? is it not I, Jehovah? and now, go, and I--I am with thy mouth, and have directed thee that which thou speakest;" (YLT)

Moses pleaded with GOD to no avail, for GOD said, **"Now therefore go."** GOD refused to honor Moses' excuses. Further, one sees some sternness in His answer to Moses. GOD approached this excuse with perfect logic (common sense). Moses needed to rely on GOD to supply what he needed. **After all, was it not GOD who gave him a voice in the first place, eyes to see, ears to hear, a mind to think, et cetera?** GOD made man, and He can supply all his needs, especially when he was been chosen, as was Moses, for a specific task. The apostles may not have been "educated" men (attended the universities of their day); yet, when they spoke, their words amazed the "educated" of their time.

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

Man does not have to be educated by man's standards in order to be a powerful speaker for the tasks GOD has set for him.

Some of the most powerful speakers the world has ever known had speech problems, according to worldly standards. (Examples: The apostles, Moses, Marshal Keeble...) The fact is that, if a man is educated in GOD's word, that is all that really matters. **Do you want to be educated?** Then study GOD's Word! The world may not claim you as an educated man, but GOD will.

In essence, GOD told Moses, *"Enough with the excuses. Now, go do what I told you to do."* GOD made Moses' mouth, and He could make it say anything He wanted it to say (**Remember the account of Balaam when he attempted to curse Israel?**).

"when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matthew 10:19-20).

Moses words would be GOD's words — just as was the case with all the prophets!

"The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned" (Isaiah 50:4).

"Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth" (Jeremiah 1:9).

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Every ability one has, no matter how small or insignificant he may deem it to be, has been given by GOD. Therefore, one ought not to refuse to use it in His service.

"And what hast thou that thou didst not receive" (1 Corinthians 4:7)?

When one appreciates what he has been given, it will cause two things to happen: (1) He will gratefully use what has been given, and (2) He will use it in humility. No matter how much men may praise the gifts of another, those gifts have come from GOD. Therefore, it is He Who should receive the praise — not a man.

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of GOD. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing

that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of GOD" (1 Corinthians 4:1-5; emphasis mine, RK).

The apostle knew who should be praised for his abilities, and so should one today.

The working of GOD's power does not depend on man's eloquence nor man's wisdom. GOD's power is demonstrated in a faithful proclamation of His word.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"

(Romans 1:16; emphasis mine, RK).

GOD's word had the power to save the Israelites then, and it has the power to save man from his sins today. Since the power comes from GOD, no teacher has the right to seek praise for himself.

Ex. 4:13 "And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send."

"And he said, Oh, Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." (ASV)

"and he saith, O, my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand Thou dost send." (YLT)

Moses offered his fifth excuse and his final attempt to get out of doing what GOD wanted him to do. Moses was using a strong form of pleading, i.e., begging, with GOD. **What was the basis of his plea?** "*Send anyone but me.*" Some have construed this as a speech of submission on Moses' part. But if this were the case, then **Why was GOD angry with him (v. 14)?** No, Moses was attempting to get out of doing what GOD told him to do.

Ex. 4:14 "And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart."

"And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is there not Aaron thy brother the Levite? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart." (ASV)

“And the anger of Jehovah burneth against Moses, and He saith, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I have known that he speaketh well, and also, lo, he is coming out to meet thee; when he hath seen thee, then he hath rejoiced in his heart,” (YLT)

The amazing patience of GOD has been seen as Moses offered up excuse after excuse to avoid the job GOD had for him. But GOD’s patience was limited, and now He became angry with Moses. GOD revealed that Aaron, Moses’ brother, was on his way to meet him and that Aaron could speak well. The implication is that he would speak for Moses, and that will be confirmed in verse sixteen. **Why was Aaron coming to see Moses at this time?** Fields speculates that he was coming to tell Moses that Pharaoh was dead. But it would seem to this writer that GOD sent him to reassure Moses.

An interesting aspect of this is the language used to introduce Aaron. He is called by GOD, **“Aaron the Levite.”** **Was Aaron any more a Levite than was Moses?** They were brothers with the same parents in the tribe of Levi. **Is it possible that GOD, because of Moses’ excuses, was naming Aaron as the one through whom the lineage of priests would come — instead of Moses?** The additional note is that Aaron would be happy to see Moses. At this point there is no rivalry, no jealousy between them. Such will raise its ugly head later on Aaron’s part.

Ex. 4:15-16 “And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of GOD.”

“And thou shalt speak unto him, and put the words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as GOD.” (ASV)

“and thou hast spoken unto him, and hast set the words in his mouth, and I—I am with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and have directed you that which ye do; and he, he hath spoken for thee unto the people, and it hath come to pass, he—he is to thee for a mouth, and thou--thou art to him for GOD;” (YLT)

The most important point in this verse is the inspiration of GOD’s Word. GOD told Moses what he was to speak.

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

What makes something to be inspired of GOD? It is that GOD said "This is what I want you to say." Over the years, this writer has heard people say that not all of the Bible is inspired. They will use passages such as Genesis three, where the serpent's words to Eve are recorded. "See, they say, GOD did not say that to Eve." No, GOD did not tell Satan to say those things. Inspiration of the Scriptures occurred when GOD told Moses to write those words, even though they were not originally from the mouth of GOD. Note also the valid comments by Coffman regarding inspiration which follow.

"This passage teaches much about inspiration and how we should regard the Bible. Note that it was 'words' which God gave to Moses, and that those same words were conveyed from Moses to Aaron. Nothing in any part of the Bible indicates that God gave His prophets some general or nebulous idea, and that they then put it into their words. We either have the word of God in the Bible, or we have nothing at all" (Coffman, p. 47).

Through this whole transaction, GOD was there to make sure they spoke as He directed them to speak.

How is it that Moses was to be to Aaron "instead of GOD?" Moses got his words directly from GOD. Aaron would receive his words directly from Moses, indirectly from GOD. Thus, GOD's relationship to Moses is paralleled to Moses' relationship to Aaron.

Ex. 4:17 "And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs."

"And thou shalt take in thy hand this rod, wherewith thou shalt do the signs." (ASV)

"and this rod thou dost take in thy hand, with which thou doest the signs." (YLT)

Moses' rod is mentioned again and again as being connected with signs, i.e., miracles. This rod of Moses (rod of GOD) is going to be seen often in this book.

Ex. 4:18 "And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace."

"And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren that are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace." (ASV)

"And Moses goeth and turneth back unto Jethro his father-in-law, and saith to him, Let me go, I pray thee, and I turn back unto my brethren who are in Egypt, and I see whether they are yet alive.

And Jethro saith to Moses, Go in peace.” (YLT)

When GOD speaks, no permission is needed for one’s actions. **So why did Moses ask permission from Jethro to return to Egypt?** This is understandable from several viewpoints. (1) Moses had Jethro’s flock with him, and he had a responsibility to get it home. Further, Jethro will now have to arrange for another to care for his flock. (2) It appears that Moses had accepted a position as part of Jethro’s family, and courtesy would dictate permission to leave. (3) Moses would probably wish to take his family with him, and again courtesy would have dictated asking for Jethro’s blessing.

Moses told Jethro that he wanted to check on the welfare of his brethren. Considering their severe bondage, it would not be unreasonable to consider that some might not have survived. The term **“brethren”** could either mean Moses’ family, or it could mean the entire family of Israel. Most believe the latter is intended.

Jethro gave Moses permission to leave and gave him a blessing — **“Go in peace.”** The original word for **“peace”** here is shalom shalom. This was a common greeting among Israelites and is even often used today when parting or in greeting. It signifies a wide range of blessings — health, prosperity, favor, rest, et cetera.

A number of commentators assume that Moses did not tell his father-in-law about the burning bush, because it is not recorded. They reason that Jethro would not understand the appearance of GOD or His message, because of a lack of spirituality. (1) But it should be remembered that he was a priest of GOD. (2) The Bible does not record every minute detail, but only those things one needs to know.

Ex. 4:19 “And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt; for all the men are dead that sought thy life.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses in Midian, Go, turn back to Egypt, for all the men have died who seek thy life;” (YLT)

Again, GOD told Moses to go back to Egypt, adding some additional information — **“all the men are dead which sought thy life.”** **Was Moses showing hesitancy in following GOD’s instructions, or was this simply more reassurance given to him by GOD?** Before being too critical of Moses, one should ask himself what he would have done under these circumstances. This writer chooses to believe that GOD was supplying Moses with more information which would further encourage him for the task ahead. The dead were most assuredly Pharaoh, but

very well could have included others of the royal family, as well as of the family of the man he killed.

There are many parallels in the lives of Jesus and Moses. The men who sought Moses' life were dead, and now he could return to Egypt to save his people. Many years later, those who had sought Jesus' life were dead, and now he could return to Israel to save His people from Satan (Matthew 2:20).

Ex. 4:20 “And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of GOD in his hand.”

“And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of GOD in his hand.” (ASV)

“and Moses taketh his wife, and his sons, and causeth them to ride on the ass, and turneth back to the land of Egypt, and Moses taketh the rod of GOD in his hand.” (YLT)

Here is the first reference to Moses' having more than one child. Gershom was his firstborn (Exodus 2:22), followed by Eliezer (Exodus 18:4). Moses began his journey back to Egypt with his family. The KJV states he set them on an ass, but the Septuagint says “asses.”

It should not be thought that Moses was destitute because the text does not state all that he took with him. The rule of divine economy does not list all of those items. What it does tell one is that the important items were taken with him — the **“rod of GOD”** and his family. It is GOD's rod because of the powerful way GOD would use it in the hands of His servant Moses.

Ex. 4:21 “And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, When thou goest back into Egypt, see that thou do before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in thy hand: but I will harden his heart and he will not let the people go.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, In thy going to turn back to Egypt, see--all the wonders which I have put in thy hand--that thou hast done them before Pharaoh, and I--I strengthen his heart, and he doth not send the people away;” (YLT)

Moses was instructed to perform all of the miracles GOD gave him as evidence. But then note that GOD said it would not be enough in Pharaoh's case. **Why?** The text says, **“I will harden Pharaoh's heart.”** Did GOD want Pharaoh to be lost? GOD does not desire that anyone will be lost.

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9, emphasis mine, RK).

So why does the text say that GOD would harden Pharaoh’s heart?

“God does not harden men by infusing malice into them, but by imparting mercy to them” (Clarke, p. 312).

When one studies the Scriptures, there are numerous accounts where the text attributes something to GOD, which in reality He did not dictate, but **allowed** to happen. A good example of this is the man Job.

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth GOD, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst Me against him, to destroy him without cause” (Job 2:3).

The student of the Scripture knows that in chapter one of the book of Job, GOD allowed Satan to do some pretty terrible things to Job. Satan was allowed to test Job, trying to get him to turn his back on GOD, to reject GOD. But Job continued to trust GOD, even though he could not understand why these terrible things were happening to him. GOD **was not** the one trying to get Job to sin! The present case is no different in Exodus. GOD did not desire that Pharaoh would sin against Him. At the same time, He knew that Pharaoh had gone so far into sin, so far into idolatry, that he would not give in to GOD’s wishes. GOD did not *“harden his heart against the influences of his own grace, that he might occasion him to so sin that his justice might consign him to hell”* (Clarke, p. 313). The words of Keil and Delitzsch seem appropriate here.

“According to this, the hardening of Pharaoh was quite as much his own act as the decree of God. But if, in order to determine the precise relationship of the divine to the human causality, we look more carefully at the two classes of expressions, we shall find that not only in connection with the first sign, by which Moses and Aaron were to show their credentials as the messengers of Jehovah, sent with the demand that he would let the people of Israel go (7:13-14), but after the first five penal miracles, the hardening is invariably represented as his own. After every one of these miracles, it is stated that Pharaoh’s heart was firm, or dull, i.e., insensible to the voice of God, and unaffected by the miracles performed before his eyes, and the judgments of God suspended over him and his kingdom, he did not listen to them (to

Moses and Aaron with their demand), or let the people go. (Chapter 7:22; 8:8, 15, 28; 9:7)" (Keil/Delitzsch, p. 453).

Let us consider some things about GOD's judicial hardening and condemnation of sinners.

"Stubborn and willful sin inevitably leads to God's judgmental action against the sinner, not upon some distant judgment, but in the sinner's lifetime. 'God hardens his heart.' Such sinners are paralyzed. 'Their senseless hearts are darkened' (Rom. 1:21). 'God gives them up' (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28)! This is called judicial hardening" (Coffman, p. 51).

"For we are unto GOD a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things" (2 Corinthians 2:15-16)?

Consider that the same messenger, thus, his message, causes both death and life. *How can this be?* It all depends on the heart of an individual. *Does he accept the message of salvation, or does he reject it?* GOD will not force anyone to yield to His desire — man's heart is the deciding factor between his eternal life or death.

Does GOD cause the heart of anyone to sin? A study of James 1:12-18 will greatly help the student here.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of GOD: for GOD cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of **firstfruits of his creatures." (Emphasis mine, RK).**

"The same sun moistens the wax and hardens the clay" (Theodoret, quoted by Coffman, p. 52).

Can a person get so involved in sin that he cannot give it up, that he cannot repent? The context revolving around

Pharaoh indicates that a person can become so steeped in sin that he cannot obey GOD — he will not allow himself to obey Him. Consider the example of Balaam, who started out as a prophet of GOD and ended up a sinner who died in the camp of GOD's enemies (Numbers 22-24; 31:8, 16; Jude 11). The New Testament teaches the same thing.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of GOD, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of GOD afresh, and put Him to an open shame” (Hebrews 6:4-6).

“As the earthly sun produces different effects upon the earth, according to the nature of the soil upon which it shines, so the influence of the divine sun of grace manifests itself in different ways upon the human heart, according to its moral condition. The penitent permit the proofs of divine goodness and grace to lead them to repentance and salvation; but the impenitent harden themselves more and more against the grace of God, and so become ripe for the judgment of damnation. The very same manifestation of the mercy of God leads in the case of one to salvation and life, and in that of the other to judgment and death, because he hardens himself against the mercy” (Keil/Delitzsch, p. 455).

Ex. 4:22-23 “And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is My son, even My firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.”

“And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith Jehovah, Israel is My son, My first-born: and I have said unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me; and thou hast refused to let him go: behold, I will slay thy son, thy first-born.” (ASV)

“and thou hast said unto Pharaoh, Thus said Jehovah, My son, My first-born is Israel, and I say unto thee, Send away My son, and he doth serve Me; and—thou dost refuse to send him away—lo, I am slaying thy son, thy first-born.” (YLT)

Pharaoh was to be informed of the relationship sustained by Israel and GOD — “Israel is My firstborn child.” This was something Pharaoh could relate to, not only in the physical realm, but also in the spiritual. Every Pharaoh considered himself to be the “son of Ra” (the sun god of Egypt). As such, the people of Egypt were his children. Thus, GOD made His

appeal to Pharaoh based on the father - son relationship. The people of Egypt were expected to serve Pharaoh in the capacity of this relationship.

Pharaoh was not only commanded to let Israel go, but he was also given the consequence if he did not obey GOD. The consequence was extreme and would be devastating to any father. GOD said He would kill Pharaoh's firstborn. This was a prediction of the last plague upon Egypt, and it would be the ultimate persuader. But in looking ahead, it should be noted that GOD was not just singling out Pharaoh. GOD's promise was that He would kill all the firstborn of Egypt (man and beast) as just retribution for all that Egypt had done to His children. What a terrible consequence for rebellion to GOD.

Ex. 4:24-26 "And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. So He let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision."

"And it came to pass on the way at the lodging-place, that Jehovah met him, and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a flint, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet; and she said, Surely a bridegroom of blood art thou to me. So He let him alone. Then she said, A bridegroom of blood art thou, because of the circumcision." (ASV)

"And it cometh to pass in the way, in a lodging place, that Jehovah meeteth him, and seeketh to put him to death; and Zipporah taketh a flint, and cutteth off the foreskin of her son, and causeth it to touch his feet, and saith, Surely a bridegroom of blood art thou to me; and He desisteth from him: then she said, A bridegroom of blood, in reference to the circumcision." (YLT)

The word **"inn"** does not connote what modern man associates with it. This was probably no more than a stopping place for travelers, because it provided water and possibly a few trees for shade. The ASV uses the words *"lodging place,"* but it probably had no buildings as one might think of today. It was a camping place (*"encampment"* – NKJV).

Who was the Lord going to put to death? Was it Moses who failed to circumcise his son or the uncircumcised son? It is this writer's studied conclusion that it was Moses who is to be understood in this text. There is a valuable lesson thus to be learned if he is correct. GOD's people must obey Him just as everyone else, or suffer the consequences. Moses had not obeyed GOD, and the consequences for such must be paid.

On the other hand, *Is it possible, that the one GOD was seeking to kill was not Moses, but Moses' son?* Note the text in Genesis 17:9-14 regarding GOD's instructions for circumcision, particularly verse fourteen.

“the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant”

(v. 14).

In that passage, GOD said the one who was not circumcised was the one to be cut off, and He says nothing about the father who did not fulfill his responsibility in this matter. Although most commentators believe that Moses is the subject here, the text of Genesis 17 does leave room for doubt.

Whether it was Moses or his son who was under consideration here, there is an important lesson to be learned — GOD’s leaders are not exempt from His laws. They suffer for violating his laws just like anyone else.

Why did Zipporah call Moses “A bloody husband?”

Obviously, it had something to do with the circumcision and that blood had to be shed. Other than that, there is a lot of speculation as to what was meant by her words, none of which seemed satisfactory to this writer.

It is interesting that this incident took place immediately after the promise of GOD regarding the firstborn of Egypt. Whether it was Moses or his son, they were spared when blood was shed. Later, the firstborn of Israel would be spared by the shedding of blood.

Ex. 4:27-28 “And the LORD said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of GOD, and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD Who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him.”

“And Jehovah said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mountain of GOD, and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of Jehovah wherewith He had sent him, and all the signs wherewith He had charged him.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Aaron, Go to meet Moses into the wilderness; and he goeth, and meeteth him in the mount of GOD, and kisseth him, and Moses declareth to Aaron all the words of Jehovah with which He hath sent him, and all the signs with which He hath charged him.” (YLT)

GOD sent Aaron to meet him. **How did Aaron know where to go?** Probably the same way Cornelius’ servants knew where to find Peter (Acts 10) — direct revelation. **Where did they meet?** At GOD’s mountain.

When the brothers met, great affection was shown as would be expected. It had been forty years since they last saw each other. Moses revealed all that GOD had said to him and told Aaron of the authoritative signs GOD had given him.

Ex. 4:29-31 “And Moses and Aaron went and gathered

together all the elders of the children of Israel: And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that He had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.”

“And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: and Aaron spake all the words which Jehovah had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that Jehovah had visited the children of Israel, and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.” (ASV)

“And Moses goeth--Aaron also--and they gather all the elders of the sons of Israel, and Aaron speaketh all the words which Jehovah hath spoken unto Moses, and doth the signs before the eyes of the people; and the people believe when they hear that Jehovah hath looked after the sons of Israel, and that He hath seen their affliction; and they bow and do obeisance.” (YLT)

Their faith had sustained them all these years. Even though the passage of time would have discouraged many — they had not given up on GOD. This is evidenced by their actions in these verses.

Moses and Aaron gathered the people together, and then Aaron told them everything that GOD had told Moses. Further, Aaron demonstrated the miracles that Moses had been given to convince them (and hopefully Pharaoh). Yet, GOD knew Pharaoh would not be convinced. Moses had tried to excuse himself from obeying GOD, because he feared they would not believe him. **Is it not interesting that Aaron is the one who spoke to them, and he was believed?** Initially, just as GOD said, they believed him. Yet, like many today and in all ages, they were impatient when things did not happen as quickly as they thought they should, as will be seen later. Unlike Pharaoh, when they later saw the mighty power of GOD unfold, they gave up their unbelief and obeyed GOD. For the present, they were relieved and grateful to know that GOD had been observing their afflictions. They showed this by bowing down and worshiping Him.

Exodus Chapter Five

Ex. 5:1 “And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD GOD of Israel, Let My people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness.”

“And afterward Moses and Aaron came, and said unto Pharaoh, Thus saith Jehovah, the GOD of Israel, Let My people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness.” (ASV)

“And afterwards have Moses and Aaron entered, and they say unto Pharaoh, Thus said Jehovah, GOD of Israel, Send My people away, and they keep a feast to Me in the wilderness;” (YLT)

After convincing the elders that GOD had sent Moses to be their deliverer, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh with GOD's demands. There seem to be two things particularly to notice here. (1) The apparent ease with which access to Pharaoh was obtained (this will also appear in verse fifteen); possibly it was not as easy as it appears. (2) *Where were the elders of Israel?* GOD had instructed Moses that the elders of Israel were to go in to meet Pharaoh with him.

“The Jewish midrash says, very plausibly, that they stole furtively away, singly and in pairs” (Fields, p. 127).

If the midrash is correct, they left Moses and Aaron alone to face Pharaoh. Notice should be given that that did not stop Moses from accomplishing his task. *From where did this new courage come?* Perhaps this strength and courage came in the same way as did Jeremiah's.

“behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee” (Jeremiah 1:18-19).

“Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 1:8).

Moses truly understood and had now accepted the fact that GOD had chosen him to free Israel.

“that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness”
Why ask to go into the wilderness to offer sacrifices? Why not offer their sacrifices right where they were? In part, because some of the animals needed in sacrifice were considered holy by the Egyptians. This would have infuriated the Egyptians and probably would have provoked strong measures against them. Further, when GOD told them to go sacrifice outside the land, He never intended for them to come back.

For a moment, disregard the fact that the Israelites were to leave this land of oppression permanently.

“There was nothing in that request that was the basis of any legitimate objection on Pharaoh’s part. Work journals belonging to overseers of employees in the times of the Pharaoh’s listed, among other allowable reasons for absenteeism, the offering of sacrifices by workmen to their gods. There is visible in this first demand which God made of Pharaoh a definite mercy. By asking something that was legitimate enough, as presented, Pharaoh, had his heart been right, would have granted it...By refusing the first reasonable and lawful request, Pharaoh himself opened the door for all that followed” (Coffman, p. 58).

Now remember that Israel was not just to leave Egypt for a short visit and time of worship in the wilderness. It is this writer’s belief that Pharaoh understood that, if he granted this request, Israel was not coming back.

Ex. 5:2 “And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.”

“And Pharaoh said, Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto His voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go.” (ASV)

“and Pharaoh saith, Who is Jehovah, that I hearken to His voice, to send Israel away? I have not known Jehovah, and Israel also I do not send away.” (YLT)

Clarke made the correct statement about the attitude behind the words of Pharaoh — *“What claims has he on me? I am under no obligation to him”* (p. 315). Since Pharaoh claimed to be and was recognized by the people as a god; therefore, **why should he recognize some foreign GOD?** There is a similar statement in 2nd Kings 18:28-35, made by Sennacherib, the king of Assyria.

“Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?”

Sennacherib and Pharaoh’s words were filled with contempt, and such would not go unpunished. In one night, GOD killed one hundred and eighty-five thousand of Sennacherib’s army, and He would basically destroy the nation of Egypt through the plagues.

Pharaoh was probably wilfully ignorant of the GOD of Israel. But if so, he not only would know him but would also submit, at least for a moment.

Ex. 5:3 “And they said, The GOD of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our GOD; lest He fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.”

“And they said, The GOD of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto Jehovah our GOD, lest He fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.” (ASV)

“And they say, The GOD of the Hebrews hath met with us, let us go, we pray thee, a journey of three days into the wilderness, and we sacrifice to Jehovah our GOD, lest He meet us with pestilence or with sword.” (NKJV)

Moses informed Pharaoh that the **“GOD of the Hebrews”** had met with them and given them instructions. He had instructed them to go three days' journey into the wilderness and offer sacrifices to Him. He further revealed that if they did not honor GOD as He directed, the result could be punishment through pestilence (disease) or sword (war). Therefore, Moses begged Pharaoh to let them take this journey.

One of the notable things to observe here is the politeness and respect exhibited when Moses addressed this evil ruler. GOD was on Moses' side, and he could have simply demanded that Pharaoh let them go. But note that that is not the way he acted. Instead he pleaded with him for permission. This is an example which should be used by Christians when dealing with others, yes, even with GOD's enemies.

Why a three days' journey? Clarke states that it was a three day journey from Goshen to Sinai (p. 315), a distance of about 194 miles (impossible for them to travel this distance in three days RK). Considering the promise of GOD to Moses (Exodus 3:12), this may indeed have been the intended place of sacrifice.

“lest He fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword”

“If God had indeed visited His people with either pestilence, or sword, the Egyptians themselves would have been most vitally affected” (Ellison, p. 29).

“Think, for example, how a fatal disease breaking out among the Israelites would also have quickly spread to the Egyptians; or how, in case of a war, Egypt herself would alone have been required to repel the invader” (Coffman, p. 60).

Moses was trying to use persuasive language to influence Pharaoh, to get him to reason. Remember that people of that time believed, that, if something evil happened to them, that their gods were punishing them for not honoring and sacrificing as the gods demanded. But Pharaoh was too stubborn, too self-willed, too confident of his own self-conceived “deity” to

listen to Moses' pleas.

"How did Pharaoh regard the Hebrews? He probably regarded them only as one of the assorted Semitic people who had at times in history entered into and 'squatted' in Egypt. The Hyksos had been such a people. Such peoples were a threat to the 'native' population. The Egyptians contemptuously referred to them as sandcrossers. They also called them Habiri (or Habiru, or Khapiru, or Apiru), a name applied to peoples in various places who existed outside the normal establishments of society, somewhat like our 'Gypsies'" (Fields, p. 129).

Ex. 5:4-5 "And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens."

"And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, loose the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land are now many, and ye make them rest from their burdens." (ASV)

"And the king of Egypt saith unto them, Why, Moses and Aaron, do ye free the people from its works? go to your burdens. Pharaoh also saith, Lo, numerous now is the people of the land, and ye have caused them to cease from their burdens!" (YLT)

Pharaoh did not see Moses and Aaron as prophets of GOD. Rather, he looked upon them as being trouble-makers, rabble rousers. He considered the Israelites as his property, therefore even Moses and Aaron should have been out working with the rest of their brethren. In a very real sense, he was asking them, **"Just who do you think you are? What gives you the right to think you can release the people from their work?"**

Further, Pharaoh called them **"the people of the land."** It cannot be determined as to what Pharaoh meant by this term, but whatever it meant, it does not seem to be a compliment. It has been thought that this term may have meant working class, riff raff, common people, et cetera.

Moses and Aaron were accused of causing the Israelites to stop working. Such a large number of workers who were not working would hurt the pocket-book of Pharaoh.

Ex. 5:6 "And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying,"

"And the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying," (ASV)

"And Pharaoh commandeth, on that day, the exactors among the people and its authorities, saying," (YLT)

After Moses and Aaron made their “request” of Pharaoh, he called for the taskmasters. There are three classes of overseers mentioned in Exodus, with three different words designating them.

“(1) sarrey massim, superintendents over major projects, and of high rank, (2) nogeshim, subordinate overseers of various specific projects, and far more numerous, and (3) shoterim (rendered ‘officers’) each group of slaves, numerous clerks-of-the-works, who were recruited from among the Hebrews themselves, being therefore, Hebrews elevated over their own brethren, and thus enjoying special favors from Pharaoh” (Coffman, p. 61).

This latter class, the officers, seems to have had the dual role of clerk and liaison officer for the Egyptians.

Ex. 5:7-8 “Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our GOD.”

“Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the number of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they are idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our GOD.” (ASV)

“Ye do not add to give straw to the people for the making of the bricks, as heretofore--they go and have gathered straw for themselves; and the proper quantity of the bricks which they are making heretofore ye do put on them, ye do not diminish from it, for they are remiss, therefore they are crying, saying, Let us go, let us sacrifice to our GOD;” (NKJV)

Today bricks are produced in ovens, which makes it difficult to understand the use of straw in them. Today, one would picture the straw burning in the oven. Egypt is a land where very little rain falls each year. If it had the rain Georgia has each year, houses or buildings made of mud bricks would deteriorate rapidly. In Egypt, mud or clay bricks would be very practical.

What was the purpose of adding straw to the mud or clay?

At first glance, it might be assumed that it served exclusively as a binding agent, but note the observations of an American chemist.

“Edward G. Acheson, an American chemist, discovered by observation and experiment that clays were much easier to work when they contained certain organic matter. In a further experiment, he boiled oat straw, and

added the water from the straw to clay. He found that this clay was much easier to work as a result of the admixture. This likely explains the Israelites' use of straw and, later, stubble, when the straw was not available for their brick making. Without straw or at least the organic material furnished by the stubble, the difficulty of brick making was greatly increased" (Free, p. 92).

By issuing his decree, Pharaoh had drastically increased the work load of the Israelites. Workers would have to be syphoned off from their normal tasks to gather the needed straw, and yet he required the same amount of production as when they had been provided with straw.

"tale of bricks" — *"To tell' in Old English meant 'to count.' And the total was called the 'tale.' The counter of votes in the English Parliament is still called The Teller"* (Coffman, p. 62)!

If they did not gather straw, but simply made bricks without it, as noted above, their work load was still increased.

What was Pharaoh's excuse for increasing their burdens?

They were idle, i.e., lazy. As proof of his statement, he noted that they wanted to take time off from their labors in order to worship their GOD. Pharaoh was simply looking for an excuse to make their lives more miserable.

Ex. 5:9 "Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words."

"Let heavier work be laid upon the men, that they may labor therein; and let them not regard lying words." (ASV)

"let the service be heavy on the men, and let them work at it, and not be dazzled by lying words." (YLT)

"vain" — sheqer — *"an untruth; by implication a sham... deceit, false"* (Strong); *"lie, deception, disappointment, falsehood"* (BDB); *"it is an untruth, a sham, a lie, lying words"* (Zodhiates); *"a noun meaning a lie, vanity, without cause"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1195).

Pharaoh said that the words of Moses were nothing more than lies which would basically build false hope within the hearts of Israel. Pharaoh was trying to discredit Moses in the eyes of the Israelites. He wanted them to believe Moses' words were useless. Further, he seemed to have increased their work load, apparently beyond the gathering of straw, and blamed it on Moses' attempt to release them from their labors for worship. He wanted to crush any confidence they might have had in Moses. He wanted them to see Moses, not as a liberator, not as a prophet of GOD, but as the cause for their additional labors.

Ex. 5:10-14 “And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished. So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. And the taskmasters hasted them, saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw. And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and to day, as heretofore?”

“And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. Go yourselves, get you straw where ye can find it: for nought of your work shall be diminished. So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. And the taskmasters were urgent saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw. And the officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task both yesterday and to-day, in making brick as heretofore?” (ASV)

“And the exactors of the people, and its authorities, go out, and speak unto the people, saying, Thus said Pharaoh, I do not give you straw, ye—go ye, take for yourselves straw where ye find it, for there is nothing of your service diminished. And the people is scattered over all the land of Egypt, to gather stubble for straw, and the exactors are making haste, saying, Complete your works, the matter of a day in its day, as when there is straw. And the authorities of the sons of Israel, whom the exactors of Pharaoh have placed over them, are beaten, saying, Wherefore have ye not completed your portion in making brick as heretofore, both yesterday and to-day?” (YLT)

“Thus saith Pharaoh” Note that in verse one, when Moses spoke to Pharaoh, he said, **“Thus saith Jehovah.”** Thus, the messengers of both GOD and Pharaoh used the same formula to address the people. It was a formula meant to express sovereign rule. Thus, when Pharaoh's messengers used this phrase, they were at the least saying that Pharaoh was equal with, if not superior to, Jehovah.

“stubble” would include what straw they could find, but it would also include other materials which could be used, though inferior to straw. This additional work had the effect of scattering the Israelites all over the land to find what they needed to make the bricks. This would also have the effect of making it harder for them to unite under a common leader, such as Moses.

Their task was an impossible one. They could not make the same tally of bricks as before because of the additional labor

involved, so their officers were beaten. Most believe these officers were Israelites promoted to these positions. Clarke offered the following note about these beatings.

“Probably bastinadoed; for this is the common punishment in Egypt to the present day for minor offenses. The manner of it is this: the culprit lies on his belly, his legs being turned up behind erect, and the executioner gives him so many blows on the soles of the feet with the stick. This is a severe punishment, the sufferer not being able to walk for many weeks after, and some are lamed by it through the whole of their lives” (Clarke, p. 317).

Ex. 5:15-16 “Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people.”

“Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault it in thine own people.” (ASV)

“And the authorities of the sons of Israel come in and cry unto Pharaoh, saying, Why dost thou thus to thy servants? Straw is not given to thy servants, and they are saying to us, Make bricks, and lo, thy servants are smitten--and thy people hath sinned.” (YLT)

There appears to have been a somewhat open-door policy with this Pharaoh, because the **“officers”** appear to have had easy access to him. Note that they approached him with humility and respect. They did not do as so many underlings do today, demanding that he hear them and give them what they want. They referred to themselves as **“thy servants”** and simply asked why this was being done to them. Further, they pointed out that they had not done anything to deserve this kind of treatment.

“the fault is in thine own people” Here is the proof that these officers (foremen) were Hebrews. The phrase, **“Thine own people”** refers to people of the same background as Pharaoh — Egyptians.

Note the basis of their argument to Pharaoh: (1) The task set before them was impossible to perform. (2) They were being punished for what was impossible to perform. To say the least, this was unfair.

Ex. 5:17-19 “But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the LORD. Go

therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks. And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not diminish ought from your bricks of your daily task.”

“But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and sacrifice to Jehovah. Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the number of bricks. And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, when it was said, Ye shall not diminish aught from your bricks, your daily tasks.” (ASV)

“And he saith, Remiss--ye are remiss, therefore ye are saying, Let us go, let us sacrifice to Jehovah; and now, go, serve; and straw is not given to you, and the measure of bricks ye do give. And the authorities of the sons of Israel see them in affliction, saying, Ye do not diminish from your bricks; the matter of a day in its day.” (YLT)

If they had not realized who was behind their extra workload before, there was no doubt now that it was Pharaoh. Pharaoh gave the reason for the extra work, saying that they were lazy, i.e., they were simply trying to get out of work. Therefore, he assigned them this extra work so that they did not have time to think about anything else. Now the Israelites realized the fix they were in — either increase production or continue suffering the beatings.

“Perhaps in their desperation they had believed what they wanted to believe, that surely Pharaoh would help them when he knew the truth about them. That hope was now dashed” (Fields, p. 134).

They could expect no mercy from Pharaoh, only heartache and more labors.

Ex. 5:20-21 “And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.”

“And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: and they said unto them, Jehovah look upon you, and judge: because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.” (ASV)

“And they meet Moses and Aaron standing to meet them, in their coming out from Pharaoh, and say unto them, Jehovah look upon you, and judge, because ye have caused our fragrance to stink in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants--to give a sword into their hand to slay us.” (YLT)

Pharaoh had basically asked Moses who he thought he was to think he could get the people released from their work (5:4),

then he blamed Moses for their work load's being increased (5:9). When the officers of Israel left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron apparently waiting for them. Now the Israelites themselves blamed Moses and Aaron for their troubles. Many a man over the years has blamed the wrong person for his troubles, and these Israelites were no different. In their anger, they actually call upon GOD to **"judge"** Moses and Aaron.

"judge" — shaphat — *"a primitive root; to (judge), i.e., pronounce sentence (for or against); by implication to vindicate or punish"* (Strong); *"to judge, govern, vindicate, punish"* (BDB); *"a verb meaning to judge, to govern"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1186).

"May the Lord look upon you and judge you' was a way for one who was unable to avenge himself to say, 'You have wronged me; may God punish you'" (Roper, p. 90).

They were already murmuring against Moses, and he had not even gotten them moving toward the Red Sea yet.

"ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh"

"savour" — reyach — *"odor (as if blown); smell"* (Strong); *"scent, fragrance, aroma, odor"* (BDB); *"a masculine noun indicating an aroma, a fragrance, an odor"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1052).

"To Pharaoh you have caused us to be an unpleasant smell, something that stinks."

"abhorred" — baash — *"a primitive root; to smell bad; figuratively to be offensive morally: (make to) be abhorred (had in {abomination} {loathsome} {odious})"* (Strong); *"to have a bad smell, stink, smell bad"* (BDB); *"A verb meaning to stink, to be offensive, to be repulsive"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 116).

These officers were basically saying that Moses had caused them to be despised by Pharaoh and the Egyptians. **Did they fail to recognize that the Egyptians despised them before Moses came back (Exodus 2:23-24), and despised them even more now?**

Further, they accused Moses of putting **"a sword in their hand to slay us."** Simply put, they were accusing Moses of giving Pharaoh all the provocation and excuse he needed to destroy them. They were oppressed before, but now they felt that their destruction was imminent.

Instead of turning to GOD in their time of trouble, they turned against His messenger. With all the complaining they did against Moses in the years which were to come, it is interesting to see how their descendants claimed to revere and adore the name of Moses (See Acts 7).

Ex. 5:22-23 “And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that Thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all.”

“And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Lord, wherefore hast Thou dealt ill with this people? why is it that Thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath dealt ill with this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all.” (ASV)

“And Moses turneth back unto Jehovah, and saith, Lord, why hast Thou done evil to this people? why is this? --Thou hast sent me! and since I have come unto Pharaoh, to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people, and Thou hast not at all delivered Thy people.” (YLT)

Moses was accused of not doing what he told the Israelites he was going to do in the previous verses. Note the difference between the Israelite officers and Moses. They took their complaint to a human being with limited power. Moses took their complaints to GOD, Who has unlimited power. Keil made an interesting observation here.

“The question and complaint proceeded from faith, which flies to God when it cannot understand the dealings of God” (Keil/Delitzsch, p. 466).

It does appear that Moses thought he was going to march up to Pharaoh, demand the people's release, and they would quickly leave. Yet, GOD had previously let him know there would be a delay, according to human standards, before Pharaoh let them go (See Exodus 3:18-20.).

Moses did not understand why things had taken a turn for the worse for his brethren. The word **“evil”** in this text does not refer to what one would call moral evil. As Fields pointed out, it refers to calamity, misfortune or an adversity of some kind (p. 135). The same original word is sometimes simply translated as “afflict.” Things were going to have to get worse before they would get better. They needed a strong desire to leave Egypt, so that when the time came, they would gladly and quickly take their stuff and go. GOD knew that this desire was going to be produced by a stubborn and rebellious Pharaoh. GOD answered Moses and the Israelites' complaints in the next chapter.

Exodus Chapter Six

Ex. 6:1 “Then the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for by a strong hand shall he let them go, and by a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Now dost thou see that which I do to Pharaoh, for with a strong hand he doth send them away, yea, with a strong hand he doth cast them out of his land.” (YLT)

Moses and the Israelite leaders had been given a chance to see Pharaoh as he really was. GOD had given Pharaoh the opportunity to obey, so that they could see Pharaoh as GOD saw his heart. Now GOD told Moses the time was right and they (with time) would see what GOD would do (with a strong hand) to Pharaoh.

Note that GOD did not give Moses a direct answer to his questions (5:22). Instead, GOD will answer them with the unfolding of time and events. Surely in the future, Moses and the Israelites would be able to look back and understand why things were accomplished as they were. It would be obvious that Pharaoh did not let them go out of the kindness of his heart, but rather that he had to be forced into letting them go because of the mighty hand of GOD. Thus, it was GOD who should receive glory and honor from His people.

“The oppression in the mean time was not merely driving the people to desperation, but preparing them by severe labor, varied by hasty wanderings in search of stubble, for the exertions and privations of the wilderness” (Barnes, p. 18).

These hardships would make them even more desirous of the freedom GOD offered them.

An important thing to reemphasize here is that it will be the strong hand of GOD which would cause Pharaoh to use a strong hand in driving the Israelites out of his land. The term **“strong hand”** stands for “sovereign power, suddenly and forcibly applied.”

Ex. 6:2-3 “And GOD spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of GOD Almighty, but by My name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.”

“And GOD spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Jehovah: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as GOD Almighty; but by My name Jehovah I was not known to them.” (ASV)

"And GOD speaketh unto Moses, and saith unto him, I am Jehovah, and I appear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as GOD Almighty; as to My name Jehovah, I have not been known to them;" (YLT)

"JEHOVAH" — *"This is the personal proper name par excellence of Israel's God"* (ISBE, Vol. 2, p. 1254).

"In both names ehyeh and Yhwh, the root idea is that of underived existence. When it is said that God's name is He is, simply being is not all that is affirmed. He is in a sense in which no other being is. He is; and the cause of His being is in Himself. He is because He is" (Unger, p. 565).

One should also consider Unger's Dictionary, page 565, column one, under #3.

The statement that grabs one's attention in these verses is **"By My name JEHOVAH was I not known unto them."** Did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob not know GOD by the name "Jehovah?" This is puzzling from the following verses, which record the Patriarchs and the use of the name **"Jehovah."**

Eve — Genesis 4:1

Noah — Genesis 9:26

Abraham — Genesis 15:7-8; 18:13, 17; 22:14

Isaac — Gen. 26:2

Jacob — Genesis 27:20

What is the explanation of this apparent contradiction? Several explanations have been put forth, and they are given as follows.

"The principal Hebrew word in the clause means, 'I-made-my-self-known.' There is also a negative, but it occurs afterwards, and the placement of it is optional. Tyndale rendered it thus: 'Was I not known unto them'" (Coffman, p. 70)?

"The words should be read interrogatively, for the negative particle lo, not, has this power often in Hebrew. 'I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by the name of God Almighty, and by My name Jehovah was I not also made known unto them'" (Clarke, p. 319)?

"The name Jehovah was not revealed before the time mentioned here, for though it occurs so frequently in the book of Genesis, as that book was written long after the name had come into common use, as a principal characteristic of God, Moses employs it in his history because of this circumstance; so that whenever it appears previously to this, it is by the figure called prolepsis or anticipation" (Clarke, p. 139).

Another idea is put forth by Fields, which basically states

that one does not really know someone when he only knows his name. To know the name “Jehovah” does not therefore mean that one knows what the name implies. Just because someone knows the name “GOD,” does not mean that he knows GOD. This writer knows the name “Winston Churchill,” but he must admit that he knows almost nothing about the man.

“Supporting this view is the fact that, long centuries after the name Jehovah was well known, God said, ‘I will cause them to know that My name is Jehovah’ (Jer. 16:21). Thus knowing God as indicated by the scriptures themselves, certainly means more than merely knowing how to pronounce God’s name. In fairness, it must be said that this appears to be the preferred explanation adopted by scholars generally”
(Coffman, p. 72).

One may have a title, but until he exercises the authority of that title, it is only a title. The descriptive nature of the title is unknown until it is acted upon.

Ex. 6:4 “And I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.”

“And I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their sojournings, wherein they sojourned.” (ASV)

“and also I have established My covenant with them, to give to them the land of Canaan, the land of their sojournings, wherein they have sojourned;” (YLT)

“established” — qum — “to rise” (Strong); “to rise, arise, stand, rise up, stand up” (BDB); “to rise up, establish, strengthen” (Zodhiates); “a verb meaning to arise, to stand, to stand up” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 987); “to make or cause to come into existence” (Zerr, p. 114).

When one considers the idea of something’s being established, he thinks of something that is already a reality, something that in time past came to be. In the present text, the word is used to show that even though the thing spoken of (giving the land of Canaan as a possession) had not yet come to pass, it was going to happen. It was going to be fulfilled. It is fulfilled in prospect. The land of Canaan would indeed become the possession for the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, when in GOD’s plans the time was right.

Ex. 6:5-6 “And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid

you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments:”

“And moreover I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am Jehovah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments:” (ASV)

“and also I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, whom the Egyptians are causing to serve, and I remember My covenant. Therefore say to the sons of Israel, I am Jehovah, and I have brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and have delivered you from their service, and have redeemed you by a stretched-out arm, and by great judgments,” (YLT)

GOD heard their groaning, and He was now ready to act on their behalf. GOD had not temporarily forgotten His covenant, but the time before this had not been the time in which to fulfill it. Now the time had finally come. GOD gave Moses and the people assurance by telling them He was about to bring them out from under the burdens imposed on them by the Egyptians. He let them know that, no matter how bad things appeared, He was in charge.

Note the word **“redeem”** which GOD used.

“redeem” — gaal — *“to redeem [according to Oriental law of (kinship), i.e., to be the next of kin (and as such to buy back a relative’s (property), marry his (widow) etc.]...perform the part of (near), next kinsfolk...redeem, revenger”* (Strong); *“to redeem, act as kinsman - redeemer, avenge, revenge, ransom, do the part of a kinsman”* (BDB); *“to redeem, to ransom, release, deliver; to fulfill the duties of relationship, to marry a childless widow of an older brother...redeemer, avenger, kinsman-helper”* (Zodhiates); *“a verb meaning to redeem or act as a kinsman-redeemer”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 176).

GOD was basically telling Moses and the Israelites that He was going to act as their near kinsman and save them from the severe bondage under which they presently resided.

“I have seen, I have seen the affliction of My people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did GOD send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush” (Acts 7:34-35).

One might also notice the relationship of Boaz and Ruth with regard to the duties of a near-kinsman (Ruth 2:20; 3:9).

It is observed that what GOD was about to do was called

“great judgments.” The plagues which GOD was about to bring down upon Egypt were not simply great wonders — they were **“great judgments.”** These were judgments which would declare the Egyptians guilty, but they were not empty judgments which had no power. These were judgments which brought great punishment upon the perpetrators of great crimes. Man cannot escape GOD’s punishment when he hardens his heart as did Pharaoh.

GOD redeemed Israel from Egyptian bondage; yet, notice something He did not do.

“He did not spare Israel from all their troubles and hardships in the desert; but He did deliver them from all intolerable difficulties, those which were beyond their power to face” (Fields, p. 145).

Christians also have a redeemer and have been redeemed from the greatest bondage of all — bondage to Satan and sin. Yet, like Israel of old, Christians have to endure the trials of this life. Redemption means the price has been paid for one to be free, but that does not free him from the care and troubles of this life.

“In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

Redemption has been paid with the greatest price which could ever be paid, to free one from the greatest bondage which could ever be imposed on him, to enjoy the greatest freedom ever available.

Ex. 6:7 “And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a GOD: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your GOD, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.”

“and I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a GOD; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your GOD, who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.” (ASV)

“and have taken you to Me for a people, and I have been to you for GOD, and ye have known that I am Jehovah your GOD, who is bringing you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians;” (YLT)

“I will take you to Me for a people” The word **“take”** in this phrase carries a number of meanings, one of which is to *“marry, take a wife”* (BDB). Since the marriage relationship is often stressed between GOD and His people (both in the Old and New Testaments), this writer believes that this is the emphasis here. GOD assures them that He will be their GOD, and that they would know He was their GOD. It seems to be the thought that there would be no doubt in their minds that He was their GOD. This of course would need evidence, and He was indeed about to give them an abundance of evidence that

He is the only GOD there is.

“which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians” Consider that at the time this was spoken, they were still under cruel bondage to the Egyptians. This, therefore, was a prediction of what GOD as about to do. Their release from bondage would be the evidence that Israel was His people. Further, it would demonstrate to them that He would take care of them, even though they often forgot this in their wanderings and resorted to murmuring against GOD and His appointed representatives.

Ex. 6:8 “And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.”

“And I will bring you in unto the land which I sware to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for a heritage: I am Jehovah.” (ASV)

“and I have brought you in unto the land which I have lifted up My hand to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and have given it to you--a possession; I am Jehovah.” (YLT)

Again the formula is seen to declare that GOD is the same GOD to them which spoke and made promises to their fathers — Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. GOD had made this promise of a possession to them, and now the time had come for Him to fulfill that promise. Notice the element of time involved here. It will be forty-plus years before the possession will be claimed by Israel.

“beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8).

It should also be observed that, if it had not been for their sin of refusing to go into the land when GOD commanded it, the time frame would have been much shorter. GOD will be known and understood to be the GOD of Israel.

Ex. 6:9 “And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.”

“And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.” (ASV)

“And Moses speaketh so unto the sons of Israel, and they hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for harsh service.” (YLT)

Instead of rejoicing at Moses' words, the Israelites were in **“anguish”** [*“shortness, impatience, anguish,”* (BDB)]. **Would**

it be proper to say that they were in a state of shock? Moses had said that they were going to be released; but, instead, the immediate result of his efforts was cruel bondage. It should be considered that Moses did not tell them when they were going to be released, just that they would be.

“The words signify that their labor was so continual, and their bondage so cruel and oppressive, that they had scarcely time to breathe” (Clarke, p. 320).

“anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage” Moses had told them exactly what GOD told him to say, but they would not listen. They had gotten their hopes up (4:31), only to have them dashed by Pharaoh’s proclamation (5:15-19). So, when Moses tried to let them know that this was not the end of the matter, they would not listen. They were blaming him for their troubles and the increase of their oppression. They may have reasoned, *“We listened to him once and look what it brought us.”*

Ex. 6:10-11 “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.”

“And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah speaketh unto Moses, saying, Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he doth send the sons of Israel out of his land;” (YLT)

Note how GOD responded to the reaction of the Israelites to Moses. He told Moses to go back and raise the bar in his demand of Pharaoh. It was just a small notch above what he had before asked, but now he made it a command. Remember that in Exodus 5:1, Pharaoh was asked to let them go three days’ journey. Now it is simply “Let them go.” Further, GOD ignored the attitude and actions of the Israelites. He told Moses to get back to work — Charlie Mike (continue mission). In essence, Moses was told to forget the opposition — *“Do what I told you to do.”*

Ex. 6:12 “And Moses spake before the LORD, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?”

“And Moses spake before Jehovah, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?” (ASV)

“and Moses speaketh before Jehovah, saying, Lo, the sons of Israel have not hearkened unto me, and how doth Pharaoh hear me, and I of uncircumcised lips?” (YLT)

How quickly human beings can turn on one who is trying to help them. GOD sent Moses to deliver the people, and at first they believed him and supported him. Then a temporary setback occurred, and they immediately turned against him. Further, Moses then reverted back to making one of the same excuses he had previously made. It is almost as if he told GOD, “See, I told you I could not speak well. Not even my own people will listen to me. How can you expect Pharaoh to heed my words.” He stated that he had **“uncircumcised lips,”** which is being used as a figure of speech to say that he cannot do what is required.

“Similarly we read of uncircumcised hearts and ears, that is, ears and hearts that will not hear and comprehend (Acts 7:51)” (Fields, p. 147).

“An uncircumcised ear is one that does not hear clearly, an uncircumcised heart one slow to receive and understand warnings; uncircumcised lips, such as cannot speak fluently” (Barnes, p. 19).

Note the way Jesus used similar language to indicate the Jews rebellious inability to absorb truth.

“in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matthew 13:14).

Ex. 6:13 “And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.”

“And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah speaketh unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and chargeth them for the sons of Israel, and for Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt.” (YLT)

Moses had given Pharaoh the charge of GOD regarding letting His people go, knowing that Pharaoh would not comply. This provided evidence to both Moses and the Israelites of the stubbornness of Pharaoh and his determination to keep them in bondage. GOD gave Pharaoh a chance to avoid the devastation which would follow. Everything which took place

to this point was a clearing of the deck for the battle which was about to come.

Ex. 6:14-27 “These be the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel; Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi: these be the families of Reuben. And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman: these are the families of Simeon. And these are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari: and the years of the life of Levi were an hundred thirty and seven years. The sons of Gershon; Libni, and Shimi, according to their families. And the sons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel: and the years of the life of Kohath were an hundred thirty and three years. And the sons of Merari; Mahali and Mushi: these are the families of Levi according to their generations. And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years. And the sons of Izhar; Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri. And the sons of Uzziel; Mishaël, and Elzaphan, and Zithri. And Aaron took him Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Naashon, to wife; and she bare him Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. And the sons of Korah; Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph: these are the families of the Korhites. And Eleazar Aaron's son took him one of the daughters of Putiel to wife; and she bare him Phinehas: these are the heads of the fathers of the Levites according to their families. These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies.”

The versions ASV, and NKJV will not be listed here with the genealogy provided by the KJV. A few comments will be made about these verses. These form a partial genealogy, which is meant to show the lineage of Moses and Aaron. It also introduces a few people who would play important roles in Israel.

Verses fourteen and fifteen give the descendants of Reuben and Simeon. It is not understood by this author why they are listed here, since the text is primarily directed to the genealogy of Moses and Aaron. Possibly this would be sure to identify **the** Levi which was spoken of as being the son of Jacob (an additional proof, so to speak). Again, the focus is on Levi and his descendants — Moses and Aaron.

One thing of interest here is that Simeon had a Canaanite wife or concubine, for Shaul was born of this union. Such

marriages were later condemned by GOD (Exodus 34:15-16; Deuteronomy 7:3-4). These marriages were condemned because the Gentiles (being idol worshipers) would lead GOD's people away from worshipping Him.

"The idolatry which later developed among the Simeonites (Num. 25:14), and their great decline in population (Num. 1:23; 26:14) suggests an inherent weakness in the tribe's character" (Fields, p. 149).

The three sons of Levi are mentioned, beginning with verse seventeen — Gershom, Kohath and Merari. Though all will be important in the care and function of the Tabernacle, one (Kohath) is most important. Kohath's descendants would become the priests, and this lineage shows that Moses and Aaron were descended from him.

Verse twenty mentions the father of Moses and Aaron — Amram. Amram married his **"father's sister."** The original is hard to understand here and is thought to be either his "aunt" or a "cousin" (Fields, Clarke). Most writers chose to observe the passover on the relationship involved here. This author believes that this relationship would later have fallen under the condemnation of Leviticus 18:12.

Jochebed's name means *"Jehovah is (my) glory."*

Among the names found in verses twenty-one and twenty-two, one tends to stick out — Korah. Korah's family became famous in several ways. Korah rebelled against GOD and Moses, as recorded in Numbers sixteen and Jude eleven, and he was consequently swallowed up by the earth with all of his followers. This event also involved a number of the princes of Israel. It is this writer's belief that this was the same Korah involved in the later rebellion against GOD's chosen one — Moses — but he cannot prove this.

In First Chronicles 6:22-23, the descendants of Korah are said to be famous musicians, and a number of the Psalms are attributed to them (Psalms 42, 44-49, 84-85, 87-88).

In verse twenty-three, Aaron's wife and sons are mentioned. Two of Aaron's sons were killed by GOD because they offered strange fire (unauthorized fire) in burning the incense with strange fire (Numbers 3:4; 26:61; Leviticus 10:1-2; 1 Chronicles 24:1-2). It is noted in this genealogy that they had no children, thus, the priests from that time on came through their other brothers.

Following the death of Aaron, Eleaser became the High Priest of Israel (Numbers 20:25-28).

"In later generations the high priesthood passed to the house of Aaron's son Ithamar in the person of Eli and his sons Ahimelech and Abiathar (1 Chron. 24:3; 1 Sam. 1:9). Still later the high priesthood reverted to the house of Eleazar through Zadok (1 Kings 2:26-27, 35)" (Fields, p. 151).

In verse twenty-five, Phinehas is introduced as the son of

Eleazar. He became famous when he killed the adulterous couple with the spear in Numbers 25:6-13 (cf. Psalm 130:28-31). He became the successor of Eleazar as High Priest in 1st Chronicles 6:3-15.

Notice the emphasis in verses 26-27 on Aaron and Moses' descent from the lineage of Levi. Part of this is to draw one back to verse thirteen before the partial genealogical record was given, thus resuming the account of Moses' and Aaron's work. It is also observed that Aaron is mentioned first in verse twenty-six due to order of birth, whereas Moses is mentioned first in verse twenty-seven due to his being chosen by GOD to lead His people.

Ex. 6:28-30 “And it came to pass on the day when the LORD spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt, That the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I am the LORD: speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee. And Moses said before the LORD, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?”

“And it came to pass on the day when Jehovah spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt, that Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, I am Jehovah: speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I speak unto thee. And Moses said before Jehovah, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?” (ASV)

“And it cometh to pass in the day of Jehovah's speaking unto Moses in the land of Egypt, that Jehovah speaketh unto Moses, saying, I am Jehovah, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I am speaking unto thee. And Moses saith before Jehovah, Lo, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how doth Pharaoh hearken unto me?” (YLT)

These verses are basically a repetition of what was said in verses ten through thirteen. It may be that one should consider verses fourteen through twenty-seven as a parenthetical statement, with a return now to the point. Moses was not to speak his own words. He was to repeat accurately what GOD said to Pharaoh.

“God's servants need not fear or wonder what they should speak. Speak words God has given us” (Fields, p. 152).

It might be added to Fields' remark that, after speaking the words GOD has spoken (Scripture), leave the rest up to Him.

Jushua Chapter Seven

Ex. 7:1-2 “And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, See, I have made thee as GOD to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee; and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.”
(ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, See, I have given thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother is thy prophet; thou--thou dost speak all that I command thee, and Aaron thy brother doth speak unto Pharaoh, and he hath sent the sons of Israel out of his land.”
(YLT)

Two important things are mentioned here. (1) Moses is portrayed as being made like **“a god to Pharaoh.”** This relationship gives Moses power and authority over Pharaoh. By thus portraying Moses, GOD was letting Moses know that he had nothing to fear from Pharaoh; and just like with the GOD of Heaven, the end result of all of Moses’ efforts as His servant will result in total victory. Moses was there to deliver Israel and deliver them he would — nothing Pharaoh would attempt could keep this deliverance from taking place.

(2) In Exodus 4:16, GOD told Moses that he was to be a god to Aaron, and Aaron was to be his spokesman. In this passage, Aaron was called Moses’ prophet, thus the work of a prophet is revealed. A prophet’s work was to faithfully proclaim the truths of the GOD of Heaven to the people on earth. Notice that though Moses was made like a god to Pharaoh and in essence to Aaron, nevertheless he sustained the role of prophet himself. GOD did not give Moses the power, or authority, to do anything Moses chose to do. Nor did GOD grant Moses a decision-making opportunity in the matters ahead. Moses was subject to the dictates of GOD, just as Aaron or anyone else who has ever served GOD. Moses was specifically told to speak what GOD commanded him to speak (act as a prophet). Aaron was to faithfully repeat the message Moses gave him to Pharaoh. Moses was GOD’s prophet, His spokesman — Aaron was Moses’ prophet, his spokesman. The significance is that this identifies GOD as the author of the message, and not the prophet or the spokesman as the author. Also note that, since Moses spoke for GOD, his speech had the same force as if GOD Himself spoke directly to Pharaoh.

One other important aspect which should be understood in this whole matter is expressed by Coffman.

“Through the whole series of the Ten Wonders about to

be related, Aaron spoke and acted for Moses, his actions and words being actually those of Moses, facts clearly indicated by this verse. How ridiculous, therefore, are all the quibbles with which the critics busy themselves about whether it was Aaron or Moses who stretched out the rod! Moses and Aaron were a divinely constituted unit in all these actions, and whatever either of them did or said might properly be credited to the other or both” (p. 82).

The demand to be placed before Pharaoh is to send the children of Israel out of his land. No longer would requests be made — now Moses’ words would be restricted to commands toward Pharaoh.

Ex. 7:3 “And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.”

“And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.” (ASV)

“And I harden the heart of Pharaoh, and have multiplied My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt,” (YLT)

The hardening of Pharaoh’s heart has already been discussed in the notes on Exodus 4:21, to which one might refer. Another comment of interest on this subject is given by Canon George Harford.

“There are three forms of the word used in reference to hardening: (1) hard, (2) self-hardened, and (3) God-hardened, raising difficulty; but a little reflection lightens the difficulty. In all human conduct there is a mysterious combination of man’s choice and God’s enabling. God uses events to produce opposite effects upon different characters, as fire melts wax and hardens clay. Assertions of God’s sovereignty must not be isolated, but interpreted in harmony with His moral rule. Thus read, the cumulative assaults upon Pharaoh’s resolution call forth one of the most dramatic exhibitions of the vacillations of man whose conscience has been awakened or silenced, by self-will” (p. 174).

Zerr also gave a comment worth consideration.

“So a short but true statement would be to say that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh by giving him the occasion and Pharaoh hardened his heart by grasping the occasion...Pharaoh was already a wicked man before this experience with God started (1:8) and thus his moral character was not made any different by this use to which God put him” (p. 116).

One additional note regarding the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart. Exodus records a number of times when it is said that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exodus 7:13-14, 22-23; 8:15,

19, 32; 9:7, 34-35).

“multiplying My signs and My wonders” This refers to the miracles which were about to be brought upon Egypt, better known to Bible students as plagues. These would also include the first miracle which Pharaoh would see — the staff turned into a serpent.

Ex. 7:4 “But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth Mine armies, and My people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments.”

“But Pharaoh will not hearken unto you, and I will lay My hand upon Egypt, and bring forth My hosts, My people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments.” (ASV)

“and Pharaoh doth not hearken, and I have put My hand on Egypt, and have brought out My hosts, My people, the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments;” (YLT)

Pharaoh was not going to listen to GOD’s demands through His servant Moses. Thus, his actions would provide GOD with the opportunity to bring judicial punishments upon Egypt. The destructions sent by GOD in the plagues are thus called **“great judgments.”** But what is the purpose of these judgments against Egypt? A moment of reflection will cause one to see that they were brought because of the Egyptian’s idol worship. GOD will later drive out the Canaanites before His people, primarily because of their idol worship. It should be remembered that the Israelites had lived among the Egyptians for over four hundred years, thus affording the Egyptians the knowledge of the One GOD. Yet, the Egyptians had not given up their multitude of gods. If anything during this time, their idol worship had increased. This conclusion is backed up by the fact that every one of the plagues seems to have been directed against some form of idol worship in Egypt. Notice the following list of this idol worship in connection with the plagues.

1. Nile River turned to blood.
 - a. Directed against the worship of the Nile itself.
 - (1) To the Egyptians, this was the source of all life.
 - b. The Nile god was Hapi.
2. Frogs covering the land (probably *“marsh leapers”* according to I.S.B.E., p. 2404).
 - a. Directed against the worship of amphibian animals.
 - b. *“The frog was also associated with divinity, was the symbol of Hegt, a form of Hathor”* (IBID, p. 2404).
 - c. *“Frogs were among the sacred animals. One of their deities, Heka [‘queen of the two worlds,’ (Turner, p. 96)], was a frog-headed goddess; and they seemed to have regarded the frog as a sacred emblem of creative power”* (Pulpit Commentary, p. 180).

3. Dust turned to lice.
 - a. Directed against the whole idolatrous system of worship. No priest could officiate with any type of vermin on him.
 - b. *"The great weight of authority is in favor of the rendering 'gnats' or 'mosquitoes'"* (Pulpit Commentary, p. 189; also note I.S.B.E. under plagues.)
4. Swarms of flies (possibly the winged Asp).
 - a. Directed against insect worship.
 - b. Pulpit Commentary (p. 192) says this should be *"swarms of beetles"* from the original. Beetles were sacred in the worship of Ra, the sun god.
5. Murrain on the cattle (epidemic pestilence).
 - a. Directed against the worship of domesticated animals, especially cattle worship.
 - b. *"The cow being the animal sacred to the goddess Hathor"* (I.S.B.E., p. 2404).
6. Boils and blains.
 - a. Directed against the worship of Typhon.
 - b. Idithya was the city where this furnace was built, where men were offered as sacrifices to this god. They would burn the man and/or red bull, and then take the ashes and sift them in the air, believing that anyone the ashes touched would be blessed.
7. Hail and fire.
 - a. Directed against the worship of trees and vines (nature).
 - b. This would also affect the animals, many of which were worshiped.
 - c. *"The Egyptians worshiped the fig tree, the peach tree, the pomegranate tree, wheat, barley, sorghum, and the vine"* (Turner, p. 102).
8. Locusts.
 - a. Directed against the worship of any vegetation.
 - b. *"They worshipped all nature's beautiful growth which came in addition to the food growth of the several food producing vegetables"* (Turner, p. 103).
9. Darkness which could be felt.
 - a. Directed against the worship of the sun, moon and stars.
10. Death of the first-born.
 - a. Pharaoh was considered a god, and his son was thus to become a god – deified by the people.

"When will mortal man learn that God is God and is the one to be obeyed and worshiped" (Turner, p. 108).

They refused to recognize GOD as the one true GOD, even with all the evidence provided for them. Thus, their punishment was guaranteed. The lesson should be obvious for any student of the Bible. When man refuses to recognize GOD and His

ways, he will always suffer the consequences.

“Be not deceived; GOD is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”
(Galatians 6:7).

In the text, GOD’s people are now referred to as an army. One would view them as a undisciplined army, yet nonetheless an army with great potential. **After all, GOD is helping them defeat their enemies, and who can win against Him?** When they leave Egypt, they will leave as units under their individual family “banners.” Note also that it will be very obvious that they did not deliver themselves from bondage. (Just as we cannot deliver ourselves from the bondage of sin.) GOD made sure that it was well understood that He was in control, and it was the judgments He instigated which caused their release.

Ex. 7:5 “And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.”

“And the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah, when I stretch forth My hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.” (ASV)

“and the Egyptians have known that I am Jehovah, in My stretching out My hand against Egypt; and I have brought out the sons of Israel from their midst.” (YLT)

“And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD”

How will the Egyptians know that He is the LORD? Through the mighty works of judgment He would bring upon them. Further, by the results of those judgments, i.e., His people’s being released from the land. Non-believers and liberal “scholars” today often try to say that all of the plagues should not be considered as miracles. They go on to claim that natural occurrences caused these things to happen. It should be noted that the Egyptians would **know** that they were not natural occurrences, that GOD was the One who caused them to happen. They were miraculous events and the magicians will later state that to Pharaoh.

Not only would the Egyptians know that He is Lord, all the nations around them would know Him as the only GOD. They would be forced to recognize the sovereignty of GOD. In this recognition there was the possibility that some of them would even convert from their idolatry to Judaism. When looking at this context, it would seem that the conflict was not simply one between GOD and Pharaoh, but rather between GOD and the pretended gods of the Egyptians and any other nation.

“The Egyptians would learn that Jehovah is the existing one, the eternal, the ultimate causer. They would learn that their bag of gods was a fiction! See 7:17; 8:10, 22; 14:4, 18” (Fields, p. 158).

Ex. 7:6-7 “And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they. And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.”

“And Moses and Aaron did so; as Jehovah commanded them, so did they. And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.” (ASV)

“And Moses doth--Aaron also--as Jehovah commanded them; so have they done; and Moses is a son of eighty years, and Aaron is a son of eighty and three years, in their speaking unto Pharaoh.” (YLT)

The obedience of Moses and Aaron should be noted as, up to this point and time, they did and will do exactly as GOD has told them to do. They will disobey later, but for the time being, they will obey Him. They had spoken to the people, convinced them of their mission, and tried to get the elders to go to Pharaoh. Further, they had delivered GOD’s message to Pharaoh just as He spoke it.

Interestingly, the ages of the brothers are given at this point. Moses was three years younger than Aaron, which would show that Pharaoh’s order to cast the male babies into the river came after Aaron was born. It has already been revealed that Moses was forty years old when he fled Egypt (Acts 7:23). Now he has returned to Egypt to free GOD’s people, and he is eighty years old. He will be one hundred and twenty years old when he dies. Moses’ life is therefore broken into three forty-year segments.

1. Forty years as a prince.
2. Forty years as a shepherd, and
3. Forty years as a prophet of GOD and leader of His people.

Fields also showed this division with some interesting observations.

- “1. 40 years in Egypt as a prince (thinking he was somebody);*
- 2. 40 years in Midian as a shepherd (finding out he was a nobody);*
- 3. 40 years in the desert as a leader of Israel (learning what God can do with somebody who realizes he was a nobody)” (p. 158).*

Ex. 7:8-9 “And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.”

“And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Show a wonder for you;

then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it become a serpent.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah speaketh unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh speaketh unto you, saying, Give for yourselves a wonder; then thou hast said unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast before Pharaoh—it becometh a monster.” (YLT)

Here is the beginning of the miracles used against Pharaoh which were given to cause him to recognize that GOD is the one and only sovereign of the universe.

“miracle” — *“The fundamental meaning is, a wonder, omen, sign or something out of the ordinary and not produced by established and simple causes”* (Zerr, p. 116)

“The Biblical idea of a miracle as an extraordinary work of God, generally though not invariably transcending the ordinary powers of Nature, wrought in connection with the ends of revelation” (I.S.B.E., Vol. 3, p. 2062).

The word **“miracle”** has been widely abused in present times. Today, it is commonly used in the area of medicine. Some breakthrough will come in a medicine, and it will be called a “miracle drug.” The drug may indeed be wonderful, but it is not miraculous, nor are its benefits a miracle when it does that for which it was designed. The new drug is a product which came from nature and works by natural laws which GOD set in order thousands of years ago. The drug does not act outside of the normal laws of nature. Probably the most absurd phrase in our society with regard to the word “miracle,” in the phrase “miracle of birth.” There is nothing miraculous in any way about the birth of a baby today. The birth of a child follows the laws of nature which GOD set forth in the beginning. Because men may not understand everything about the process, that does not make it a miracle. What it does make them is ignorant, because they do not know all that GOD knows and has put into action.

Probably the best definition of a miracle was given by Clarke:

“A miracle, signifies an effect produced in nature which is opposed to its laws, or such as its power are inadequate to produce” (Vol. 1, p. 323).

The critics at this point try very hard to deny that there is any such thing as a miracle, which is perfectly understandable. There are only two possibilities — there are either miracles, or there are not. If miracles were performed, then there is a supernatural being Who has the power to do anything He wants and Who has the right to command obedience from His creation. Liberals and modernists do not like this fact, because it declares that there is an all-powerful GOD to Whom they will have to answer someday. They do not wish to acknowledge

that there is an intelligence greater than their own.

“The three customary ways of trying to get rid of miracles are: (1) outright denial of the supernatural, leaving man himself as the highest thing in the universe, (If man is the highest authority in the universe, who then determines what is right and wrong?), (2) finding ‘natural explanations’ that actually do not deny the existence of God, but at the same time remove Him from the scene, as for example, when Jesus’ walking on the sea is ascribed to an optical illusion caused by His walking near the water! And, (3) they are interpreted as purely psychological. An example of this is the explanation of feeding the five thousand as being due to mass psychology that resulted from the little boy’s willingness to share his lunch. He brought it to Jesus, and the vast throng were so shamed by his sweet example that everyone brought out his hidden lunch basket, and they all had a big feast! All explanations for biblical miracles that follow such patterns are absolutely worthless, pitiful devices of infidelity, and should be rejected” (Coffman, p. 84).

Notice some of Coffman’s observations on what made the ten plagues miraculous.

“(1) In each case they were accurately foretold, as to the time and place of occurrence. (2) The intensity of such things as the frogs and lice was beyond all possibility of what could have been expected naturally. (3) Both their occurrence and their cessation were demonstrated to be under the control and subject to the word of God through Moses. (4) There was discrimination, some of the plagues affecting the Egyptians and yet at the same time sparing the Israelites. (5) There was orderliness in their appearance, each event more severe than the one that preceded it, culminating at last in the most devastating of all, the death of the firstborn” (p. 86).

Basically, Coffman dealt with the elements of prediction, intensity, timing, control, and orderliness.

“The Christian understanding that natural phenomena were involved, along with the understanding that the miraculous element in the events was achieved largely by such things as intensity, timing, prediction, and control by Moses and Aaron, such understanding leaves the critic high and dry with no valid basis of denial” (IBID, p. 87).

Notice how all of this was planned. GOD knew how Pharaoh was going to react to the demands Moses placed upon him, so He prepared Moses. When Pharaoh asked for a sign — “This is what I want you to do — have the rod turn into a serpent.”

“a serpent” In Exodus 4:3, the rod was turned into a serpent (nachash). In this verse, the rod is turned into a serpent (tannin). The word tannin is used, according to Clarke, to mean a large creature of either aquatic or amphibious nature. Barnes, Clarke, Coffman, and Fields point out that some believe it may have been a crocodile (Fields believes positively that it was.). Clarke also pointed out that tannin is translated **“whale”** in Genesis 1:21, though that hardly seems to be the case here.

“serpent” — tanniyn tanniyn — *“a marine or land (monster) i.e., serpent or jackal”* (Strong); *“dragon, serpent, sea monster... serpent, venomous snake”* (BDB); *“a marine or land monster, a dragon, a sea serpent, a water animal, a whale, a shark, a crocodile, a snake”* (Zodhiates); *“a masculine noun meaning a serpent, a dragon, and a sea monster”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1237).

Whatever this serpent was, it must have been very frightening. **What will Moses and Aaron do?** Exactly what GOD told them to do (v. 10).

Ex. 7:10-12 “And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.”

“And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so, as Jehovah had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers: and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.” (ASV)

“And Moses goeth in--Aaron also--unto Pharaoh, and they do so as Jehovah hath commanded; and Aaron casteth his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it becometh a monster. And Pharaoh also calleth for wise men, and for sorcerers; and the scribes of Egypt, they also, with their flashings, do so, and they cast down each his rod, and they become monsters, and the rod of Aaron swalloweth their rods;” (YLT)

Moses and Aaron approached Pharaoh and did everything GOD told them to do. The rod was cast down, and it turned into a serpent. Thus, a miracle was used to try to convince Pharaoh that they were on a GOD-directed mission.

“Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before

his servants, and it became a serpent” Why is it called Aaron’s rod. Was this Moses rod, but being used by Aaron in this case? Were both Aaron’s and Moses’ rods used individually?

The rod *“is indifferently called the rod of GOD, the rod of Moses, and the rod of Aaron. God gave it the miraculous power, and Moses and Aaron used it indifferently”* (Clarke, Vol. 1, p. 323).

The important thing to remember about this rod is not who the rod belonged to, but the Power behind the rod.

Pharaoh had apparently seen something like this performed by his magicians before. So he called for them, and they produced the desired effect he wanted, i.e., they appeared to produce serpents from rods. These magicians did what magicians do — they deceived people into believing they did something they did not actually do. This writer believes they used the **“lying wonders”** Paul spoke of in Second Thessalonians 2:9.

Although not named here, Paul appears to name two of these magicians in Second Timothy 3:8 — Jannes and Jambres. It is believed by a number of scholars that these two were mentioned by Paul because they were the chief of Pharaoh’s magicians, i.e., not the only ones involved.

When the magicians were able to appear to do the same thing Aaron’s rod had done, this must have been puzzling to Moses and Aaron. But if so, then they were quickly given an answer by GOD — **“Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods.”** To any logically thinking person, this would indeed show the power of GOD working through Aaron’s rod. Remember that Pharaoh asked for a sign to prove they were GOD’s servants (7:9-10). The sign had been produced, it had been “copied,” and then the copies were eaten by the real thing. Even though Pharaoh’s magicians had appeared to copy GOD’s sign, their work was shown to be inferior. **How would Pharaoh react to these events? Would he recognize Moses and Aaron as GOD’s servants with His power invested in them?**

Ex. 7:13 “And he hardened Pharaoh’s heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.”

“And Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as Jehovah had spoken.” (ASV)

“and the heart of Pharaoh is strong, and he hath not hearkened unto them, as Jehovah hath spoken.” (YLT)

The first thing to notice here is the difference between the KJV and the ASV, NKJV and YLT. The latter three indicate that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, whereas the KJV indicates that GOD hardened his heart. Note how Pharaoh’s heart was hardened. Pharaoh had already declared that he

would not obey this GOD whom Moses served.

“Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go” (Exodus 5:2).

How was Pharaoh's heart hardened? It was Pharaoh who called for his magicians to duplicate the sign given to Moses. By their trickery, they helped Pharaoh's determination to refuse belief of and obedience to GOD. It did not matter to Pharaoh that Aaron's serpent had eaten all of his magician's serpents and thus shown GOD's superiority to Pharaoh. He had all the excuse he needed to rebel against GOD's command to let His people go. It should be remembered that GOD was demonstrating to Moses what He already knew. Pharaoh was not going to submit himself to GOD and His commands. Thus, it appears that GOD chose this first miracle because he knew Pharaoh's magicians could appear to duplicate it and give Pharaoh the excuse he wanted to refuse to obey Him. **So, did Pharaoh harden his own heart? Did the Magicians help Pharaoh harden his heart? Did GOD have a part helping Pharaoh his heart?** This author believes all of these played a part in this.

Ex. 7:14-16 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go. Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. And thou shalt say unto him, The LORD GOD of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is stubborn, he refuseth to let the people go. Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thy hand. And thou shalt say unto him, Jehovah, the GOD of the Hebrews, hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou hast not hearkened.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, The heart of Pharaoh hath been hard, he hath refused to send the people away; go unto Pharaoh in the morning, lo, he is going out to the water, and thou hast stood to meet him by the edge of the River, and the rod which was turned to a serpent thou dost take in thy hand, and thou hast said unto him: Jehovah, GOD of the Hebrews, hath sent me unto thee, saying, Send My people away, and they serve Me in the wilderness; and lo, thou hast not hearkened hitherto.” (YLT)

The evidence of Pharaoh's hardened heart is his continuing refusal to let GOD's people go. So, GOD told Moses to go meet him at the river in the morning. The only river this could

be is the Nile River. This seems to indicate that Pharaoh either made a practice of going to the Nile each morning, or that he would be going this particular morning for some particular purpose. Whichever the case, GOD knew where Pharaoh would be and caused His servants to meet him there. Also notice that Moses was told to take the rod which had been turned into a serpent with him. Further, he was told specifically what to say to Pharaoh.

Moses was instructed to tell Pharaoh plainly that it was the GOD of the Hebrews who was issuing this command. With Pharaoh's hatred of the Hebrews having already been vividly demonstrated, this writer believes these words were purposely chosen by GOD for the purpose of allowing Him to demonstrate Pharaoh's rebellion to Moses. Because Pharaoh disregarded the Hebrews, considering them as being inferior, he also viewed their GOD as being inferior to the gods of Egypt and to himself as the son of Ra. Therefore, he was not inclined to listen to Moses or to his GOD.

These Hebrews were his slaves, therefore Pharaoh probably reasoned that if their GOD was so powerful, He would not have allowed this situation to exist in the first place. This is nothing new. The same kind of reasoning is used by many today. Some tragedy comes into the life of a person, such as the death of a loved one in some horrible accident, or a death caused by another's evil actions. *"How could a loving GOD allow such an evil thing to happen?"* cries the skeptic. Sometimes even Christians are tempted to ask the same skeptical question or one like it. GOD allows these things to happen — He does not make them happen. GOD allows these things to happen to Christians as a test of their faith. **Friend, it is an extremely dangerous thing to attribute evil to GOD!**

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of GOD: for GOD cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren" (James 1:13-16, emphasis mine, RK).

GOD does not tempt man to do evil, because He cannot be tempted with it. When GOD allowed the first century Christians to be persecuted, instead of asking why He let this happen, look in hindsight at the tremendous growth which the church experienced because of it.

"behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear" With this phrase Moses was told to remind Pharaoh that whatever happens is his own fault. He is to be reminded that he would not listen to previous instructions, so he has brought this impending calamity upon himself and Egypt. This was to be

the first of the plagues visited upon Egypt, all of which could have been avoided.

Ex. 7:17-18 “Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river.”

“Thus saith Jehovah, In this thou shalt know that I am Jehovah: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in my hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that are in the river shall die, and the river shall become foul; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink water from the river.” (ASV)

“Thus said Jehovah: By this thou knowest that I am Jehovah; lo, I am smiting with the rod which is in my hand, on the waters which are in the River, and they have been turned to blood, and the fish that are in the River die, and the River hath stank, and the Egyptians have been wearied of drinking waters from the River.” (YLT)

This plague was being brought as a punishment, because Pharaoh had refused to let Israel go after the sign of the serpent was given to him. Note that no fresh command is given to let Israel go. But a primary purpose of the plagues is given — **“In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord.”** GOD was clearly declaring that Pharaoh should be able to recognize His deity by what He was about to do (and had done) and respond positively to it. Yet, one notices that Pharaoh will still refuse to acknowledge the deity of GOD. **Why? Was it GOD’s fault? Did GOD fail in some way to do something impressive enough which would cause Pharaoh to change his mind about GOD? NO!!!** It was totally Pharaoh’s fault because of his stubbornness. GOD gave him all the proof he needed. Pharaoh’s reaction (refusal) will clearly show how far the hardness and unreasonableness of his heart had progressed.

Another thing which might be noticed is the divine formula used in Moses’ words to identify GOD — **“I AM.”** The **“I AM”** had spoken these words.

“And GOD said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you” (Exodus 3:14).

Moses was instructed to tell Pharaoh exactly what he was going to do with the rod. He was going to smite/strike the river, and the waters would be turned into blood. Pharaoh was also told the results of this action: (1) All the fish would die, (2) the river would stink (blood alone has a strong stench to it, but consider the dying rotting fish), and (3) the people would loathe to drink from it.

The Egyptians considered the Nile as the emblem of life.

By far, most of their food came from the river. Not only did their drinking water come from the river, but due to its annual flooding, most (if not all) of their grain crops were a result of it. But it was not just these items which were involved, for much of their meat supply came from the fish in this river. Fish from the Nile is still a major source of food in Egypt. They considered salt-water fish to be unclean.

The loss of this major source of food would be devastating to the population. Added to that would be the diseases which would come through all of the dying fish. The people were going to suffer because of Pharaoh's hard heart. A lesson to be learned here is that innocent people often suffer because of their leaders' sins. For seven days, they would suffer tremendously, but after the blood was turned back to water, they would continue to suffer — there would be no fish, since they had all died. It would take time for the fish population to increase in any way which would be useful.

Further, the people would **"loathe"** to drink from the river. The water of the river would **"disgust"** (laah – Strong) them; they would be offended by it. The Egyptians looked upon the Nile as the greatest drinking water there was. Travelers, according to Clarke, have spoken of that water as having a wonderful taste (p. 325). Yet, this water would now be detestable to them.

There is a natural reddening of the Nile which occurs each year. But this natural reddening does not kill the fish, nor cause the water to stink, and actually makes the water tastier. See Keil and Delitzsch's extensive notes of this (pages 478-479). Also, this plague lasted a very specific time and ended at a specific time — **none of it was gradually done.**

Ex. 7:19 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone."

"And Jehovah said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, over their streams, and over their pools, and over all their ponds of water, that they may become blood; and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone." (ASV)

"And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thy hand against the waters of Egypt, against their streams, against their rivers, and against their ponds, and against all their collections of waters; and they are blood--and there hath been blood in all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in those of stone." (YLT)

The enormity of this plague is seen in this verse. Anywhere in the land where water was gathered or stored (rivers, canals, ponds, containers) would offer nothing but blood. **All** would be turned to blood; thus, everyone would suffer from this plague. Everyone in Egypt would know what had been done, and as they asked what was happening, no doubt they would have known Pharaoh's stubbornness had brought this suffering on them. Further, the fact that the entire land's water system was affected clearly showed this had nothing to do with the annual reddening mentioned above. There was no good drinking water found anywhere in the land. They would have no choice but to try to satisfy their thirst with this disgusting "water."

Ex. 7:20-21 "And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt."

"And Moses and Aaron did so, as Jehovah commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that were in the river died; and the river became foul, and the Egyptians could not drink water from the river; and the blood was throughout all the land of Egypt." (ASV)

"And Moses and Aaron do so, as Jehovah hath commanded, and he lifteth up his hand with the rod, and smiteth the waters which are in the River, before the eyes of Pharaoh, and before the eyes of his servants, and all the waters which are in the River are turned to blood, and the fish which is in the River hath died, and the River stinketh, and the Egyptians have not been able to drink water from the River; and the blood is in all the land of Egypt." (YLT)

Moses and Aaron did exactly what they were told to do. The Nile turned to blood. In the movie, "The Ten Commandments," when Heston lifted the rod, the river was portrayed as turning to blood gradually, spreading from the point where it was "struck." This writer sees in his mind the entire river at once turning to blood, as well as every source in the land doing so at the same time.

Some have quibbled that verse twenty-one calls what was in the river bed **"water."** But what else would one call it to designate what was happening? Further, the original word used for blood in this context (dam) means literal blood (Strong, BDB). This is the same word translated **"blood"** in Genesis 9:6.

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood (dam), by man shall

his blood (dam) be shed: for in the image of GOD made he man.”

Ex. 7:22 “And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said.”

“And the magicians of Egypt did in like manner with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as Jehovah had spoken.” (ASV)

“And the scribes of Egypt do so with their flashings, and the heart of Pharaoh is strong, and he hath not hearkened unto them, as Jehovah hath spoken,” (YLT)

It is not known if the magicians had accompanied Pharaoh to the river or not. What is known is that a number of people were present on this occasion, so they might have been there, or he might have sent for them after Moses' actions. The magicians appeared to turn water into blood, probably by using the same lying techniques used with their serpents (vv. 11-12). But a question arises — **Where did they get their water to turn into blood? Did they simply take a vessel that they already knew had been turned into blood and pawn it off as having created blood?** The context says that when Moses acted, all the water in Egypt turned to blood. Possibly they dug some water up in the ground (v. 24)

This raises another question — **Why did not Pharaoh command his magicians to counteract what Moses did, i.e., tell them to turn the blood back into water? If his magicians could have reversed what Moses (GOD) did, would that not have justified his ignoring GOD?** Perhaps by this time, Pharaoh understood the futility of attempting such a thing, after witnessing the swallowing of the magicians' serpents.

Ex. 7:23-25 “And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also. And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river.”

“And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he lay even this to heart. And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. And seven days were fulfilled, after that Jehovah had smitten the river.” (ASV)

“and Pharaoh turneth and goeth in unto his house, and hath not set his heart even to this; and all the Egyptians seek water round about the river to drink, for they have not been able to drink of the waters of the River. And seven days are completed after Jehovah's smiting the River,” (YLT)

Note the callousness with regard to Pharaoh and the suffering his people were going through. They did not have to suffer this plague. The river bed was still full of blood. Throughout the land, all the water had been turned to blood, There was no drinking water for the people except apparently what they could get from digging into the ground and drinking the seeping water. This water would have been muddy in nature — nasty. It might be suggested that, try as he might, there was no way Pharaoh could have actually ignored what was happening. Any water brought to him would have had to have been that awful “well” water. Every time he took a drink, he would be reminded of his stubborn arrogance. If he left the palace, the evidence of his stubbornness would have been seen and smelt everywhere he went.

When the seven days were ended, the plague ended. This is another indication that the natural reddening of the Nile each year was not what had happened. According to Keil and Delitzsch, that natural reddening lasts much longer than seven days (usually about twenty days) and gradually disappears.

Chapter Eight

Ex. 8:1-4 “And the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let My people go, that they may serve Me. And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs: And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneadingtroughs: And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants.”

“And Jehovah spake unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, Let My people go, that they may serve Me. And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs: and the river shall swarm with frogs, which shall go up and come into thy house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs: and the frogs shall come up both upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: and thou hast said unto him, Thus said Jehovah, Send My people away, and they serve Me; and if thou art refusing to send away, lo, I am smiting all thy border with frogs; and the River hath teemed with frogs, and they have gone up and gone into thy house, and into the inner-chamber of thy bed, and on thy couch, and into the house of thy servants, and among thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs; yea, on thee, and on thy people, and on all thy servants do the frogs go up.” (YLT)

This chapter is going to continue showing the stubbornness of Pharaoh and three more of the plagues, which will increase in strength. Man's stubbornness in obeying GOD can lead to destruction, as the events surrounding Pharaoh illustrate. The plagues found in this chapter will be frogs (#3), lice (#4), and flies (#5). Plagues number three and number four will be over all of the land of Egypt, whereas the fifth plague will only be felt by the Egyptian people (Goshen will be spared).

Moses was told to go to Pharaoh and, in essence, threaten him with more plagues if he refused to let Israel go. It should be observed that GOD dealt fairly with Pharaoh, in that He did not just send the plague. He gave Pharaoh a chance to avoid the frogs. If Pharaoh would let the Israelites go, then Egypt would not suffer.

It is observed that the mere existence of the frogs was not the miracle here. The miracle consisted of their numbers and the precise time when they would possess the land. Further, the miracle also involved the precise time when they would leave the land through death. Note that these frogs came from

the river and then inhabited the land. “Water frogs” do not normally venture far from the water, yet this invading army of frogs would cover their land.

It has been observed, and will continue to be emphasized, that these plagues were all designed by GOD against the false gods of Egypt. They show GOD’s superiority over pretend gods. **So what Egyptian god did this plague attack?**

“The frog was the symbol of the goddess of fertility in Egypt; she was called Hekt, represented in statues as ‘a female deity with a frog’s head,’ and supposed to symbolize, the renewal of life” (Coffman, p. 96).

“The frog itself was often worshipped as a symbol of Hekt, a form of the goddess Hathor” (Unger, p. 112).

Verse four is significant because of what will be seen in verse five. All of Pharaoh’s servants are going to be affected by this plague — Egyptian and Israelite. This plague would have affected normal daily activities in every area, and would probably have caused most activities to cease. They would not be able to sleep, cook, or do anything else without these formerly worshipped creatures making life miserable. There was no place where they could go to escape the frogs. In the first plague, they found relief for their thirst by digging wells, but no relief could be obtained here. It is interesting that after the plague, these worthless gods continued to be worshipped by many of the Egyptians. This is, again, nothing new. Today, it can be demonstrated beyond doubt that some “pastor” or “reverend” is a fraud, and people will still follow him.

Ex. 8:5-7 “And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thy hand with thy rod over the rivers, over the streams, and over the pools, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. And the magicians did in like manner with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy hand, with thy rod, against the streams, against the rivers, and against the ponds, and cause the frogs to come up against the land of Egypt. And Aaron stretcheth out his hand against the waters of Egypt, and the frog cometh up, and covereth the land of Egypt; and the scribes do so with their flashings, and cause the

frogs to come up against the land of Egypt.” (YLT)

What one sees in these verses is the magicians’ using some kind of magical trick to make it appear that, to some degree, they duplicated what Aaron did. There is something both ridiculous and sad about these magicians causing more frogs to come upon the land.

“The last thing they needed was more frogs! It shows that even the efforts of God’s enemies aid God’s purposes” (Coffman, p. 97).

Ex. 8:8 “Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that He may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD.”

“Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat Jehovah, that He take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice unto Jehovah.” (ASV)

“And Pharaoh calleth for Moses and for Aaron, and saith, Make supplication unto Jehovah, that He turn aside the frogs from me, and from my people, and I send the people away, and they sacrifice to Jehovah.” (YLT)

Why did Pharaoh call for Moses and Aaron? Because the consequences of this plague were getting to him. He recognized his helplessness in getting rid of this plague (remember that he considered himself a god). But there is far more than that happening. He was being forced to recognize that his magicians could not do what the GOD of the Hebrews was doing. Furthermore, to a certain degree, he was recognizing GOD as GOD. He was not recognizing Him as the only GOD, but nevertheless he was no longer asking **“Who is the Lord?”** This would have necessitated a recognition that the GOD of the Hebrews was more powerful than his gods.

It is observed that Pharaoh offered to let the people go and sacrifice to GOD. Yet, he set a condition for letting them go — **“if you take away the plague.”** Pharaoh may have meant it at the time, but he would quickly go back on his word once he saw that the plague had ended.

Ex. 8:9-15 “And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only? And he said, To morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our GOD. And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only. And Moses and Aaron

went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD because of the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields. And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank. But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.”

“And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Have thou this glory over me: against what time shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, that the frogs be destroyed from thee and thy houses, and remain in the river only? And he said, Against to-morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word; that thou mayest know that there is none like unto Jehovah our GOD. And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only. And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto Jehovah concerning the frogs which He had brought upon Pharaoh. And Jehovah did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courts, and out of the fields. And they gathered them together in heaps; and the land stank. But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them, as Jehovah had spoken.” (ASV)

“And Moses saith to Pharaoh, Beautify thyself over me; when do I make supplication for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to cut off the frogs from thee and from thy houses--only in the River they do remain? and he saith, To-morrow. And he saith, According to thy word it is, so that thou knowest that there is none like Jehovah our GOD, and the frogs have turned aside from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; only in the River they do remain. And Moses--Aaron also--goeth out from Pharaoh, and Moses crieth unto Jehovah, concerning the matter of the frogs which He hath set on Pharaoh; and Jehovah doth according to the word of Moses, and the frogs die out of the houses, out of the courts, and out of the fields, and they heap them up together, and the land stinketh. And Pharaoh seeth that there hath been a respite, and he hath hardened his heart, and hath not hearkened unto them, as Jehovah hath spoken.” (YLT)

“Glory over me”

“The word ‘glory’ is from Paar and means to boast; either to boast one’s self or to boast over another or ‘at his expense’” (Zerr, p. 118).

Pharaoh was given the honor and opportunity to say when the plague would end. He could have said in three days or even a week — he said tomorrow. By giving Pharaoh the choice, Moses made sure that the glory of the ending of this plague went to GOD. It did not just happen. Moses had to petition GOD for their removal. Pharaoh could not accomplish this, nor could his magicians. Only a faithful servant of GOD could accomplish this.

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man

availeth much” (James 5:16).

Consider that these plagues did not just happen — they were strictly controlled. They came and went at specific times. It was forcefully demonstrated to Pharaoh that it was up to him when they ended. All Pharaoh had to do was submit to GOD’s will, and there would be no more plagues.

Note that the frogs would be destroyed, but they would not just disappear as if nothing had happened. Pharaoh and the people would be reminded for some time that this plague had taken place. Further, it seems that the frogs were all going to die at the same time, at the same moment. This would again have shown the power of GOD. The Bible does not state how long this plague lasted, but imagine the noise from all of those frogs. Humankind has an amazing ability to get used to noise. But all of a sudden the noise of these frogs would have been silenced, which would have seemed strange and probably frightening to them.

Another very important aspect of these plagues is seen in verse ten. Moses properly acknowledged the fact that GOD was performing these miracles — no man could do these things. Only the Creator could do them.

Also consider all of these dead frogs. Remember that GOD did not simply cause them to disappear — He caused them to die. The frogs would begin to decay, and since they covered the land, the stench of dead, decaying frogs would have been everywhere. Their houses and the palace would have stunk. But there is another problem which would have come from all these dead, decaying frogs that they piled up — disease.

When one considers verse fifteen and Pharaoh’s renewed hardened heart, one can not help but observe that this is nothing new. Such action has continued down through the ages and will continue until the end of time. This tragedy had struck Pharaoh and his land, so he turned to GOD for relief, promising to do what GOD commanded him to do. As soon as relief was gained, he went back to his old ways. So often when trouble comes into the lives of people, they will make all kinds of promises to GOD. At that moment, they may really mean it — Pharaoh may really have meant it at the time he made the promise to let GOD’s people go. But how quickly he forgot that promise, as so many often do. He determined not to do GOD’s will.

Ex. 8:16-19 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians did

so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of GOD: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said."

"And Jehovah said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the earth, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And they did so; and Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and there were lice upon man, and upon beast; all the dust of the earth became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: and there were lice upon man, and upon beast. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of GOD: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as Jehovah had spoken." (ASV)

"And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, and it hath become gnats in all the land of Egypt. And they do so, and Aaron stretcheth out his hand with his rod, and smiteth the dust of the land, and the gnats are on man and on beast; all the dust of the land hath been gnats in all the land of Egypt. And the scribes do so with their flashings, to bring out the gnats, and they have not been able, and the gnats are on man and on beast; and the scribes say unto Pharaoh, It is the finger of GOD; and the heart of Pharaoh is strong, and he hath not hearkened unto them, as Jehovah hath spoken." (YLT)

It is not known how much time passed between the plague of frogs and the beginning of this plague, though it does appear that the present plague quickly followed that of the frogs. Pharaoh had promised to let Israel go if the last plague was removed. But when it was, he quickly hardened his heart again. Now it appears that GOD issued a quick rebuke to Pharaoh by sending the plague of insects upon him. It should be observed that, previously, GOD had given Pharaoh an opportunity to give in to his demands. Now no such opportunity is seen.

Aaron was told to take the rod and smite the dust, which was to become **"lice."** The meaning of the term **"lice"** is very uncertain. It is variously translated as *"gnats," "maggots," "mosquitoes," "fleas,"* and *"ticks."* It does not matter which of these was the insect involved in this plague. They would all have been extremely troublesome in such numbers as seen here. The plague extended throughout the land of Egypt.

It is noted in the text that the magicians could not pretend to replicate this plague, as they had with other plagues and miracles in the past. Therefore, they honestly admitted they could not accomplish what Moses had done. Their admission clearly put forth the proposition that the supernatural was involved. They told Pharaoh this was the finger of GOD.

"That is, the power and skill of God are here evident. Probably before this the magicians supposed Moses

*and Aaron to be **conjurers**, like themselves; but now they are convinced that no man could do these miracles which these holy men did, unless God were with him"* (Clarke, p. 23).

The magician's admission here reminds one of that of Nicodemus.

"The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from GOD: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except GOD be with him" (John 3:2).

Consider also the words of Peter in Acts 10:38.

"How GOD anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil; for GOD was with Him."

Regarding the phrase **"finger of GOD,"** Barnes had this interesting observation.

"This expression is thoroughly Egyptian; it need not imply that the magicians recognized Jehovah as the God who wrought the marvel. They may possibly have referred it to a god hostile to their own protectors."

The phrase **"finger of GOD"** (when referencing GOD and His work) to symbolize His power.

Pharaoh kept on hardening his heart. His magicians told him that GOD was behind this plague (and, in essence, what they had already observed in the other plagues). Further, they admitted that they could not match His powers. By formerly begging that the plagues be removed, Pharaoh had in essence admitted that his magicians did not have the power to remove this GOD's finger from them. **So why did Pharaoh keep on hardening his heart?** Probably for the same reason so many today reject GOD. They simply do not want to recognize a higher power, which would then have the right to command them.

Ex. 8:20-24 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let My people go, that they may serve me. Else, if thou wilt not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are. And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. And I will put a division between My people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be. And the LORD did so; and there came

a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies."

"And Jehovah said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, Let My people go, that they may serve Me. Else, if thou wilt not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are. And I will set apart in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am Jehovah in the midst of the earth. And I will put a division between My people and thy people: by to-morrow shall this sign be. And Jehovah did so; and there came grievous swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses: and in all the land of Egypt the land was corrupted by reason of the swarms of flies." (ASV)

"And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Rise early in the morning, and station thyself before Pharaoh, lo, he is going out to the waters, and thou hast said unto him, Thus said Jehovah, Send My people away, and they serve Me; for, if thou art not sending My people away, lo, I am sending against thee, and against thy servants, and against thy people, and against thy houses, the beetle, and the houses of the Egyptians have been full of the beetle, and also the ground on which they are. And I have separated in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people are staying, that the beetle is not there, so that thou knowest that I am Jehovah in the midst of the land, and I have put a division between My people and thy people: to-morrow is this sign. And Jehovah doth so, and the grievous beetle entereth the house of Pharaoh, and the house of his servants, and in all the land of Egypt the land is corrupted from the presence of the beetle." (YLT)

Moses was again sent to Pharaoh, this time early in the morning, to meet him as he went to the water. The message to be given was the same as it had been, **"Let My people go."** It appears that Pharaoh's attendance (probably at the Nile) was a regular occurrence. *Was this for a bath, or some religious service, or simply a walk he took for exercise?* Note that Pharaoh was not asked to let GOD's people go — he was told to let them go. Further, he was told the consequences if he continued to disobey GOD. The text does not show one the answer Pharaoh gave, but the plague would not have come upon them if he had agreed to let them go.

"swarms of flies" Notice that the words "of flies" is italicized, because the original simply says **"swarms."** Exactly what the swarms were composed of is widely disputed, though most versions list it as flies.

*"The Hebrew word for **swarms** means a mixture and may signify the increase of all kinds of verminous scourges"* (Johnson, p. 59).

arob — “swarm, probable meaning from ‘mixture’ and ‘incessant or involved motion’” (BDB).

There are those who believe that “beetle” is the correct rendering, since the beetle was considered the representative of one of their major gods. Strong translates it “mosquito,” and Young translates it as “a beetle, or a fly.”

“J.H. Hertz renders it **beetles**. Beetles (particularly the scarab beetle, a dung beetle) were sacred bugs in Egypt” (Fields, p. 190).

“We are inclined to accept the rendition of the LXX which translated the **swarms** as dog-flies, a sharp biting fly actually capable of killing animals and which attacked in sufficient numbers, and which also inflict very painful bites upon men. The ordinary stock-fly in Texas is a species of it. Our preference is based upon the fact that the LXX was translated in the very part of the world where this plague occurred” (Coffman, p. 103).

Some have pointed to Psalm 78:45 which reads, “**He sent divers sorts of flies among them; and frogs, which destroyed them**” to indicate that flies is the literal meaning here. But it must be pointed out that the word “flies” there comes from the same Hebrew word in the present text (arob).

“I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there”

Further proof that GOD exists and is in control was that this plague would affect every area of Egypt except Goshen, where GOD’s people lived. GOD’s people were not going to suffer as the Egyptians would. It is as though GOD placed an invisible curtain around His people to protect them from suffering. Pharaoh was being forced to recognize that this was not the actions of some god such as he worshipped (they could not have done anything in the first place) — this was the only GOD demonstrating His power.

“corrupted” — shachath — “to ruin” (Strong); “to destroy, corrupt, go to ruin, decay” (BDB); “a verb meaning to spoil, to ruin, to destroy, to pervert, to corrupt, to become corrupt, to wipe out” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1124).

In what way the land was destroyed is unknown. Some have speculated that these swarms may have produced some kind of disease. Note the second definition found in Webster’s 1828 dictionary for “plague.”

“A pestilential disease; an acute, malignant and contagious disease that often prevails in Egypt, Syria and Turkey, and has at times infected the large cities of Europe with frightful mortality.”

Ex. 8:25-27 “And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron,

and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your GOD in the land. And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our GOD: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our GOD, as He shall command us."

"And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your GOD in the land. And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to Jehovah our GOD: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to Jehovah our GOD, as He shall command us." (ASV)

"And Pharaoh calleth unto Moses and to Aaron, and saith, Go, sacrifice to your GOD in the land; and Moses saith, Not right to do so, for the abomination of the Egyptians we do sacrifice to Jehovah our GOD; lo, we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes--and they do not stone us! A journey of three days we go into the wilderness, and have sacrificed to Jehovah our GOD, as He saith unto us." (YLT)

The swarms finally got Pharaoh's attention. But instead of simply obeying GOD's command, he offered four compromises, which Moses will rightly refuse (Exodus 8:25, 28; 10:11, 24).

Pharaoh's Offered Compromises

1. Go sacrifice in the land of Egypt (Ex. 8:25).
2. Go out of the land, but do not go far (Ex. 8:28).
3. Only the men may go and sacrifice (Ex. 10:8, 11).
4. Everyone may go and worship, but leave the flocks and herds in Egypt (Ex. 10:24).

Pharaoh was now ready to let the people worship their GOD, but not the way GOD demanded. He wanted them to worship inside of the borders of Egypt. If they did not leave the land as GOD wanted them to do, they would still be his servants. Remember that GOD never intended for the Israelites to return to Egypt, once they left it. Also consider that just as Pharaoh did not want GOD's people to be where He wanted them to be, so Satan does not want Christians to be where GOD wants them to be.

"He was like Satan. He has no objections to the religious professions of mankind as long as they do not enter the church of the Lord" (Zerr, p. 119).

Pharaoh was, in a sense, saying, *"Go ahead and go part of the way, but do not serve GOD all the way."* He knew that GOD wanted them out of the land, where they would make the proper sacrifices to Him. Coffman points out that Satan is still trying to get GOD's people to compromise today, and one might add he always will as long as this world exists. Why, because Satan knows that compromise is rebellion to GOD.

*“1. If you must serve Christ, do so **in the world**; why bother belonging to the church? Of course this is as impossible now as it was when Pharaoh requested it. The Christian must **sacrifice** what the world adores.*

2. If you must be religious, then don't be a fanatic. Do not go very far! This is the motto of all lukewarm, indifferent Christians, who fancy that they are serving Christ; but they have not gone far!

3. Only the men must go! Leave your families out of it. If you must be a Christian, do not attempt to take others with you. Let everyone make up his own mind. Keep your religion to yourself!

4. Let the flocks and herds stay behind. If you must be a Christian, go ahead; but don't invest any money in it. Use your wealth for yourself. Of this class of Christians are those whose pocketbooks are never baptized” (Coffman, p, 104)!

Pharaoh represents Satan. He did not object to their professing religion, as long as they remained in his possession.

Note that Pharaoh referred to “your GOD.” He refused to recognize that he was speaking about the GOD of the universe, so he considered GOD only to be the GOD of the Hebrews, just as he considered Ra to be the god of the Egyptians. Many people today still do the same thing with GOD’s word. When you hear someone speak about the Bible and his religious beliefs, when he says “*You have your verses, and we have ours,*” he in essence is claiming that his god is different from your GOD. He speaks the truth, for the god he serves is not the GOD of the Bible. Only those who serve and worship as GOD has directed are His people.

Moses rejected Pharaoh’s offer of compromise. He said that their sacrifices were an abomination to the Egyptians and would cause them to rise up and stone them. **What were these abominations?** Barnes and others believe it was the offering of the ox, bull or cow. *“The cow was never sacrificed in Egypt, being sacred to Isis”* (p. 24). Some believe this may have something to do with the purification practices of the Egyptians, which were stricter than those of the Israelites. Fields believes it was the offering of sheep. Shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians, and thus the animal which made them shepherds would be the abomination.

“Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians”
(Genesis 46:34).

It appears that, whatever these abominations were, Pharaoh recognized them as a valid objection to his offer, for he made no rebuttal. But he did offer another compromise to take its place.

Moses again stated that they would go into the wilderness to offer GOD sacrifices as GOD had commanded. Moses was bound and determined to go all the way with GOD.

Ex. 8:28 “And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your GOD in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: intreat for me.”

“And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to Jehovah your GOD in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: entreat for me.” (ASV)

“And Pharaoh saith, I send you away, and ye have sacrificed to Jehovah your GOD in the wilderness, only go not very far off; make ye supplication for me;” (NKJV)

Pharaoh’s first attempt at compromise failed, so rather than give up, he attempted a second compromise. Moses had previously told Pharaoh how far they were going. But Pharaoh said, “Do not go all the way.” One will remember that Moses had previously told him they would go three-days journey, and that is exactly what he planned on doing now. It should also be remembered that GOD never intended for the Israelites to return to Egypt once they left it behind. Moses had repeatedly let Pharaoh know that they were going to go all the way with GOD.

“If a man is bound to go into the religious life the devil will not object so much provided the man does not go very far into such life” (Zerr, p. 120).

“If you must be religious, then don’t be a fanatic. Do not go very far! This is the motto of all lukewarm, indifferent Christians, who fancy that they are serving Christ; but they have not gone very far” (Coffman, p. 104)!

“In these compromises we read Satan’s attempt to keep God’s people ensnared by the world, and thus to hold them under his control and power. In this strategy he has highly succeeded in Christendom” (Unger, p. 113).

At the end of his compromise offer, Pharaoh pleaded with Moses to pray (athar – **“intreat”**) for him. It would appear at this moment, in the height of agony because of this plague, Pharaoh submitted himself to GOD. How often has one seen the same thing in human beings of all ages. In the midst of trouble, they are willing to do whatever GOD says to alleviate the pain and agony they are going through. As demonstrated by Pharaoh in this text, how quickly one can change his mind. It must be remembered that many times in the moment, people may truly intend to obey GOD — yet, old habits are oftentimes hard to break. That is why it is so very important to train one’s self from a young age to obey GOD.

Ex. 8:29-32 “And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will intreat the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to morrow: but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD. And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one. And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.”

“And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will entreat Jehovah that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to-morrow: only let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to Jehovah. And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and entreated Jehovah. And Jehovah did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one. And Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and he did not let the people go.” (ASV)

“and Moses saith, Lo, I am going out from thee, and have made supplication unto Jehovah, and the beetle hath turned aside from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people--to-morrow, only let not Pharaoh add to deceive--in not sending the people away to sacrifice to Jehovah. And Moses goeth out from Pharaoh, and maketh supplication unto Jehovah, and Jehovah doth according to the word of Moses, and turneth aside the beetle from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people--there hath not been left one; and Pharaoh hardeneth his heart also at this time, and hath not sent the people away.” (YLT)

Moses answered Pharaoh by telling him the swarms would be gone tomorrow. Again, a set time is designated, so that Pharaoh knows it did not just happen. The swarms would cease because GOD made them cease, not “accidentally” cease. Pharaoh was warned not to deal deceitfully with them, as he had in the past. **“Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also”**

Joshua Chapter Nine

Ex. 9:1 “Then the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD GOD of the Hebrews, Let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

“Then Jehovah said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith Jehovah, the GOD of the Hebrews, Let My people go, that they may serve Me.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and thou hast spoken unto him, Thus said Jehovah, GOD of the Hebrews, Send My people away, and they serve me,” (YLT)

Moses was again instructed by GOD to go before Pharaoh and demand, **“let My people go.”** It is quite obvious that GOD wants His people free so that they can worship Him. The implication is that that Pharaoh has no right to hold them in bondage — because he does not own them. They are GOD’s people, not Pharaoh’s people. Further, Pharaoh was to understand that this was not Moses making this demand, GOD is making the demand.

Note also an implication put forth from this text which Zerr saw.

“No one can serve the Lord acceptably while in the territory of the enemy of the Lord” (p. 120).

Since the Old Testament was written for our learning (Romans 15:4), and since Egypt is a type of the “land of sin” (or the territory possessed or occupied by sin), it seems to stand that GOD is saying His people must leave sin behind in order to faithfully serve Him. Note the following passages which indicate sin and the territory occupied by sin must be left behind in order to faithfully serve GOD.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).

“I heard another voice from Heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Revelation 18:4).

Man cannot grasp sin in one hand and reach for GOD with the other. He must let go of sin and reach for GOD with both hands. The Egyptians were wholly given to idolatry, and their influence would contaminate and could destroy Israel. It almost did at Mount Sinai. Read Exodus 32 to see them making a golden calf and then note what GOD said in verse ten.

“Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.”

GOD was so angry that He considered consuming them, destroying them and starting all over with Moses. They had to leave the influence of sin behind and so must one today. If one decides to hang around those situations and places where sin abounds — it will have an effect upon him.

Note that Peter's denials of the Lord were made while he sat in the assembly of the Lord's enemies (Mark 14:53-72).

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

Ex. 9:2-3 “For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still, Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain.”

“For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still, behold, the hand of Jehovah is upon thy cattle which are in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the herds, and upon the flocks: there shall be a very grievous murrain.” (ASV)

“for, if thou art refusing to send away, and art still keeping hold upon them, lo, the hand of Jehovah is on thy cattle which are in the field, on horses, on asses, on camels, on herd, and on flock--a pestilence very grievous.” (YLT)

It has been emphasized and will continue to be emphasized that GOD gave Pharaoh opportunity after opportunity to turn back from his obstinate stand.

“A murrain (Heb. deber) is a destruction, pestilence, or plague. The English word murrain is an archaic term from the same root as the word murder and the Latin mors (meaning death). We do not know exactly the nature of this plague, whether it was like anthrax or rinderpest, or some other disease. But it was deadly” (Fields, p. 200)!

One might consider that anthrax can be passed to man, though whatever the murrain was, it was not declared in the text to affect man.

The first thing to notice is that it is only going to affect the animals in the fields. This is interesting from three standpoints: (1) This pestilence is not confined to one species of animals as most pestilences are, but it will affect all of the domestic animals. (2) It was confined to the animals in the field. **Has there ever been a disease like this which only struck the animals in the fields, but did not strike those shut up in stalls, et cetera?** (3) The cattle, or field animals of the Hebrews were exempt from this plague.

Some critics have tried to make a contradiction out of this

verse and what is said in verses eighteen and nineteen. They do not carefully read the distinction made here of those **“in the fields.”** Yes there were **“cattle”** left in the present verses under consideration, because the plague affected only those left in the fields. Some also try to make a big deal out of the word **“camel,”** saying camels were not domesticated at this time. How silly this claim is considering such passage as Job 1:17, which took place long before the present passage. Job had a herd of cattle.

Like the other plagues, this plague not only struck at the well being of the Egyptians, it also struck at the deities of the Egyptians.

“This one was ‘Ptah (Apis), the god of Memphis, represented as a bull, as well as other gods represented by the goat, the ram, the cow, and other animals.’ Fields also identified another pagan deity that was discredited by this plague as ‘Hathor, pictured in the form of a cow,,,and as suckling one of the kings, giving him divine nourishment’” (Coffman, p. 109).

The Egyptians believed Ptah manifested himself in the physical form of a bull. The bull chosen to represent him was pampered daily by its priests. When these bulls died, they were mummified at tremendous cost [(50 to 100 thousand dollars each – Fields) 1976 figures].

“In A.D. 1856 the excavator Auguste Mariette found a long underground avenue where these bulls had been buried in black granite sarcophagi. The burial tunnels extended 1,120 feet; and sixty-four large burial chambers lay along the avenue” (Fields, p. 202).

Ptah — *“the potter god of Egyptian mythology – artificer of the universe, creator of the cosmic egg, and thereby indirectly of the sun, moon, and earth”* (American People Encyclopedia, Vol. 15, p. 325).

One might remind himself that Egyptians worshipped almost everything. The following is a short list of those things they worshipped as found in the Encyclopedia Britannica, 1961 edition, Vol. 8, p. 53.

“The goat, the serpent, the bull, the cow, the lion, the cats (especially female cats), crocodiles, scarab beetles, the ape, the ibis, the hawk, the vulture, the jackal, etc...The sacred animals were in the eyes of the more or less gods...Ra was the sun god; Shu was the wind god; Nut was the sky goddess; Geb was the earth god; Thermouthis was the goddess of childbirth and of crops; Nepri was the corn god; Tait was the goddess of funerary vestments.”

Ex. 9:4-7 “And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of

Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel. And the LORD appointed a set time, saying, To morrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land. And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go."

"And Jehovah shall make a distinction between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt; and there shall nothing die of all that belongeth to the children of Israel. And Jehovah appointed a set time, saying, To-morrow Jehovah shall do this thing in the land. And Jehovah did that thing on the morrow; and all the cattle of Egypt died; but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not so much as one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was stubborn, and he did not let the people go." (ASV)

"And Jehovah hath separated between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt, and there doth not die a thing of all the sons of Israel's; and Jehovah setteth an appointed time, saying, To-morrow doth Jehovah do this thing in the land. And Jehovah doth this thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt die, and of the cattle of the sons of Israel not one hath died; and Pharaoh sendeth, and lo, not even one of the cattle of Israel hath died, and the heart of Pharaoh is hard, and he hath not sent the people away." (YLT)

When told of the coming plague, Pharaoh was told that a distinction would be made between the animals of Egypt and those of the Israelites. Only Egyptian animals would die. Zerr believed it was necessary to make such a distinction because some of the Israelite animals would have been mixed with those of Egypt. If this was the case it multiplied the evidence that this plague came from GOD and that he was protecting His people. One can only imagine cattle and flocks in the same field, side by side, owned by separate people, but only those owned by the Egyptians died. Israel's cattle were being spared.

A **"set time,"** an exact time was set by GO for this plague to begin. Again, another proof that GOD was causing this to happen.

Consider the mercy shown by GOD here. If an Egyptian farmer recognized the hand of GOD in these matters, and unlike his Pharaoh did not harden his heart, he had the opportunity to gather his animals into a place of safety. Considering future texts in this book, it is this writers belief that some indeed heeded to GOD's words and saved their animals.

Since Pharaoh had been told none of the Israelite's animals would be affected, and after seeing the multitude of dead Egyptian animals, **would curiosity alone not cause him to send**

servants out to see if the Israelite's animals had been spared? His investigation showed that indeed not a single Israelite animal had died in this plague.

Let one also consider the phrase **“all the cattle of Egypt died.”** Two things to consider: (1) The word **“cattle”** obviously signifies all the different kinds of animals which would die (see verse two). (2) The word **“all”** should be considered.

Fields wrote, *“It would seem that the word all in 9:6 (as in 8:18) is not to be taken in an absolute sense, but as referring to such a large portion that what remained was as nothing in comparison”* (p. 201).

The word “all” is often used to signify a large amount or number of something.

With all the animals dying, and the great separation between animals, **is it not incredible that Pharaoh would maintain a hardened heart? Is it not incredible that he refused, or could not see GOD's hand in this plague?** Nevertheless, that is exactly what he did.

Ex. 9:8-12 “And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall become small dust over all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boils were upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. And Jehovah hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them, as Jehovah had spoken unto Moses.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you the fulness of your hands of soot of a furnace, and Moses hath sprinkled it towards the heavens, before the eyes of Pharaoh, and it hath become small dust over all the land of Egypt, and it hath become on man and on cattle a boil breaking forth with blains, in all the land of Egypt. And they take the soot of the furnace, and

stand before Pharaoh, and Moses sprinkleth it towards the heavens, and it is a boil with blains, breaking forth, on man and on beast; and the scribes have not been able to stand before Moses, because of the boil, for the boil hath been on the scribes, and on all the Egyptians. And Jehovah strengtheneth the heart of Pharaoh, and he hath not hearkened unto them, as Jehovah hath spoken unto Moses.” (YLT)

Exactly what furnace this was is not known. Some think it might have been one of the furnaces used to make bricks. This writer does not believe this to be the case. Bricks in that time were not placed in kilns to dry in Egypt, they were allowed to be baked and hardened by the sun. Since the plagues were aimed, not only at Pharaoh, but also at the gods of the Egyptians, this one too would appear to aimed at these gods. The Egyptians had a god named Typhon who was worshipped in the city of Idithya. Human sacrifices were offered to this god and the ashes were then sprinkled in the air with the belief that whoever they touched would be blessed (cf, Barnes, p. 25; Pulpi Commentary, Vol. 1, p. 204).

“Some scholars suggest that Moses’ ‘symbolic sprinkling of ashes in the air (9:10) demonstrated the helplessness of the Egyptian air-deity (Show [or Shul] in the face of coming events.’ Perhaps the festering boils also exposed the weakness of Imhotep, the god of medicine” (Rope, p. 147).

“boils” and **“blains”**

“The first of these words is from a word that means an ulcer while the second is from a word that means an eruption. The meaning of the verse is that ashes were made to cause ulcers on the bodies of man and beasts and that these ulcers became running sores” (Zerr, p. 120).

When Moses and Aaron did as GOD commanded them, one finds the Magicians so affected that they could no longer stand before Moses. Some have expressed the idea that they could no longer stand before Moses because of a sense of shame and guilt, because they knew Who was behind these plagues. The text says it was because they themselves were covered with these boils. They were probably in so much pain that they could not perform their official tasks. It should also be noted that this will be the last time he sees the magicians in the book of Exodus.

Again, Pharaoh hardened his heart.

“Any direct action which the Lord may have taken (in this hardening) was consonant with the character of Pharaoh and operated within the framework of Pharaoh’s freedom” (Honeycutt, p. 341).

Ex. 9:13-14 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early

in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD GOD of the Hebrews, Let My people go, that they may serve Me. For I will at this time send all My plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like Me in all the earth.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, the GOD of the Hebrews, Let My people go, that they may serve Me. For I will this time send all My plagues upon thy heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like Me in all the earth.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Rise early in the morning, and station thyself before Pharaoh, and thou hast said unto him, Thus said Jehovah, GOD of the Hebrews, Send My people away, and they serve Me, for, at this time I am sending all My plagues unto thy heart, and on thy servants, and on thy people, so that thou knowest that there is none like Me in all the earth,” (YLT)

Upon the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, Moses was again sent to him. The message has not varied in the least, **“Let My people go.”** Why? GOD's answer, that they may serve Me. GOD is plainly declaring that His people were no longer to serve as Pharaoh's slaves. They were to serve Him as their King, their sovereign Lord.

In verse fourteen a promise was made which had not been done before. Each of the plagues before had been mentioned one at a time. Now GOD mentions that there will be a number of plagues still to come and the purpose for these plagues. The plagues were not just to cause Pharaoh to let His people go, but they were a message that there was none like GOD. Note that the plagues were now **“plagues upon thine heart.”** Nothing stirs the heart of man more than the death of friends, neighbors and loved ones. He and the Egyptians had seen the destruction of crops and servile animals, and that would have caused distress — but now they will see the destruction of friends and family on a massive scale. Just here this author cannot help but think about the great confrontation Satan had with GOD over Job. As one reads the account below he will see that it is evident that Satan knows what is most precious to most human beings.

“the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth GOD, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear GOD for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth

Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD”

(Job 1:8-12).

Consider the order which Satan described. **“an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side”** GOD has placed self-preservation within the heart of every individual, so Satan put that first. Next he listed Job’s kin and finally his possessions.

The destruction of crops and servile animals brings heartache and anxiety to the heart. But the loss of friends and family strikes at the very core of man and his emotions. As one looks ahead he can see how the next three plagues foreshadow and set-up the last plague — the death of the first born; even Pharaoh’s son.

Again, one focuses on the purpose of the remaining plagues; GOD is to be known as **the GOD**. There is no power like Him and there never will be a power like Him. Note the comment by Coffman below.

“Pharaoh had not been moved in heart by previous plagues; because , as the privileged ruler, he was not really touched by them; but now GOD will break his heart in the subsequent visitations culminating at last in the death of the firstborn and heir to his kingdom” (p. 112).

Ex. 9:15-16 “For now I will stretch out My hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee My power; and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth.”

“For now I had put forth My hand, and smitten thee and thy people with pestilence, and thou hadst been cut off from the earth: but in very deed for this cause have I made thee to stand, to show thee My power, and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth.” (ASV)

“for now I have put forth My hand, and I smite thee, and thy people, with pestilence, and thou art hidden from the earth. And yet for this I have caused thee to stand, so as to show thee My power, and for the sake of declaring My Name in all the earth;” (YLT)

This passage seems difficult when read in the KJV, becomes a little easier to understand in the ASV, and better still in the NKJV where the word *“if”* greatly enhances the meaning. Fields mentioned that the word **“pestilence”** is the same word translated **“murrain”** in verse two. Murrain was a killing disease, which if it had been aimed at the people would have

wiped them out. In the next four plagues, GOD did not send such a disease among the people. Clarke also noted that the verbs in verse fifteen are all past tense (p. 335). Taking these things into consideration along with verse sixteen, the meaning seems to be that GOD could have destroyed them at any time with a pestilence. He could have quickly destroyed them from off the face of the earth in quick action. **So why did he not so that His people could be released more quickly?**

GOD allowed Pharaoh to be able to maintain his status of Pharaoh throughout the ten plagues. **Why?** Because GOD was going to show forth His power throughout all the world through what He did in Egypt and to Pharaoh. It would demonstrate how GOD dealt with stubborn disobedience.

No matter how Pharaoh reacted to GOD's demands, GOD's power would be revealed. When GOD made His first demand of Pharaoh to **"Let My people go,"** if Pharaoh had consented it would have caused the world to set back and take note. He was the most powerful ruler in the world at that time, ruling by far the most powerful nation in the world. If he had recognized the right of GOD to rule over him and thus let his slaves leave, the world have reacted in wonder and awe. They would have been forced to consider the fact that there was none like the GOD of Heaven and earth.

But Pharaoh did not choose the easy route of submission and obedience. Instead Pharaoh rebelled and resisted GOD, giving GOD the judicial right to destroy Egypt while bringing His purpose about. And GOD's name truly was declared in all the earth. When the Israelites later sent spies into the city of Jericho, Rahab told them some astounding news.

"we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your GOD, He is GOD in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Joshua 2:10-11).

Note, the events before their passage in the Red Sea would also have had to be known for that passage to make any sense as to how the Israelites got to the Red Sea in the first place. The recognition of GOD's power was seen through all the events which led to their entrance into the promised land, the land of Canaan. GOD allowed Pharaoh to remain in power even though He could have quickly destroyed him and his people. GOD's almighty power is still seen as generations have read about His deeds and marvelled at them.

"That God foresees conditions and then prepares to use

characters that are evil for his service is here set forth and at other places in the Bible” (Zerr, p. 121).

Regarding the words of Zerr above; GOD still does this. His will must be done and no matter how great a nation or leader may be today, they should consider what it means to oppose GOD. As these words are being written, there is no more powerful nation or leader in the world than the United States of America (2020). But as America has continued to disregard the laws of GOD, promoting everything that is opposed to GOD’s will, *how long can she maintain the status she currently holds?* GOD is still speaking through the events of the past — *are we listening?*

Ex. 9:17 “As yet exaltest thou thyself against My people, that thou wilt not let them go?”

“As yet exaltest thou thyself against My people, that thou wilt not let them go?” (ASV)

“still thou art exalting thyself against My people--so as not to send them away;” (YLT)

Basically GOD has said to Pharaoh, *“You have seen My power demonstrated and yet you still will not let My people go.”* It seems at first glance that this is an expression of wonderment and amazement on GOD’s part. But note the words of Coffman with which this writer agrees that it cannot express wonderment or amazement.

“Verse 17 is understood by some as an imperative sentence; but we believe that it is properly punctuated here as a question. As a mere statement, it would express amazement on God’s part, something that cannot be imagined, for God had predicted exactly what Pharaoh would do. As a question, however, it stands in the same category as God’s asking Adam, ‘Where art thou?’ ‘This was directed to the conscience and was used for the purpose of bringing conviction’” (p. 113).

Why did Pharaoh continue his course of rebellion considering what he had already seen of GOD’s power? Arrogance. Further he was demonstrating, as he did at first, that he was not about to take orders from a GOD he did not recognize as GOD.

Ex. 9:18 “Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now.”

“Behold, to-morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the day it was founded even until now.” (ASV)

“lo, I am raining about this time to-morrow hail very grievous, such as hath not been in Egypt, even from the day of its being founded,

even until now.” (YLT)

Remember, GOD is speaking through Moses, so it is GOD who is announcing the seventh plague. **When is GOD going to send this “grievous hail” upon Egypt?** In about twenty-four hours. Note that Pharaoh is warned in such a way that lives could be spared (See verses nineteen through twenty-one.) This will be a **“grievous”** hail (*kabed*), i.e., a **“heavy, great...massive...burdensome...very oppressive”** (BDB). Hail storms can be especially heavy, even causing the loss of life. This one is to be particularly massive and greater than any which had ever struck the land of Egypt.

Clarke tells of two hail storms which were particularly devastating. In England (April 29, 1697), a hail storm two miles wide and sixty miles long killed small animals, birds, split trees, and knocked down horses and men. In 1510, in Italy, a hail storm killed **“beasts, birds, and even the fish of the country”** (p. 336).

Ex. 9:19-21 “Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: And he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field.”

“Now therefore send, hasten in thy cattle and all that thou hast in the field; for every man and beast that shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. He that feared the word of Jehovah among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses. And he that regarded not the word of Jehovah left his servants and his cattle in the field.” (ASV)

“And, now, send, strengthen thy cattle and all that thou hast in the field; every man and beast which is found in the field, and is not gathered into the house—come down on them hath the hail, and they have died. He who is fearing the word of Jehovah among the servants of Pharaoh hath caused his servants and his cattle to flee unto the houses; and he who hath not set his heart unto the word of Jehovah leaveth his servants and his cattle in the field.” (YLT)

There are two interesting thoughts involved in these verses. First, look at the mercy of GOD gave Egyptians the opportunity to obey His words and save themselves. Just because they were Egyptians did not mean that they had to die. It is apparent that there were now a number of Egyptians who believed in the warnings issued by Moses, and thus believed that the GOD of Moses was real and able to do what He said He would do. While others continued to resist GOD by refusing to obey His words. It was probably some of those who listened

to GOD's in obedience who departed Egypt with the Israelites.

"a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle" (Exodus 12:38, emphasis mine, RK).

GOD's mercy was extended then to those outside His family and such is still the case today.

"He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45).

Second, note that it was not just the people and cattle which died when the hail came. Verse nineteen states that this destructive plague would fall upon **"every man and beast which shall be found in the field."** The word "cattle" is used to represent any animal, thus even the beasts of the fields which did not have shelter would die.

Ex. 9:22-26 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail."

"And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch forth thy hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and Jehovah sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down unto the earth; and Jehovah rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail." (ASV)

"And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Stretch forth thy hand towards the heavens, and there is hail in all the land of Egypt, on man, and on beast, and on every herb of the field in the land of Egypt. And Moses stretcheth out his rod towards the heavens, and Jehovah hath given voices and hail, and fire goeth towards the earth, and Jehovah raineth hail on the land of Egypt, and there is hail, and fire catching itself in the midst of the hail, very grievous, such as hath not been in all the land of Egypt since it hath become a

nation. And the hail smiteth in all the land of Egypt all that is in the field, from man even unto beast, and every herb of the field hath the hail smitten, and every tree of the field it hath broken; only in the land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel are, there hath been no hail.” (YLT)

After ample warning and time was given to the Egyptians, Moses called forth the hail. Someone might ask, Why were not the trees and herbs mentioned in the prediction of this plague? And hail that would kill men and beasts would certainly destroy trees, bushes, and herbs. In fact, hail storms which do not kill man or animals often will shred trees and plant life.

In verse twenty-three there is a description of this storm. Thunder naturally causes one to think of the lightening which usually accompanies it. Clarke mentioned that the thunder was probably continuous and very loud. Note also that fire is mentioned. This writer remembers watching a hail storm in Lansing, Michigan as a boy; where there appeared to be waves of fire running along the ground, and there was a sulphur smell in the air. Being a curious fellow, this writer had to see if it would hurt to stick your finger in those waves. The hail stung his hand, but there was no particular sensation from the “waves of fire.” Some believe the fire spoken of here was lightening, which has been at times to be like a ball of fire — extremely destructive.

Verse twenty-five lists the damage which was very destructive throughout the land of Egypt — but not in Goshen. There was not a single nugget of hail in all the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived. Has it ever crossed your mind as to what it would have been like to be an Israelite during that time. *Can one imagine what it would have been like to look any direction and see in the distance walls of hail, but none where your people lived?* Lightening flashing, extreme hail falling, life being destroyed all around them, and their ears being constantly assaulted by the distant thunder.

“He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycomore trees with frost. He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts. He cast upon them the fierceness of His anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble” (Psalm 78:47-49).

“He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He smote their vines also and their fig trees; and brake the trees of their coasts” (Psalm 105:32-33).

“The gods worshiped by the Egyptians could do nothing to protect the people — whether Nut (the sky goddess), Isis (the goddess of life), or Seth (the protector of the

crops)” (Roper, p. 151).

Ex. 9:27-28 “And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Intreat the LORD (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.”

“And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: Jehovah is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Entreat Jehovah; for there hath been enough of these mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.” (ASV)

“And Pharaoh sendeth, and calleth for Moses and for Aaron, and saith unto them, I have sinned this time, Jehovah is the Righteous, and I and my people are the Wicked, make ye supplication unto Jehovah, and plead that there be no voices of GOD and hail, and I send you away, and ye add not to remain.” (YLT)

This is the first time Pharaoh acknowledged his sin. **What was his sin?** One might be inclined to say the way he treated the Israelites. But the fact is, his sin was against GOD. His treatment of the Israelites was secondary, a by-product so-to-speak. Note what king David said on this matter in prayer for his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband.

“Against thee, *thee only*, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest” (Psalm 51:4, emphasis mine, RK).

Did David sin against Bathsheba in committing adultery with her? Yes! Did David sin against Uriah when he committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered him? Yes! But his sins against them were by-products, i.e., a result of his sinning against GOD. First and foremost, his sin was against GOD. The same is true with regard to Pharaoh; his primary sin was against GOD, his secondary sin was against the Israelites.

“I have sinned this time” Did Pharaoh truly repent? Before one looks ahead at the context of his statement, it should be noted that he may have truly repented, at least for the moment. It may be that he really did not think of the other times he disobeyed GOD that he had sinned (as hard as that is for one to believe), but now consider that this time he had gone too far. **How many times have those who read these words (including the author), repented of some wrong, and then later done the same thing again?** It is possible that Pharaoh was only giving lip service to his confession.

Pharaoh admitted that he had had enough. He basically admitted that he could no longer stand against GOD and he knew it. He asked Moses to plead with GOD on his behalf and promised that the Israelites could leave Egypt.

Consider the terms used by Pharaoh to describe the thunder and hail — **“mighty thunderings and hail.”** This writer wonders if the average person has any idea how terrifying this would be. This writer believes he has some real life experience that probably did not even rival what is described here in Exodus. A number of years ago, he used to make trips to the Smokey Mountains with a number of friends. On one of these trips, he was hiking on a very high ridge when suddenly a storm which was not forecast swooped in upon he and his friends. The lightening was literally flashing all around them, the wind was blowing, the rain pounded, and the sound of the thunder was deafening. It was like being back in Vietnam — extremely frightening, especially since it happened so fast. This is how this writer envisions what happened to Pharaoh.

Ex. 9:29-30 “And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the LORD'S. But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the LORD GOD.”

“And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto Jehovah; the thunders shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know that the earth is Jehovah's. But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear Jehovah GOD.” (ASV)

“And Moses saith unto him, At my going out of the city, I spread my palms unto Jehovah—the voices cease, and the hail is not any more, so that thou knowest that the earth is Jehovah's; but thou and thy servants—I have known that ye are not yet afraid of the face of Jehovah GOD.” (YLT)

“As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD” Two things had to take place before the hail, thunder, et cetera, would end. (1) Moses had to exist the city proper, not as he walked through the city, not as he was almost out the city. (2) His hands had to be spread abroad, i.e., he must make supplication to GOD for the hail to end. **Why did these two things have to happen?** Because it showed that the ending of the plague was not a coincident. It could only end not because Moses ended it — GOD had to do it. Pharaoh was to understand that GOD was in control and that the whole earth belonged to Him.

“The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1).

“Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S thy GOD, the earth also, with all that therein is” (Deuteronomy 10:14).

In verse twenty-nine, Moses also told Pharaoh that he knew he would again harden his heart. **How did he know this?** Because GOD had revealed it to him. GOD knew that as frightened as Pharaoh was, enough to even admit that he had sinned, that it was not yet enough, and never would be enough, to keep Pharaoh from changing his mind. Pharaoh was beyond hope. Note what Isaiah said about such people as Pharaoh.

“Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD” (Isaiah 26:10).

Christian, elder, deacon, preacher; do not think you cannot become like Pharaoh.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of GOD, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of GOD afresh, and put Him to an open shame” (Hebrews 6:4-6; cf. Romans 1:18-23).

Ex. 9:31-32 “And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolled. But the wheat and the rie were not smitten: for they were not grown up.”

“And the flax and the barley were smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was in bloom. But the wheat and the spelt were not smitten: for they were not grown up.”

“And the flax and the barley have been smitten, for the barley is budding, and the flax forming flowers, and the wheat and the rye have not been smitten, for they are late.” (NKJV)

A parenthetical statement is inserted by the writer to explain why some grains were destroyed and why some survived at this time. The flax (grown to make linen), and barley (for bread, similar to wheat), were near the time of harvest, i.e., nearly full grown. The hail would have shredded them. On the other hand, the wheat and “rie” would have been a later crop, probably just planted, or maybe just starting to break the ground. Another possibility is that they were not planted until after the barley and flax were harvested.

“‘Spelt,’ mistranslated ‘rye’ in some versions, is a grain somewhat similar to wheat; and it provided the principle food supply of the common citizens of ancient Egypt. More than any other, this grain appears frequently on the sculptures and monuments” (Coffman, p. 117).

Ex. 9:33-35 “And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the LORD: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth. And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses.”

“And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto Jehovah: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth. And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the children of Israel go, as Jehovah had spoken by Moses.” (ASV)

“And Moses goeth out from Pharaoh, from the city, and spreadeth his hands unto Jehovah, and the voices and the hail cease, and rain hath not been poured out to the earth; and Pharaoh seeth that the rain hath ceased, and the hail and the voices, and he continueth to sin, and hardeneth his heart, he and his servants; and the heart of Pharaoh is strong, and he hath not sent the sons of Israel away, as Jehovah hath spoken by the hand of Moses.” (NKJV)

In essence Moses was making a statement that the hail could not stop unless GOD told it to stop. Further, he gave honor and glory to GOD through his actions in front of all Egypt.

Like so many today, when Pharaoh thought the danger was over, he rethought his position, and hardened his heart again. Like so many who live godless lives until some tragedy comes into their lives, they will promise to obey GOD, but when the danger is past, they turn back to disobedience. Just here, Coffman made an inciteful statement which bares some thought.

“In God’s hardening of the human heart, there is a fundamental loss of intelligence, as if the Heavenly Surgeon had plucked the vital center out of his brain. In this very fact lies the explanation of the terrible truth that some of the worlds intellectual giants cannot comprehend the revelation of God. Despite the glory of their earthly attainments, they are nevertheless intellectual dwarfs, having long previously made the moral decision against God, their ability to think straight concerning him has been atrophied, hardened, and removed” (p. 116).

Joshua Chapter Ten

Ex. 10:1-3 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these My signs before him: And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the LORD. And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD GOD of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me? let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I may show these My signs in the midst of them, and that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought upon Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them; that ye may know that I am Jehovah. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, the GOD of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me? let My people go, that they may serve Me.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, for I have declared hard his heart, and the heart of his servants, so that I set these My signs in their midst, and so that thou recountest in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, that which I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have set among them, and ye have known that I am Jehovah. And Moses cometh in--Aaron also--unto Pharaoh, and they say unto him, Thus said Jehovah, GOD of the Hebrews, Until when hast thou refused to be humbled at My presence? send My people away, and they serve Me,” (YLT)

Why did GOD do these miracles in Egypt? Two reasons are stated: (1) that Pharaoh and his servants (chief advisers in particular and the people as a whole) might see them and recognize Him as the only GOD, and (2) so that the Israelites might tell their children about what GOD did for them. It was, and is, important for people to remember their history, lest they forget and repeat their errors.

“Those who forget history, or revise history, are doomed to repeat it” (Author Unknown).

Both groups needed to recognize the power and authority of GOD and that He was/is in control.

“It was not to crush the poor worm, Pharaoh, that He wrought such mighty wonders, but to convince his enemies, to the end of the world, that no cunning or power can prevail against Him; and to show His followers that whosoever trusted in Him should never be confounded” (Clarke, p. 340).

The Israelites had lived in Egypt for hundreds of years, and,

during that time, some of them began worshipping the gods of Egypt. They needed to be reminded that these gods had **no power**, could not do anything for them, and could not save them from their oppression. When one looks ahead and sees the continual murmuring of the Israelites, he can begin to see the extent to which they had been affected by the teaching of the priests of these gods.

“Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord” (Joshua 24:14; cf. Exodus 20:6-8; emphasis mine, RK).

Moses was used to refer to the whole of the Israelites with regard to the obligation to tell their children, grandchildren... When studying Deuteronomy 7; Psalms 78; 105, one sees that they did their job. These events were to be a constant reminder that GOD had delivered His people from bondage and that He would continue to deliver, help, and nurture those who obey Him.

“How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me?” This question is very interesting, because it reveals the basic problem of Pharaoh. Pharaoh’s downfall was **pride**.

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up” (James 4:10).

From this it may be learned that: (1) GOD will lift up, promote, exalt the humble, and (2) GOD will abase those who refuse to exalt Him. GOD will bring the proud down.

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18).

“God did not demand that Pharaoh humble himself so that He might as it were, place his foot upon the neck of a defeated victim (Joshua 10:24). But rather God sought to humble Pharaoh that Pharaoh might be blessed, for God exalts the humble (James 4:10)” (Fields, p. 218).

Ex. 10:4-6 “Else, if thou refuse to let My people go, behold, to morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast: And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field: And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers’ fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh.”

“Else, if thou refuse to let My people go, behold, to-morrow will I

bring locusts into thy border: and they shall cover the face of the earth, so that one shall not be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field: and thy houses shall be filled, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; as neither thy fathers nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned, and went out from Pharaoh." (ASV)

"for if thou art refusing to send My people away, lo, I am bringing in to-morrow the locust into thy border, and it hath covered the eye of the land, and none is able to see the land, and it hath eaten the remnant of that which is escaped, which is left to you from the hail, and it hath eaten every tree which is springing for you out of the field; and they have filled thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians, which neither thy fathers nor thy father's fathers have seen, since the day of their being on the ground unto this day, --and he turneth and goeth out from Pharaoh." (YLT)

GOD, through Moses, announced the eighth plague which would come upon Egypt — locusts. He also specified the time they would arrive. Locust invasions bring horror to the people of the East, even today, and for good reason. They can completely destroy the crops of a region in a matter of hours. Note some of the descriptions of locusts which follow.

"When climatic and soil conditions are just right, there is a relatively common grasshopper that multiplies fantastically into millions, or billions, or trillions of locusts. In this explosion, they change color, with red, yellow, and black markings, and increase fantastically in size and appetite! They have been known to obscure the sun in their flight. 'In Angola, July 1031, swarms of locusts completely obscured the sun for some hours...There are historical instances of areas 1,600 to 1,800 square miles being covered with locusts to a depth of four or five inches" (Coffman, p. 121-122).

"Syria partakes together with Egypt and Persia, and almost all the whole middle part of Asia, in the terrible scourge, I mean those clouds of locusts of which travelers have spoken; the quantity of which is incredible to any person who has not himself seen them, the earth being covered with them several leagues round. The noise they make in browsing the plants and trees may be heard in a distance, like an army plundering in secret. Fire seems to follow their tracks. Wherever their legions march the verdure disappears from the country, like a curtain drawn aside; the trees and plants, despoiled of their leaves, make the hideous appearance of winter instantly succeed to the bright scenes of

spring. When these clouds of locusts take their flight, in order to surmount some obstacle, or the more rapidly to cross some desert, one may literally say that the sun is darkened by them" (Clarke, p. 341).

"Locusts that develop to the migratory stage resemble the grasshopper, but are larger, being nearly three inches long. They are yellowish-tan in color, with dark roundish spots on their wings. A locust can eat its own weight daily. In a severe plague a square mile of land will have from one hundred to two hundred million locusts. They are hardy creatures. They can fly up to twenty hours continuously at ten to twelve miles an hour. Locusts have been tracked as far as 900 miles in fourteen days. In one day they can eat the growing food grains that took a year to grow; and the price of bread will soar beyond the reach of the poor (who then may be reduced to eating the locusts!). Palm trees bending with fruit may be reduced to bare spars, golden grain fields to stubble, and even wild marsh reeds disappear. While locust hordes are often a mile or less in width, clouds of locusts have been known to extend over 500 miles and be so thick as to hide the sun completely as they fly over" (Fields, p. 221).

Locusts cause famine, which in turn leads to the slow death of both animal and human life. *Is it any wonder then that when Pharaoh asked Moses to remove the locusts, he described them as a death (Ex. 10:17)?*

In verse five, note the extent to which the plague would exist. The whole land would be covered to the extent that the ground would not be seen. They were going to cover all of the land of Egypt, except Goshen, and would not leave any green thing behind. Their houses would be filled with them, like they were with flies in Exodus 8. Further, GOD said that there had never been another plague like this one.

Ex. 10:7 "And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their GOD: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?"

"And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve Jehovah their GOD: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?" (ASV)

"And the servants of Pharaoh say unto him, Until when doth this one become a snare to us? send the men away, and they serve Jehovah their GOD; knowest thou not yet that Egypt hath perished?" (YLT)

"How long shall this man be a snare unto us?" The

idea is a trap which causes the death of the one snared. Normally, a snare/trap is hidden in such a way that the victim falls into it unawares. Here, it is not speaking about a traditional trap, for GOD instructed Moses to tell them exactly what was going to happen. Pharaoh, instead of repenting, would rather let his people suffer by walking right into what they knew was a disaster in the making. Pharaoh's servants had seen the seven plagues sent before this one. They **knew** that every time GOD's predictions by Moses came, they were fulfilled. They had seen the increasing nature of severity of each plague. They understood the implication of a plague of locusts on top of everything else which had been endured by Egypt. There is little doubt that they disbelieved this promised plague would take place just as Moses said it would. They had seen enough to believe Moses and pleaded with Pharaoh to let the Israelites go.

“that they may serve the LORD their GOD” Note that the Egyptians (advisers) who pleaded with Pharaoh referred to GOD as one who belonged to the Israelites. They still did not get the fact that there is only one GOD, the universal GOD. They still believed that each nation had its own gods.

“knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?” Was Pharaoh so blind that he could not see that Egypt was being destroyed? There may be the implication here that he could see it, but simply he did not care or refused to recognize the facts. But as will be seen, Pharaoh listens to them this time — at least at first.

Ex. 10:8-9 “And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your GOD: but who are they that shall go? And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the LORD.”

“And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve Jehovah your GOD; but who are they that shall go? And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old; with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto Jehovah.” (ASV)

“And Moses is brought back--Aaron also--unto Pharaoh, and he saith unto them, Go, serve Jehovah your GOD; --who and who are those going? And Moses saith, With our young ones, and with our aged ones, we go, with our sons, and with our daughters, with our flock, and our herd, we go, for we have a festival to Jehovah.” (YLT)

After his advisers pleaded with him, Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron again. Looking ahead a bit, it is seen that he intends to try a compromise with them. Whether he doubted

the wisdom of his last refusal, or whether he was simply playing to his people's desire as a good politician, is not known.

“who are they that shall go?” There is an implication in this question, as will be seen shortly, that there would be a limit to how many Pharaoh would let go. Note Young's translation of this question: *“Who and who are those going.”* Moses' answer indicates that they were all going with everything they owned. It is obvious that there was no intention of returning to Egypt. As will be noted shortly, no matter what Pharaoh's intention might have been when he called Moses back, this answer infuriated him. Since GOD was directing Moses' speech, this writer believes Moses' answer, though mirroring GOD's intention for a permanent removal, was intended to cause Pharaoh's anger.

Ex. 10:10-11 “And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.”

“And he said unto them, So be Jehovah with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve Jehovah; for that is what ye desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.” (ASV)

“And he saith unto them, Be it so, Jehovah be with you when I send you and your infants away; see—for evil is before your faces; not so! go now, ye who are men, and serve Jehovah, for that ye are seeking; and one casteth them out from the presence of Pharaoh.” (YLT)

Verse ten, as given in the more common text, is difficult to understand. However, Pharaoh's answer seems to be full of sarcasm and contempt. **Was his answer a challenge to GOD?** To this writer, it seems that he was challenging GOD to try to remove the people from his grasp. Fields believed that Pharaoh knew he was not going to let the people go and that he did not think GOD could deliver them (p. 219). Coffman believes he was saying, *“May the Lord be with you if I ever let you go”* (p. 123).

The term **“evil is before you”** seems to leave the wrong idea here. The idea may be that he was accusing Moses of an evil intention through his request. Since the original word **“evil”** (*ra raah*), can be interpreted as *“evil, distress, misery, injury, calamity”* (BDB), it may be that Pharaoh was threatening Moses and Israel if they pushed their demands. This may be confirmed by the compromise he suggested in verse eleven.

“Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD”

The word **“men”** (*geber*) is a masculine noun, thus referring to the males among the Israelites. Pharaoh understood that if he kept the women and children, those who went to worship would

return to be with them. It can also be noted that Satan (represented here by Pharaoh) uses this ploy quite often. If Satan cannot induce or tempt a member of a family not to worship GOD, then he will try to keep the rest of the family from worshipping GOD — *“Leave your families out of this.”* Another way of looking at it is — *“Do not train your families to serve GOD.”*

“If you must be a Christian, do not attempt to take others with you. Let everyone make up their own mind. Keep your religion to yourself” (Coffman, p. 105)!

“Oppressors often permit adults to exercise religious observances, while they seek to control the children and educate them away from the faith of their fathers” (Fields, p. 220).

After Pharaoh dictated his compromise effort, he drove Moses and Aaron out of his presence, as if his words were final. Maybe he thought that they would simply leave, take the men, go and worship, and then return — but he was badly mistaken.

Consider another thought here: Pharaoh knew that the Israelites would not leave their children behind and permanently leave Egypt themselves. Without their children, the Israelites would not prosper and grow. The Devil knows that if our children remain in the world, without proper spiritual guidance, the church cannot grow. It would seem to this aged author that it appears Satan has won this battle with many parents today. Like Eli of old, many have abdicated their responsibility to train their children to love GOD with all their hearts. They have refused to correct their worldly attitudes and sins. The result is that many of these children, when they grow up leave the church. The children are needed for the future of the church. If children are not taught Biblical respect for the authority of their parents, *How can they be expected to show respect for the authority of GOD in any way?* Further, such children will likely be rebellious to **any** authority.

Ex. 10:12-15 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was

darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and Jehovah brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all the night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the borders of Egypt; very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing, either tree or herb of the field, through all the land of Egypt.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand against the land of Egypt for the locust, and it goeth up against the land of Egypt, and doth eat every herb of the land--all that the hail hath left. And Moses stretcheth out his rod against the land of Egypt, and Jehovah hath led an east wind over the land all that day, and all the night; the morning hath been, and the east wind hath lifted up the locust. And the locust goeth up against all the land of Egypt, and resteth in all the border of Egypt--very grievous: before it there hath not been such a locust as it, and after it there is none such; and it covereth the eye of all the land, and the land is darkened; and it eateth every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail hath left, and there hath not been left any green thing in the trees, or in the herb of the field, in all the land of Egypt.” (YLT)

Pharaoh's obstinate nature caused GOD to order Moses to act. He stretched out his arm, and the east wind began to blow. Even though the locusts had not arrived as yet, the wind's beginning when Moses stretched out his arm would have let the people of Egypt know that the plague would be there soon. The wind signified the surety of the plague. Locust plagues usually begin in the east and move westward, according to many of the commentaries and historical references. The wind blew the rest of that day and all night, and when the morning sun arose, the locusts were there. Blowing all day and all night, one wonders if the locusts were brought from a great distance. If so, then it shows that GOD's power is not limited to a small area (nation), but instead extends over all the earth, as every believer accurately knows.

With all of the emphasis of the passage under consideration, no one had ever seen locusts in such numbers. Further, GOD promised that they would never be seen in such numbers again. As bad as a locust invasion may be, even today, it will never be as bad as it was in this account again. They ate every green thing over the whole of the land of Egypt.

The land was striped of vegetation when it should have been flourishing.

Ex. 10:16-20 “Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your GOD, and against you. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the LORD your GOD, that He may take away from me this death only. And he went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD. And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.”

“Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against Jehovah your GOD, and against you. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat Jehovah your GOD, that He may take away from me this death only. And he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated Jehovah. And Jehovah turned an exceeding strong west wind, which took up the locusts, and drove them into the Red Sea; there remained not one locust in all the border of Egypt. But Jehovah hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go.” (ASV)

“And Pharaoh hasteth to call for Moses and for Aaron, and saith, I have sinned against Jehovah your GOD, and against you, and now, bear with, I pray you, my sin, only this time, and make ye supplication to Jehovah your GOD, that He turn aside from off me only this death. And he goeth out from Pharaoh, and maketh supplication unto Jehovah, and Jehovah turneth a very strong sea wind, and it lifteth up the locust, and bloweth it into the Red Sea--there hath not been left one locust in all the border of Egypt; and Jehovah strengtheneth the heart of Pharaoh, and he hath not sent the sons of Israel away.” (YLT)

It is true that, on previous occasions, Pharaoh had called for Moses and Aaron after a plague had settled in. Here, he called for them in haste. When Moses and Aaron arrived, he made an admission, **“I have sinned.”** **Against Whom did he say he had sinned? “Jehovah your GOD”** Note that he still did not recognize Jehovah as the only GOD — the GOD of Heaven and earth. Further, it should be noted that this was not the first time he had admitted sinning. The first time was after the plague of hail, which had destroyed much of Egypt (Exodus 9:27). In that admission, he noted that **“I and my people are wicked.”** In the present account, he did not mention the people, but only himself. In Exodus 9:34, one is told that when Pharaoh saw that they had relief from the hail, he hardened his heart. In the text under consideration here, it is stated that GOD hardened his heart. Pharaoh had gone too far! He was no longer capable of turning back.

“For it is impossible for those who were once

enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, And have tasted the good word of GOD, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of GOD afresh, and put Him to an open shame” (Hebrews 6:4-6).

GOD got rid of the locusts the same way He had brought them — with a strong wind. Normally, the locusts would have left by continuing their journey westward. The significance of their being blown back the way they had come was again that GOD was in control. Further, He threw them, so to speak, into the Red Sea. It should also be noted that not a single locust was left in Egypt, again, showing the awesome power of GOD. This writer has often thought of the great feast the fish of the Red Sea must have had when he reads this section of Scripture.

Ex. 10:21-23 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days; they saw not one another, neither rose any one from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand towards the heavens, and there is darkness over the land of Egypt, and the darkness is felt. And Moses stretcheth out his hand towards the heavens, and there is darkness—thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days; they have not seen one another, and none hath risen from his place three days; and to all the sons of Israel there hath been light in their dwellings.” (YLT)

As soon as the locust plague was over, did GOD immediately hit Egypt with the plague of darkness? It seems that that was the case. This was no ordinary darkness. It was a darkness which could be felt, a darkness which smothered light so that none existed. Note that it is a darkness which **“may be felt,” “a thick darkness,”** and **“They saw not one another.”** Could they not light a fire in their individual houses and see each other? Apparently not. This would eliminate the idea of a storm of dust or sand, which is advocated by some

authors. “Close the door and light the candles.” GOD said the darkness was so overpowering that they did not see each other for three days. The word for “**darkness**” here (choshek) is the same word used in Genesis 1:2.

“the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of GOD moved upon the face of the waters.”

Before GOD created light, there was only darkness.

It should be noted that this darkness should have proven to Pharaoh that the Egyptians’ greatest god, Ra (the sun god), was absolutely powerless. One should remember that the Pharaohs claimed they were the descendants of Ra, therefore a gods themselves. Pharaoh was powerless!

“Each night, according to Egyptian mythology, the sun fought and overcame the snake, Apophis, who symbolized the hostile darkness. As a god, Pharaoh was the incarnation of the sun, and the hostile darkness was his enemy also” (Coffman, p. 140).

“Darkness was a direct attack on some of Egypt’s main gods. Re (or Ra), the sun-god, was also the creator of gods and men; his emblem was the sun’s disk, Pharaoh himself was thought to be the embodiment of the god. Another great god was Amon, and he also was a sun-god. He was the chief deity of Thebes, the capital city during the 18th dynasty, the time of Moses” (Fields, p. 222).

A distinction was made by GOD between the Egyptians and His people, the Israelites. The Hebrew people had light, if not over all their land, at least in the houses. Try to imagine a darkness so great that it would “swallow up all the light.” Some might be tempted to say, “*Well, I have been in the caverns in Kentucky, and they turned out the lights so that we were in total darkness.*” Scientifically, that was not so. It has been figured out that it would take many, many years for the light to disappear totally. This author has visited those caverns several times, and the darkness was not **felt**. Try to imagine the terror this experience would have caused among the Egyptians. Now consider that “darkness” is also a term often used in the New Testament to describe eternal destruction in Hell.

“Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever” (Jude 13, emphasis mine, RK).

“Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and

gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 22:13, emphasis mine, RK).

This darkness was so great that people apparently did not even try to move about. But the Israelites had light. For three days it was so.

Ex. 10:24-26 “And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our GOD. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the LORD our GOD; and we know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither.”

“And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve Jehovah; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. And Moses said, Thou must also give into our hand sacrifices and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto Jehovah our GOD. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind: for thereof must we take to serve Jehovah our GOD; and we know not with what we must serve Jehovah, until we come thither.” (ASV)

“And Pharaoh calleth unto Moses and saith, Go ye, serve Jehovah, only your flock and your herd are stayed, your infants also go with you; and Moses saith, Thou also dost give in our hand sacrifices and burnt-offerings, and we have prepared for Jehovah our GOD; and also our cattle doth go with us, there is not left a hoof, for from it we do take to serve Jehovah our GOD; and we--we know not how we do serve Jehovah till our going thither.” (YLT)

Some critics say that Pharaoh had a hard time finding Moses because of the darkness. This would have been true, if he had tried to send for Moses while the plague was going on. It is this writer’s belief that he sent for him at the end of the plague. Remember that the plague was stated to be a duration of three days.

Pharaoh now offered his third attempt at compromise (see 8:25-29 and 10:8-11). He told Moses to take the Israelite families and go worship GOD, but, leave their herds and flocks behind. Basically, Pharaoh was trying to use the herds and flocks as hostages to make sure the Israelites came back to him after they worshipped, just as he had previously used the women and children as hostages. Consider Numbers chapter eleven, where the Israelites were murmuring for a lack of food. They desired to go back to Egypt for the leeks and garlic. *Would they not desire to return in the present situation for their animals?*

“Let the flocks and herds stay behind. If you must be a Christian, go ahead, but don’t invest any money in it. Use your wealth for yourself. Of this class of Christians

are those whose pocketbooks are never baptized”

(Coffman, p. 105).

It should carefully be observed by the Bible student that there is no compromise which is acceptable when GOD has expressed his will. Further, part of Moses’ answer to Pharaoh was that they needed to take their animals, because they did not know what GOD would require for sacrifices. One cannot help but wonder if the Israelites had gotten so far removed from making sacrifices that they no longer knew what to offer. *Did they possibly anticipate new offerings which would be required of them?* Moses’ answer is a proverbial term, **“not a hoof be left behind,”** which indicated they would leave nothing behind when they left. When one leaves the clutches of Satan behind, he must understand that all belongs to GOD and use it all in His service.

Ex. 10:27-29 “But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.”

“But Jehovah hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in the day thou seest my face thou shalt die. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well. I will see thy face again no more.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah strengtheneth the heart of Pharaoh, and he hath not been willing to send them away; and Pharaoh saith to him, Go from me, take heed to thyself, add not to see my face, for in the day thou seest my face thou diest; and Moses saith, Rightly hast thou spoken, I add not any more to see thy face.” (YLT)

Today, one would probably say, *“Get out of my sight.”* There is little doubt that Pharaoh was angry. He had tried his best to break the “rebellious” Israelites. He had offered three possible compromises, only to be flatly refused each time. His land had been destroyed; yet, he refused to let these Hebrews leave. He further threatened Moses by proclaiming, *“If you ever see my face again, you will die.”* Little did Pharaoh know that he had signed his son’s death warrant, and eventually his own at the Red Sea.

Did Moses ever speak face to face with Pharaoh again? After the death of his son, the Bible states, **“he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also”** (Exodus 12:31-32). In Pharaoh’s grief and momentary broken spirit, he indeed saw Moses again —

but Moses was not killed. And he would see Moses one more time — at the Red Sea.

Exodus Chapter Eleven

Ex. 11:1-3 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Yet one plague more will I bring upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. Speak now in the ears of the people, and let them ask every man of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. And Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, One plague more I do bring in on Pharaoh, and on Egypt, afterwards he doth send you away from this; when he is sending you away, he surely casteth you out altogether from this place; speak, I pray thee, in the ears of the people, and they ask—each man from his neighbour, and each woman from her neighbour, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold. And Jehovah giveth the grace of the people in the eyes of the Egyptians; also the man Moses is very great in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of the servants of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of the people.” (YLT)

Verses one through three help the reader understand what is happening in the rest of the chapter. One should also observe that GOD spoke these words to Moses, apparently, while he was still standing before Pharaoh. These verses also point back to a promise made to Moses when GOD first spoke to him.

“But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians” (Exodus 3:22).

Remember that the word **“borrow”** (shaal) also means **“to ask.”** Further, one does not “spoil” someone by borrowing from them. To “spoil” is to take from one something they have without returning it. This promise was about to be fulfilled. **Why would the Egyptians willingly give their jewels, gold, silver and clothes to the**

Hebrews? They would give them anything they asked for out of fear and just to get rid of them.

"They connected Israel with the plagues they had experienced, and the gifts seemed a small price to pay to remove the source of the problems" (Roper, p. 174).

One might also look further back in time to Genesis 15:14, where GOD told Abraham about the Hebrews' bondage and the abundance which they would take with them when their release came about.

"also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance."

Because of GOD's divine providence and the Egyptian's view of Moses, Israel would leave Egypt with extreme wealth.

GOD had sent Moses to Pharaoh from the beginning for the purpose of releasing the Hebrews, GOD's chosen people, from Egyptian bondage. He had guaranteed Moses that he would accomplish the mission for which he was sent. It is therefore fitting that one now sees the announcement of the last plague being visited upon Egypt.

"The word for plague in 11:1 is not used elsewhere in Exodus. Its most numerous occurrence is in Lev. 13-14, where it refers to the plague of leprosy. It means a blow or striking. It was to be the final decisive blow" (Fields, p. 228).

"thrust you out" This expression shows that Pharaoh and the Egyptians who desired to escape further destruction would cause them to act with haste to get Israel out of their presence. They would encourage them to leave, almost pushing them out.

A critic of the Bible once said, *"How could Moses, who is described as such a great example of humility, talk about how great he was?"* **How?** Moses was not bragging. He simply followed the command of the Spirit. You do not disobey GOD and be declared blessed!

"the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21).

One should also compare the things the Spirit told Paul to write about himself (2 Cor. 10:8-14) or how Nehemiah was commanded to speak about himself (Neh. 5:18-19). GOD wanted the world to know the greatness of Moses and **WHO** it was Who **made him great** because of his obedience to GOD.

Ex. 11:4-8 "And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant

that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.”

“And Moses said, Thus saith Jehovah, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of cattle. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there hath not been, nor shall be any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that Jehovah doth make a distinction between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger.” (ASV)

“And Moses saith, Thus said Jehovah, About midnight I am going out into the midst of Egypt, and every first-born in the land of Egypt hath died, from the first-born of Pharaoh who is sitting on his throne, unto the first-born of the maid-servant who is behind the millstones, and all the first-born of beasts; and there hath been a great cry in all the land of Egypt, such as there hath not been, and such as there is not again. And against all the sons of Israel a dog sharpeneth not its tongue, from man even unto beast, so that ye know that Jehovah doth make a separation between the Egyptians and Israel; and all these thy servants have come down unto me, and bowed themselves to me, saying, Go out, thou and all the people who are at thy feet; and afterwards I do go out; --and he goeth out from Pharaoh in the heat of anger.” (YLT)

Here one sees Moses' answer to Pharaoh's threat at the end of chapter ten. Moses knew that victory was assured by GOD, and he knew he was about to make a last visit to Pharaoh.

The plague was announced to begin at midnight. When one reads this account, he might assume that it was to be that very midnight. But unless Moses had already given the Israelites the instructions for the Passover Feast (the **“borrowing,”** et cetera), it could not have been that very day's midnight. This writer

believes it was a few days hence (but let it be clearly understood that no one has any idea of the time span involved between the actual occurrences of the plagues). It should also be noted that Moses announced this plague without any conditions. The firstborn were going to die. If indeed this plague occurred a few days after the pronouncement, imagine the dread which would fall upon the Egyptians before each midnight came. They had already seen the fulfillment of nine predicted plagues. The plague came and the firstborn of man and beast died, just as Moses said they would.

Note how GOD portrayed His action in anthropomorphic language, i.e., presenting His actions as if He were a human being. This made it easy for human beings to understand, **did it not?** Further, GOD's actions did not end with the rich or poor — every Egyptian family suffered. The “living god” of Egypt, Pharaoh, could not stop the death of his firstborn.

“the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill”

This was another way of saying from the mightiest prince to the lowest slave — the firstborn of all would die.

The text also declares the extent of the plague and the reaction of the people to it. The plague would not just affect those in the capital, but the entire land. This speaks of a massive loss of life. It would not “just” strike the people. It would also destroy much of the animal population of Egypt.

“But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast”

“A proverb expressive of freedom from alarm and immunity from assault” (Barnes, p. 30).

“This passage has been generally understood as a proverbial expression, intimating that the Israelites should not only be free from this death, but that they should depart without any kind of molestation” (Clarke, p. 346).

The distinction between the Israelites and Egyptians had been seen in most of the plagues thus far rendered against Egypt. It will again be so — the Israelites will not lose a single person or animal. The thought of the dogs moving his tongue may mean that, when they left, the dog's of the land would not bark at them.

How would the Egyptian people react after the plague? They would come begging for Moses to take the Israelites out of the land. The wail of Egypt would be heard in every place for its dead; but, among the Israelites, all would be peace and quiet.

“What a contrast! The wicked crying, the good quiet; the wicked dead, the good living; the wicked frightened, the

good peaceful; the wicked helpless, the good protected”
(Fields, p. 231).

A description of how Moses left Pharaoh’s presence on this occasion is also given — **“he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.”** The term **“great anger”** (*choriy aph*) would literally be *“heat (of anger), burning (of anger) nostrils.”* When one is extremely angry, as pictured in the text, the nostrils will flare, the face will redden, and rapid breathing will take place. The fact that he was extremely angry was clearly seen.

Did Moses sin when he expressed anger? Many today would say yes. But then a question needs to be considered — **Did GOD ever exhibit anger, and if so, did He sin by doing so?**

“the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses”
(Exodus 4:14).

“when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and His anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp” (Numbers 11:1).

The answer is yes and no. GOD indeed exhibited anger against sinful actions, but He did not sin in doing so. A person can be angry at sin, and should be. GOD hates sin, without Himself sinning.

“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the Devil”
(Ephesians 4:26-27).

One’s anger must not lead to his sinning.

Ex. 11:9-10 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Pharaoh will not hearken unto you; that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and Jehovah hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go out of his land.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Pharaoh doth not hearken unto you, so as to multiply My wonders in the land of Egypt; and Moses and Aaron have done all these wonders before Pharaoh, and Jehovah strengtheneth Pharaoh's heart, and he hath not sent the sons of Israel out of his land.” (YLT)

“Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you” Pharaoh had not listened to Moses in the past — he would not listen to him now.

“the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go” (Exodus 11:10).

“Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay My hand upon Egypt, and bring forth Mine armies, and My people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments” (Exodus 7:4).

Coffman posed the question, *Why were so many plagues deemed necessary by GOD for the release of His people?* There are two interlocking answers which may be given. (1) All of the plagues were a contest between GOD and the gods of Egypt. After the plagues were over, none of the gods of Egypt had a leg to stand on, so to speak. They were proven to be anything but gods. (2) As Huey pointed out, one or two might have been attributed to coincidence. **But how could you attribute ten in a row to coincidence?** Further, it should be considered that the number ten was a perfect or complete number to the Hebrews.

“Chapter 11, then, is transitional. It concludes the narrative of the first nine plagues and introduces the story (account – RK) of the final and most significant plague” (Roper, p. 180).

The destruction would be so complete that no one could honestly deny that GOD had performed these miracles.

Exodus Chapter Twelve

In this chapter, mention is made of the months of the Jewish calendar. The following list shows the entire Jewish calendar, with equivalent times in the English calendar.

<u>Jewish Term</u>	<u>English Equivalent</u>
1. Nisan	March-April
2. Iyyar	April-May
3. Sivan	May-June
4. Tammuz	June-July
5. Ab	July-August
6. Elul	August-September
7. Tishri	September-October
8. Marchesvan	October-November
9. Kislev	November-December
10. Tebet	December-January
11. Shebat	January-February
12. Adar	February-March

Veadar — Intercalary month.
(Donald E. Demaray; Bible Study Source-book)

Ex. 12:1-2 “And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.”

“And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.” (ASV)

“And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.” (YLT)

This month was to be the beginning of months (new year) for the Israelites, i.e., their religious calendar. Anciently, this month was known as Abib (Ex. 13:4) and falls in the Western calendar partly in March and partly in April. After their captivity in Babylon, the Israelites changed the name of Abib to Nisan. Another interesting thing done after the Babylonian captivity was that the Jews maintained two calendars. They added a secular calendar, which began in the month called Ethanim (also called Tishri). This month followed Abib by six months and corresponds to September/October.

It should also be considered that this was the beginning of the Jewish nation. It was also the beginning of the fulfillment of the promise given to

Abraham that his seed would form a great nation. GOD commemorated this time at the beginning of a new year with the institution of one of three major feasts which all Israelite males were required to observe — the Passover Feast.

“Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto Me in the year. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before Me empty:) And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field” (Exodus 23:14-16).

1. **“Feast of Unleavened Bread”** — Passover.
2. **“Feast of Harvest”** — Pentecost.
3. **“Feast of Ingathering”** — Feast of Tabernacles.

A truly important affirmation is given in this passage. Moses and Aaron did not issue regulations which they made up, but instead spoke only as they were commanded by GOD. These were GOD’s decrees, not those of man.

“The whole system, religious, political, and ecclesiastical, was received by Divine Revelation, commanded by GOD, and merely established by the two brothers” (Rawlinson, p. 258).

The Passover marked a new beginning for Israel. For the Christian, baptism marks a new beginning for one, as he leaves the land of sin for the promised land of forgiveness.

“we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4).

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Ex. 12:3 “Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:”

“Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household:” (ASV)

“speak ye unto all the company of Israel, saying, In the tenth of this month--they take to them each man a lamb for the house of the fathers, a lamb for a house” (YLT)

There are several things of note here. (1) This is the

first time Israel is designated as a congregation. (2) The Passover sacrifice is designated as being a “**lamb.**” As will be noticed in verse five, the word “**lamb**” designates an animal from either the sheep or goats. Also, the gender of the animal is not given here, but later one is told that it must be a male. Further, the lamb is spoken of as being singular, though thousands of lambs would be sacrificed at the same time. In the text, this is no doubt because a household is spoken of, i.e., one lamb per household was to be killed. It is thought by many that this was done prophetically to point to the Passover Lamb, in order to designate Him as the only Passover Lamb.

They were to choose the lamb which would be slain on the tenth day of the month (Nisan) and keep it until the fourteenth day, when it would be killed and prepared (Ex. 12:6). By separating the lamb for four days, its purity could be more easily maintained.

“This (congregation) became a technical term for the whole body of the Israelites. The word has a somewhat similar meaning to the New Testament word ekklesia, the church, or the called out assembly. Though there are many families in Israel, they were all one congregation. In a similar way we Christians today should think and act like members of a single, world-wide congregation of those redeemed by Christ, our Passover Lamb” (Fields, p. 243).

Ex. 12:4-6 “And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.”

“and if the household be too little for a lamb, then shall he and his neighbor next unto his house take one according to the number of the souls; according to every man's eating ye shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old: ye shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats: and ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at even.” (ASV)

“(And if the household be too few for a lamb, then hath he taken, he and his neighbour who is near unto his house, for the number of persons, each according to his eating ye do count for the lamb,) a lamb, a perfect one, a male, a son of a year, let be to you; from the sheep or from the goats ye do take it. And it hath become a charge to you, until the fourteenth day of this month, and the whole assembly of the company of Israel have slaughtered it between the evenings;” (YLT)

Notice the singular language employed. **“Ye shall keep it up,”** and the **“congregation of Israel shall kill it.”** Even though many thousands of lambs were killed, yet they were spoken of as one. Even though it is only the fathers who were doing the slaying of the lambs, they are all spoken of as one. Those who did the slaying represented all of the people — from the youngest to the oldest. They **all** killed the lamb, and so it is that all of mankind is represented by those who physically killed Jesus on the cross. It is because of the sins of all mankind that Jesus had to die on the cross, not just a few chosen ones.

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Notice the singular language here: **“the Lamb of GOD,” “the sin,”** and **“the world.”** All of the sins of the world, no matter what they are, are simply considered by GOD to be the same — simply **sin**. The sins of the world demanded a one-time, singular sacrifice — the Lord Jesus Christ.

The lamb was to be slain by the congregation **“in the evening.”** The Hebrew text literally says *“between the two evenings.”* The exact meaning of this, the exact time frame involved, is not certain. Many consider this to be the time between twilight and darkness. The Jews seemed to have interpreted this as a time between 3:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M. When it is considered that the Lord died the ninth hour (3:00 P.M.), this time frame seems to be correct. Thus, Jesus died at the time the Passover lambs were being killed.

Ex. 12:7-10 “And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.”

“And they shall take of the blood, and put it on the two side-posts and on the lintel, upon the houses wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roast with fire; its head with its legs and with the inwards thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; but that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.” (ASV)

“and they have taken of the blood, and have put on the two side-posts, and on the lintel over the houses in which they eat it. And they have eaten the flesh in this night, roast with fire; with unleavened things and bitters they do eat it; ye do not eat of it raw, or boiled at all in water, but roast with fire, its head with its legs, and with its inwards; and ye do not leave of it till morning, and that which is remaining of it till morning with fire ye do burn.” (YLT)

The blood of this lamb was to be sprinkled on the door posts, i.e., the two sides of the door, and the lintel (crossbeam above the door). This blood was to be spread, not on any old door, but on the door of their residence, their house, in which they were to eat the Passover lamb. Of particular interest is that the blood was not to be put on the threshold, where it would have been trodden under foot. **What is the significance of something being “trodden under foot?”** It is considered as something which has no value, something which is worthless, something which is common.

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men” (Matthew 5:13).

“Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of GOD, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith He was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:29).

When one views verse eight, he sees that the specifics were given for this meal. They did not have a choice as to **how** this meal was to be prepared, **where** it was to be eaten, or **when** it was to be eaten. The same thing is true today with regard to the memorial feast to be eaten in a worthy manner in order for GOD’s people (Christians) to please GOD. GOD has specified the items to be used — unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. It is to be eaten by the brethren when they come together to worship GOD, and it is to be eaten on the first day of the week. Christians do not have a choice as to **how**, **where** or **when** they partake of the Lord’s Supper. Nor is there a choice as to **why** it is to be eaten.

The **“lamb”** had to be roasted with fire, and all of it was to be eaten that night — none of it was to be left and used as “leftovers” the next day. If any of it was left, rather than consume it, it was to be destroyed with fire. Unleavened bread was to be eaten, which is sometimes called the bread of “hurriedness.” But it is also representative of purity, whereas leaven often represents that which is corrupt.

The bitter herbs would cause them to remember the

bitter bondage they had endured in Egypt. It might also remind them of the hardships and sacrifices they had to endure in order to enter the promised land.

"According to the Mishnah, these particular herbs consisted of lettuce, chicory, pepperwort, endives and dandelion" (Roper, p. 189).

The lamb was to be roasted whole (v. 9). The word **"purtenance"** is translated in the ASV as *"inwards."* One of the writers spoke of the Jews' cleansing the "entrails" and then placing them back in the body before it was roasted. Although it seems logical to perform this act, one does not have sufficient evidence to confirm that this was absolutely the case.

"that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire" Why was anything that was left of the lamb to be burned up with fire? Perhaps Fields was right when he said it was to keep the leftovers from falling into irreverent use.

Ex. 12:11 "And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover."

"And thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is Jehovah's passover." (ASV)

"And thus ye do eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand, and ye have eaten it in haste; it is Jehovah's passover," (YLT)

Directions were also given with regard to their state of readiness — ready at a moment's notice to leave Egypt while they ate the Passover meal. This shows that when the time was right, when GOD's actions caused the desired results, things were going to happen very rapidly. They were to be fully clothed throughout this night.

"it is the LORD's passover" This is a strong statement of ownership. It is GOD who instituted the Passover. He gave all of the regulations for it. This memorial feast did not come from any man's mind.

*"The Hebrew word for **passover** is pesach; the Greek is pascha, from which we get 'paschal lamb.' Pesach means a sparing, or immunity from penalty or calamity. Its meaning can be seen (by the use of the related verb pasach) in Isaiah 31:5" (Fields, p. 249).*

Ex. 12:12-14 "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am

the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.”

“For I will go through the land of Egypt in that night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am Jehovah. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and there shall no plague be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and ye shall keep it a feast to Jehovah: throughout your generations ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.” (ASV)

“and I have passed over through the land of Egypt during this night, and have smitten every first-born in the land of Egypt, from man even unto beast, and on all the gods of Egypt I do judgments; I am Jehovah. And the blood hath become a sign for you on the houses where ye are, and I have seen the blood, and have passed over you, and a plague is not on you for destruction in My smiting in the land of Egypt. And this day hath become to you a memorial, and ye have kept it a feast to Jehovah to your generations; --a statute age-during; ye keep it a feast.” (YLT)

“The passing through was in judgment; the passing over was in mercy” (Barnes, p. 32).

How was the smiting of all the firstborn of both man and beast a judgment against **“all the gods of Egypt?”** Since many of the Egyptian gods were represented by human beings or animals, the destruction of these was a smiting of the gods of Egypt. This would particularly apply to Pharaoh’s house, since he represented the greatest god of the Egyptians in the minds of the people. If these gods could not protect them, then they were proven to be worthless. All of the gods of Egypt combined could not save the firstborn.

The blood which they were to sprinkle on the doorposts and lintel was a token, a sign, of the faith the Israelites had in their GOD (cf. Hebrews 11:7, 8, 17, 23, etc.). When GOD saw the evidence of their faith, He would pass over their houses. Further, it was very important that they stay in their houses while GOD was passing over them, for if they were outside the place of safety, they would not be protected. They could not sprinkle the blood on their houses and then go to the palace of Pharaoh and expect to be protected from the plague. The same is true today. The blood of Christ

protects those who remain in His house, the church. One must remain in the body of Christ in order to be eternally saved.

GOD **“hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all...There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling”** (Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:4).

The word **“plague”** is used in the passage, and it seems to indicate a disease of some sort — *“a real pandemic.”* The word **“plague”** within itself does not indicate a disease. It means *“a smiting, hurting, or stumbling,”* without indicating how those things were accomplished. Notice the connection the present passage has with Psalm 78:50-51.

“He made a way to His anger; He spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence (deh-ber); And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham” (emphasis added, RK).

“We accept the information that the firstborn of Egypt perished by a pestilence. But what a miraculous pestilence! It was almost instantaneous in its effect. It struck every house at the same moment. It struck only at the oldest child in every family, and the oldest beasts. It did not strike in houses with blood at the doors” (Fields, p. 251).

“this day” This phrase refers to the day of the Egyptians’ final destruction, the Passover Feast (14th of Nisan/Abib). They were instructed to keep this feast throughout their generations — so that they never forgot what GOD did for them on this day. They were to remember that they were delivered because they obeyed GOD in placing the blood on their door posts and lintels (not just one or the other – partial obedience). It is the blood of the perfect Passover Lamb which will allow GOD’s vengeance to pass over those who have been washed in the blood of Jesus on the judgment day.

“The Old Testament records just six times when the passover was kept: 1. Egypt (Ex. 12); 2. Sinai (Num. 9); 3. Canaan (Joshua 5); 4. Hezekiah (2 Chron. 3); Josiah (2 Kings 23); 6. Jews return from Babylon (Ezra 6). We suppose that it was kept in other years. But we know the Israelites were not always faithful in observing it” (Fields, p. 251).

The New Testament implies that they were keeping it for years before Jesus came on the scene. They possibly did not always keep it as they should.

Let one go back for a moment to the idea expressed in verse fourteen, where this feast is a **“memorial”** which should be kept as an **“ordinance for ever.”** **Does this mean it should still be kept today?** The word **“forever”** in this text means *“age lasting,”* according to Young (p. 311).

“This definition agrees with the lexicons on the subject. Hence,

whenever it is said that a thing is to be 'forever' it means that it will last as long as the age does in which, or concerning which, the thing is said...In the present verse the term is used of a thing that pertained to the Jews, which means it was to last through the Jewish age, as long as the Jews had a nation" (Zerr, p. 126).

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross" (Colossians 2:14).

"Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that He might reconcile both unto GOD in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Ephesians 2:15-16).

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him Who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto GOD" (Romans 7:4).

Ex. 12:15-20 "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread."

"Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be to you a holy convocation, and in the seventh day a holy convocation; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done by you. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for

in this selfsame day have I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day throughout your generations by an ordinance for ever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a sojourner, or one that is born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.” (ASV)

“Seven days ye eat unleavened things; only--in the first day ye cause leaven to cease out of your houses; for any one eating anything fermented from the first day till the seventh day, even that person hath been cut off from Israel. And in the first day is a holy convocation, and in the seventh day ye have a holy convocation; any work is not done in them, only that which is eaten by any person--it alone is done by you, and ye have observed the unleavened things, for in this self-same day I have brought out your hosts from the land of Egypt, and ye have observed this day to your generations--a statute age-during. In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, in the evening, ye do eat unleavened things until the one and twentieth day of the month, at evening; seven days leaven is not found in your houses, for any one eating anything fermented--that person hath been cut off from the company of Israel, among the sojourners or among the natives of the land; anything fermented ye do not eat, in all your dwellings ye do eat unleavened things.” (YLT)

Following the Passover Feast, there was another feast, which lasted seven days. This was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, i.e., bread without the influence of yeast. Yeast produces a fermentation process which causes the bread to rise.

“The New Testament explains leaven as a symbol of corruption and evil influences. (See Matt. 16:6; Mark 8:15; 1 Cor. 5:7. Matt. 13:33 seems to be an exception.)” (Fields, p. 252).

These two feasts are so closely related that they are often referred to as the same feast.

For eight days, if anyone had leaven in his house, he was to be **“cut off from Israel.”** It is not revealed in the text whether to be **“cut off”** was banishment or execution. Whichever is considered, it is to be seen as a severe punishment.

This feast was to begin on the evening of the fourteenth day of Abib and last through the twenty-first day at evening.

“evening” *“The time of sunset, the beginning of the Hebrew day...Twilight, the time of approaching darkness when lamps were lighted...The early part of the night”* (ISBE, Vol. 2, p. 1041).

On the first and last days of the feast week, the whole congregation was to be called together. These were to be considered especially holy, and no work was to be

done on these two days, with one exception — the preparation of food.

Verse seventeen gives the reason for the feast. It was held to commemorate the day GOD brought them out of Egyptian bondage. It might also be noted that GOD called Israel His army. The Passover Feast and the Feast of Unleavened Bread covered a span of seven days. *Was this how long it physically took them to leave Egypt?*

Ex. 12:21-23 “Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.”

“Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out, and take you lambs according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. For Jehovah will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, Jehovah will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.” (ASV)

“And Moses calleth for all the elders of Israel, and saith unto them, Draw out and take for yourselves from the flock, for your families, and slaughter the passover-sacrifice; and ye have taken a bunch of hyssop, and have dipped it in the blood which is in the basin, and have struck it on the lintel, and on the two side-posts, from the blood which is in the basin, and ye, ye go not out each from the opening of his house till morning. And Jehovah hath passed on to smite the Egyptians, and hath seen the blood on the lintel, and on the two side-posts, and Jehovah hath passed over the opening, and doth not permit the destruction to come into your houses to smite.” (YLT)

Moses gave further instructions on how to observe the Passover. (1) Draw out the lamb to be offered and kill it. (2) Take hyssop and sprinkle that lamb's blood on the lintel and door posts. (3) Do not leave your house until the morning. Note: they had to enter the house through the blood of the lamb **and** remain within the confines of the protective blood. Their safety that night

existed only behind the blood-stained portal. Today, gaining the protection of the blood of the Lamb is the only way to be safe from eternal death. The dwelling place of GOD (the church) can only be entered through the door of Christ.

“Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (John 10:7-9).

There is no other place of safety.

Ex. 12:23 “For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.”

“For Jehovah will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, Jehovah will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah hath passed on to smite the Egyptians, and hath seen the blood on the lintel, and on the two side-posts, and Jehovah hath passed over the opening, and doth not permit the destruction to come into your houses to smite.” (YLT)

The name **“LORD”** refers to *“GOD the Father,”* the first member of the GODHEAD. He would pass through Egypt, i.e., pass through the Egyptians for the purpose of smiting them. In a sense, He would pass over the Israelites, not allowing the destroyer to enter their homes where the blood had been struck on their door posts and lintels. The **“destroyer”** would not be allowed to enter their houses.

Who/what is the destroyer? Some believe it was the second person of the GODHEAD, i.e., the Son of GOD. Others consider it to be one of the angels executing GOD’s judgment. And some have gone so far as to say it was an evil spirit trying to win a battle against GOD. This writer would consider another line of reasoning. In Exodus 11:1, it was noted that this last punishment (like those before it) is called a **“plague,”** as well as in Exodus 12:13. The word **“plague”** (nega) means *“stroke, plague, disease, mark, plague spot”* (BDB). The same word is used in Leviticus chapters thirteen and fourteen with regard to the plague of leprosy. Putting all of this together, this writer believes the destroyer was a disease so deadly that when one contacted it, he died immediately or very, very quickly. Be that as it may, one cannot know who/what the

destroyer was, for Scripture does not reveal it.

Ex. 12:24 “And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.”

“And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.” (ASV)

“And ye have observed this thing, for a statute to thee, and to thy sons--unto the age;” (YLT)

The remembrance of GOD’s deliverance was to be rehearsed and remembered **“for ever.”** What does **“for ever”** mean? If one did not have the rest of the Old Testament to dwell upon, he would logically assume it meant never ending, i.e., something which was to be rehearsed by GOD’s people until the end of time. But, the Old Testament predicts one last era before the end of time. The New Testament shows the end of the Mosaic era and the beginning of another, i.e., the Christian age, a remembrance of which has no such command regarding Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. It is obvious then that the **“for ever”** of the present text is not the same as the **“for ever”** of eternity, i.e., **never** ending. The phrase **“for ever”** here simply refers to the fact that, as long as the Mosaic age lasted, this ordinance would be in effect.

Ex. 12:25-28 “And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as He hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD’S passover, Who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.”

“And it shall come to pass, when ye are come to the land which Jehovah will give you, according as He hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of Jehovah’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. And the children of Israel went and did so; as Jehovah had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.” (ASV)

“and it hath been, when ye come in unto the land which Jehovah giveth to you, as He hath spoken, that ye have kept this service; and it hath come to pass when your sons say

unto you, What is this service ye have? that ye have said, A sacrifice of passover it is to Jehovah, who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt, in His smiting the Egyptians, and our houses He delivered. And the people bow and do obeisance, and the sons of Israel go and do as Jehovah commanded Moses and Aaron; so have they done.” (YLT)

“the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites” (Exodus 3:7-8).

The promise that GOD made first to Abraham and later to Moses was that GOD would deliver them to a land of abundance. Verse twenty-five indicates that they would hold this feast in the land of Canaan and there rehearse the events which had taken place in Egypt. It should be remembered that, at this time, GOD’s plan was to take them straight into the land of Canaan. It was only because of their continuous rebellion that GOD delayed their occupation of the land.

GOD said that when they celebrated this feast, their children would ask why they were doing this. This would give them the opportunity to teach their children about GOD’s great deliverance, as well as teach the great power and loving care of GOD. As long as the Mosaic system existed, they would be taught these great lessons, reminding them that GOD always cares about and takes care of His people. Further, it also showed them what happened to the enemies of GOD’s people.

“the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they” This was not just a command which Moses and Aaron were to accomplish. This is proven in that the people went out and did as GOD had instructed. This shows the respect they had for GOD **and** His word. Every generation shows its respect for GOD and His word in the same way — obedience to His will.

Ex. 12:29-30 “And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a

great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.”

“And it came to pass at midnight, that Jehovah smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.” (ASV)

“And it cometh to pass, at midnight, that Jehovah hath smitten every first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who is sitting on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive who is in the prison-house, and every first-born of beasts. And Pharaoh riseth by night, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians, and there is a great cry in Egypt, for there is not a house where there is not one dead,” (YLT)

GOD did exactly what He said He was going to do. He smote (killed) all the firstborn of Egypt in one night. This reminds one of another occasion when GOD destroyed a host of the His people’s enemies.

“And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh” (2 Kings 19:35-36).

It should also be observed that social standing did not save anyone (all were treated alike) — from Pharaoh’s family to the family of the lowest individual in the kingdom. There is also an interesting implication here, i.e., that Pharaoh was not the firstborn in his family. GOD was foreshadowing the final judgment in this action, for on that day, one’s family connections or social standing will have nothing to do with his eternal destiny. All will be judged by whether or not the blood of Jesus was applied to the door of their hearts and their faithfulness to GOD. Further, this death which was administered was not just to human beings. All of the animals which were firstborn (which were left from the other plagues) also died on this night.

“Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt” This seems to indicate that Pharaoh and his people did not believe what GOD said about the firstborn. They were asleep, but something woke them up. Coffman believes that there was some great pain associated with these deaths, which caused the nation to wake up in the night.

“The fact of everyone rising up in the middle of the night should be taken as an indication that death followed some kind of violent and painful visitation with the result that the cries of the

victim aroused the households. Had this not been the case, the dead would have been discovered, not that night, but the next morning” (p. 156).

This writer wonders if there might be another explanation for the great cry which was heard throughout Egypt. It is well known that great wailing takes place among the people of this region when a relative or someone important to them dies. **Is it possible that this great wailing began when a few mothers checked on their sleeping children and found them dead?** Then as others heard these cries, remembered the words of Moses, checked on their firstborn, discovered them dead — then the cry spread over all of Egypt.

Let one consider the mass judgment a little more here. Many today (really in every generation which has ever existed) believe that GOD would be unjust to condemn so many and is in reality incapable of such action.

“Surely a comprehension of God’s absolute holiness and His hatred for sin would remove the emotional resistance to the revelations about God’s punishments upon the ungodly” (Fields, p. 257).

If GOD did not punish the wicked as His word declares, then He could not possibly be considered to be a just GOD. But, since He is absolutely just, judgments have taken place of the wicked in the past, and will take place at the end of time.

“to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

“When evil men, men of exactly the same attitude that appears in the Pharaoh of Exodus, when such men who profess not even to know God, who suppose that they shall never be punished no matter what they do, who in their atheism consider themselves as the highest thing in all creation — when such men suddenly be summoned with all of mankind to the bar of Eternal Judgment, it will indeed be a time of universal fear and mourning” (Coffman, p. 157).

Ex. 12:31-36 “And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men. And the people took their

dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.”

“And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve Jehovah, as ye have said. Take both your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, to send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We are all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment. And Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. And they despoiled the Egyptians.” (ASV)

“and he calleth for Moses and for Aaron by night, and saith, Rise, go out from the midst of my people, both ye and the sons of Israel, and go, serve Jehovah according to your word; both your flock and your herd take ye, as ye have spoken, and go; then ye have blessed also me. And the Egyptians are urgent on the people, hasting to send them away out of the land, for they said, We are all dead; and the people taketh up its dough before it is fermented, their kneading-troughs are bound up in their garments on their shoulder. And the sons of Israel have done according to the word of Moses, and they ask from the Egyptians vessels of silver and vessels of gold, and garments; and Jehovah hath given the grace of the people in the eyes of the Egyptians, and they cause them to ask, and they spoil the Egyptians.” (YLT)

Pharaoh's calling for them in the middle of the night shows just how serious the situation was. He and his people now wanted the Israelites out of their land immediately. One remembers that Pharaoh had told Moses that if he ever saw Moses' face again, he would die. Yet, he now called for Moses, not with the intention of killing him. Instead, he capitulated. Pharaoh recognized that he had been beaten. He further recognized that his gods had been thoroughly defeated. He also had learned that GOD would not let him kill Moses. In essence, he told them to take everything they owned and get out of Egypt. It would almost seem as if he wanted no trace of them left in the land; and yet, when he looked around him and saw the devastation left behind, their presence would be felt.

Verse thirty-three may indicate that they did not think

the plague was over yet: **“We be all dead.”** It may be that they considered the ten plagues, each one becoming more severe, and determined that if Israel stayed in the land, the next plague would destroy all of them.

In verse thirty-four, one sees that, in their haste to leave, the Israelites added no yeast to their dough. They simply tied their kneadingtroughs to their shoulders and began their journey. As Fields pointed out, they had no food leftover from the Passover feast and would soon be totally dependent upon GOD for everything.

“Israel’s first experience of freedom involved the labor of long walks, and carrying their goods, and of going forth without an adequate food supply for a long trip. Israel’s experiences were much like our own: victory and glory are accompanied by hardships. They were going to need perseverance and fortitude” (Fields, p. 258).

Several things should be considered in verses thirty-five and thirty-six. (1) The word **“jewels”** is a mistranslation and should be rendered **“vessels.”** The vessels were probably not gold and silver, but were probably filled with the silver and gold which they obtained from the Egyptians. (2) The favor the Israelites had with the Egyptians was not from their own works or kindness. GOD caused the Egyptians to favor them and thus give them the abundance which they carried with them out of the land. All that was involved with this favor is not known. It may be that it was gained simply from fear of what might happen next if they did not show them favor. It may have been special action by GOD other than the plagues which caused this favor to exist. (3) The words **“borrow”** and **“lent”** are unfortunate renderings in the KJV. There is no indication here that they intended to “repay” the Egyptians for these items, and the Egyptians understood this. The words **“they spoiled the Egyptians”** show this to be the case.

“The word spoil has the connotation of a conqueror taking the goods of people defeated in battle” (Fields, p. 259).

Truly, the battle had been fought, GOD won, and His people received the spoils. (4) What about the **“jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment.”** This is how many, even to this day, indicate wealth: fancy clothes and a large bank account. The greatest wealth anyone can amass is to be considered by GOD as His faithful child — an heir of GOD.

“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of GOD through Christ” (Galatians 4:7).

Ex. 12:37-39 “And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children.”

And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual."

"And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, besides children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victuals." (ASV)

"And the sons of Israel journey from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, apart from infants; and a great rabble also hath gone up with them, and flock and herd--very much cattle. And they bake with the dough which they have brought out from Egypt unleavened cakes, for it hath not fermented; for they have been cast out of Egypt, and have not been able to delay, and also provision they have not made for themselves." (YLT)

"Rameses to Succoth" It is not certainly known where either of these places were, nor is the distance between them known. Several locations for both have been advocated. Perhaps the archeological spade will someday provide definitive information on these sites. The term **"Rameses"** has been described in various translations as *"treasure cities," "strong cities," "store cities,"* et cetera. **"Succoth"** means *"booths or tents."*

"Succoth" in this context probably simply refers to somewhere the Israelites pitched their tents after leaving Egypt and not a city or exact location.

"six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children" Many over the years have disputed this number, but the Bible student should consider it a reliable, rounded-off number. Consider that families of that time tended to be larger in number than those today. The average family in the United States today has 4.2 members. This would be a total of 2,520,000 people. The census taken at Mount Sinai listed the Israelites at 603,550 men, plus 22,000 Levite males (Cf. Num. 1:46; 2:32; 3:39; Ex. 38:26). These figures are given for men who were of age to fight (Males over twenty-one were counted. Consider also how many would have been too old to fight.). In all, the figure of 2.5 million is probably quite low.

"a mixed multitude went up also with them"

Those who left Egypt on this occasion were not "only Israelites." Others went with them, possibly other

Semites, and very probably some Egyptians who had become friends with the Israelites or perhaps had come to accept the GOD of Israel by observing the miracles (plagues) of GOD. Later, some of these people would become a thorn in the side of Israel.

“the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat” (Numbers 11:4)?

The nationality of these people is not revealed, only that they left with the Israelites. Further information will be given with regard to these non-Israelites, but this point must be made: the distinctions made by the Jews of Jesus’ day do not match how “Gentiles” were treated by these Israelites. Further, they do not match the way GOD desired them to be treated, i.e., you cannot have any association with them.

“because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual” They ate unleavened bread as they began their journey, because they had been so hastily expelled from Egypt. Further, they did not have time to prepare food for the journey. When they got ready to eat, they had to use the dough they had packed in their kneadingtroughs, i.e., unleavened cakes. As pointed out earlier, they were soon going to have to rely totally on GOD for their food.

The exact time of their departure from Egypt is noted in Numbers 33:3.

“they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.”

Ex. 12:40-42 “Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.”

“Now the time that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of Jehovah went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto Jehovah for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of Jehovah, to be much observed of all the children of Israel throughout their generations.” (ASV)

“And the dwelling of the sons of Israel which they have dwelt

in Egypt is four hundred and thirty years; and it cometh to pass, at the end of four hundred and thirty years--yea, it cometh to pass in this self-same day--all the hosts of Jehovah have gone out from the land of Egypt. A night of watchings it is to Jehovah, to bring them out from the land of Egypt; it is this night to Jehovah of watchings to all the sons of Israel to their generations." (YLT)

The text states that the Hebrews were in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years; whereas, the promise made to Abraham was that they would be in bondage for four hundred years (Gen. 15:13, 16). The number in Genesis promised to Abraham appears to be a rounded off number; whereas, the number in the present text is a more exact number. For further information on various theories which have been advanced, one might look at Coy Roper's notes, pages 201-202 of his commentary (Truth for Today Series). One should not see in these numbers a contradiction, for a contradiction can only exist when two "apparent contradictions" are proven beyond doubt to be unreconcilable.

"selfsame day" This refers to the day of the Passover. They ate the meal, and the same day they were driven out of Egypt. This may also indicate that GOD had determined a particular day when this was all going to happen when He made the promise to Abraham. The night of the passover was to be observed by the generations as a night of deliverance, as long as the Mosaic system lasted. By remembrance, they would teach their children of GOD's loving care down through the ages. These accounts should be taught to every generation of GOD's people in order to remind them of the mercy and loving care GOD has shown, and will show, to His people.

Ex. 12:43-51 "And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof: But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the

stranger that sojourneth among you. Thus did all the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: there shall no foreigner eat thereof; but every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat thereof. In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to Jehovah, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: but no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. Thus did all the children of Israel; as Jehovah commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. And it came to pass the selfsame day, that Jehovah did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses and Aaron, This is a statute of the passover; Any son of a stranger doth not eat of it; and any man's servant, the purchase of money, when thou hast circumcised him--then he doth eat of it; a settler or hired servant doth not eat of it; in one house it is eaten, thou dost not carry out of the house any of the flesh without, and a bone ye do not break of it; all the company of Israel do keep it. And when a sojourner sojourneth with thee, and hath made a passover to Jehovah, every male of his is to be circumcised, and then he doth come near to keep it, and he hath been as a native of the land, but any uncircumcised one doth not eat of it; one law is to a native, and to a sojourner who is sojourning in your midst. And all the sons of Israel do as Jehovah commanded Moses and Aaron; so have they done. And it cometh to pass in this self-same day, Jehovah hath brought out the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt, by their hosts.” (YLT)

These nine verses basically deal with who could and could not partake of the Passover meal. The **“stranger”** (KJV) was a non-Israelite. **What was it that designated one as a stranger?** Someone who was not circumcised was a stranger. All Israelites would have been circumcised. Just so today, one who has not been spiritually circumcised has no right to eat of the communion of the Lord, i.e., the Lord's Supper. Then, and now, this was a means of keeping GOD's people separate from the world and the worldly.

“he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is

not of men, but of GOD” (Romans 2:28-29).

Today, a Christian is the Jew, as clearly indicated by the above passage. **Christians are the Israel of GOD!**

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of GOD” (Galatians 6:15-16).

Note also that it was **“one law”** for both the Israelite and non-Israelite. If you were circumcised you could eat. If you were not circumcised, you could not eat. All who partook of the blessings of the covenant were forced to recognize that there was one law for all. So it is today. There is only one law for all who would partake of Christ — the Passover Lamb.

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7).

“The Passover belonged only to covenant keepers” (Lightfoot, p. 266).

When looking at verse forty-six, three more requirements were given for the Passover Feast.

1. **“In one house shall it be eaten”**
2. No flesh of the Passover lamb was to be taken outside the house where it was eaten.
3. No bone of the lamb was to be broken.

It should also be observed that one who was born a non-Israelite could partake of the Passover (vv. 47-49) — but only if he and all the males in his household were circumcised. **Why?** Because when they accepted the act of circumcision, they were accepted as Israelites. They would then be subjected to every rule regarding GOD’s people. As Roper pointed out, they could refer to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as their fathers. No difference was to be made between them. In Jesus’ day, the Jews did make a difference between one who was born a Jew and one who was a “proselyte.” Man often makes differences between people, but GOD puts no difference between anyone who obeys His covenant — then or now.

This writer would like to make the following observation just here with regard to race.

When you look at people, and
instead of seeing people you see race,
Who is the racist?

Exodus Chapter Thirteen

Ex. 13:1-2 “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Sanctify unto Me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is Mine.”

“And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Sanctify unto Me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is Mine.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah speaketh unto Moses, saying, Sanctify to Me every first-born, opening any womb among the sons of Israel, among man and among beast; it is Mine.” (YLT)

It is not known exactly when GOD spoke to Moses on this occasion, either just before the Passover meal or after arriving in Succoth. Moses was told that every firstborn was to be sanctified to GOD.

“sanctify” — qadash — *“a primitive root; to be (causatively, make, pronounce or observe as) clean (ceremonially or morally)”* (Zerr, p. 129); *“kadash, signifies to consecrate, separate, and set apart a thing or person from all secular purposes to some religious use”* (Clarke, p. 363); *“to consecrate, sanctify, prepare, dedicate, be hallowed, be holy, be sanctified, be separate”* (BDB).

Which firstborn? Verse twelve gives the answer: it was the firstborn males which were to be consecrated, set aside.

Coffman noted that there are three memorials which were established for the people to remember their deliverance from Egyptian bondage: (1) The Passover, (2) The Feast of Unleavened Bread, and (3) The sanctification of the firstborn.

“The Passover stressed God’s passing over the houses of the Israelites on that fatal night; the Unleavened bread recalled the haste of their departure and the unavailability of any leaven during those stressful days; the Sanctification of the first-born was a personal reminder that only the first born were to be slain” (Coffman, p. 165).

The last of these would be a constant reminder that, while GOD had destroyed the firstborn of Egypt (both man and beast), He had spared Israel’s first-born.

Two thoughts have been expressed by scholars as to when the Israelites were sanctified. Fields and others believe it was after GOD had spared them while striking down the Egyptians (Fields, p. 278). Keil and Delitzsch believe they were sanctified and then they were spared from the death of the firstborn. Since the idea of sanctification seems to revolve around ideas of separation, it would seem that the latter of these ideas bears the most weight. This writer believes that throughout the captivity, GOD was setting aside a people for Himself. More information will be given

beginning with verse eleven.

Ex. 13:3-4 “And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. This day came ye out in the month Abib.”

“And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand Jehovah brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. This day ye go forth in the month Abib.” (ASV)

“And Moses saith unto the people, Remember this day in which ye have gone out from Egypt, from the house of servants, for by strength of hand hath Jehovah brought you out from this, and any thing fermented is not eaten; To-day ye are going out, in the month of Abib.” (YLT)

The Israelites were to remember this day of deliverance, not just while they lived. They were to make sure it was remembered throughout their generations. Thus, this was to be a yearly memorial feast. They were to remember that it was on this day that they were delivered **“out of the house of bondage,”** i.e., *“the house of slaves.”*

The language indicates that they did not escape Egypt due to their own power or abilities. Nor did some foreign power deliver them from Pharaoh. They were delivered by the strength of the Lord's hand. Today, man is delivered from the enslaving hold of sin, from the power of Satan — again, not by his own power — but through the power of the blood of the Lamb of GOD. GOD directed the Israelites to salvation, and today the same thing is true for those who obey Him.

“Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him” (Hebrews 5:8-9).

One of the things they were to do to remember this day was not to eat any leavened bread. **Why was leaven excluded from their diet on this day?**

“A natural reason for the prohibition, like that of the similar exclusion of honey, is sought on the ground that fermentation implied a process of corruption...Rabbinical writers regularly use leaven as a symbol of evil” (Lightfoot, p. 1862).

What was their day of release from Egypt? The fifteenth day of Abib (later to be known as Nisan after the Babylonian captivity.) They celebrated the Passover feast on the fourteenth day of Abib. They left on the fifteenth.

Ex. 13:5-7 “And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which He sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the LORD. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.”

“And it shall be, when Jehovah shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, which He sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to Jehovah. Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee, in all thy borders.” (ASV)

“And it hath been, when Jehovah bringeth thee in unto the land of the Canaanite, and of the Hittite, and of the Amorite, and of the Hivite, and of the Jebusite, which He hath sworn to thy fathers to give to thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou hast done this service in this month. Seven days thou dost eat unleavened things, and in the seventh day is a feast to Jehovah; unleavened things are eaten the seven days, and any thing fermented is not seen with thee; yea, leaven is not seen with thee in all thy border.” (YLT)

Again it is emphasized that it is the Lord Who would bring them into the land of promise. They would not get there on their own, nor would they claim the land without doing their part. GOD had sanctified them, promised them the land; but they had to walk to get there. They had to fight the battles to drive the evil inhabitants out of the land. All the while, they had to obey the commands of GOD.

The term **“Canaanites”** is used many times to designate all the inhabitants of the land, even though there was a subset of people in the land known as Canaanites. Here it seems to be referring to the subset. They were basically people who had descended from Ham. The English text only lists five designations for the inhabitants of the land, whereas the Septuagint lists seven, adding Gergashites and Perizzites.

When they got to this land overflowing with abundance (**“flowing with milk and honey”**), they were to observe this service. It is upon this basis, and the fact that they were to do no work (except preparation of food) on the first and last day of this feast (Ex. 12:16), that many believe that they did not

completely observe the requirements of this feast until after they entered Canaan.

Consider that much of what has been said in these verses is repetition of what they had been told earlier. Consider then the words of Coffman here.

"Repetition is a necessity in the teaching and instruction of men, regardless of their age, social condition, or historical sequence. Jesus Christ Himself constantly used repetition in His revelation of the Holy Gospel" (Coffman, p. 168).

Ex. 13:8-10 "And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the LORD'S law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt. Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year."

"And thou shalt tell thy son in that day, saying, It is because of that which Jehovah did for me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thy hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the law of Jehovah may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath Jehovah brought thee out of Egypt. Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year." (ASV)

"And thou hast declared to thy son in that day, saying, It is because of what Jehovah did to me, in my going out from Egypt, and it hath been to thee for a sign on thy hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, so that the law of Jehovah is in thy mouth, for by a strong hand hath Jehovah brought thee out from Egypt; and thou hast kept this statute at its appointed season from days to days." (YLT)

It is noted that all of the feasts which GOD assigned to the Israelites were designed to cause them to teach the next generation about GOD's care for them, as well as His great power. The natural curiosity of children causes them to ask questions; therefore, an opportunity to teach presents itself, so that the lessons will not be lost with time. Those who forget history are doomed to repeat it.

"a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes" These words appear to be the primary passage used by the Jews to justify the use of phylacteries (tephillin). The Jews of later years interpreted this passage literally and wore the following passages (Exodus 3:2-20; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21). They did this by rolling these compacted passages into very small rolls which were then placed into tiny boxes. They wore these tiny boxes on their foreheads and on their left arms below the elbow.

There is little doubt that GOD did not literally intend for them to wear these passages in this way. In verse nine He said, **“that the Lord’s law may be in thy mouth.”** This indicates that the Lord’s laws (all of His laws) were to be remembered and spoken — not stored away in a little box. GOD’s laws are to be written in one’s heart, and thus proclaimed to others. Further, if Exodus 13:9 is to be taken literally, **then why not Proverbs 3:3?**

“Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck”

In that very passage, GOD illustrated what He meant when he told them to wear these things.

“And write them upon the table of thine heart”

Further, it is noted that Jesus condemned the Israelites for making wide their phylacteries.

“But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments” (Matthew 23:5).

Consider that Jesus condemned them for doing so because they did it for the wrong reason. They did it to be seen by others and thus praised by them for being so *“holy.”*

“Just when this practice began cannot accurately be determined. While the Talmud attempts to trace it back to the primitive, even Mosaic, times, it probably did not long predate the birth of Christ” (ISBE, p. 2393).

Ex. 13:11-13 “And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the LORD’S. And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.”

“And it shall be, when Jehovah shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanite, as He swore unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, that thou shalt set apart unto Jehovah all that openeth the womb, and every firstling which thou hast that cometh of a beast; the males shall be Jehovah’s. And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break its neck: and all the first-born of man among thy sons shalt thou redeem.” (ASV)

“And it hath been, when Jehovah bringeth thee in unto the land of the Canaanite, as He hath sworn to thee and to thy fathers, and hath given it to thee, that thou hast caused every one opening a womb to pass over to Jehovah, and every firstling--the increase of beasts which thou hast: the males are Jehovah’s. And every firstling of an ass thou dost ransom with a lamb, and if thou dost not ransom it, then thou hast

beheaded it: and every first-born of man among thy sons thou dost ransom.” (YLT)

Like the Passover Feast, there was another ordinance given by GOD which enabled them to remember their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. This ordinance was to be enacted when they entered the land of Canaan. The ordinance was that all firstborn belonged to the Lord, and were to be sanctified to the Lord. This was true of both man and beast. Both the firstborn of unclean animals and firstborn of human males were to be redeemed. If the firstborn unclean animal was not redeemed (ransomed) it was to be killed, so that the owner could not be profited by it. For a human being, a ransom price was paid. There were no human sacrifices to be made to GOD, as such would have been an abomination to Him. The ransom for a child was five shekels of silver [a shekel was about a ½ ounce, so about 2 ½ ounces of silver (Cf. Numbers 3:46-47; 18:15-16)]. The firstborn of clean animals were to be sacrificed on the eighth day after birth. The firstborn of unclean animals could not be offered as a sacrifice. A clean animal would be offered as the ransom for the firstborn unclean animal.

“Every thing that openeth the matrix in all flesh, which they bring unto the LORD, whether it be of men or beasts, shall be thine: nevertheless the firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem” (Numbers 18:15).

Ex. 13:14-16 “And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.”

“And it shall be, when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand Jehovah brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: and it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that Jehovah slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man, and the first-born of beast: therefore I sacrifice to Jehovah all that openeth the womb, being males; but all the first-born of my sons I redeem. And it shall be for a sign upon thy hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand Jehovah brought us forth out of Egypt.”

(ASV)

“And it hath been, when thy son asketh thee hereafter, saying, What is this? that thou hast said unto him, By strength of hand hath Jehovah brought us out from Egypt, from a house of servants; yea, it cometh to pass, when Pharaoh hath been pained to send us away, that Jehovah doth slay every first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of man even unto the first-born of beast; therefore I am sacrificing to Jehovah all opening a womb who are males, and every first-born of my sons I ransom; and it hath been for a token on thy hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes, for by strength of hand hath Jehovah brought us out of Egypt.” (YLT)

Much of this section is a repetition, showing that a teaching exercise would take place; yet, the offerings themselves were very important. Imagine a child as he began to realize that every time one of his father's animals gave birth to its first baby, his father sacrificed it. Further, he might see his father break the neck of the firstborn of an unclean animal. The question would be, “Why are you doing this?” The answer would be, “Because GOD forced Pharaoh to let us leave his bondage by killing all the firstborn of Egypt, both man and beast. But of the Israelites, not a one of the firstborn died. We were protected by the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the door posts and lintel.” It was the blood of the firstborn that protected them; and it is the blood of the firstborn, the perfect Lamb of GOD, which saves man today.

Ex. 13:17-19 “And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that GOD led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for GOD said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: But GOD led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, GOD will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.”

“And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that GOD led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for GOD said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: but GOD led the people about, by the way of the wilderness by the Red Sea: and the children of Israel went up armed out of the land of Egypt. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, GOD will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.” (ASV)

“And it cometh to pass in Pharaoh's sending the people away, that GOD hath not led them the way of the land of the Philistines, for it is near; for GOD said, Lest the people repent in their seeing war, and have turned back towards Egypt; and God turneth round the people the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea, and by fifties have the sons of Israel gone up from the land of Egypt. And Moses taketh the bones of Joseph with him, for he certainly caused the sons of Israel to swear, saying, GOD doth certainly inspect you, and ye have brought up my bones from this with you.” (YLT)

The first thing noticed in these verses is that GOD did not lead them to Canaan by the easiest route, i.e., by the same path they used to get to Egypt in the first place. This would have been the route just south of the Mediterranean Sea. Further, it is stated why He did not lead them this way — the Philistines. The Philistines were used to war and were formidable opponents which might have discouraged the Israelites and caused them to return to Egypt. Later in these studies, an example of this will be seen in the wilderness, when they were attacked by the Amalekites. The southern route by which GOD chose to lead them was far less traveled than the northern route mentioned above. Another thing to consider here is that the northern route, the way of the Philistines, had a number of Egyptian strongholds which guarded the border. Israel would have had to go past them to get to Canaan.

It is evident that GOD knew about the condition of His people. Due to their slavery, they were not prepared for war. In Exodus 14, it will be seen how frightened the Israelites were when they were attacked. Later, when GOD told them to invade the land of Canaan, they were so afraid of the “giants” in the land that they rebelled against GOD's instructions. GOD was taking care of His people and knew that they were not able to bear a great deal of war yet. Consider the same idea in John, where Jesus told the apostles that there were many things He needed to tell them, but they were not ready for them yet. If He had told them these things at that time, they too might have become discouraged.

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (John 16:12).

“the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt” There is much difficulty in determining the meaning of the word **“harnessed.”** Some believe it meant they went up armed and, therefore, prepared for war. Others believe it means they went out in an orderly manner by ranks, prepared for the march.

“Moses took the bones of Joseph with him” Joseph had told the people that some day GOD would

visit them and take them to their own land. Further, Joseph had taken an oath from the people that, when they left Egypt, they were to take his bones with them (Genesis 50:24-25). Moses now honored that request. In Joshua 24:32, it is revealed that Joseph's bones were buried in Shechem. Joseph's request gave the Israelites hope during their sojourn in Egypt, because of his great faith in GOD's keeping His word.

"Jamison and others have pointed out that not only the remains of Joseph, but those of the patriarchs, were also removed from Egypt" (Coffman, p. 173).

In Acts 7:15-16. Note the implication that all of the "fathers" were taken out of Egypt when the Israelites left.

"So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem."

Ex. 13:20-22 "And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."

"And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. And Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, that they might go by day and by night: the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, departed not from before the people." (ASV)

"And they journey from Succoth, and encamp in Etham at the extremity of the wilderness, and Jehovah is going before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give light to them, to go by day and by night; He removeth not the pillar of the cloud by day, and the pillar of the fire by night, from before the people." (YLT)

How did the people know where to go? GOD guided them. **How did He guide them?** They journeyed from Succoth to Etham, led by a **"pillar of cloud"** in the daytime and a **"pillar of fire"** by night. What an amazing sight this must have been. Later in this study, it will be seen that they knew when to move, and when to stop, by the action of these pillars. These pillars stayed with them as long as they were in the wilderness. This must also have been very comforting to the Israelites, for it signified that GOD was with them.

"Interestingly, the same cloud which gave light to Israel was darkness to the Egyptians (Ex. 14:40). How much this is like

the teaching of the gospel. The truths which bring light to the believers are hidden from the wise and the prudent of the world (Cf. Matt. 11:25; 2 Cor. 4:3-4)"

Etham was the last stop before they reached the Red Sea.

Exodus Chapter Fourteen

Ex. 14:1-4 “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so.”

“And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn back and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before Baal-zephon: over against it shall ye encamp by the sea. And Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he shall follow after them; and I will get me honor upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host: and the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah. And they did so.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah speaketh unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the sons of Israel, and they turn back and encamp before Pi-Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before Baal-Zephon; over-against it ye do encamp by the sea, and Pharaoh hath said of the sons of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut upon them; and I have strengthened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hath pursued after them, and I am honoured on Pharaoh, and on all his force, and the Egyptians have known that I am Jehovah; and they do so.” (YLT)

The location of the Red Sea is known today, but all of the other places mentioned here are still unidentified. One thing which should be noted is that the Red Sea extended further north than it has in recent times. What is known, wherever these places were, is that the Israelites felt trapped here when Pharaoh appeared.

The route Israel was taking would have indeed seemed strange to Pharaoh. **Why did Israel not travel to the north along the Sea? How did Pharaoh know where the Israelites were?** It would seem obvious that he had commanded someone to observe them as they left. When the report of their turning back and camping by the Red Sea reached him, it accomplished what GOD desired. Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he decided to pursue the Israelites. **Would he have tried to slaughter them or bring them back to Egypt as his slaves? Why did GOD lead Pharaoh to believe the Israelites were unable to get out of the land and were hopelessly trapped?** This was to be a final victory over Pharaoh. Pharaoh had caused Israelite babies to be

thrown into the water of the Nile. Now GOD would cast him into the sea. **“I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host”** Once and for all, the Egyptians would know that GOD is the only GOD.

This writer believes that Pharaoh's actions are parallel to Satan's refusal to give up to GOD, i.e., to keep on trying to destroy GOD's people, until his final destruction. Until he is cast into Hell, right to the bitter end, he will think he can somehow defeat GOD and His people. But his destruction will be just as complete as was Pharaoh's.

GOD placed His people in a position where no human agency could save them. **Why?** To show Pharaoh and the Egyptians that He is the GOD of Heaven and earth. To show His people Who really cared for them and protected them.

One final note here regarding the Red Sea and the critics of the Bible.

“That it was not merely a ‘swampland’ as affirmed by the critics is certain, being proved by the facts (1) that Pharaoh considered it impassable, (2) that the Israelites themselves considered their position hopeless, (3) that the normal strength (or depth) of the waters was sufficient to drown Pharaoh's army, (but not the Israelites, RK) and (4) that it is unequivocally represented in the Bible as a sovereign act of Almighty God that enabled Israel to cross.”

GOD has always told man where He wants him to go, what He wants him to do, and how he can get there. The only variable is man — what choice he will make — obey or disobey.

Ex. 14:5-9 “And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand. But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon.”

“And it was told the king of Egypt that the people were fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was changed towards the people, and they said, What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us? And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and

captains over all of them. And Jehovah hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: for the children of Israel went out with a high hand. And the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baal-zephon.” (ASV)

“And it is declared to the king of Egypt that the people hath fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants is turned against the people, and they say, What is this we have done? that we have sent Israel away from our service. And he harnesseth his chariot, and his people he hath taken with him, and he taketh six hundred chosen chariots, even all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over them all; and Jehovah strengtheneth the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursueth after the sons of Israel, and the sons of Israel are going out with a high hand, and the Egyptians pursue after them, and all the chariot horses of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his force, overtake them, encamping by the sea, by Pi-Hahiroth, before Baal-Zephon.” (YLT)

Pharaoh had previously ordered the Israelites to leave the land, but when they actually left, a strange thing happened. The Egyptians seem to have acted like it was a strange thing that they had left. The people appear to have gone to Pharaoh to tell him the Israelites had gone.

Pharaoh and his people had a selfish motive for wanting the Israelites back. **“Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?”** Because of their grief at the death of the firstborn, they had made a spur-of-the-moment decision to let the Israelites go. Now they suddenly realized that all of this “free” labor which had provided for their ease was gone. In spite of all that GOD had done to them, they were willing to risk the wrath of GOD once again. Remember, that after many of the plagues were completed, Pharaoh had changed his mind, even after admitting on one occasion that he knew he was wrong and had sinned. He and his people were no longer able to reason correctly. They could look all around them and see the terrible destruction they had brought upon themselves by their obstinate refusal to obey GOD; yet, they invited it again. Common sense (logic) fled them.

“for this cause GOD shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thessalonians 2:11).

They had reached the point where they knew that what they were doing was wrong, but they did not care.

“he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him” It should be emphasized that Pharaoh went with his army. He led them to confront the Israelites. Consequently, he died with his army.

“But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for

His mercy endureth for ever" (Psalm 136:15).

"he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt" It has been estimated that there may have been over twenty thousand chariots in Egypt at this time. The chariots mentioned here appear to be an elite group of fighting men. But carefully note that he took more than this elite group — **"and all the chariots of Egypt."**

"War chariots and cavalry were always the leading force of the Egyptians" (Keil & Delitzsch, p. 44).

Regarding their chariots, the following information is provided by several sources for consideration.

"The Egyptian chariot was distinguished by its lightness of build. It was so reduced in weight that it was possible for a man to carry his chariot on his shoulders without fatigue. The ordinary chariot was made of wood and leather, and had only two occupants, the fighting man and his shield-bearer" (ISBE, Vol. 1, p. 595).

"The Egyptian army comprised large numbers of chariots, each drawn by two horses, with two men, one bearing the shield and driving, the other fully armed. The horses were thoroughbred, renowned for strength and spirit" (Barnes, p. 38).

"According to the most authentic accounts we have of war chariots, they were frequently drawn by two or by four horses, and carried three persons: one was charioteer, whose business it was to guide the horses, but he seldom fought; the second chiefly defended the charioteer; and the third alone was properly the combatant" (Clarke, p. 369).

Pharaoh hardened his heart yet again. He gathered a large army and pursued the Israelites. Meanwhile, the Israelites were unaware of the gathering storm which would overtake them. **"the children of Israel went out with an high hand"** This writer's opinion is that this means they left Egypt with their heads held high, not sneaking out, but leaving in somewhat of an haughty, defiant manner.

"Pharaoh...overtook them encamping by the sea" This action pinned them to the sea. They had no humanly devised way to escape. This will be the second time water is used by GOD to deliver His people. (1) Noah and his family were delivered by water. (2) The Israelites will be delivered from Egyptian bondage by water, while Pharaoh and his host will be destroyed. Christians are also delivered by water from sin and the destruction which will overtake those who refuse to submit to GOD and His means for washing their sins away.

"Jesus Christ, Who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Revelation 1:5, emphasis mine, RK).

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16, emphasis mine, RK).

Water itself is not what saved Noah, the Israelites, or man today. Obedience to GOD is what provides the salvation. Noah could have chosen not to build the ark, and he would not have floated to safety, but drowned like the rest of the rebellious world. Israel could have refused to cross the bed of the Red Sea as GOD instructed and been destroyed by the Egyptians. Man, in this last time, can refuse to obey the command of GOD to be immersed in order to have his sins forgiven and suffer regret for eternity.

Ex. 14:10-14 “And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.”

“And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto Jehovah. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to bring us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we spake unto thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it were better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which He will work for you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. Jehovah will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” (ASV)

“And Pharaoh hath drawn near, and the sons of Israel lift up their eyes, and lo, the Egyptians are journeying after them, and they fear exceedingly, and the sons of Israel cry unto Jehovah. And they say unto Moses, Because there are no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in a wilderness? what is this thou hast done to us--to bring us out from Egypt? Is not

this the word which we spake unto thee in Egypt, saying, Cease from us, and we serve the Egyptians; for better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in a wilderness? And Moses saith unto the people, Fear not, station yourselves, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which He doth for you to-day; for, as ye have seen the Egyptians to-day, ye add no more to see them—to the age; Jehovah doth fight for you, and ye keep silent.” (YLT)

Why did the Israelites panic when they saw the Egyptian army? Had not GOD protected them as the plagues, one after the other, devastated Egypt? Did they forget the greatest of the plagues, when all of the firstborn of Egypt died, but not their firstborn? Maybe they thought He had used up all of His power and now could not save them. O ye of little faith.

“Our fathers understood not Thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of Thy mercies; but provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red sea. Nevertheless He saved them for His name's sake, that He might make His mighty power to be known. He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so He led them through the depths, as through the wilderness” (Psalm 106:7-9).

From a purely human standpoint, their panic can be understood. As they saw it, they were trapped with no way out. But as the passage in Psalms above shows, they had no right to feel and react the way they did. It is interesting to note that the first thing they did when they saw the Egyptians was to cry out to the Lord. But their cry to the Lord is seen as a cry of unbelief, as shown by their next words to Moses.

“Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?” The idea seems to be, *“We could have been buried in Egypt just as well as out here, without all this trouble.”* When Moses first came back to Egypt to free them, they rejoiced, until the first set-back was seen. It was then that they turned on him and told him to leave them alone. Now, when things to human eyes seemed hopeless, they were again saying, *“Better to be an Egyptian slave than dead.”*

“Fear ye not, stand still...hold your peace” Moses basically told them to shut up and stop their complaining. He told them to open their eyes and watch GOD give them the victory. **“The LORD shall fight for you.”** He told them that, after this day, they would not see Pharaoh or his soldiers again.

“While the Israelites will see the dead bodies of the Egyptians, the inner man will have gone and thus in reality they will not be seen after the present day” (Zerr, p. 131).

When man's spirit leaves his body, that man is no longer on the earth. The outer shell in which he lived is

left to return to the earth from which it came. Since the inner man lives on, this shows one that the inner being is of far more importance than the outer shell he inhabited. That being the case, **Why does man tend to spend so much time trying to beautify the outward body and not the inner man?** He strives to make himself beautiful, i.e., pleasing to the eye of his fellow man; but he mostly neglects making himself beautiful to GOD's eyes.

Ex. 14:15-18 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto Me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get Me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten Me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen."

"And Jehovah said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto Me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. And lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go into the midst of the sea on dry ground. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall go in after them: and I will get Me honor upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have gotten Me honor upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen." (ASV)

"And Jehovah saith unto Moses, What? thou criest unto Me--speak unto the sons of Israel, and they journey; and thou, lift up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand towards the sea, and cleave it, and the sons of Israel go into the midst of the sea on dry land. And I--lo, I am strengthening the heart of the Egyptians, and they go in after them, and I am honoured on Pharaoh, and on all his force, on his chariots, and on his horsemen; and the Egyptians have known that I am Jehovah, in My being honoured on Pharaoh, on his chariots, and on his horsemen." (YLT)

The prayer of Moses on this occasion is not recorded, but GOD's answer is. In a sense, GOD was saying, *"Stop talking to me and command the people of Israel to go forward."* Moses could have interrupted and said, *"How can we go forward? The Sea blocks our path!"* But his faith did not waver. He listened as GOD told him to part the sea so that his people could walk across on dry ground. This writer likes the description

given by Coy Roper here.

"Israel was 'between a rock and a hard place'...They had Pharaoh's army behind them, the desert on both sides of them, and the Red Sea in front of them. What were they to do? God said, 'Go forward'" (Roper, p. 228).

There is a lesson to be learned here for all followers of GOD throughout time. One is simply to obey GOD, no matter how difficult the situation in which he may find himself. Instead of sitting down and whining about what appears to be an impossible task imposed upon one by GOD — keep moving forward! Keep moving toward the eternal home! Never give up! GOD has given his servants all of the instructions they need (2 Timothy 3:16-17), and He expects "us" to keep moving forward, ever pressing toward the goal. When his servants do their part, He will do His part!

How will Israel be able to escape Pharaoh? **"lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it"** Would it not have caused one's jaw to drop in amazement to have seen the results? The skeptic would declare that nothing would happen when Moses lifted that rod. But even he would have had to be amazed at what did happen. One can only imagine the amazement of Pharaoh and the Egyptians when GOD removed the pillar which stood between them and the Israelites. **The Israelites were not there! Where were they?**

A few promises were made to Moses in verses seventeen and eighteen. (1) Israel would walk on dry ground through the sea. (2) Pharaoh's heart would be hardened (*"to strengthen"* – BDB) again. (3) Pharaoh would attempt to follow them. (4) Pharaoh and his army would be destroyed. These actions would cause the honor of GOD to be upheld to all who heard of these events, and His name would be glorified throughout the earth. As will be seen later, after many years of wandering in the wilderness, the inhabitants of the land of Canaan all remembered what GOD did on this day. Consider carefully the words **"I will get me honour upon Pharaoh."** Who would die in the Red Sea? Pharaoh, as well as his charioteers and horsemen. The day is coming when Satan and his cohorts will never trouble GOD's people again, when he will not be one who **"walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"** (1 Peter 5:8). The victory will be complete — GOD's honor and glory will be upheld eternally.

Ex. 14:19-22 "And the angel of GOD, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came

between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.”

“And the angel of GOD, who went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud removed from before them, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud and the darkness, yet gave it light by night: and the one came not near the other all the night. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and Jehovah caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.” (ASV)

“And the messenger of GOD, Who is going before the camp of Israel, journeyeth and goeth at their rear; and the pillar of the cloud journeyeth from their front, and standeth at their rear, and cometh in between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and the cloud and the darkness are, and He enlighteneth the night, and the one hath not drawn near unto the other all the night. And Moses stretcheth out his hand towards the sea, and Jehovah causeth the sea to go on by a strong east wind all the night, and maketh the sea become dry ground, and the waters are cleaved, and the sons of Israel go into the midst of the sea, on dry land, and the waters are to them a wall, on their right and on their left.” (YLT)

The **“angel of GOD,”** the messenger of GOD, is thought by many (as well as this writer) to be the Lord Jesus Christ. On their journey thus far, the angel had moved before them, but on this occasion He moved to the rear of the Israelites. The purpose was to provide a barrier between the two groups. Consider that the cloud separated them, yet it gave both light and darkness. To the Egyptians it gave darkness. They could not see what was happening. But it gave light to the Israelites. **Has consideration been given as to why light was needed by the Israelites?** GOD led them by the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. While the Egyptians were being held at bay by the cloud, the Israelites were crossing the Red Sea. It apparently took all night for the Israelites to cross. If this statement be doubted, ask when it was that GOD destroyed the Egyptians. Verse twenty-four tells one it was in the

“morning watch.” The word **“morning”** comes from the Hebrew word boqer, which is defined by Strong as **“dawn”** and BDB as **“morning, break of day.”**

GOD separated the waters of the Red Sea, and Israel had only one option for escape — go forward. They did this on dry ground. Under natural circumstances, one would not have been able to cross on dry ground for many days, if not weeks. It was not just the parting of the waters that was miraculous. The dry ground upon which they trod was a miracle. Again, to achieve safety, the Israelites had to follow GOD’s instructions by going forward. By moving through this alley way, they were protected on the north and south by the water, on the west by the cloud. There was just one narrow way of escape for those who would obey GOD. This has always been the case.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Ex. 14:23-25 “And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians.”

“And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass in the morning watch, that Jehovah looked forth upon the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and discomfited the host of the Egyptians. And he took off their chariot wheels, and they drove them heavily; so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for Jehovah fighteth for them against the Egyptians.” (ASV)

“And the Egyptians pursue, and go in after them (all the horses of Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen) unto the midst of the sea, and it cometh to pass, in the morning watch, that Jehovah looketh unto the camp of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubleth the camp of the Egyptians, and turneth aside the wheels of their chariots, and they lead them with difficulty, and the Egyptians say, Let us flee from the face of Israel, for Jehovah is fighting for them against the Egyptians.” (YLT)

At some point, GOD removed the pillar of cloud, at

which time the Egyptians continued their pursuit of the Israelites. This writer has often wondered about their amazement as they viewed the place where Israel had been encamped — it was empty. Ahead, they saw a path through the sea, and — possibly way ahead of that — they saw the Israelites on the other side. Pharaoh led his whole army into the middle of the Red Sea.

“morning watch”

“The night was divided into four watches beginning at six O’clock (as we count it) in the evening and going to six in the morning. Thus the four watches began respectively at 6, 9, 12.

3. The one beginning at 3 would be the morning watch” (Zerr, p. 132).

It was during this morning watch that GOD looked down upon the Egyptians and troubled them. Their chariots began to break down when He removed the wheels (sur wur — *“to turn aside, depart,”* BDB). A few wheels coming off would have been understandable, but so many was another of the miracles in this incident. Such would have caused confusion to reign among them, and too late they realized what was happening. GOD had done this, and they were doomed. They wanted to flee, but it was too late. Before they died, they understood something — the Lord was fighting for Israel; thus, they had no hope of victory. Today, one must understand that there will be a time when the rebellious will have no more time to repent — it will be too late. All will know beyond any doubt that GOD is the supreme ruler Who meant what He said.

“As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to GOD” (Romans 14:11).

Ex. 14:26-31 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the

people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and His servant Moses.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and Jehovah overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, even all the host of Pharaoh that went in after them into the sea; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. And Israel saw the great work which Jehovah did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared Jehovah: and they believed in Jehovah, and in His servant Moses.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand toward the sea, and the waters turn back on the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen. And Moses stretcheth out his hand towards the sea, and the sea turneth back, at the turning of the morning, to its perennial flow, and the Egyptians are fleeing at its coming, and Jehovah shaketh off the Egyptians in the midst of the sea, and the waters turn back, and cover the chariots and the horsemen, even all the force of Pharaoh, who are coming in after them into the sea--there hath not been left of them even one. And the sons of Israel have gone on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters are to them a wall, on their right and on their left; and Jehovah saveth Israel in that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel seeth the Egyptians dead on the sea-shore, and Israel seeth the great hand with which Jehovah hath wrought against the Egyptians, and the people fear Jehovah, and remain steadfast in Jehovah, and in Moses His servant.” (YLT)

These verses are a summary of the destruction of the Egyptian army. GOD had had enough of the Egyptians and ordered Moses to stretch forth his hand toward the sea. When Moses did so, the walls of water collapsed, and all the Egyptians died — **“there remained not so much as one of them.”** Here it might be pointed out that skeptics who try to remove the miracles of this chapter say that the Israelites crossed the “Reed Sea,” i.e., a swampy area to the north of the Red Sea. Note the excellent comment of Coffman here.

“The picture here is not of some marsh covered with reeds, or some type of shallow swamp, but of a body of water called a ‘sea’ seventeen times in the 31 verses of this chapter” (Coffman, p. 195).

The contrast in verse twenty-nine is that the Israelites walked in safety with GOD. The Egyptians, on the other hand, walked against GOD to their own destruction. GOD was with the one and against the

other. Safety cannot to be found walking with the enemies of GOD.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish” (Psalm 1).

What were the results of all of these miracles? The Israelites saw the cloud’s separating them from the Egyptians, the parting of the sea at the command of Moses, the dry ground upon which they fled, and the dead bodies of their enemies — all of this with their own eyes. This caused not only fear, but faith as well, in GOD and His servant Moses.

“The people’s trust in Moses, both before and after this time, was closely linked to their faith in God. To believe Moses’ words was to believe God; to believe in God was to believe in — to have trust and confidence in — Moses, the one whom God had appointed to lead His people” (Roper, p. 233).

Considering the remarks of Roper above, when they rebelled against Moses, they rebelled against GOD Who guided Moses. **Why?** Because they had lost their faith in GOD.

Exodus Chapter Fifteen

Ex. 15:1 “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.”

“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto Jehovah, and spake, saying, I will sing unto Jehovah, for He hath triumphed gloriously: The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.” (ASV)

“Then singeth Moses and the sons of Israel this song to Jehovah, and they speak, saying: I sing to Jehovah, For triumphing He hath triumphed; The horse and its rider He hath thrown into the sea.” (YLT)

Note that Moses and the children of Israel sang a song which told about the events of their deliverance. Further, it was a song of praise to GOD for His wonderful care for them. Their enemies had tried to destroy them, but GOD would not, and will not today, allow His people to perish from the earth. Consider also that, as they sang this song in the future, it would accomplish exactly what GOD intended. It taught future generations and brought to their remembrance GOD’s care for His people.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16).

They sang not simply about the triumph of GOD. They declared what He did to the Egyptians. He **“triumphed gloriously”** signifies a complete triumph. **How?** He hath **“thrown into the sea”** those who opposed Him.

“An alternative rendition of this is, ‘He is gloriously glorified’” (Coffman, p. 202).

There will be several poetic allusions throughout this song regarding His destruction of the Egyptians. Moses and the Israelites gave recognition in this song the One to Who saved them. Not one word is said about “we” saved ourselves. They glorified their Savior.

Ex. 15:2 “The LORD is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my GOD, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father’s GOD, and I will exalt Him.”

“Jehovah is my strength and song, And He is become my salvation: This is my GOD, and I will praise Him; My father’s GOD, and I will exalt Him.” (ASV)

“My strength and song is JAH, And He is become my salvation:

This is my GOD, and I glorify Him; GOD of my father, and I exalt Him.” (YLT)

This song presents a picture of the sovereign power of GOD. It will show characteristics of Him, some of which people do not want to consider as belonging to GOD (anger, a man of war, a GOD of judgment). He is both the One who gives Man the ability to sing and the One to Whom one should sing songs of praise. The singers recognized the strength which GOD alone could give them. When GOD’s people face difficulties in life, no matter what kind or where those difficulties may come from, if they will genuinely turn their reliance upon GOD, GOD can take care of them.

“prepare him an habitation” This was not talking about the Tabernacle (and later the Temple) which would be built for the Lord. This speaks of welcoming Him into their hearts. They prepared an habitation in their hearts for him. Barnes said it this way, *“I will make him be welcome with me as if it were his home”* (p. 133). At this point, they had not envisioned a Tabernacle or any other humanly made structure.

“Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for GOD is my defence, and the GOD of my mercy” (Psalm 59:17).

“For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt Thou compass him as with a shield” (Psalm 5:12).

Ex. 15:3 “The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is His name.”

“Jehovah is a man of war: Jehovah is His name.” (ASV)

“Jehovah is a man of battle; Jehovah is His name.” (YLT)

GOD’s nature is simply not one of salvation, mercy and forgiveness. Here He is pictured as a man of war, the Lord of hosts (armies).

“And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there” (1 Samuel 1:3).

GOD had promised the Israelites that He would fight for them, which implies conquering their enemies, not simply fighting with an uncertain outcome.

“The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace” (Exodus 14:14).

GOD demonstrated that He was a warrior by defeating the Egyptians in the present text. In the future, He would be seen as such many times (against Amalek, Ex. 17:9; all the enemies in Canaan, Deut. 20:4; etc.). Friend, GOD still fights for His people today – not in the same ways He fought for them then. Nevertheless, He still stands firm for His people.

GOD is not a man of war simply for war's sake. His people should not look at war as something to be relished and desired. Yet, when the faith must be defended, they must stand firm against all enemies of the truth. Though GOD does not make war simply to make war, it should be recognized that, when GOD does go to war, He is the ultimate warrior, a warrior Who can never be defeated. When GOD is pictured as a conquering warrior, it is always for the purpose of destroying stubborn people who refuse to recognize His authority.

"Israel failed to understand that the war in which Jehovah was and is eternally engaged is by no means an exclusively carnal and military operation. 'This is not a war against people; it is the continuing battle against evil'" (Coffman, p. 203).

The Egyptians may have thought that GOD did not mean what He said (just as many do today). But GOD has never made a promise, or given a command, which He did not mean.

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

It should also be considered that GOD has never taken delight in the overthrow and destruction of those who have made themselves His enemies. When GOD sent the flood upon the earth to destroy wicked men, it grieved Him.

"it repented the LORD that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them" (Genesis 6:6-9, emphasis mine, RK).

"As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel" (Ezekiel 33:11, emphasis mine, RK)?

Ex. 15:4-5 "Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone."

"Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea; And His chosen captains are sunk in the Red Sea. The deeps cover them: They went down into the depths like a stone." (ASV)

"Chariots of Pharaoh and his force He hath cast into the sea; And the choice of his captains Have sunk in the Red Sea! The depths do cover them; They went down into the depths as a stone." (YLT)

All of Pharaoh's army was destroyed in the sea, all of his soldiers, including his chosen captains (possibly many of his advisors as well). They sank as a stone (**"as lead,"** v. 10), which may have been due to their armor. One can only imagine the terror which would have been experienced by them as they were tossed around in the swirling waters. They could have escaped this death, but, alas, they now had no time to escape – their destruction was complete.

Ex. 15:6-8 "Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of Thine excellency Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee: Thou sentest forth Thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble."

"Thy right hand, O Jehovah, is glorious in power, Thy right hand, O Jehovah, dasheth in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of Thine excellency Thou overthrowest them that rise up against Thee: Thou sendest forth Thy wrath, it consumeth them as stubble." (ASV)

"Thy right hand, O Jehovah, Is become honourable in power; Thy right hand, O Jehovah, Doth crush an enemy. And in the abundance of Thine excellency Thou throwest down Thy withstanders, Thou sendest forth Thy wrath--It consumeth them as stubble." (YLT)

The **"right hand"** is a symbol often used in the Scriptures to describe might, power and strength. The sovereign of the universe has the right and the obligation from His character to destroy those who disobey Him.

"dashed in pieces" This is a primitive root which means to *"break in pieces"* or to *"shatter."* This shows that the destruction was complete.

"Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee" Interestingly, the text does not mention that the Egyptians rose up against the Israelites. **Why?** Consider here what is said in Psalm 51:4.

"Against thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest" (emphasis mine, RK).

One may indeed sin against another human being. But, ultimately, all sin is against GOD and Him only! **Why can this be said?** Because it is one's sins against GOD which cause Him to lose his soul. Because man sins against GOD, He will breathe out his destruction upon him like a mighty wind which one cannot stand against. GOD did not destroy the Egyptian host because He felt like it, but because of their continual rebellion.

Let one consider again, for a moment, the statement made by the Psalmist — **“Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned.”** In Matthew 18:23-35, one finds Jesus telling of a king which represents GOD. This king had a servant who owed him an enormous sum which was absolutely impossible to repay (over 22 billion dollars today). The king forgave him the entire debt. This servant went out and found a fellow servant who owed him about \$15.00. Yet, he would not forgive him the debt, neither would he give him time to repay the debt. Jesus taught this lesson after Peter had asked how often he should forgive someone who sinned against him. The sins everyone of us have committed are like the first servant’s debt, absolutely “unpayable.” Yet, GOD forgives our sins when we ask Him for forgiveness, as long as our heart is right. The debt (sin) of the second servant against a fellow servant is inconsequential in comparison to the sin committed against GOD. If one is not willing to forgive the infinitely small sin of his brother, how can he even begin to think his overwhelming sins against GOD can be forgiven.

“Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned”

“Thou sentest forth Thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble” Stubble is the heavy part of the stalk, which, unlike chaff, sinks when the wind blows. Yet, like chaff, it is of little value, fit only for starting a fire.

Ex. 15:8-10 “And with the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.”

“And with the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were piled up, The floods stood upright as a heap; The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; My desire shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them: They sank as lead in the mighty waters.” (ASV)

“And by the spirit of Thine anger Have waters been heaped together; Stood as a heap have flowings; Congealed have been depths In the heart of a sea. The enemy said, I pursue, I overtake; I apportion spoil; Filled is my soul with them; I draw out my sword; My hand destroyeth them: – Thou hast blown with Thy wind The sea hath covered them; They sank as lead in mighty waters.” (YLT)

The present verses show that the Egyptians had lost all ability to reason correctly. Common sense should have told them that the One who had the ability to cause the waters to stand up, making a highway for the Israelites to escape, could also cause the waters to come crashing down. All they could think about, all they were consumed with, was materialism — the **“spoil”** which would be obtained. They were consumed with vengeance — destroy these Israelites. They had reached a point of no return, pursuing the Israelites into the sea, and sank as does a piece of lead in the sea.

Ex. 15:11-13 “Who is like unto Thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out Thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation.”

“Who is like unto Thee, O Jehovah, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out Thy right hand, The earth swallowed them. Thou in Thy lovingkindness hast led the people that Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength to Thy holy habitation.” (ASV)

“Who is like Thee among the gods, O Jehovah? Who is like Thee—honourable in holiness—Fearful in praises—doing wonders? Thou hast stretched out Thy right hand—Earth swalloweth them! Thou hast led forth in Thy kindness The people whom Thou hast redeemed. Thou hast led on in Thy strength Unto Thy holy habitation.” (YLT)

“Who is like unto Thee, O LORD, among the gods?” This is not a statement that there truly are “other gods.” GOD had proven that those whom people proclaimed as gods did not exist. The above question’s answer is obvious — no one!

Why is there no one like GOD? (1) No one is like Him in holiness. (2) No one can command the praise which is due Him. (3) No one can do the wonders (miracles) which He does. No thing or imaginary being can do what GOD had done.

“the earth swallowed them” Previously, it was said that the water swallowed them. Now it is the earth. The word “earth” includes every aspect of the planet on which life is found. Some have thought that this may be a reference to an earthquake, where the earth opened up and swallowed them [as was done to Korah and those who followed him (Numbers 16:32-33)]. Some also see an allusion here to the Egyptians’ being carried into Sheol by the waters.

Verse thirteen shows the mercy of GOD toward those who obeyed Him. This mercy was not shown to them because they were perfect. It was shown in spite of the weakness they had exhibited before GOD opened the sea for their escape. GOD's mercy was shown because they obeyed when He said go forward.

The word **“redeemed”** is interesting, because it is usually thought of as having to do with buying back, paying a price to get something or someone back. Webster shows that the word can also mean to get something back through the use of force. GOD had indeed used force to humble the Egyptians into letting His people go. Further, He used force in causing the Red Sea to part, allowing His people to escape, and then used force to cause the waters to destroy the Egyptians.

“thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation” Some believe this is a reference to Mount Sinai (cf. Deuteronomy 33:2). Others believe it a reference to the land of Canaan to which GOD was guiding them.

Ex. 15:14-16 “The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which Thou hast purchased.”

“The peoples have heard, they tremble: Pangs have taken hold on the inhabitants of Philistia. Then were the chiefs of Edom dismayed; The mighty men of Moab, trembling taketh hold upon them: All the inhabitants of Canaan are melted away. Terror and dread falleth upon them; By the greatness of Thine arm they are as still as a stone; Till Thy people pass over, O Jehovah, Till the people pass over that Thou hast purchased.” (ASV)

“Peoples have heard, they are troubled; Pain hath seized inhabitants of Philistia. Then have chiefs of Edom been troubled: Mighty ones of Moab--Trembling doth seize them! Melted have all inhabitants of Canaan! Fall on them doth terror and dread; By the greatness of Thine arm They are still as a stone, Till Thy people pass over, O Jehovah; Till the people pass over Whom Thou hast purchased.” (YLT)

These verses basically deal with the future and how the people of Canaan, whose land they were to inherit, would react to Israel. Not only would they hear about what GOD did for them to the Egyptians, they would

also hear about the things done for them in the wilderness. They are going to be afraid of them — No — they would be terrified! Consider the events of Joshua 2:9-11 and multiply their thinking by the nations living in Canaan.

“And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your GOD, He is GOD in heaven above, and in earth beneath” (Joshua 2:9-11).

Verse sixteen points to the crossing of the Jordan River by the Israelites. The inhabitants of the land would simply stand by while Israel began its invasion. Another possibility is that, when the men were circumcised just after they crossed the Jordan River (Joshua 5), instead of attacking during that time when they would have been unable to defend themselves, they did nothing. This writer believes it speaks of a combination of the two events.

Ex. 15:17-19 “Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established. The LORD shall reign for ever and ever. For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.”

“Thou wilt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, The place, O Jehovah, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, The sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established. Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever. For the horses of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and Jehovah brought back the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel walked on dry land in the midst of the sea.” (ASV)

“Thou dost bring them in, And dost plant them In a mountain of Thine inheritance, A fixed place for Thy dwelling Thou hast made, O Jehovah; A sanctuary, O Lord, Thy hands have established; Jehovah reigneth—to the age, and for ever! For the horse of Pharaoh hath gone in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and Jehovah turneth back on them the waters of the sea, and the sons of Israel have gone on dry land in the midst of the sea.” (YLT)

These verses show what would happen because of the deliverance GOD gave them by destroying the Egyptians. They would inherit the land GOD promised to Abraham. There are two general ideas as to what the sanctuary is: (1) Mount Moriah or (2) the entire land of Canaan. A sanctuary is not simply a sacred place. It is also a place of safety. Immediately GOD brought them to Mount Sinai, which indeed seems to fill part of the promise, but it could not be the complete fulfillment. That could only be ultimately fulfilled when they dwelt in this sanctuary. This was indeed a place of safety for the Israelites, a place where GOD would protect them because He was with them.

The promise to Abraham was a land wherein his descendants could dwell in peace and safety as long as they obeyed Him.

“He brought them to the border of His sanctuary, even to this mountain, which His right hand had purchased. He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents” (Psalm 78:54-55).

Later, the term would be used exclusively for the Temple which was built on Mount Moriah. But in the present text, these terms only seem to indicate a place of safety, a place for the refuge of GOD’s people.

Verse nineteen is a repetition of the destruction of the forces of Pharaoh’s army. It is again being emphasized why they are rejoicing and may be a continuation of the narrative after the major portion of this song was recorded. This verse also gives the strongest argument for the death of Pharaoh with his army — **“the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea.”**

Ex. 15:20-22 “And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.”

“And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to Jehovah, for He hath triumphed gloriously; The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. And Moses led Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.” (ASV)

“And Miriam the inspired one, sister of Aaron, taketh the timbrel in her hand, and all the women go out after her, with timbrels and with choruses; and Miriam answereth to them: – Sing ye to Jehovah, For Triumphant He hath triumphed; The horse and its rider He hath thrown into the sea! And Moses causeth Israel to journey from the Red Sea, and they go out unto the wilderness of Shur, and they go three days in the wilderness, and have not found water,” (YLT)

Several things are seen in this text about Miriam. (1) She is called a prophetess. A prophet was one who spoke for another, particularly for GOD. A prophetess was a female prophet. Miriam was one only of a handful of prophetesses seen in the Old Testament (cf. Numbers 12:1-2; Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14; Isaiah 8:3). (2) She was the sister of Aaron, which by implication made her the sister of Moses (Numbers 26:59). The wording here also implies that she, like Aaron, was not on the same level as Moses. GOD made Moses the leader of Israel, with Aaron and Miriam as servants to Moses. (3) Miriam seems to be a leader of the women.

“all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances” A timbrel is a small, round, hand-held drum. It appears from various writers that these timbrels may not have had small jingly pieces of metal attached to them, as is known today. Regarding the word **“dances,”** note what Fields said about that.

“The Hebrew women and men danced on occasions of victory (1 Sam. 18:6) and on special religious holidays (Judges 21:21; Psalm 30:11; 150:4; 2 Sam. 6:14). These dances seem to have been practiced by each sex alone, and hardly resemble our modern social dancing, which is more like the evil dancing referred to in Job 21:7, 11, and is spoken of in the New Testament as ‘reveling’ (Gal. 5:21; 1 Pet. 4:3)” (Fields, p. 329).

All of this celebration was done to give honor and glory to GOD, because He gave them their victory.

After celebrating GOD’s great victory, verse twenty-two gives the beginning of their long journey after crossing the Red Sea. They went out into the wilderness of Shur. **“Shur”** means **“wall.”**

“This name belongs to the whole district between the northeastern frontier of Egypt and Palestine” (Barnes, p. 42).

According to Numbers 33:8, this area was also known as the wilderness of Etham. For three days they traveled and found no water. Their sheep and other animals would have probably been desperate for water, not counting their own thirst.

Ex. 15:23-24 “And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?”

“And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?” (ASV)

“and they come in to Marah, and have not been able to drink the waters of Marah, for they are bitter; therefore hath one called its name Marah. And the people murmur against Moses, saying, What do we drink?” (YLT)

They finally reached a place which they called **“Marah”** (*“bitter”* or *“bitterness”*). It is possible that the Israelites gave this place its name, or as one writer thought, maybe it was only known to them by this name. There was water there, but it was so bitter that they could not drink it. One can only imagine how they must have felt: tired, thirsty, and now disappointed. **What did they do?** THEY MURMURED [*“murmured”* — {loon} leen — *“to grumble, complain, murmur”* (BDB)]! Things were not going the way they had envisioned them, so they complained against their leader. This was pretty much a characteristic of the Israelites during this period — whiners and complainers. Sadly, it is quite common in every age. GOD’s people must learn to be content with what they have, to learn patience. Things will not always work out the way one thinks they should.

“the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages” (Luke 3:14, emphasis mine, RK).

“And having food and raiment let us be therewith content” (1 Timothy 6:8, emphasis mine, RK).

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5, emphasis mine, RK).

“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Philippians 4:11, emphasis mine, RK).

Note that contentment is learned; therefore, it is not a natural condition.

Murmuring has been condemned by GOD in all ages. **Why?** Because it shows a lack of faith in GOD to provide for man’s needs (cf. Matthew 6:33). Their murmuring got so bad that, eventually, they were not allowed to enter the promised land. For some, it led to their absolute destruction by GOD’s hand.

“Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer” (1 Corinthians 10:10).

Ex. 15:25-26 “And he cried unto the LORD; and the

LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them, And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy GOD, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee."

"An he cried unto Jehovah; And Jehovah showed him a tree, and he cast it into the waters, and the waters were made sweet. There He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them; and He said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy GOD, and wilt do that which is right in His eyes, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon thee, which I have put upon the Egyptians: for I am Jehovah that healeth thee." (ASV)

"and he crieth unto Jehovah, and Jehovah sheweth him a tree, and he casteth unto the waters, and the waters become sweet. There He hath made for them a statute, and an ordinance, and there He hath tried them, and He saith, If thou dost really hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy GOD, and dost that which is right in His eyes, and hast hearkened to His commands, and kept all His statutes: none of the sickness which I laid on the Egyptians do I lay on thee, for I, Jehovah, am healing thee." (YLT)

Moses served as a mediator and prophet for the people of Israel. Unlike the Israelites in general, he was not in the habit of grumbling and complaining when trouble came. Instead of whining about the problem, he took the problem to GOD. GOD instructed him to take a certain tree and cast it into the water. When Moses did as GOD commanded, the water was made sweet and drinkable. Clearly this was a miracle, for no tree had the ability to turn undrinkable, bitter water into sweet, drinkable water.

GOD next gave them a prelude to the covenant He was going to give them at Sinai. Note the repetition in this verse:

"If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy GOD...and wilt give ear to His commandments...and wilt do that which is right in His sight...and keep all His statutes."

GOD promised them something **if** they followed the two instructions above: **"I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians."** Some have tried to explain away the word **"diseases"** by saying it meant the plagues, not disease as the word is normally employed. The original word,

machaleh machalah, means “*sickness*” (Strong), “*disease, sickness*” (BDB). From this, it is shown that the plagues GOD sent upon Egypt caused great sickness to come upon them. Consider, as an example the land covered with the dead frogs in that hot climate. The rotting of flesh can cause deadly sicknesses, and that is why dead animals are often disposed of both in nature and by man. That is why human dead are buried.

This is not saying that the Israelites did not have any sicknesses among them. GOD would later give them instructions regarding hygiene and how to deal with various ailments. But if the Israelites would hearken to GOD’s commands, obeying them, then they would not suffer these diseases to the degree that Egypt did. Today, GOD offers exemption from the greatest disease of all — SIN. If man will simply do as the Israelites were commanded to do, i.e., listen to and obey GOD’s laws, the blood of His Son will continually cleanse them of this terrible disease.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Ex. 15:27 “And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.”

“And they came to Elim, where were twelve springs of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees: and they encamped there by the waters.” (ASV)

“And they come to Elim, and there are twelve fountains of water, and seventy palm trees; and they encamp there by the waters.” (YLT)

After leaving Marah, the Israelites next stopped at Elim. Here they found twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees. BDB defines the words “**palm trees**” as “*date palms*.” What a refreshing place this must have been after Marah.

“The water of Elim is as good as that of the Nile, and no where in the Sinai peninsula, except in the wadi Feiran, is it so abundant” (Fields, p. 333).

It is interesting that the twelve springs correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel. The seventy palms trees correspond with the later number of ruling elders of Israel (Sanhedrin).

Exodus Chapter Sixteen

Ex. 16:1-3 “And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to GOD we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

“And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness: and the children of Israel said unto them, Would that we had died by the hand of Jehovah in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” (ASV)

“And they journey from Elim, and all the company of the sons of Israel come in unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month of their going out from the land of Egypt. And all the company of the sons of Israel murmur against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness; and the sons of Israel say unto them, Oh that we had died by the hand of Jehovah in the land of Egypt, in our sitting by the flesh-pot, in our eating bread to satiety—for ye have brought us out unto this wilderness to put all this assembly to death with hunger.” (YLT)

The **“wilderness of Sin”** should not be confused with the “wilderness of Zin.” They are two separate places. Neither should the word **“Sin”** be equated with the common use of the word, i.e., a transgression. This was simply the designation for this region, having nothing to do with the Israelites’ transgression. The location of this area is unknown today, but it is usually considered to be somewhere near Mount Sinai.

The text says they arrived on the fifteenth day of the second month, i.e., the second month of their new calendar. This would have been exactly one month from the time they left Egypt.

Again, the congregation of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron. **What was the problem this time?** They murmured because they did not have flesh to eat

as they had had in Egypt. Any food supplies which they had plundered from the Egyptians had probably run out. Some believe that this context shows that, though Pharaoh was a terrible tyrant, that he had at least fed them well. That assessment is probably open to dispute. It should be remembered that these Israelites were speaking about an abundance when they were probably in the midst of not much food. Under the present circumstances, they probably looked at what little food they had and wished for the small amount which had previously been supplied by Pharaoh. Yet, it may have been that Pharaoh did supply them with plenty of food so that they would have the strength to do his bidding. These people were remembering the “good-old-days,” probably thinking of them as being better than they actually were. *If things had truly been so good in Egypt, why had they been so willing to leave only a month earlier?*

“The people’s hunger apparently blurred their memory of slavery, made them forget their deliverance, and emptied their hearts of gratitude” (Roper, p. 258).

They accused Moses and Aaron of leading them out into the wilderness so that they would all die (murder them). Not simply die, but die specifically from hunger. GOD was the One leading them. If GOD had wanted them to die, He could have left them in Pharaoh’s hands, or He could have abandoned them at the Red Sea when Pharaoh had them trapped, or let them die of thirst at Marah. They might as well have said, *“If GOD wanted to kill us, why did He bring us out here to do it? Why not just kill us in Egypt?”* They also stated that they wished they had died by their **“flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full.”** The idea seems to be, *“We may have died there, but at least there we had plenty to eat.”*

What was their real problem? They did not trust GOD to take care of them. This writer is reminded of some Korean children who were adopted at a young age many years ago by some Americans. At first, though they were well taken care of, and fed well, they would steal food and put it under their pillows, because they did not trust that they would have anything to eat tomorrow. This scribe has been told that this is often the case with orphaned children from third world countries who are given a new life in America. These children, though promised plenty of food tomorrow, did not trust that their new parents would be able to provide it for them. GOD promised the Israelites care, but they did not trust that He could provide. One might say, if he had lived back then, that he would not have questioned GOD’s abilities after all he had seen and experienced.

Would he have trusted GOD? What is one saying about trust when he disobeys GOD?

Ex. 16:4-8 “Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that He heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and what are we, that ye murmur against us? And Moses said, This shall be, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against Him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD.”

“Then said Jehovah unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law, or not. And it shall come to pass on the sixth day, that they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that Jehovah hath brought you out from the land of Egypt; and in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of Jehovah; for that He heareth your murmurings against Jehovah: and what are we, that ye murmur against us? And Moses said, This shall be, when Jehovah shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that Jehovah heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against Jehovah.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Lo, I am raining to you bread from the heavens--and the people have gone out and gathered the matter of a day in its day--so that I try them whether they walk in My law, or not; and it hath been on the sixth day, that they have prepared that which they bring in, and it hath been double above that which they gather day by day. And Moses saith--Aaron also--unto all the sons of Israel, Evening--and ye have known that Jehovah hath brought you out from the land of Egypt; and morning--and ye have seen the honour of Jehovah, in His hearing your murmurings against Jehovah, and what are we, that ye murmur against us? And Moses saith, In Jehovah's giving to you in the evening flesh to eat, and bread in the morning to satiety--in Jehovah's hearing your murmurings, which ye are murmuring against Him, and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against

The people murmured because of a lack of food, and just like at the Red Sea, GOD responded, not by punishing them, but by providing for them. **Is this not an example of GOD’s grace and mercy being shown in the Old Testament?** God told Moses He would send them bread from heaven (manna). Next, GOD gave preliminary instructions regarding this bread. They were to gather only enough for themselves each day. **Why did GOD do this?** It was a test, a test to see if they would obey His instructions. Further, it would teach them to trust His promises. **Did they trust GOD not only to provide for them once, but to do it on a continual basis?** If they did not trust GOD, they would gather more than the prescribed amount.

GOD then told Moses there was an exception to this rule. On the sixth day, they were to gather twice the amount they normally did. Again, a test was involved with these instructions. **Did they believe GOD meant what He said, or did some of them go hungry on the seventh day because they only gathered enough for one day?** Further, Moses told them that they were going to receive flesh to eat in the evening. This was provided to the Israelites as a proof that it was GOD Who brought them out of the land of Egypt. In the morning, when the people saw the manna, they would also see the glory of the Lord because of their murmuring.

In verse two, one is told that the people murmured against Moses and Aaron because of their lack of food. What they did not realize was that their murmuring was not actually against them, but against GOD. The lesson is very plain. When people murmur, complain, and gripe against those who give the instructions of GOD, those who do the work of GOD — they are complaining against GOD. It was GOD who brought them out of Egypt, not Moses (v. 3). They were blaming GOD for their condition. Further, Moses pointed out then, and it applies today, that GOD hears one’s complaining.

Ex. 16:9-10 “And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for He hath heard your murmurings. And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.”

“And Moses said unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before Jehovah; for He hath heard your murmurings. And it came to pass, as Aaron spake

unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of Jehovah appeared in the cloud.” (ASV)

“And Moses saith unto Aaron, Say unto all the company of the sons of Israel, Come ye near before Jehovah, for He hath heard your murmurings; and it cometh to pass, when Aaron is speaking unto all the company of the sons of Israel, that they turn towards the wilderness, and lo, the honour of Jehovah is seen in the cloud.” (YLT)

“The glory mentioned in verse ten was something similar to the glory that appeared in the pillar of fire by night; and here it was a pledge of God’s concern and care for His people” (Coffman, p. 220).

“God’s appearance to the people in Exodus 16 may have been to impress the Israelites with the importance of keeping God’s word. It may also have been to confirm Moses’ and Aaron’s authority in the presence of the people who had complained about them” (Roper, p. 260).

Ex. 16:11-15 “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your GOD. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.”

“And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your GOD. And it came to pass at even, that the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the camp. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness a small round thing, small as the hoar-frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, What is it? For they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them, It is the bread which Jehovah hath given you to eat.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah speaketh unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the sons of Israel; speak unto them, saying, Between the evenings ye eat flesh, and in the morning ye are satisfied with bread, and ye have known that I am Jehovah your GOD. And it cometh to pass in the evening, that the quail cometh up, and covereth the camp, and in the morning there

hath been the lying of dew round about the camp, and the lying of the dew goeth up, and lo, on the face of the wilderness a thin, bare thing, thin as hoar-frost on the earth. And the sons of Israel see, and say one unto another, What is it? for they have not known what it is; and Moses saith unto them, It is the bread which Jehovah hath given to you for food.” (YLT)

Some of the details of GOD’s providing them with flesh and bread are given. The manna came with the dew, and when the dew was gone, the manna remained for the people to gather. It would be good to note that GOD could simply have provided food for them, ready to eat. In both cases, quail and manna, they had to go out and gather the quail and the manna — it was not simply handed to them. They had to do their part or starve.

“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing” (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12).

The word **“manna”** comes from the Hebrew word mân, which means *“whatness”* or *“What is it?”* That this should be shown in the form of a question is easily seen, because the Israelites did not know what it was. Moses had to tell them it was the bread which GOD had promised them.

“Rawlinson translated the Hebrew word here as meaning ‘It is a gift’” (Coffman, p. 221).

Some try to dismiss the manna as being nothing more than a natural event. They will claim that the manna was nothing more than a resinous gum from the tamarisk trees, or the honey-like secretions of insects, or even the substance called “commercial manna” traded by the Arabians today. But there are a number of problems with any of these “explanations.” (1) It appeared only when GOD said it would and had never appeared before. (2) It continued to appear for forty years and then never again. (3) It only appeared for six days of each week. (4) For five days, if they gathered more than they could use, it bred worms and rotted; but that which was gathered on the sixth day did not spoil on the seventh day. (5) The Israelites themselves recognized that this was not a natural phenomenon.

It is noted that only a small part of this text is devoted to the quail. It would seem from the continuing context that this was not a daily event, like the manna. Again, the critics will try to take GOD out of the picture here by claiming it was simply a migration of quail that happened to come at this time. Consider the number of quail it would have taken to feed all of the Israelites. No migration of quail has ever been known with those kinds of numbers. GOD sent the quail in such numbers that

all had flesh to eat (remember that a quail is a small bird which will provide enough for one person).

Ex. 16:16-21 “This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.”

“This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded, Gather ye of it every man according to his eating; an omer a head, according to the number of your persons, shall ye take it, every man for them that are in his tent. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered some more, some less. And when they measured it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. And Moses said unto them, Let no man leave of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and became foul: and Moses was wroth with them. And they gathered it morning by morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.” (ASV)

“This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded: Gather of it each according to his eating, an omer for a poll; and the number of your persons, take ye each for those in his tent. And the sons of Israel do so, and they gather, he who is gathering much, and he who is gathering little; and they measure with an omer, and he who is gathering much hath nothing over, and he who is gathering little hath no lack, each according to his eating they have gathered. And Moses saith unto them, Let no man leave of it till morning; and they have not hearkened unto Moses, and some of them do leave of it till morning, and it bringeth up worms and stinketh; and Moses is wroth with them. And they gather it morning by morning, each according to his eating; when the sun hath been warm, then it hath melted.” (YLT)

In these verses, GOD gave them some rules regarding the manna. The first thing seen is that a portion was assigned for each person — an **“omer.”** **What is an omer?** There are a number of calculations for an omer (anywhere from four to seven pints), but the

fact is that no one today uses the measurement known as an omer. The important thing to remember is that they were not to hoard the manna. They were to depend on GOD to provide for them. **Is that not also a lesson which needs to be taught today?** Man needs to learn to depend on GOD to provide his needs, for indeed GOD does provide what is needed. Jesus taught His disciples to pray for their daily bread (Matthew 6:11; Luke 11:3).

In verses seventeen and eighteen, it is seen that some gathered more than others, and some gathered less. This indicates that if one needed more than another, then that is what he gathered, i.e., until he had an omer — **“they gathered every man according to his eating.”** Yet, Moses gave the instruction that each day’s gathering was to provide only for what was needed that day. None was to be left over until the next day. Their daily bread was supplied each day. Each day they had to gather it (except the seventh day). Thereby GOD taught them two lessons: (1) trust in Him, and (2) the need for daily labor. GOD expected them to take no more than they needed. This reminds one that he is not supposed to worry about tomorrow, but rather trust GOD for the necessities of life.

“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:34).

This does not mean one can be lazy, doing nothing, and expect GOD to hand it to him. It does mean that there will be a way for him to meet his daily needs by doing his part and leaving the rest in the hands of GOD. GOD never intended for welfare societies to exist; and where such does exist, He condemns such.

It is obvious from the text that some did not trust GOD to provide their daily bread. They gathered more than the prescribed amount, and the next day it was rotten and full of worms. They were like many of every generation who put their trust only in what they can see. GOD demands that people walk by faith.

“For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

GOD also had a set time each day for them to gather the manna. It was between the time the dew melted away and before the sunshine became hot. What was not gathered between these times melted away like snow in Mississippi.

Ex. 16:22-26 “And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the

rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.”

“And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which Jehovah hath spoken, Tomorrow is a solemn rest, a holy sabbath unto Jehovah: bake that which ye will bake, and boil that which ye will boil; and all that remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not become foul, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day is a sabbath unto Jehovah: to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.” (ASV)

“And it cometh to pass on the sixth day, they have gathered a second bread, two omers for one, and all the princes of the company come in, and declare to Moses. And he saith unto them, It is that which Jehovah hath spoken of; a rest--a holy sabbath to Jehovah--is to-morrow; that which ye bake, bake; and that which ye boil, boil; and all that is over, let rest for yourselves in charge till the morning. And they let it rest until the morning, as Moses hath commanded, and it hath not stank, and a worm hath not been in it. And Moses saith, Eat it to-day, for to-day is a sabbath to Jehovah; to-day ye find it not in the field: six days ye do gather it, and in the seventh day--the sabbath--in it there is none.” (YLT)

In these verses, instructions are given regarding manna and the sixth and seventh days. Moses had instructed them that they were to gather twice as much as normal on the sixth day. But when he told them this, it appears to have alarmed **“the rulers of the congregation.”** Perhaps they thought the people were gathering too much and that GOD would punish them in some way. If so, how quickly they forgot the instructions given just a few days before. The Israelites were told to prepare the manna as they wished and store the leftovers until the next day. They would not spoil.

They were also told not to look for the manna on the seventh day — it would not be there. Little did they realize that they were being prepared, through obedience to GOD’s instructions, for the giving of the sabbath law.

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus

20:8).

This writer would note that, though there is no sabbath day in the Christian era, it would be good if people would remember the Lord's day and do as little work on that day as possible. Not only was their sabbath day a holy day, but it was also to be a day of rest. Everyone needs a day of rest.

Some have advocated that there has always been a sabbath day which is to be observed in every generation. But consider Nehemiah 9:13-14 just here.

“Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from Heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them Thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses Thy servant” (Nehemiah 9:13-14).

Clearly, the sabbath law was not given until mount Sinai, when GOD told Moses and the people about it. GOD did not give a sabbath day observance to the patriarchal age. He gave it to the Mosaic age, which ended at the cross. And, where no law is given, no obedience is required. For those who would argue that there has always been a sabbath ordinance, pertinent arguments of Coffman are presented below.

- “1. There is no sabbath command in Genesis. Some cite Genesis 29:7 as such, but ‘sabbath’ is not in the passage.*
- 2. The very first occurrence of the word ‘sabbath’ in the entire Bible is right here in verse 23.*
- 3. Furthermore, in this passage, the sabbath is not introduced as The Sabbath, but merely as a rest. Misunderstanding of this has come about because of an unfortunate rendering in the King James Version, which has ‘The rest of Thy Holy Sabbath.’ Rawlinson cited the inaccuracy of this rendition, pointing out that, ‘the absence of the article is a strong indication that the idea is new.’*
- 4. God revealed His sabbath, not to Adam, nor to anyone on the other side of the Flood, not to anyone ever born on earth before Moses, for the prophet of God stated that ‘GOD revealed His holy sabbath through Moses’ (Neh. 9:13-14).*
- 5. Furthermore, the very first revelation of it was ‘in the wilderness,’ as we have in this chapter. Ezekiel wrote: ‘I (God) brought them into the wilderness...and gave them My sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them’ (20:10-12).*
- 6. The sabbath was never a sign between God and all men, but a sign between God and Israel (Ex. 31:17).*
- 7. The reason assigned by God for keeping the sabbath was not the prior existence of the institution, but the deliverance from Egyptian bondage (Deut. 5:15).*
- 8. The prophet Amos foretold that the sabbath would be ‘gone’ when God caused the sun to go down at noon and the earth to be darkened on a clear day (Amos 8:9).*
- 9. Paul categorically declared that the sabbath was ‘nailed’ to the cross of Christ (Col. 2:14).*
- 10. The very name sabbath is Jewish to the core, deriving from the Hebrew word shabbath, meaning rest. This would never have been the case if the sabbath had derived from*

Ex. 16:27-31 "And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws? See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day. And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey."

"And it came to pass on the seventh day, that there went out some of the people to gather, and they found none. And Jehovah said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws? See, for that Jehovah hath given you the sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day. And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey." (ASV)

"And it cometh to pass on the seventh day, some of the people have gone out to gather, and have not found. And Jehovah saith unto Moses, How long have ye refused to keep My commands, and My laws? see, because Jehovah hath given to you the sabbath, therefore He is giving to you on the sixth day bread of two days; abide ye each in his place, no one doth go out from his place on the seventh day. And the people rest on the seventh day, and the house of Israel call its name Manna, and it is as coriander seed, white; and its taste is as a cake with honey." (YLT)

Further evidence is here given that, prior to this time, the Israelites knew nothing about a sabbath. Some of the people did not heed the instructions GOD gave to Moses. They went out from the camp to look for manna — but there was none. Their action caused GOD to ask Moses how long would the people disobey His commands and laws. Later, GOD would institute a penalty for breaking the sabbath law.

"Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people...Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death" (Exodus 31:14; 35:2).

They were also told that, because GOD gave them a double portion on the sixth day, they were not to leave

their place. This is variously understood to mean their tents or the camp of Israel, either of which can be the correct understanding. The people were to rest. It is observed that, at the time GOD said that in this text, there is no command found that they should rest on this day. Instead, they were simply to “abide in their place.”

Verse thirty-one gives one an idea of what the manna looked like (coriander seed) and tasted like (wafers made with honey). That sounds pretty good to this author.

“Coriander seed is in the class of mints with a pleasant taste and fragrance” (Zerr, p. 136).

Ex. 16:32-36 “And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.”

“And Moses said, This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded, Let an omerful of it be kept throughout your generations, that they may see the bread wherewith I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omerful of manna therein, and lay it up before Jehovah, to be kept throughout your generations. As Jehovah commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. And the children of Israel did eat the manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat the manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.” (ASV)

“And Moses saith, This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded: Fill the omer with it, for a charge for your generations, so that they see the bread which I have caused you to eat in the wilderness, in My bringing you out from the land of Egypt. And Moses saith unto Aaron, Take one pot, and put there the fulness of the omer of manna, and let it rest before Jehovah, for a charge for your generations; as Jehovah hath given commandment unto Moses, so doth Aaron let it rest before the Testimony, for a charge. And the sons of Israel have eaten the manna forty years, until their coming in unto the land to be inhabited; the manna they have eaten till their coming in unto the extremity of the land of Canaan. and the omer is a tenth of the ephah.” (YLT)

Now a look into the future was provided for them. Since Moses wrote this book, it would seem quite natural for him to be instructed to give a little bit of information as to the storing of this manna for the knowledge of future generations. The pot of manna was to hold an omer of the manna and be **“laid up before the Lord.”** So Aaron is said to have **“laid it up before the Testimony.”** As will be noticed later in Exodus, **“the Testimony”** referred to tablets of stone upon which the ten commandments were given to Israel (cf. 25:16, 21; 26:33-34; 27:21). Looking ahead, one learns that the pot of manna would be put inside the ark, along with Aaron’s rod that budded.

The text also reveals that GOD continued to give the Israelites the manna for as long as they remained outside of the borders of Canaan.

“And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year” (Joshua 5:12).

“During later centuries the ark was moved about from place to place – from Shiloh to Ebenezer, Ashdod, Gath, Ekron, Beth-shemesh, Kiriath-Jerim, Jerusalem. During that time the jar of manna seems to have been lost, as was Aaron’s budded rod (Num. 17:10). Thus, in Solomon’s time there was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses placed there (1 Kings 8:9)” (Fields, p. 354).

Exodus Chapter Seventeen

Ex. 17:1 “And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink.”

“And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, by their journeys, according to the commandment of Jehovah, and encamped in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink.” (ASV)

“And all the company of the sons of Israel journey from the wilderness of Sin, on their journeyings, by the command of Jehovah, and encamp in Rephidim, and there is no water for the people to drink;” (YLT)

One is reminded that the Israelites moved when GOD demonstrated their need to move or stopped when He told them to stop. This was accomplished by moving the pillar of fire/cloud when the time was right.

A more detailed account of the Israelites' journey from the wilderness of Sin to Rephidim is given in Numbers 33:12-14. There one finds that they also camped at Dophkah and Alush. Apparently, nothing of significance took place in either of these places. It would have been needful for them to stop for a while all along their journey for the sake of their animals.

The name **“Rephidim”** means *“resting”* or *“resting place.”* When they arrived at Rephidim, they found that there was no water.

Ex. 17:2 “Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?”

“Wherefore the people stoved with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why strive ye with me? Wherefore do ye tempt Jehovah?” (ASV)

“and the people strive with Moses, and say, Give us water, and we drink. And Moses saith to them, What? --ye strive with me, what? --ye try Jehovah?” (YLT)

No water, so the Israelites (for the fourth time) did what they did best so far — they **“strove”** with Moses.

“to strive, contend...to conduct a case or suit (legal), sue, to make complaint, to quarrel, to contend against” (BDB); *“The verb translated ‘strove’ (or ‘did chide’ or ‘found fault’) is the Hebrew rib (or riv), meaning to quarrel, strive, or contend”* (Fields, p. 363).

Like so many in every age, instead of looking for help from GOD when trouble came, they looked for

someone to blame. Since Moses held a prominent position of leadership, they vented their anger, frustration and fear on him. One should ask himself if he is akin to the Israelites when troubles come in his life, in society as a whole, or in the church. **Or is one like Moses, who humbly took the problem to GOD?**

Moses asked them why they were complaining against him. He had followed GOD's instructions, and they should have realized this because they saw the cloud, just as he had. Then Moses forced them to realize that, when they quarreled with him as he followed GOD's instructions, they were actually contending or quarreling with GOD. They needed to put their trust in GOD, but it appears that, even though GOD had demonstrated over and over that He would take care of them, they did not trust Him to do so. This principle can also be applied to the church today. When godly elders follow the dictates of GOD, by following His word, and people begin murmuring/complaining, their quarrel is with GOD. When a teacher proclaims the truth of GOD's word and people do not like it, their quarrel is not with him. It is with GOD! People often believe they are simply quarreling with mere men, when in reality they quarrel with GOD. Note what GOD told Samuel when the Israelites later "stood against Samuel," demanding a king.

"And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Samuel 8:7).

"wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?" In what way did they **"tempt"** GOD? The word **"tempt"** is usually thought of as a solicitation to sin. But GOD cannot be tempted to do that which evil.

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of GOD: for GOD cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man" (James 1:13).

Therefore, **"tempt"** must mean something other than soliciting GOD to do evil, i.e., to sin.

"tempt" — *nasah* — *"to test, by implication to attempt: try"* (Strong); *"To test, try, prove, tempt, assay, put to the proof or test"* (BDB).

"The thought of tempting the Lord is to put Him 'on the spot' so to speak. Try out his various attributes; his power, patience, mercy, etc." (Zerr, p. 137).

In essence, they were testing GOD to see if He really would take care of them. GOD had not promised them that their lives would be without hardships when they followed Him. Neither did Christ promise His followers that their lives would be "a bed of roses" because they followed Him. The trials of life prove one and give him

strength (like the fires try metal); they prepare him for the final victory.

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1:2-4).

The Israelites had no control over this situation. They had been led to Rephidim by GOD. It is what they did when they found themselves in this situation that counts. Instead of turning to GOD as they should have, they whined and complained and demanded a solution. They needed a rebuke, and Moses gave it to them.

Ex. 17:3-4 “And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.”

“And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore hast thou brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? And Moses cried unto Jehovah, saying, What shall I do unto this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” (ASV)

“and the people thirst there for water, and the people murmur against Moses, and say, Why is this? —thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to put us to death, also our sons and our cattle, with thirst. And Moses crieth to Jehovah, saying, What do I to this people? yet a little, and they have stoned me.” (YLT)

“the people murmured against Moses” As pointed out already, they thought they were complaining against Moses, but such was not the case.

“murmured” — lun liyn — “(in a bad sense) to be obstinate (especially in {words} to complain” (Strong); “to grumble, complain, cause to grumble” (BDB); “a verb meaning to murmur, to grumble, to howl” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 546).

Part of their murmuring was a charge that Moses had brought them out of Egypt in order to kill them. Further, they charged that he would accomplish this by causing them to die of thirst. They were concerned about their children and animals suffering from such. Moses was no doubt also concerned about the situation in which they found themselves. Unlike them, he was not looking to blame anyone. He put his trust in GOD and knew that GOD would take care of the problem.

“The previous deliverances of the Israelites from Egypt, and at the sea, and at Marah should have produced in them a habit of trusting God in every emergency, and of trusting Moses”

(Fields, p. 363).

While the people wasted their time complaining and threatening GOD's servant, Moses took the problem to GOD. Basically, he asked GOD what needed to be done. It is also noted that the people may have implied or even threatened Moses with stoning.

"God's people must expect to face problems, discomforts, dangers, and tribulations. They must be spiritually prepared to trust God when such experiences arrive" (Fields, p. 364).

Ex. 17:5-7 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?"

"And Jehovah said unto Moses, Pass on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thy hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the striving of the children of Israel, and because they tempted Jehovah, saying, Is Jehovah among us, or not?" (ASV)

"And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Pass over before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel, and thy rod with which thou hast smitten the River take in thy hand, and thou hast gone: Lo, I am standing before thee there on the rock in Horeb, and thou hast smitten on the rock, and waters have come out from it, and the people have drunk. And Moses doth so before the eyes of the elders of Israel, and he calleth the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the strife of the sons of Israel, and because of their trying Jehovah, saying, Is Jehovah in our midst or not?" (YLT)

GOD gave Moses three instructions: (1) Go before the people (lead them), (2) Take the elders of Israel with you, and (3) Take your rod with you. This was to be quite formal in nature. Moses was told to go *"in front of, before, to the front of, in the presence of"* (BDB). In other words, he was to make sure the people saw him with his staff. **Why was he to take the elders with him?** The Israelites were a great nation, and so there were too many of them for all to be eyewitnesses of what was done. But the elders of the people would be able to see

what was said or done, and thus be able to report it to anyone who asked.

Once Moses heard the things GOD commanded above, he was then told to **“go.”** Where was he to go? How would he know when he got to the place where GOD wanted him? GOD told him, **“I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb.”** This was probably done through the pillar of fire, since no man could literally see GOD and live. Once Moses got to the rock, what was he to do?

“thou shalt smite the rock” Moses obeyed the command of GOD; and when he did, water enough for all of Israel and its animals to have plenty of life-giving water flowed.

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

Fields, citing the information in the Psalm passage above, thought the rock was some distance away and outside the camp (**“streams”** and **“rivers”**). Why did GOD make the specific requirements (commands) for Moses on this occasion? It would seem to this writer that it was to make sure that the people understood the personal involvement of GOD and His care for them. Further, there would be no doubt that it was a miracle which had provided this water.

Moses gave this place two names — **“Massah”** and **“Meribah,”** both of which give indication of the events here.

“Massah” — *“temptation”* (BDB); *“testing”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 633); *“temptation or trial”* (Clarke, p. 389); *“tempting or proving”* (Fields, p. 365).

“Meribah” — *“strife or contention”* (BDB); *“quarreling or contention”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 670); *“contention or litigation”* (Clarke, p. 389); *“quarreled”* (Coffman, p. 231); *“strife, chiding or quarreling”* (Fields, p. 365).

Interestingly, there is a specific in verse seven as to what the Israelites were saying to Moses. **“Is the LORD among us, or not?”** They dared to doubt, after all that GOD had done for them, that He was still among them, still caring for them.

“They incorrectly thought that it was God’s business to see to it that His people were rendered marvelously immune to the hazards of existence, time, accident, and environment. And yet, are not Christians today sometimes tempted to doubt the providence of God because of hardships encountered in the way of life” (Coffman, p. 233)?

One other thing which should be addressed is the accusation some make that the incident recorded later at Kedesh was actually the same incident recorded here. The incidents surrounding these **two** events are

very different. Also, it should be considered that the results of these two events were very different for Moses. Here, Moses obviously obeyed GOD exactly. There, Moses disobeyed GOD and payed the price of not being allowed to enter the promised land, the land of Canaan.

Ex. 17:8-9 “Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. ”

“Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.” (ASV)

“And Amalek cometh, and fighteth with Israel in Rephidim, and” (YLT)

The simple statement is made that Amalek came and fought the Israelites. **But who were the Amalekites, and why did they attack the Israelites?** Amalek was the son of Eliphaz, who was in turn the son of Esau (Gen. 36:15-16). This tribe of people (Amalekites) was named after Amalek, the grandson of Esau. It is possible that the leader of the tribe took the name “Amalek,” as the leaders of Egypt had taken the name “Pharaoh.” Thus, the Amalekites were blood relatives of the Israelites. Both groups could trace their lineage directly back to Isaac. It is probable that these hostilities could be traced back to the problems between Jacob and Esau and the “birthright.”

“fought with Israel” It is to be observed that Amalek did not fight against Israel head-on, i.e., a frontal attack.

“Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not GOD” (Deuteronomy 25:17-18, emphasis added).

They attacked them in the rear of the column, where the weak and stragglers would have been. This was cowardly, to say the least. But now to answer the question asked earlier — **Why?** Because they did not fear GOD.

Ex. 17:9-10 “And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of GOD in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.”

“And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill

with the rod of GOD in my hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.” (ASV)

“and Moses saith unto Joshua, Choose for us men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to-morrow I am standing on the top of the hill, and the rod of GOD in my hand. And Joshua doth as Moses hath said to him, to fight with Amalek, and Moses, Aaron, and Hur, have gone up to the top of the height;” (YLT)

Joshua is seen for the first time and is portrayed as a servant of Moses — his right hand man. Later, Joshua would be chosen by GOD to replace Moses as the leader of His people (Deut. 31). At this time, Joshua was chosen to be the military commander of Israel — without any previous military experience. (This old soldier would not want to follow someone into battle who had no previous experience with war.) Joshua did not need experience, since GOD was directing this action. It might also be noted that, in the New Testament, his name in the Greek is the same as Jesus name, “*savior*” (Acts 7:45; Heb. 4:8).

Moses told Joshua to lead the fight against Amalek and that he would go to the top of the hill with the “**rod of GOD.**” Further, it is seen that he did not go alone. Aaron and Hur went with him. Aaron was Moses’ brother, but **who was Hur?** Josephus stated that he was the husband of Miriam, while another tradition says he was Miriam’s son (Cf. Coffman, p. 234). There are three things one may positively know about him. (1) He was a servant to Moses on this occasion. (2) He was the grandfather of Bezaleel, who was the sculptor and artificer of the Tabernacle (Ex. 31:2-5). (3) He was from the tribe of Judah (1 Chron. 2:18-20).

Ex. 17:11-13 “And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.”

“And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; And his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.” (ASV)

“and it hath come to pass, when Moses lifteth up his hand, that Israel hath been mighty, and when he letteth his hands rest, that Amalek hath been mighty. And the hands of Moses are heavy, and they take a stone, and set it under him, and he sitteth on it: and Aaron and Hur have taken hold on his hands, on this side one, and on that one, and his hands are stedfast till the going in of the sun; and Joshua weakeneth Amalek and his people by the mouth of the sword.” (YLT)

What is the significance of Moses’ holding the rod of GOD and lifting his hands? There are two basic views expressed to answer this question. (1) The lifting up of hands was a common position of prayer. This view states that he was involved in prayer; and yet, the rod is never seen elsewhere to be used in an act of prayer. (2) The rod acted as an ensign, or banner, to rally and encourage the troops. In the context, this rod was called the **“rod of GOD,”** and as such, was used by Moses and Aaron to show the power of GOD. As long as Moses held the rod up, Israel was victorious. But when GOD’s rod was lowered, Amalek was victorious. This gave evidence to the Israelites that they did not win this battle by their own power and might. GOD gave them the victory.

“The fact of God’s requiring Moses to do something here (keep his hands up all day) that no man, no matter how young and strong, could possibly do unaided shows that God’s great purposes for His people cannot be achieved through the efforts of leaders alone. They must be supported and aided by others” (Coffman, p. 236).

The term **“discomfited”** is a word, when used in connection with the word **“sword,”** generally indicates heavy casualties.

“discomfited” — *chalash* — “to prostrate; by implication to (overthrow) decay...waste away, weaken” (Strong); “To weaken, disable, prostrate” (BDB); “a verb meaning to lie prostrate, to cause one to lie prostrate” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 346).

Joshua’s troops inflicted heavy casualties, which caused the Amalekites to be weakened to the point that they did not try to attack Israel again for about forty years. Josephus described this event as a near slaughter. Their only means of escape seems to have been the setting of the sun.

Note some lessons which other writers suggest in regard to this incident.

“From this Israel was to learn the lesson, that in all its conflicts with the ungodly powers of the world, strength for victory could only be procured through the incessant lifting of its hands in prayer” (Keil/Delitzsch, p. 81).

“Ponder the mixture of human effort and divine power needed for victory. Israel had to fight, but they won only by the power of God. The dividing line between natural effort and supernatural help is often difficult to pinpoint in our experience”

(Fields, p. 370).

"We may not be personally able to accomplish the work some other is doing, but by assisting him and supporting him in the work, we become partners with him and will receive credit from the Lord for it" (Zerr, p. 138).

"Moses praying on the hill while the people are fighting in the valley is an emblem of (or type) of Christ interceding in the heavenly places for His people struggling upon earth (Heb. 4:14-16)" (Dummelow, p. 65).

Ex. 17:14 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

"And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."
(ASV)

"And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Write this, a memorial in a Book, and set it in the ears of Joshua, that I do utterly wipe away the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens;"
(YLT)

Moses was to record this incident and the prediction that the Amalekites were to be removed from the face of the earth. He was to record it in a book — the Pentateuch which consists of the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). Note that Moses was to **"rehearse"** something to Joshua. **What? The battle?** No, because Joshua had been there. He was to make sure that Joshua knew the declaration of the utter destruction of the Amalekites because they did not fear GOD. Their lack of fear of GOD caused them to attack GOD's people. The same is true in any generation of those who attack GOD's faithful children.

Were the Amalekites destroyed, and (if so) when was this to take place? Approximately four hundred years after the time of Moses, the Israelites rebelled against GOD by demanding a king. GOD told this king, Saul, to utterly destroy (wipe out) the Amalekites.

"Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass"
(1 Samuel 15:3).

But Saul disobeyed GOD. Possibly, this is the reason one finds a descendant of king Agag causing so much trouble for the Jews later on.

"Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them" (Esther. 9:24).

One might also note that Hezekiah also had a role in helping to destroy the Amalekites.

“And some of them, even of the sons of Simeon, five hundred men, went to mount Seir, having for their captains Pelatiah, and Neariah, and Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi. And they smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped, and dwelt there unto this day” (1 Chronicles 4:42-43).

GOD did not promise that the Amalekites would immediately be destroyed, but their destruction should have been completed by Saul.

Critics of the Bible often attack what was declared by GOD here. They maintain that GOD (if there be one) certainly could not be so “cruel” as to wipe out an entire people from the earth. Part of their thinking revolves around the idea of not wanting a day of judgment in the future. They understand that, if there is a day of judgment, then they will be held accountable to the ruler of the universe. What they refuse to recognize is that justice demands accountability — a day of judgment. This is, in part, why one hears such critics talk about the “*myth of the flood*,” for the flood is a powerful reminder of GOD’s justice and judgment against evil.

Ex. 17:15 “And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi:”

“And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi;” (ASV)

“and Moses buildeth an altar, and calleth its name Jehovah-Nissi,” (YLT)

Altars were not always built for the purpose of worship. Sometimes they were built by GOD’s people to commemorate some event, i.e., to act as a reminder to future generations. This altar may have been used for both purposes. Man in every generation builds memorials of events. Take a trip to Washington, D.C. sometime and note the multitude of memorials, both to events and people.

Moses named this altar **“Jehovahnissi,”** which means *“Jehovah is my ensign or banner”* (Clarke, p. 390). Remember the notes in this chapter on an ensign or banner (vv. 11-13). Moses understood that GOD’s people were to fight under the authority and leadership of GOD.

Ex. 17:16 “For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

“And he said, Jehovah hath sworn: Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.” (ASV)

“and saith, Because a hand is on the throne of Jah, war is to Jehovah with Amalek from generation--generation.” (YLT)

Almost all scholars agree that there is a problem with the translation of this verse. No one seems to be able to settle on a translation here with any degree of certainty. But understanding what it basically says is not hard to determine. This verse is a declaration of war by GOD against the Amalakites.

Perhaps the best translation of this passage is in the following attempt by Clarke.

“Because the hand of Amalek is against the throne of God, therefore will I have war with Amalek from generation to generation” (p. 391).

This interpretation is consistent with the tone of what has been previously written, showing why GOD is going to destroy these people utterly. Another translation which has merit is that of Young.

“and saith, Because a hand is on the throne of Jah, war is to Jehovah with Amalek from generation--generation” (YLT)

Again, the basic message is clear: GOD was at war. What a horrible thought to consider — being at war with GOD.

Exodus Chapter Eighteen

Ex. 18:1-6 “When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard of all that GOD had done for Moses, and for Israel His people, and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt; Then Jethro, Moses' father in law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, And her two sons; of which the name of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land: And the name of the other was Eliezer; for the GOD of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh: And Jethro, Moses' father in law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of GOD: And he said unto Moses, I thy father in law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.”

“Now Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that GOD had done for Moses, and for Israel His people, how that Jehovah had brought Israel out of Egypt. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her away, and her two sons; of whom the name of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been a sojourner in a foreign land: and the name of the other was Eliezer; for he said, The GOD of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness where he was encamped, at the mount of GOD: and he said unto Moses, I, thy father-in-law Jethro, am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.” (ASV)

“And Jethro priest of Midian, father-in-law of Moses, heareth all that GOD hath done for Moses, and for Israel His people, that Jehovah hath brought out Israel from Egypt, and Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, taketh Zipporah, wife of Moses, besides her parents, and her two sons, of whom the name of the one is Gershom, for he said, a sojourner I have been in a strange land: and the name of the other is Eliezer, for, the GOD of my father is for my help, and doth deliver me from the sword of Pharaoh. And Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, cometh, and his sons, and his wife, unto Moses, unto the wilderness where he is encamping--the mount of GOD; and he saith unto Moses, I, thy father-in-law, Jethro, am coming unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.” (YLT)

Exodus 2:18 states that Moses' father-in-law's name was Ruel, while here it is shown that he was also called Jethro. He is further designated as **“the priest of Midian.”** One is reminded that it was in Jethro's house where Moses found safety from Pharaoh, was given a wife, and became a shepherd.

“heard of all that GOD had done for Moses, and

for Israel His people” The knowledge of what GOD had done for His people was spread far and wide. Just as GOD had promised (Ex. 15:15-16), this knowledge would cause fear among the people of the land they were to inherit.

“took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back” Nothing is known about Moses' having sent his wife and sons back to Jethro other than what is stated here. They were last mentioned in Exodus 4, where the circumcision of Moses' son was seen. **Did he send them back then or shortly thereafter? Or were they sent back later? Did Moses send them back because they would have hindered him in his work, or possibly because he did not want them to have to face the dangers which were inherent in that work?** It is simply not revealed. No doubt the reunion of Moses' family was a very joyous occasion. With regard to that, Moses' second son with Zipporah is introduced for the first time — Eliezer.

When considering the sons of Moses, it is interesting that almost nothing is known about them. Moses' brother and sister are seen as being involved in prominent positions, but not his sons. Why this is so is not known. GOD had directed the use of Aaron to fill an important position, so it is possible that GOD directed Moses to keep his family in the background. JFB offered the following thought on this matter.

“...instead of advancing family, to keep them back, and fill public offices of honour and responsibility with others” (p. 347).

When did this incident take place? At this point in time, Israel was camped in the shadow of Mount Sinai. Chapter nineteen will begin a long narrative regarding the giving of the law and the incidents surrounding it. Such a narrative was not to be interrupted by the events recorded here.

Ex. 18:7-12 “And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. And Moses told his father in law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the LORD delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, Who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, Who hath delivered the people from under the hand of

the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them. And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for GOD: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father in law before GOD."

"And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him: and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. And Moses told his father-in-law all that Jehovah had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how Jehovah delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which Jehovah had done to Israel, in that He had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be Jehovah, Who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh; Who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods; yea, in the thing wherein they dealt proudly against them. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for GOD: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before GOD." (ASV)

"And Moses goeth out to meet his father-in-law, and boweth himself, and kisseth him, and they ask one at another of welfare, and come into the tent; and Moses recounteth to his father-in-law all that Jehovah hath done to Pharaoh, and to the Egyptians, on account of Israel, all the travail which hath found them in the way, and Jehovah doth deliver them. And Jethro rejoiceth for all the good which Jehovah hath done to Israel, whom He hath delivered from the hand of the Egyptians; and Jethro saith, Blessed is Jehovah, Who hath delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of Pharaoh--Who hath delivered this people from under the hand of the Egyptians; now I have known that Jehovah is greater than all the gods, for in the thing they have acted proudly--He is above them! And Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, taketh a burnt-offering and sacrifices for GOD; and Aaron cometh in, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with the father-in-law of Moses, before GOD." (YLT)

Note the customs of oriental greeting seen here. There was the going out to greet one who was coming to them, the showing of respect through the act of obeisance, and kissing on both cheeks. Then they enquired, much as one does today, about their health, et cetera. Then it is noted that they retired to the tent, probably Moses' tent, where they could relax, possibly take some refreshment, and bring each other up to date on events since they last saw one another. Custom appears to dictate that, in these countries, the person and family was more important than business. This is the way it should be everywhere and in every culture.

Consider that Moses told Jethro **"all that the LORD**

had done.” He did not say all that he or the people had done. He gave the credit where it belonged. The character of Jethro is also shown as a worshiper of GOD — he rejoiced at what GOD had done.

“Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods” A lot of controversy has surrounded these words. Some advocate that it shows that Jethro believed that there were many gods and that GOD was simply greater than all the others. The question this scribe asks is **Why could this not indicate that he was expressing his belief in the one GOD and used this terminology in an accommodative sense?** There is no doubt in this author’s mind that everything seen about Jethro indicates that he was a believer in GOD and in no “other.”

“for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them” **Who dealt proudly?** The “make believe” gods could not act proudly or do anything else. **Why was Pharaoh guilty of sin?** It was his refusal to recognize GOD as the Almighty One, i.e., his pride. The Egyptian people treated the Israelites the way they thought their gods would have them to be treated. They had dealt arrogantly with GOD, as if they were smarter and knew better than He.

After they had caught up on events, Jethro **“took a burnt offering and sacrifices for GOD.”** Critics state that he did not have a right to offer these sacrifices — that the Levites should offer them. They forget something of importance here. The Law of Moses had not been given yet. Therefore, they were still living under the Patriarchal law, wherein the fathers acted as GOD’s priests. Further, GOD described him as **“the priest of Midian”** (Ex. 2:16; 3:1; 18:1). Jethro had every right to offer a burnt offering and sacrifice to GOD on this occasion. Consider Coffman’s words here to which this author fully agrees.

“We believe that he stands, like Melchizedek, a great monolithic witness of the true monotheism which continued to be known (though perhaps imperfectly) on earth during that long and rapid descent of the postdiluvian world into the debaucheries of paganism” (Coffman, p. 244, emphasis added).

The next thing of interest is that after this act of worship was completed, **“Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses’ father in law before GOD.”** GOD allowed many of the sacrifices which were offered to him to be eaten by the offerer. This may be the case here, but this writer believes there may be more to this than simply a meal. Meals were also eaten to seal covenants which were made between people. Consider that in studies of the Bible, there was

a close relationship between the people of Midian (Midianites) and Israel after this time. Was this feast such a meal? Consider who came to this feast – the leaders of Israel.

Ex. 18:13-20 “And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of GOD: When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of GOD, and His laws. And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and GOD shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to GOD-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto GOD: And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.”

“And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood about Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand about thee from morning unto even? And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of GOD: when they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between a man and his neighbor, and I make them know the statutes of GOD, and His laws. And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for the thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and GOD be with thee: be thou for the people to GOD-ward, and bring thou the causes unto GOD: and thou shalt teach them the statutes and the laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.” (ASV)

“And it cometh to pass on the morrow, that Moses sitteth to judge the people, and the people stand before Moses, from the morning unto the evening; and the father-in-law of Moses seeth all that he is doing to the people, and saith, What is this thing which thou art doing to the people? wherefore art thou sitting by thyself, and all the people standing by thee from

morning till evening? And Moses saith to his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to seek GOD; when they have a matter, it hath come unto me, and I have judged between a man and his neighbour, and made known the statutes of GOD, and His laws. And the father-in-law of Moses saith unto him, The thing which thou art doing is not good; thou dost surely wear away, both thou, and this people which is with thee, for the thing is too heavy for thee, thou art not able to do it by thyself. Now, hearken to my voice, I counsel thee, and GOD is with thee: be thou for the people over-against GOD, and thou hast brought in the things unto GOD; and thou hast warned them concerning the statutes and the laws, and hast made known to them the way in which they go, and the work which they do.” (YLT)

The day after Moses’ reunion with his family, Jethro observed Moses as he acted as judge over the people. In those days, rulers would go to a public place or sit in front of their dwelling places to judge. The people would come to them for decisions regarding matters of law; thus, Moses was acting as a civil magistrate. Moses sat all day long, hearing the cases all by himself, and many of the people had to sit long hours waiting for a decision.

“What is this thing that thou doest to the people?” Jethro questioned why judgments were being done this way. Note that he said something was being done to the people. **What might that be?** Consider the frustrations the people would have felt because of the long waits in the hot sun (It is bad enough when such is the case today in an air-conditioned building.). Further, **how many may have gotten discouraged and simply walked away?**

In verses fifteen and sixteen, Moses revealed that he had to give an answer to the people regarding GOD’s law. They came to him in order to have His laws revealed to them. Further, he had to act as a civil magistrate in order to settle matters of law between them. He also acted as a teacher regarding the statutes and laws of GOD to the people (This is another indication that the priesthood had not received the laws as given on Mount Sinai yet.).

“The thing that thou doest is not good” Jethro chided Moses for putting this burden on himself and the people. He was concerned for Moses’ health and the well-being of the people. Jethro was also concerned that GOD’s will be done and appears to suggest that GOD should be consulted regarding the advice he was giving. This is a good suggestion anytime someone gives another spiritual advice. He suggested that men should be chosen from the among the people who would be taught the **“ordinances and laws”** of GOD. They then would be able to shoulder some of the burden and make life a little easier for Moses and the people.

Remember what Paul told Timothy to do with the Gospel.

“the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).

“What a comprehensive form of a preacher’s duty does this verse exhibit! (1) He must instruct the people in the nature, use, and importance of the ordinances of religion. (2) He may lay before them the whole moral law, and their obligations to fulfill all its precepts. (3) He must point out to each his particular duty, and what is expected of him in his situation, connections, etc. And (4) He must set them all their work, and see that they do it” (Clarke, p. 394).

These are good suggestions except, for the fourth one, which is clearly the role of the elders — not the preacher!

Ex. 18:21 “Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear GOD, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:”

“Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear GOD, men of truth, hating unjust gain; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:” (ASV)

“And thou--thou dost provide out of all the people men of ability, fearing GOD, men of truth, hating dishonest gain, and hast placed these over them, heads of thousands, heads of hundreds, heads of fifties, and heads of tens,” (YLT)

Jethro now described the kind of men who should be chosen to be judges of the people. These were not to be just anybody who might want to hold one of these positions. They were to meet strict qualifications.

“Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you” (Deuteronomy 1:13).

“able men” Fields thought this referred to physical strength. Often people underestimate the physical toughness needed by leaders. If the physical toughness is not there, their mental abilities will likely be affected by this weakness. While this would be good for any judge, it is not the primary concern of this word here. An **“able man”** is one who possesses strength of mind, ability, efficiency. No incompetent person should ever be allowed to hold such a position of responsibility and power. Consider the distinctions listed later in this verse regarding judging over groups of various sizes. A person capable of judging over a hundred may not be able to judge over a thousand. The judges were to be placed only in positions which they had the capacity to

exercise and would be held accountable for what they were able to do, not what they could not do.

People are often heard today to say that elders are needed in the church, so just appoint someone. It is not a matter of taking the best men you have for that office (even unqualified men), because that is better than not having any elders. Appointing elders who are incompetent and unqualified is not only foolish — it is dangerous and sinful. If GOD did not have a standard for elders to meet in order to be qualified, He would not have given any qualifications. GOD has always had standards for His people. Again, to ignore such standards is not only foolish — it is damnable.

Able men are *“persons of wisdom, discernment, judgment, prudence, and fortitude”* (Clarke, p. 395).

“such as fear GOD” To do GOD’s work effectively, one must have a proper respect, reverence and fear of GOD.

“fear” — yare — *“fearing, reverent, afraid”* (BDB).

They must be men who truly worshiped the GOD of Heaven, because only that kind of person is as concerned as he should be about doing GOD’s will. Further, he is the only type of man who is truly concerned that others do what is right according to GOD’s will. He is the only kind of person who truly cares for the welfare of GOD’s people.

“men of truth” This is not simply men who speak the truth, though that is important, but men who live the truth. Jesus said, **“the truth shall make you free”** (John 8:32). The truth given to man in the age in which he lived (lives) is the only thing which can provide freedom from sin with its eternal consequences. Further, **“men of truth”** would by necessity require that they are lovers of truth. Those who love truth will not allow family, friends, threats or anything else to color their judgments. They will continue to speak and live the truth, no matter what kind of pressure may be placed upon them to do otherwise. They will be lovers of truth-loving individuals.

“hating covetousness” Why is it so important for a judge to hate, to despise, covetousness? Because he will not be tempted to pervert judgment for money or a bribe.

“Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous” (Deuteronomy 16:19).

If a temptation is placed before him to accept a bribe, he will quickly reject it and hold the one who offered the bribe accountable.

“Buy the truth, and sell it not...” (Proverbs 23:23).

Consider the words of Coffman and apply them to the state of this nation's judiciary today.

"When the judiciary of a state has been corrupted through the appointment of immoral, dishonest, greedy and unjust judges, such a nation cannot long endure. The corruption of the judiciary soon communicates the rottenness of a society to the entire corpus of it, hastening the destruction of it" (p. 249).

Ex. 18:22-26 "And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and GOD command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace. So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves."

"and let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge themselves: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and GOD command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people also shall go to their place in peace. So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves." (ASV)

"and they have judged the people at all times; and it hath come to pass, every great matter they bring in unto thee, and every small matter they judge themselves; and lighten it from off thyself, and they have borne with thee. If thou dost this thing, and GOD hath commanded thee, then thou hast been able to stand, and all this people also goeth in unto its place in peace. And Moses hearkeneth to the voice of his father-in-law, and doth all that he said, and Moses chooseth men of ability out of all Israel, and maketh them chiefs over the people, heads of thousands, heads of hundreds, heads of fifties, and heads of tens, and they have judged the people at all times; the hard matter they bring in unto Moses, and every small matter they judge themselves." (YLT)

Jethro had offered the suggestion that judges be appointed in order to relieve the burden upon Moses, as well as the burden of the people. Consider that the

system he suggested is similar to that in the United States. There are county judges, state judges, regional judges, and finally the Supreme Court (as well as various courts in between these listed). If a matter cannot be settled in a lower court, it can be taken to a higher court. In each case, the ability of the judge to handle the cases presented to him increases. This would ensure much swifter judgments than those Moses was presently able to render, and it would prevent as much backlog as the past arrangement produced. It would also allow for swifter justice to be rendered and executed.

“and GOD command thee” Jethro did not advise Moses to act on his own, i.e., to use his own judgment in this matter. Neither did he tell him, “This is what you should do.” He suggested that Moses do this, but only if GOD commanded him to do so. It should not be forgotten that Jethro was a priest of GOD, **“the priest of Midian.”**

“Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law” Most leaders, when approached by an inferior, tend to be resentful of any advice they may give. Moses was not that way. GOD had chosen him to lead and direct His people. He could have easily said, *“Who are you to give me advice?”* The point is that the humility of Moses is clearly seen in this account. He took the advice of this non-Israelite, his inferior, consulted with GOD, and then put it into practice.

“Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3).

“The LORD lifteth up the meek: He casteth the wicked down to the ground” (Psalm 76:9).

Ex. 18:27 “And Moses let his father in law depart; and he went his way into his own land.”

“And Moses let his father-in-law depart; and he went his way into his own land.” (ASV)

“And Moses sendeth his father-in-law away, and he goeth away unto his own land.” (YLT)

Apparently, Jethro recognized a need to return to his homeland and asked Moses’ permission to depart. This reminds one of an earlier event, when Moses asked Jethro for permission to return to Egypt (Ex. 4:18). It would seem that this was done as a matter of courtesy.

Jethro now disappears from history, but the Midianites will be seen again as favored allies of the Hebrews.

Exodus Chapter Nineteen

Ex. 19:1-2 “In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.”

“In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. And when they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mount.” (ASV)

“In the third month of the going out of the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt, in this day they have come into the wilderness of Sinai, and they journey from Rephidim, and enter the wilderness of Sinai, and encamp in the wilderness; and Israel encampeth there before the mount.” (YLT)

“In the third month” There are a number of positions taken by various authors about when this time was.

1. The same day of the third month as their departure from Egypt. Thus, the fifteenth day of the month.
2. The same day of the month, i.e., the third day of the third month.
3. The first day of the month is intended.

A great deal of time is wasted (in this author's opinion) in trying to determine the exact day they arrived and the exact place where the following events took place. The point being made is that they got here after a number of months of travel. The important thing to consider is not when they got there, but the events which took place after they got there. They have arrived at the Mount of GOD — Mount Sinai.

Ex. 19:3-6 “And Moses went up unto GOD, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”

“And Moses went up unto GOD, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be Mine own possession among all peoples: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.” (ASV)

“And Moses hath gone up unto GOD, and Jehovah calleth unto him out of the mount, saying, Thus dost thou say to the house of Jacob, and declare to the sons of Israel, Ye--ye have seen that which I have done to the Egyptians, and I bear you on eagles' wings, and bring you in unto Myself. And now, if ye really hearken to My voice, then ye have kept My covenant, and been to Me a peculiar treasure more than all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and ye--ye are to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation: these are the words which thou dost speak unto the sons of Israel.” (YLT)

“Moses went up unto GOD” Moses sought GOD’s counsel and GOD responded to him out of the mountain. Unlike many, Moses did not rely upon his own counsel to determine a course of action.

“Thus shalt thou say” GOD told Moses what he should say. He did not give Moses an outline and allow him to fill it in. GOD has always given man specific instructions with the intent that he follow them. In this case, He told Moses to remind the Israelites of what He had done for them, specifically in releasing them from Egyptian captivity.

His care for them is described as having borne them **“on eagles' wings.”** He had lifted them up above their enemies so that they could not be harmed.

“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings” (Deuteronomy 32:11).

“When the young eaglets reached a time when they should fly, the old eagle stirs up their nest and forces them to begin the experience, supporting their first attempts by flying under them when they are about to fail, thus bearing them upward and enabling their first flight” (Coffman, p. 256).

“The mother eagle will tear up her nest and thus force the eaglets to fly. In a similar way God had propelled Israel to leave Egypt. Then he protected them in their spiritual immaturity as they journeyed” (Fields, p. 395).

Where did GOD take them on eagles' wings? He brought them to Himself for the purpose of establishing a covenant with them. In doing so, He made a promise to them. But the promise had a condition, as do all of the promises of GOD. All of GOD’s promises to man are conditioned upon obedience to Him. It has always

been so and will be so until the end of time.

“if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people” If they obeyed the voice of GOD, He would make them His *“own possession”* (ASV). The idea is that they would be considered as a prized possession to Him. *When one has a prized possession, what does he do with it?* He guards it, he cares for it, he keeps watch over it, and he protects it.

The Hebrew word here, *“does not signify property in general, but valuable property, that which is laid by, or put aside, hence a treasure of silver or gold”* (Keil & Delitzsch, p. 96).

Consider the meaning of the word **“covenant”** here as discussed by Fields.

“This word covenant refers to a formal arrangement of relationship between two parties. Covenants can be made by individuals or groups... There are two kinds of covenants:

- 1. Parity covenants (or treaties), between parties of equal importance,*
- 2. Suzerainty treaties (covenants), by rulers for the subjects beneath them.*

God, as a ruler, makes certain promises and then demands particular acts of obedience. The covenant is imposed by the superior upon the inferiors. Such covenants may be basically offers of grace to an undeserving people; God’s covenants are always such” (p. 396).

“ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” Two very interesting phrases are given here. **“kingdom of priests”** A kingdom has a king and is united by common laws, but GOD never intended for Israel to have a physical king. He did have a king over them — Himself. He was to be their benevolent ruler, and they were to have no other. Later, in rebellion to Him, they demanded a king of Samuel (1 Sam. 8). *What kind of kingdom would belong to GOD?* A kingdom of priests. Priests are associated with people who are leaders, and their primary concern in life is about spiritual things. As such, they are separated from society, i.e., not everyone can be a priest. In order for one to be a priest, he had to meet certain qualifications, as will be seen when the Levites were appointed as priests for Israel.

“The fact that Israel was a kingdom of priests suggests that their individual and collective purpose was to function as a go-between between God and men of all nations. They were to be living examples of what God would do with and for obedient mankind, and were to teach the ways of God to men, and otherwise help men come to God” (Fields, p. 399).

The second phrase of interest in this text is **“holy nation.”** This does not refer to a separated nation, as that was taken care of in the phrase **“kingdom of priests.”** The word **“holy”** refers to their being untarnished, pure. They were to be a nation of morally

sacred people. Sin opposes purity, and sinners resist being as GOD would have them to be.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of GOD, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (1 John 3:2-3).

As the present text is viewed, it reminds one of the purpose of the Law of Moses.

“the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Galatians 3:24-25).

Note two things from the above passage. (1) The law was designed to lead man to Christ and His law. (2) The time would come when the Law of Moses would be replaced by a superior law. Thus, the purpose of the law would be fulfilled in a second kingdom, a holy nation — the church. Note what the Bible says about this second kingdom and those who belonged to it.

“ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

It needs to be repeated that these things were only to come about **if they kept His covenant**. Viewing history, they violated His covenant repeatedly and thus proved themselves unworthy of the task set before them. Yet, some were faithful. The sons of Levi, who became the priests, were all on the Lord’s side when it came time to destroy the golden calf (Ex. 32:26).

Why did GOD choose Israel as His own possession?

(1) He chose them to be the vehicle through whom the Messiah would come. (2) He chose them because of the amazing ability of Abraham to command his children after him (Gen. 18:19). (3) He chose them to provide a blessing to all the world (Gen. 12:3).

Is “Old Israel,” i.e., those who follow the Law of Moses, still GOD’s chosen possession? NO!!! Old Israel was composed primarily of those born into the physical lineage of Abraham. Today, physical lineage means absolutely nothing with regard to who comprise the chosen people.

“there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him” (Romans 10:12).

Today, there is no physical kingdom of GOD, nor will there ever be. The kingdom today is a spiritual one, which is composed of anyone who is willing to obey the Law of Christ.

“Is He the GOD of the Jews only? is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one GOD, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and

uncircumcision through faith” (Romans 3:29-30).

“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that GOD is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him” (Acts 10:34-35, emphasis added).

Ex. 19:7-9 “And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.”

“And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which Jehovah commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do. And Moses reported the words of the people unto Jehovah. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and may also believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto Jehovah.” (ASV)

“And Moses cometh, and calleth for the elders of the people, and setteth before them all these words which Jehovah hath commanded him; and all the people answer together and say, All that Jehovah hath spoken we do; and Moses returneth the words of the people unto Jehovah. And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Lo, I am coming unto thee in the thickness of the cloud, so that the people hear in My speaking with thee, and also believe in thee to the age; and Moses declareth the words of the people unto Jehovah.” (YLT)

Moses had gone up upon the mountain (Sinai) to talk with GOD. GOD commanded him to give words unto the people, i.e., laws and His covenant. Moses did exactly as he was commanded. He began by rehearsing GOD’s words to the **“elders.”** As stated earlier, GOD dictated the terms of the covenant, and the people were given two choices — accept or reject the terms offered. As will be stated later in the text, if they failed to keep the terms of this covenant, they would be cursed.

After hearing the terms of this covenant (its laws), the people agreed that they would keep GOD’s law. **“All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.”** Moses, then acting as the intermediary between GOD and the Hebrews, went back to GOD and reported their words

to Him.

GOD told Moses that He was going to come to him and speak from a thick cloud. This was at a future time, as will be noticed in the next few verses. **Why come in a “thick cloud?”** So that the people could not see the glory of GOD; for if they did, they would die. GOD was going to demonstrate once and for all to the Hebrews that when Moses spoke to them, GOD had actually spoken to them through him. In other words, Moses had not just made up the things he told them. GOD was giving them proof.

Ex. 19:10-13 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their garments, and be ready against the third day; for the third day Jehovah will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: no hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, he shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Go unto the people; and thou hast sanctified them to-day and to-morrow, and they have washed their garments, and have been prepared for the third day; for on the third day doth Jehovah come down before the eyes of all the people, on mount Sinai. And thou hast made a border for the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, going up into the mount, or coming against its extremity; whoever is coming against the mount is certainly put to death; a hand cometh not against him, for he is certainly stoned or shot through, whether beast or man it liveth not; in the drawing out of the jubilee cornet they go up into the mount.” (YLT)

GOD instructed Moses to go back to the people and **“sanctify”** them for two days.

“sanctify”— qadash — *“clean”* (Strong); *“to consecrate,*

sanctify, prepare, dedicate, be hallowed, be holy, be sanctified, be separate” (BDB); “a verb meaning to be set apart, to be holy, to show oneself holy, to be treated as holy, to consecrate, to treat as holy, to dedicate, to be made holy, to declare holy or consecrated, to behave, to act holy, to dedicate oneself” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 980).

The people had to prepare themselves to be in the presence of GOD by cleansing themselves. Carefully note that the people could not come before a holy GOD any old way they chose. As part of this cleansing, their clothes had to be washed. It should be observed that one may never come to GOD without preparation. They were quite naturally to make sure that all sin was removed from the camp.

When this author reads this passage, and others like it, he cannot help but wonder why people have such a hard time realizing that the way they present themselves before GOD is important. As will be noted later, the Levitical priests could not wait upon the Lord in just any old clothes. **Why do Christians, who are GOD’s priests today, feel they can appear before GOD without caring how they physically appear before Him?** One should remember that, when he gathers with the saints to worship, he is in the presence of GOD.

“where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20, emphasis added).

Many excuses have been given to this author for why people think it is all right to appear before GOD any old way. (1) “I cannot afford better clothes.” If a person really cannot afford better, that is one thing. But over the years, this writer has seen people who make that claim at weddings or funerals dressed to the nines. They show more respect for a bride and groom or a dead body than they do for GOD. (2) “It does not matter how I dress. It is the condition of my heart which matters.” That kind of answer is saying more than one really wishes to reveal about himself. If one’s heart is truly right, **Does he not wish to give GOD the very best he can?**

When would GOD come to Moses? On the third day. Moses let the people know what GOD had said and no doubt urged them to prepare themselves to be in GOD’s presence.

“Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it” The essence of this is that the mountain was too holy to be touched at this time by human beings. **Why was the mountain holy? Was it always holy?** It was holy only as long as GOD was present there. When one looks ahead, he will see the ark of the covenant portrayed in the same way, i.e., not to be touched with human hands. Looking even

further ahead, he will see Uzzah reaching out to stop GOD's ark from falling to the ground (2 Sam. 6:6). He will also see in that context that GOD struck him dead for touching the ark. GOD meant what He said.

So it was in the present text. GOD set boundaries around the mountain, and if beast or animal went beyond that boundary, they were to be killed. But note that the manner in which they were to die was not by human hands striking a blow, i.e., touching the one to die. Whoever or whatever touched the mountain was to be **“stoned, or shot through.”** Why? Because to have touched one who violated GOD's law and was executed was to defile himself by touching a dead body. Such action caused him to be ceremonially unclean.

It should also be observed that the people should gather to hear GOD when the trumpet sounded. What trumpet? Was this a trumpet that Moses or some other was to sound at a specified time? Was it the sound of a trumpet from Heaven? There is much debate about this. The important thing to note is that there would be a distinct signal made when GOD was to appear. It reminds one that, at the end of time, when the Lord comes again, a trumpet will sound to announce it.

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:52).

Ex. 19:14-15 “And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives.”

“And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their garments. And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not near a woman.” (ASV)

“And Moses cometh down from the mount unto the people, and sanctifieth the people, and they wash their garments; and he saith unto the people, Be ye prepared for the third day, come not nigh unto a woman.” (YLT)

Moses sanctified the people for the third day to meet GOD on the third day. But he also gives a prohibition which seems strange — **“come not at your wives.”** This is a euphemism for sexual intercourse (Strong, BDB, Baker/Carpenter). Why forbid something which GOD declares to be beautiful and right?

“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled” (Hebrews 13:4).

Both the Old and New Testaments declare that sexual intercourse is good and to be cherished in marriage.

Consider the Song of Solomon and Proverbs 5:18-20. **So why the prohibition?** The answer probably lies in the practices common to idol worship in that time, i.e., orgies which the idolaters thought would cause their gods to grant their wishes. The Israelites were to recognize a distinction between their religious practices and those of their neighbors. Later, in Leviticus 15:18, a ceremonial law was given by GOD which declared a man and woman to be unclean until the evening after having sexual intercourse. This would keep them from mixing such activity with worship, as the heathen did.

Ex. 19:16-18 “And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with GOD; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.”

“And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; and all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet GOD; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.” (ASV)

“And it cometh to pass, on the third day, while it is morning, that there are voices, and lightnings, and a heavy cloud, on the mount, and the sound of a trumpet very strong; and all the people who are in the camp do tremble. And Moses bringeth out the people to meet GOD from the camp, and they station themselves at the lower part of the mount, and mount Sinai is wholly a smoke from the presence of Jehovah, Who hath come down on it in fire, and its smoke goeth up as smoke of the furnace, and the whole mount trembleth exceedingly;” (YLT)

The third day came, and what a day it was. GOD demonstrated His presence, and it caused the people to tremble — to quake in fear. Note the description of this event as recorded in Hebrews 12:18-21.

“For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the

mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart:
And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I
exceedingly fear and quake:)"

When one considers the description given when GOD appeared, he can have some kind of understanding of the awe and fear this created among the people. It was in this setting that GOD brought them out of the camp to the **“nether (‘‘lowermost’’ – Strong) part of the mount.”**

“These sense-shattering phenomena got the people’s attention and focused that attention on the One with whom they were entering into a covenant” (Roper, p. 313).

Ex. 19:19-21 “And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and GOD answered him by a voice. And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish.”

“And when the voice of the trumpet waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and GOD answered him by a voice. And Jehovah came down upon mount Sinai, to the top of the mount: and Jehovah called Moses to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto Jehovah to gaze, and many of them perish.” (ASV)

“and the sound of the trumpet is going on, and very strong; Moses speaketh, and GOD doth answer him with a voice. And Jehovah cometh down on mount Sinai, unto the top of the mount, and Jehovah calleth for Moses unto the top of the mount, and Moses goeth up. And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Go down, protest to the people, lest they break through unto Jehovah to see, and many of them have fallen;” (YLT)

This shows that, when the trumpet sounded it was not one blast and done. The sound of the trumpet continued and got louder and louder.

Next, one sees Moses speaking to GOD, and GOD answered him **“by a voice,”** not some kind of symbolism. This is the prime purpose of the Scriptures — GOD talking to man. GOD’s voice gave instructions which were understandable and could thus be fulfilled — just as the Scriptures do today. The only reason people say they cannot understand the Scriptures is because most of them never put out the effort needed to study them. GOD has never spoken to man, whether directly or through the written word, in such a way that His instructions cannot be understood by all alike. On this occasion, His voice was uttered as a proof that Moses was His representative, and therefore the people were

to listen to him.

GOD told Moses to come up the mountain to meet with Him in private. Interestingly, no sooner had he arrived at his destination, than GOD told him to go back and warn the people not to go beyond the boundary He had set. He further told Moses that if they stepped over this boundary, many of them would perish.

Ex. 19:22-25 “And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them. And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.”

“And let the priests also, that come near to Jehovah, sanctify themselves, lest Jehovah break forth upon them. And Moses said unto Jehovah, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for Thou didst charge us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. And Jehovah said unto him, Go, get thee down; and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto Jehovah, lest He break forth upon them. So Moses went down unto the people, and told them.” (ASV)

“and also the priests who are coming nigh unto Jehovah do sanctify themselves, lest Jehovah break forth on them. And Moses saith unto Jehovah, The people is unable to come up unto mount Sinai, for Thou--Thou hast protested to us, saying, Make a border for the mount, then thou hast sanctified it. And Jehovah saith unto him, Go, descend, then thou hast come up, thou, and Aaron with thee; and the priests and the people do not break through, to come up unto Jehovah, lest He break forth upon them. And Moses goeth down unto the people, and saith unto them: --” (YLT)

Who are the priests mentioned in these verses?

They cannot be the Levitical priests, because that order had not yet been established. Whoever they were, it must be considered that they were priests according to the patriarchal age under which they then lived. Some have speculated that they may have been the firstborn or heads of the families. One thing is certain — GOD recognized them as His priests. It should also be noted that these priests were not exempt from sanctifying themselves on this occasion before the Lord.

Moses questioned the instructions to go back down and warn the people again against going beyond GOD’s

boundary. But GOD let him know decisively that he was to follow His instructions. One must obey GOD, even if he does not understand why GOD has given a certain instruction.

A new command was given to Moses to bring Aaron with him when he came back. Further, he was to remind the priests and people again of the charge not to cross GOD's boundary line. This reminds one that man often needs to be reminded not to violate GOD's laws.

"Aaron did not go up the mount until after Moses himself had received the laws of Exodus 21-23. See Exodus 20:21. Then GOD called Moses to come up with Aaron, and Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders (24:1). But even then, these were to worship afar off, and only Moses came near to Jehovah (24:2)" (Fields, p. 407).

Something needs to be understood before entering chapter twenty. The ten commandments were first spoken orally to all the people, and later repeated privately to Moses and written down.

"Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy GOD in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather Me the people together, and I will make them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone...he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me" (Deuteronomy 4:10-13; 10:4, emphasis added).

When considering the above passages, it is obvious that not everything which was done on the occasion of the present text is revealed here.

Exodus Chapter Twenty

Ex. 20:1 “And GOD spake all these words, saying,”

“And GOD spake all these words, saying,” (ASV)

“And GOD speaketh all these words, saying,” (YLT)

“all these words” — Literally, this means *“the ten words.”* Today, they are commonly called the “Ten Commandments.” They are also referred to in Scripture as **“The Law,” “commandments,” “words of the covenant,” “Tables of the covenant,” “the covenant,” “the two tables,” “The testimony,” “the two tables of the testimony,” “the commandments,”** and **“the law”** (Romans). They are also called “The Decalogue,” which comes from two Greek words, δέκα (meaning *“ten”*) and λογος (meaning *“word”*), or *“ten words.”* These ten laws form the kernel, the core, the heart of the law. Compared to American law, it would correspond to the Constitution. Later, the Decalogue was kept in the ark of the covenant. The rest of the law was kept by the side of the ark.

“Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your GOD, that it may be there for a witness against thee” (Deuteronomy 31:26).

In the present text, GOD gave these words orally. The tables of stone had not yet been given. No one knows how these words were arranged on the tablets, but there is a notable division in them. The first four dealt with man’s relationship and obligations toward GOD. The last six dealt with man’s relationship and obligations to his fellow man. Notice how this corresponds with Jesus’ words.

“Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:36-40, emphasis added).

Man’s first and primary obligation is to GOD and then to his fellow man. No human relationship can be placed before that which belongs to GOD — not even family.

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life

for My sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:34-39).

One might reasonably ask, **"Are people still under the Law today?"** Consider the following thoughts.

1. Exodus 34:28 and Deuteronomy 9:9 specifically refer to the ten commandments as being the covenant.

2. Jeremiah 31:31-32 prophesied that GOD would make a new covenant with the house of Israel which would not be like the covenant He made with them when He brought them out of Egypt.

a. **What covenant did He make with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt?** The Ten Commandments.

3. Hebrews 8:6-13 declares that Christ is now the mediator of a new and better **covenant**. This passage then contrasts this new covenant with the one GOD made with Israel when He led them out of Egypt. In 2 Corinthians 3:6, the Holy Spirit declared that Paul was a minister of a new covenant, not of a covenant written on stones. Only the ten commandments were written on stone.

The Scriptures make it clear that one does not live under the laws of the ten words today. Since one lives under a new law (New Testament), he is no longer obligated and cannot live in compliance to GOD's will by following (practicing) the Ten Commandments.

"GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Ex. 20:2 "I am the LORD thy GOD, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

"I am Jehovah thy GOD, Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." (ASV)

"I am Jehovah thy GOD, Who hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of a house of servants." (YLT)

A very definitive and authoritative statement declares Who He is — **"the Lord thy GOD."** One should also note that GOD was speaking to the whole nation, not just to Moses.

"The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying, I am the LORD thy GOD, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage"

(Deuteronomy 5:3-6).

What gave GOD the right to give them laws? GOD did not base His right to command on the fact that He was GOD, even though He could have. He based His right to command on the fact that He, Almighty GOD, not an idol, delivered them from the slavery of Egypt. The first two verses here thus establish the preface for the laws which follow.

Ex. 20:3 “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.”

“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” (ASV)

“Thou hast no other gods before Me.” (YLT)

Poole stated that the Hebrew here is *“There shall not be to thee another god, or other gods before Me”* (p. 158). This refers to idols, since they were their so-called gods. Speaking of idols, Zerr mentioned three classes of idolatry which follow.

1. *man-made (such as those of gold or silver or wood);*
2. *invisible or imaginary (such as Baal, or Ashtoreth, or Tammuz); and*
3. *Natural, (such as animals or trees or rivers or planets, ‘host of heaven’)* (p. 141).

Barnes stated that the phrase **“before Me”** is literally *“before My face”* (p. 52).

“The sentence is quite a general one, and not only prohibits polytheism and idolatry, the worship of idols in thought, word and deed, but also commands the fear, love, and worship of God the Lord” (Keil/Delitzsch, p. 114).

“This phrase has various shades of meaning depending upon the context. It can be rendered in the following ways: (1) ‘in front of Me’ or ‘in My presence,’ (2) ‘before Me’ or ‘in preference to Me,’ (3) ‘in addition to Me’ or ‘besides Me,’ and (4) ‘in front of Me’ or ‘in defiance to Me’” (Roper, p. 322).

The verse under study declares that there is only one GOD; thus, it is a declaration that monotheism is the only way to worship. The verse does not imply that there are other genuine gods — there is only one GOD! It is true that man’s fertile imagination may conjure up “gods,” or that he may decide to treat or call something around him a god — but that does not make that object a god (whether a real substance or imagined).

Also implied in this verse is the fact that one can only love the GOD of Heaven. Note what Jesus said in Matthew 22:37-38.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.”

Why is loving GOD the first and great commandment? Because from it all other commands have their basis of fulfillment. To love GOD with all of one’s heart, soul, and mind will cause him not only to put GOD first in his

life — it will also cause him to obey GOD.

“Once a person denies or forsakes his first and greatest of all obligations, the denial and repudiation of all or any other duties becomes infinitely easier” (Coffman, p. 270).

“This command came first because it was the most basic. A person’s attitude toward nature, other human beings, and himself depends on what he thinks of God” (Roper, p. 323).

The old pagan gods may not be around in America, but Americans have made plenty of gods for themselves: Sports, Sex, Gold, Fashion, Fame, Intellect, Mother Earth, Passion, Drink, Chance, Science, Medicine, et cetera. All of these and many more have become the gods of men. No, they may not make a graven image and bow before it; nevertheless, they bow before their gods and (at best) give lip service to the only GOD.

Ex. 20:4 “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.”

“Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.” (ASV)

“Thou dost not make to thyself a graven image, or any likeness which is in the heavens above, or which is in the earth beneath, or which is in the waters under the earth.” (YLT)

The essence of this passage is that man is not to worship any created thing; and that includes himself. This passage involves acts of worship. Nothing is to be made by the hands of man and then worshiped. This does not include statues of individuals which are made to remember someone or some event (George Washington, The Wall, etc.). This prohibition would also include an image which supposedly represents GOD Himself. Consider the wise words of Coffman here.

“Note also that the prohibition is multiple: (1) religious images must not be made; (2) men must not bow down to them; (3) men must not serve them...How can that which is material represent anything spiritual? How can that which is helpless represent eternal omnipotence? How can that which decays represent life eternal? How can that which is not intelligent represent omniscience? How can that which is dumb, unfeeling, blind, and dead represent any of the vital realities of God and holy religion” (p. 273)?

When one considers the land from which they came (Egypt) and the many gods they served, he can understand why GOD emphasized the need not to make any images. The Egyptians had worshiped everything from the heavens, the earth and under the water.

It is interesting to note that the Catholic church in its

“translations” of the Bible, has either: (1) removed this passage from the Decalogue, (2) relegated it to a footnote, or (3) explained it away in their footnotes. When one goes into a Catholic church building, he quickly can understand why it does such.

Ex. 20:5 “Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy GOD am a jealous GOD, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me;”

“Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them, for I Jehovah thy GOD am a jealous GOD, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate Me,” (ASV)

“Thou dost not bow thyself to them, nor serve them: for I, Jehovah thy GOD, am a zealous GOD, charging iniquity of fathers on sons, on the third generation, and on the fourth, of those hating Me,” (YLT)

Many through the ages have bowed themselves down to the gods of their own imagination — whether seen or unseen. They have served these false gods with unfailing loyalty. But in doing so, they have violated the greatest law of all — to worship only The GOD of heaven and earth. In doing so, they have declared themselves to be fools.

“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible GOD into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things” (Romans 1:22-23).

Why is man not to bow down to his created image?

Because **“I the LORD thy GOD am a jealous GOD.”**

“(For the LORD thy GOD is a jealous GOD among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy GOD be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 6:15).

In what sense is GOD a jealous GOD? Is it the ugly “green-eyed” monster to which one commonly applies this word? Assuredly it is not! This writer would agree with the assessment of Adam Clarke here.

“This shows in a most expressive manner the love of God for His people. He felt for them as the most affectionate husband could do for his spouse; and was jealous for their fidelity, because He willed their invariable happiness” (p. 403).

The simple fact is that GOD will not tolerate any rival (and neither should any person regarding his mate).

“visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children” In what way is the iniquity of the fathers brought upon the children? Does not the Bible teach that each person is responsible for his own sins?

“The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers:

every man shall be put to death for his own sin
(Deuteronomy 24:16, emphasis added).

“Behold, all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die...The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezekiel 18:4, 20, emphasis added).

The children of those who sin against GOD are not guilty of their parents' sins. Nevertheless, they may suffer the consequences of their parents' sins. For example: diseases passed to the children because of fornication, poverty due to a parent's gambling or his committing a crime which causes him to spend many years in prison, the abuse of children by a drunkard, et cetera.

Those who do not repeat the sins of their fathers will not be punished for those sins which their fathers committed. A good example of this is King Manasseh, who was a very wicked king. His sins brought a sentence of destruction upon the nation of Judah (2 Kings 21:10-15). But Manasseh had a righteous grandson, Josiah, who was not punished, because he kept GOD's covenant (2 Kings 22:16-20). Yet, Josiah's righteous behavior did not turn away the promised destruction brought upon Judah.

“Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of His great wrath, wherewith His anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked Him withal. And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of My sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there” (2 Kings 23:26-27, emphasis added).

Ex. 20:6 “And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments.”

“and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.” (ASV)

“and doing kindness to thousands, of those loving Me and keeping My commands.” (YLT)

Here is a contrast to the last verse. Hate is the opposite of love. **How does one prove that he loves GOD?** By keeping His commandments. **What proves that one hates GOD?** Not keeping His commandments. **Who receives GOD's mercy?** Those who keep His commandments.

“Know therefore that the LORD thy GOD, He is GOD, the faithful GOD, which keepeth covenant and mercy with

them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations” (Deuteronomy 7:9).

Ex. 20:7 “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy GOD in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.”

“Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy GOD in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.” (ASV)

“Thou dost not take up the name of Jehovah thy GOD for a vain thing, for Jehovah acquitteth not him who taketh up His name for a vain thing.” (YLT)

Note some of the comments made by various authors regarding what it means to take the Lord’s name in vain.

“To take the name of the Lord in vain means to make a useless application of the holy name. The word ‘vain’ is from SHAV and defined by Strong as ‘useless’” (Zerr, p. 141).

“Our translators make the third commandment bear upon any profane and idle utterance of the name of GOD” (Barnes, p. 53).

“‘In vain’ (or ‘for vanity’) means at least three things:

- 1. It means to use God’s name to back up a LIE (Isaiah 59:4).*
- 2. It means to use God’s name in an idle, useless, flippant, irreverent utterance (Psalm 60:11; 119:37).*
- 3. ‘In vain’ also means to use God’s name for any wicked purpose, in defiance, blasphemy, etc. (Psalm 139:19)” (Fields, p. 427).*

As can easily be seen, this command protects the name of GOD from abuse. Consider that the opposite of this command is also true. One must use GOD’s name only in a way which brings glory and honor to it.

It should also be observed that GOD did not put limits on how one could misuse His name. Therefore, one should not indulge in the use of slang terms which misuse His name and things which are holy. GOD’s name must only be used, especially by His people, to signify great reverence for Him and those things which are His. One should take the time to read the able comments of Guy N. Woods regarding euphemisms (slang terms) in his commentary on James 5:12.

“Jews later in their history began to believe that God’s name, ‘Yahweh’ (YHWH), was too holy to be pronounced at all. Consequently the Jews refused to say God’s name. Rather than saying the name ‘Yahweh,’ they would insert some other word” (Roper, p. 327).

Ex. 20:8-9 “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:”

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work;" (ASV)

"Remember the Sabbath-day to sanctify it; six days thou dost labour, and hast done all thy work," (YLT)

For solid answers to the Sabbatarians assertions with regard to the sabbath's continued existence, see The Book of Exodus, Memphis School of Preaching Lectures, 1987, p. 119f.

Sabbatarians need to observe this passage carefully, because most of them violate its rules. If the sabbath observance is binding today, then so are the six days of work. About all they are interested in is having a religious service on Saturdays. Most of them violate the prohibitions which the commandment has against work. They cook meals or get someone else to do it for them, or they involve themselves in some other form of work. Further, they do not offer the sacrifices which were required for a sabbath day's observance.

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10, emphasis added).

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10).

The fact is, Sabbatarians cherry-pick what they want to follow of the Law of Moses and ignore the rest. But as seen above, such will only bring condemnation to them.

GOD established a day of worship in which they could rest from their labors, as they devoted it to Him. He told them that the other six days were sufficient to accomplish their daily tasks. On this day, they could devote their thoughts and activities to Him.

Is one day of devotion each week too much for GOD to ask of His creation? Under the New Testament Law of Christ, GOD has not restricted man, as He did under the Mosaic law, with regard to a sabbath law. Today, one is still commanded to worship, but it is a different day. It is not the seventh day, but rather the first day of the week. Unfortunately, many today think it is too inconvenient to gather twice to worship him on the first day of the week. Further, if one does go to worship on the required day for such, he may not spend any more time that day considering GOD or studying His word. It might also be observed that, over the years, time spent in worship activities has been reduced until some get upset if the worship period goes beyond one hour (even by a few minutes). Further, too many never open their Bibles during the week except at the worship service, if they do then.

Ex. 20:10 “But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy GOD: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:”

“but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy GOD: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:” (ASV)

“and the seventh day is a Sabbath to Jehovah thy GOD; thou dost not do any work, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy handmaid, and thy cattle, and thy sojourner who is within thy gates, —” (YLT)

As in all things religious, GOD set the standard! No one would be allowed to work on this day, not even the animals. Interestingly, GOD also forbade the stranger (foreigner) to work on this day, even though he was not a practicing Israelite.

Consider some examples from the Scriptures of things which could not be done on the sabbath: (1) plowing and reaping (harvest time) (Ex. 34:21); (2) carrying of goods (Neh. 13:15); (3) bearing burdens (Jer. 17:21); (4) carrying on trade or business (Amos 8:5); (5) holding markets (Neh. 13:15f); (6) gathering firewood (Num. 15:32); (7) kindling fires for cooking (Ex. 35:3).

One might consider the kind of work which was prohibited. It was servile, common, worldly work which was intended for profit or pleasure. The prohibition did not extend to those acts which were required for worship. The seventh day was to be a day when worldly work was dismissed from the mind.

Ex. 20:11 “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

“for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” (ASV)

“for six days hath Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and resteth in the seventh day; therefore hath Jehovah blessed the Sabbath-day, and doth sanctify it.” (YLT)

GOD showed by His own example that six days was enough to accomplish one's work. The question arises, **When did GOD establish the sabbath day? Was it on the day He rested, or was it at some later date?** The answer is found in Nehemiah 9:13-14.

“Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant” (emphasis added).

To make something known is to present something which was hidden before. What is learned from this is that: (1) sabbath celebration was not required during the patriarchal age and (2) the sabbath celebration began when Moses brought it down as a requirement when he brought the rest of the Mosaic law to the people.

The sabbath day was also to serve as a memorial for what GOD had done in delivering the Israelites from bondage.

“the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy GOD: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy GOD commanded thee to keep the sabbath day” (Deuteronomy 5:14-15, emphasis added).

Ex. 20:12 “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee.”

“Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy GOD giveth thee.” (ASV)

“Honour thy father and thy mother, so that thy days are prolonged on the ground which Jehovah thy GOD is giving to thee.” (YLT)

This passage marks a departure from the obligations man has toward GOD to those he has toward his fellow man. It seems fitting that the first one involves obligations one has to his parents. If one honors his Father (GOD), then he will honor his human parents. On the other hand, if one will not honor his parents, he cannot honor GOD.

“Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase” (Proverbs 3:9).

How does one honor GOD? By giving Him of his increase. **How does one honor his parents?** By providing for their needs.

“And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of GOD, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever

thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of GOD of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye” (Mark 7:9-13).

Honoring father and mother is not just showing them proper respect and obeying them. It includes caring for them in their advanced years, when they cannot care for themselves.

GOD gave a command to honor father and mother, but He also gave a command as to what to do to a persistently disobedient child. Put him to death — stone him.

“If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear” (Deuteronomy 21:18-21).

Notice that GOD considers a disobedient child to be evil.

“that thy days may be long upon the land” A promise is given for those who obey the command to honor father and mother. This command is also found as an obligation in the New Testament for Christians.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Ephesians 6:1-3).

In Paul’s Holy Spirit-inspired command is the implication of long life: “That it may be well with thee.” This implies having a better kind of life. This is a general statement, as not all who obey their parents lead long or better lives than those who do not.

“In general, children who learn to obey their parents and submit to authority lead better and longer lives than those who do not” (Roper, p. 331).

“the land which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee”

All blessings come from GOD, whether it be the food on one’s table or the basic life he has. Just as one should honor GOD, he should honor the parents through whom GOD gave him life, simply because they are his parents.

Ex. 20:13 “Thou shalt not kill.”

“Thou shalt not kill.” (ASV)

“Thou dost not murder.” (YLT)

There is a difference between “killing” someone and “murdering” someone. One may “kill” someone either purposefully or accidentally, but he can only murder someone intentionally. The better translation in this passage is “murder.” GOD made a distinction between the two ideas (kill and murder) when He gave commands with regard to the cities of refuge in Deuteronomy chapter nineteen. The one who killed another accidentally could flee to this city and live. The avenger of blood was not allowed to kill him in this city without being guilty of murder. On the other hand (v. 11ff), if a man purposely caused the death of another, he could flee to the city of refuge, (apparently after a trial of some kind) he would be delivered to the avenger of blood to be executed.

It is significant that the passage does not say, *“Thou shalt not kill your fellow man.”* If it were worded in this way, it would mean punishment anytime someone died at the hands of another human being. This would mean that GOD would be guilty of breaking His own command, which this author hastens to say He is not. In this author’s notes, it has already been stated that GOD commanded human beings to kill (execute) evildoers. Further, when the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, GOD told them to eliminate all the inhabitants of the land. Even though these were judicial punishments, a human being still had to execute most of them.

This passage gives no comfort at all to those who oppose capital punishment. Capital punishment for murder is an eternal law, i.e., it has been a consistent command of GOD throughout all three ages (Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian).

“And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of GOD made He man” Genesis 9:5-6).

“rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of GOD to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of GOD, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Romans 13:3-4, emphasis added).

It should also be noted that GOD gave this right in the Christian age to government — not to individuals.

Ex. 20:14 “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.” (ASV)

The prohibition here is against sexual activity with one who is not his/her mate. Many people in the present century advocate that adultery does not hurt anyone, so nothing should be said or done about it. They want to call it an "extra-marital affair" and will castigate anyone who dares call it as it is — adultery. The sad fact is that adultery hurts many people and causes untold numbers of divorces and even murders each year. Note some whom adultery hurts.

1. First and foremost, it is a sin against GOD. When Joseph was tempted to commit adultery by Potiphar's wife, he answered her, **"how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against GOD"** (Gen. 39:9, emphasis added)? He knew he would have been doing something against Potaphar if he had given in to his master's wife. Let it be noted just here that, when one sins, he does that which is wrong and therefore contrary to GOD. All sin is primarily against GOD. Carefully consider what David said to GOD after his sin with Bathsheba.

"I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight" (Psalm 51:3-4, emphasis added).

2. Adultery is a sin against the very body of the adulterer. Adultery is a subdivision of fornication.

"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (1 Corinthians 6:18).

3. Adultery is against the adulterer's soul.

"whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul" (Proverbs 6:32).

This would apply to the woman who commits adultery as well.

4. Adultery is a sin against one's legitimate marriage partner.

"Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:8-9, emphasis added).

GOD always, from the beginning, planned for man to have only one sexual partner for life. That is why He made one woman (Eve) for one man (Adam), not multiple women for one man or multiple men for one woman. Further, He did not make a man for a man and a woman for a woman.

5. Adultery is a sin against the whole fabric of society. It tears homes apart, bringing great hardship upon a single parent to raise children. Studies have shown that children who come from a single-parent home are at huge disadvantages in society and often suffer psychologically all of their lives.

Under the Law of Moses, the penalty for adultery was death for both parties.

“the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death” (Leviticus 20:10).

This shows just how bad GOD considers the sin of adultery to be. One cannot help but speculate at how much adultery would never be committed today if the above punishment were still the rule.

Adultery is a lack of faithfulness to one's mate. A side lesson here is that the Bible often refers to GOD as the husband of His people. **What does the Bible say about them when they are unfaithful to, i.e., when they violate His laws?**

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with GOD? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of GOD” (James 4:4).

Does one realize that, when he violates GOD's law, he is turning away from his “mate” and running into the arms of Satan?

Ex. 20:15 “Thou shalt not steal.”

“Thou shalt not steal.” (ASV)

“Thou dost not steal.” (YLT)

What is stealing? It is taking something which belongs to another and appropriating it for one's own use. The appropriation of it may be done in a number of ways: openly or secretly, using violence or intimidation, cheating, forgery, misrepresentation, embezzlement, et cetera. However it may be done, it is a sin.

“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Ephesians 4:28).

“That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified” (1 Thessalonians 4:6).

By issuing this command, GOD endorsed the right of a person to have (own) personal property. It might be added that GOD struck a blow here against socialism!

“Personal property was a gift from God, who owns all things.

To steal from another person was as if one were stealing from God” (Roper, p. 333).

The example of Ananias and Sapphira shows the right of people to have personal property (Acts 5:1-11). If there were no right to own personal property, **what would determine if one had anything?** Might and power — “take what you want.”

The worst kind of stealing (theft) is portrayed in Malachi 3:8.

“Will a man rob GOD? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings.”

Ex. 20:16 “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.” (ASV)

“Thou dost not answer against thy neighbour a false testimony.” (YLT)

This commandment appears to involve a trial where some matter is to be settled. False witnesses could unjustly cause a man to lose his reputation, property, freedom, or even his life. It should also be considered that bearing **“false witness”** would apply not only to telling an outright lie, but also to using deceptive speech. **What was the penalty GOD imposed on those who bore false witness?** The same penalty which would have been suffered by the one against whom false witness was brought.

“If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong; Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you” (Deuteronomy 19:16-19).

“The commandment under consideration seeks to protect a man’s reputation and character against false testimony, both in court and in the private sector of life...it also prohibits all whispering, talebearing, slandering, back-biting, and telling of lies against one’s neighbor (all men), whereby his character, credit, and reputation would be damaged by innuendos, sly insinuations, and evil suggestions” (Cline, p. 231).

“Slander can be committed in many ways, even by telling the truth that carries false implication” (Coffman, p. 294).

Who is my neighbor? It refers to anyone, as our Lord showed in what is called “the parable of the good Samaritan” (Luke 10).

Ex. 20:17 “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's

house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." (ASV)

"Thou dost not desire the house of thy neighbour, thou dost not desire the wife of thy neighbour, or his man-servant, or his handmaid, or his ox, or his ass, or anything which is thy neighbour's." (YLT)

The Septuagint reads, *"Thou shalt not desire,"* which is the correct meaning of chamad ("covet"). In and of itself, the word desire is neither good nor bad. The context must determine its intent, which here among the list of things forbidden means that it describes something bad, something sinful. In this case, covetousness involves the thinking of one who desires to take what belongs to another. In the context, the previous commands regarded one's physical actions toward another person. This passage deals with his thoughts — his heart.

"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). If a man thinks about stealing, he is a thief. If he thinks about murder, he is a murderer. If he thinks about adultery, he is an adulterer. **If not, why not? Did GOD present the truth in Proverbs 23:7 or not?** To ask such a question is to provide the answer.

Considering desire, if GOD tells one to desire something, that is a good thing and worthy of seeking attainment.

"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (1 Timothy 3:1).

On the other hand, to desire something which GOD forbids is evil and sinful, such as in the present passage. The violation of this commandment is akin to stealing, for one does not steal that for which he does not desire. The command is comprehensive, forbidding the desire to take anything which another might own — whether life or property.

"This command is a most excellent moral precept, the observance of which will prevent all public crimes. He who feels the force of the law that prohibits all inordinate desire for anything that is the property of another, can never make a breach in the peace of society" (Clarke, p. 405).

Roper pointed out that covetousness (desire) can lead one to violate all of the rest of the ten commandments.

"A son's passionate desire to have his own way could drive him to dishonor and harm his parents (21:15, 17). David's lust for Bathsheba resulted in adultery and murder (2 Sam. 11; 12). Ahab's desire to own Nabath's vineyard led to false testimony

and murder (1 Kings 21). Coveting merchants who lived in the time of the prophet Amos broke the Sabbath and were guilty of stealing (Amos 8:4-6). The greedy people of Judah who lived in the days of the prophet Jeremiah perhaps violated all of the commandments, trading pure devotion to God and His name for pagan idolatry (Jer. 7:1-15)” (p. 335).

Ex. 20:18-19 “And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not GOD speak with us, lest we die.”

“And all the people perceived the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not GOD speak with us, lest we die.” (ASV)

“And all the people are seeing the voices, and the flames, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mount smoking; and the people see, and move, and stand afar off, and say unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we hear, and let not GOD speak with us, lest we die.” (YLT)

It is understandable that hearing the thunder and trumpet, seeing the lightning and smoke, would cause great fear. But the voice of GOD as it spoke caused far more fear than all of those things combined. Note what the Spirit said to the Hebrews writer.

“For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more...And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake” (Hebrews 12:18-19, 21, emphasis added).

Consider the role of fear in causing men not to do that which is evil. The fear of punishment caused the people to move away from the boundary which GOD had set forth. All societies need to learn that lesson. When those who do evil are not punished by society, it emboldens others who might have abstained from such behavior to get involved in evil themselves.

“By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil” (Proverbs 16:6).

The day is coming when all will hear the voice of GOD.

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of GOD: and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thessalonians 4:16, emphasis added).

If the voice of GOD caused so great a fear at Sinai, imagine what it will cause on the day of judgment. His voice caused the earth to shake at Sinai, but on the day the Lord appears again, the earth and heaven will be shaken (Hebrews 12:26).

Note also that they wanted a mediator, someone to stand between GOD and themselves. GOD had intended for them to be **“a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation”** (Ex. 19:6). A priest could speak his wishes to GOD on a personal basis. But the people were not satisfied with the privileges of priesthood and wanted a mediator. They did not want GOD speaking to them because of fear. This would lead to their dependency on a relatively small group to become their priests.

Ex. 20:20-21 “And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for GOD is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where GOD was.”

“And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for GOD is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before you, that ye sin not. And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where GOD was.” (ASV)

“And Moses saith unto the people, Fear not, for to try you hath GOD come, and in order that His fear may be before your faces--that ye sin not. And the people stand afar off, and Moses hath drawn nigh unto the thick darkness where GOD is.” (YLT)

The first thing Moses did was assure the people that they were not going to die. Of course there was a condition, i.e., that they did not cross the boundary GOD had set for them. Second, he gave them two reasons why GOD had come down and spoken to them: (1) to prove or test them and (2) to cause enough fear that they would not sin.

They were not to fear death on this occasion, but they were to fear the power of GOD. They were to fear what GOD could do to them if they broke His commands. Again, note that fear was used by GOD as a deterrent to sin. Note how Jesus brought the ideas of fear and deterrence together.

“fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28).

After giving the people assurance that they would be okay, Moses **“drew near unto the thick darkness where GOD was.”** He was going in order to receive instruction (laws) for the people. These laws would not

only be directed toward their religious activities but would encompass every aspect of their lives. Just so today — the laws Christ brought for Christians should guide them not only in worship but also in the way they act in every aspect of their lives. Like the Israelites at Sinai on this occasion, fear should cause one to be afraid of breaking GOD's commands. It will shortly be seen, though, that their fear of punishment was short-lived, and unfortunately such is often the case today.

Ex. 20:22-23 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from Heaven. Ye shall not make with Me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye yourselves have seen that I have talked with you from Heaven. Ye shall not make other gods with Me; gods of silver, or gods of gold, ye shall not make unto you.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Thus dost thou say unto the sons of Israel: Ye--ye have seen that from the heavens I have spoken with you; ye do not make with Me gods of silver, even gods of gold ye do not make to yourselves.” (YLT)

“Thus thou shalt say” This emphasizes again that the covenant given to Israel was from GOD. It also seems to imply that they were not to listen to so-called gods or to anyone representing himself as GOD. Such simply did not and do not exist.

“Ye have seen that I have talked with you from Heaven” They saw the evidence of the presence of GOD and, therefore, would know that the voice could only be His.

GOD next expanded on the second commandment. The Israelites had been around the idol-worshipping Egyptians for over four hundred years. Further, the people living around them in the promised land also worshiped images. In verses twenty-two through twenty-six, GOD laid down instructions for their worship. They were not to be like their neighbors and create gods of gold and silver which they would worship alongside Him. This would include not only the supposed gods of the land, but (as expressed) earlier they were not to make any image that supposedly represented Him. They had not actually seen GOD; therefore, no image could be made like Him.

Ex. 20:24 “An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen:

in all places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.”

“An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in every place where I record My name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee.” (ASV)

“An altar of earth thou dost make for Me, and thou hast sacrificed on it thy burnt-offerings and thy peace-offerings, thy flock and thy herd; in every place where I cause My name to be remembered I come in unto thee, and have blessed thee.” (YLT)

Verse twenty-four commands an altar of earth (**“stones,”** v. 25) to be built as a place to offer their variously commanded sacrifices. Note the simplicity. GOD was not interested in an ornate altar where humans might be tempted to offer their sacrifices.

Two kinds of offerings are mentioned here — burnt and peace offerings. Interestingly, the regulations surrounding these sacrifices do not appear to be given at this point in time. Those regulations will be seen in Leviticus 1:2-17; 6:8-13 (burnt offerings) and Leviticus 3:1-17; 7:11-18 (peace offerings).

“in all places where I record My name” This seems to imply where GOD authorized these altars and, thus, true worship. The altar prescribed could be built anywhere and then abandoned as they continued their journey. Further, there is no mention of a special class of priests at this point, conducting these offerings. What is seen is the nation of Israel as a whole offering them.

“I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee” This is an assurance, it would seem, that GOD would be with them when they offered the prescribed offerings at the prescribed place and in the prescribed manner as instructed. GOD would bless them when they obeyed His commands for worship.

Ex. 20:25 “And if thou wilt make Me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.”

“And if thou make Me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stones; for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.” (ASV)

“And if an altar of stones thou dost make to Me, thou dost not build them of hewn work; when thy tool thou hast waved over it, then thou dost pollute it;” (YLT)

Again, the simplicity with which GOD desires to be worshiped is seen. If they had used tools on the stones, they could have ornately carved them. This goes contrary to the way man thinks and acts. Throughout

time, man has tended to build ornate buildings for worship and to provide great ceremony in “worship.” Such does not impress GOD nor gain His favor. In building such places and planning for spectacles of ceremony, man has wasted his time, energy and money. The simplicity GOD desires will not detract from the worship which satisfies Him.

Ex. 20:26 “Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto Mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.”

“Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto Mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.” (ASV)

“neither dost thou go up by steps on Mine altar, that thy nakedness be not revealed upon it.” (YLT)

Zerr states that the word **“steps”** comes from a word which means **“elevation.”** Thus, the simple altar GOD desired on which to burn offerings was simply to be built upon the ground. The altar was not to be placed on an elevated piece of ground or a constructed elevation. **Why was such not to be done?**

In those days, men wore loose-fitting robes, and if they went up on an elevation, their nakedness would be exposed. Note that GOD was (is) concerned with modesty in His creatures. When nude Adam and Eve sinned, GOD made them clothes of animal skins, not something which could be seen through. It might also be observed, in the original language of Genesis chapter three, that their clothing covered a substantial part of their bodies. Further, there was no difference in the way that GOD covered the man and woman. The material He used was skins — which could not be seen through. Men, if it is wrong for a woman to go topless in public (and it is), then it is just as wrong for you to go topless in public.

One might also observe something in Luke 8:27-39. That man was possessed by demons, and he was running around naked. But note the change in verse 35 when Jesus cast out the demons.

The people of the village **“went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid.”** (Emphasis added).

What might that say about those who dress so immodestly today or in any age?

Exodus Volume Three

Exodus Chapter Twenty-one

Outline of the chapter as found in Coffman's commentary on Exodus.

1. The rights of male slaves (vv. 1-6).
2. The rights of female slaves (vv. 7-11).
3. The rights of the accused (vv. 12-20).
4. The rights of those suffering punishment (vv. 21-25).
5. The rights of dismembered people (vv. 26-27).
6. The rights of people wounded or killed by animals (vv. 28-32).
7. The rights of people suffering from willful negligence on the part of others (vv. 33-36).

Ex. 21:1-6 "Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever."

"Now these are the ordinances which thou shalt set before them. If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he come in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he be married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master give him a wife and she bear him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. But if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto GOD, and shall bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever." (ASV)

"And these are the judgments which thou dost set before them: When thou buyest a Hebrew servant--six years he doth serve, and in the seventh he goeth out as a freeman for nought; if by himself he cometh in, by himself he goeth out; if he is owner of a wife, then his wife hath gone out with him; if his lord give to him a wife, and she hath borne to him sons or daughters--the

wife and her children are her lord's, and he goeth out by himself. And if the servant really say: I have loved my lord, my wife, and my sons--I do not go out free; then hath his lord brought him nigh unto GOD, and hath brought him nigh unto the door, or unto the side-post, and his lord hath bored his ear with an awl, and he hath served him--to the age." (YLT)

These six verses deal with the rights of one who became a Hebrew slave bought by a Hebrew. Foreigners who became a slave to a Hebrew will be dealt with in Leviticus 25:44-46. **How could a Hebrew be sold into slavery?** (1) He could be taken into slavery in order to pay off a debt.

"Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen" (2 Kings 4:1).

(2) He could be sold by parents who were in debt.

"Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already: neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards" (Nehemiah 5:5).

(3) He could become a slave in order to repay what he stole from another.

"If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft" (Exodus 22:3).

One of the things which should be pointed out before continuing this study is that GOD neither endorsed nor approved of slavery. What He did do was guarantee fair treatment for those who became slaves. While in these circumstances, they were to be treated like a brother (fellow Hebrew), not just a piece of property.

"If thou buy an Hebrew servant" In the sixth year, he was to be released from his servitude. The seventh year could be one of two times. (1) It could mean that he could only serve for six years, no matter when the time began. (2) It could refer to the sabbath year (it came every seven years) or the jubilee year, in which case, when they came, anyone who was a slave was to be released.

According to Deuteronomy 15:13ff, when the slave was set free, he was given gifts by his former master. But notice some of the restrictions listed in this text. If he came to be a slave by himself, then he would leave by himself. If he became a slave and had a wife, they were both to go free when the time came. But if he were given a wife by his master, then **he** was set free, but the wife and any children born to them remained with the master. But the one who had become a slave

had a choice in this matter. He could go out free, or he could keep his wife (and children) by remaining his master's slave for the rest of his life. This had to be a choice made by free will. He could not be coerced into remaining (**"if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free"**). Jamieson, Fausset and Brown believed the wife in this case was a non-Hebrew who did not have the right to be released with this man (p. 363).

If this were the choice he made, then he was brought to the **"the judges."** The ASV translates this word as **"GOD."** The Hebrew word here is eloheem and can either be used to signify the supreme GOD or magistrates [(We will leave it up to the reader to determine which he believes it to be. RK) Strong]. **Why bring him to the judges?** This would prove that he was making this commitment voluntarily. He had to proclaim clearly that he loved his master, wife and children. Then he was taken to a door post, probably of his master, and an awl was used to pierce his ear (lobe).

"What the piercing of the ear signified, other than the slave's status is uncertain. It may have indicated his willingness to hear and obey his master" (Roper, p. 346).

There does appear to be one exception to this lifetime of servitude — the Jubilee year (It took place every fifty years.).

"But as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee: And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return" (Leviticus 25:40-41).

Coffman summarized the rights of these slaves as follows.

"(1) He was guaranteed the right of just and honorable treatment. (2) He could occupy positions of great trust and responsibilities as did Eliezar of Damascus for Abraham. (3) He could not be bound for more than six years without his consent. (4) He could hold property, with the possibility that he might, in time, redeem himself. (5) He was protected from the sadistic master (v. 20). (6) He could claim compensation for bodily injury (vv. 26-27). (7) He had full rights of rest on the sabbath (20:10)" (p. 304).

Ex. 21:7-11 "And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the menservants do. If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. If he take her another wife; her food,

her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money.”

“And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do. If she please not her master, who hath espoused her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a foreign people he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. And if he espouse her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. And if he do not these three things unto her, then shall she go out for nothing, without money.” (ASV)

“And when a man selleth his daughter for a handmaid, she doth not go out according to the going out of the men-servants; if evil in the eyes of her lord, so that he hath not betrothed her, then he hath let her be ransomed; to a strange people he hath not power to sell her, in his dealing treacherously with her. And if to his son he betroth her, according to the right of daughters he doth to her. If another woman he take for him, her food, her covering, and her habitation, he doth not withdraw; and if these three he do not to her, then she hath gone out for nought, without money.” (YLT)

This text deals with the rights of a Hebrew woman who was sold into slavery. She was not to be treated like a male slave. It would appear in context that this maid was sold to be a concubine or secondary wife to either the master himself or to his son. Because of this relationship, she was not to **“go out”** at the end of six years. Hers was a more permanent relationship and was, as will be seen, protected by GOD to a greater degree. If the maid were purchased to be a wife for his son, then he must treat her as a daughter. It would seem that there is a side lesson here which should be considered. When one’s child marries, he should treat the child’s mate as if he/she were his child. If such were done, it would solve a lot of the problems families often have. This writer and his wife told their grandson’s bride that she should understand that she was now their granddaughter, and she is treated as such.

“If she please not” Poole stated that the Hebrew here is *“be evil in the eyes of”* (p. 162). YLT translated this phrase as *“if evil in the eyes of.”* Strong stated that it means bad or evil, either naturally or morally. If the master bought her to be a second wife or concubine, but then found some evil in her, he could allow another to pay a redemption price for her. It is thought by some that only the father could pay this price. This writer believes it could be any Israelite, likely a kinsman such as in the book of Ruth. At any rate, if he decided not to keep her, he was absolutely forbidden to sell her to a non-Israelite.

Another condition is placed in order to protect this woman. If the master took another wife (which was allowed under the Mosaic law, though never intended from the beginning) he must remember that **“her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish.”** In other words, he must continue to provide her necessities, which included her conjugal rights. One might consider the Scripture below with regard to one’s conjugal rights in marriage.

“Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency” (1 Corinthians 7:3-5, emphasis added).

If her husband did not provide these things for her, he was to free her immediately. Further, he could receive no compensation for his loss.

A number of writers criticize GOD’s allowance of slavery under any circumstances. Note Coffman’s response to such criticism, which helps one’s understanding with regard to this institution in that time.

“God allowed slavery upon exactly the same basis that He allowed divorce (Matt. 19:3-9), allowed the monarchy (1 Sam. 9:7-9), allowed a representative priesthood instead of the priesthood of all Israel (Ex. 9:6), allowed the building of the temple (2 Sam. 7:5-17)” (p. 307).

Why did he allow these things? Because of the hardness of their hearts. Someone might argue that, since that was the case, he might change the worship to fit his likes and dislikes, or one might marry and divorce for any cause, because of the hardness of his heart. **Is this a valid argument?** No!

“the times of this ignorance GOD winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).

GOD allowed some things in the past which He does not allow today. GOD does not allow any variation from His law today!

Ex. 21:12-14 “He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. And if a man lie not in wait, but GOD deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from Mine altar, that he may die.”

“He that smiteth a man, so that he dieth, shall surely be put to death. And if a man lie not in wait, but GOD deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. And if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor, to slay

him with guile; thou shalt take him from Mine altar, that he may die.” (ASV)

“He who smiteth a man so that he hath died, is certainly put to death; as to him who hath not laid wait, and GOD hath brought to his hand, I have even set for thee a place whither he doth flee. And when a man doth presume against his neighbour to slay him with subtilty, from Mine altar thou dost take him to die.” (YLT)

It would seem that these verses show the rights of the accused (in a general sense). Verse twelve is a declaration that GOD approves of capital punishment and always has. It might be said that capital punishment has existed from the beginning; therefore, it is an eternal law.

“Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of GOD made He man” (Genesis 9:6).

Further, it is noted why capital punishment is approved by GOD — **“for in the image of GOD made He man.”** Note also the mercy that is shown by GOD regarding one man’s taking the life of another. If someone unintentionally, i.e., not premeditatedly, killed another, GOD set the wheels in motion for his life to be spared. A place would be provided to which he could flee. At first, this place was the altar, where one laid hold of the horns of the altar (cf. 1 Kings 1:50-51; 2:28-34). After the horns of the altar, the place of safety was found in the cities of refuge, where one who had “killed” someone could go. There it would be determined whether the individual should be spared or put to death — a trial. Six cities of refuge were appointed (Joshua 20:1-9). Consider also that the unintentional killing of another was not without consequences. If one were acquitted in the city of refuge, he had to remain in that city, which will be discussed in more detail later. If he left the city of his own accord, then the avenger could kill him without consequences.

There is an interesting phrase in these verses with regard to one who would be spared for killing another — **“GOD deliver him into his hand.”** This indicates that GOD would at times deliver someone into the hands of another so that his life could be taken. If such were the case, then the one who took another’s life was not to be executed. The idolatrous nations of the promised lands were delivered into the hands of the Israelites. Another thought here would be that GOD delivered His Son into the hands of Judas and the Sanhedrin.

Ex. 21:15-17 “And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death. And he that

stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.”

“And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death. And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. And he that curseth his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death.” (ASV)

“And he who smiteth his father or his mother is certainly put to death. And he who stealeth a man, and hath sold him, and he hath been found in his hand, is certainly put to death. And he who is reviling his father or his mother is certainly put to death.” (YLT)

These verses show general protections for parents. The first thing to notice is the death of the child who **“smiteth”** his parent. The word **“smiteth”** may either signify striking one (probably physical abuse) or killing him.

Verse sixteen deals with kidnaping. *“Just as murder takes life, the kidnapper steals a person’s life”* (Roper, p. 350). Consider that it does not seem to matter what was done with the kidnaped person, i.e., whether he was kept by the kidnapper, sold to another, or murdered. The kidnapper’s sentence was death.

“he that curseth his father, or his mother” What does it mean to “curse” one? Is it talking about speaking profanity?

“curseth” — galal — *“to lightly esteem, vilify, revile”* (Young, p.215); *“to make despicable, to curse...to treat with contempt, bring contempt or dishonor”* (BDB); *“a verb meaning to be slight, to be trivial, to be swift...In many instances, it is used to describe speaking lightly of another or cursing another”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 997).

GOD obviously considers the sin of cursing one’s parents extreme, because He gave an extreme punishment for one’s doing so — death.

“Such behavior leads to a chaotic society. God regards disobedience and disrespect toward parents as a grave sin” (Roper, p. 350).

Later, it will be seen that the present text involved more than just talking back to one’s parents.

“If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our

voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard”
(Deuteronomy 21:18-20).

One of the things to notice in the above passage is that the effort must be made to correct the child’s behavior. If the parents have made the effort and the son has continuously refused to change his ways, then he is to be brought to the city gate where judgement will be rendered.

Ex. 21:18-19 “And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed: If he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed.”

“And if men contend, and one smite the other with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keep his bed; if he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed.” (ASV)

“And when men contend, and a man hath smitten his neighbour with a stone, or with the fist, and he die not, but hath fallen on the bed; if he rise, and hath gone up and down without on his staff, then hath the smiter been acquitted; only his cessation he giveth, and he is thoroughly healed.” (YLT)

The general rights of an injured party are seen in these verses. In the course of a disagreement, if violence ensued and one was severely injured so that he could not work, compensation was required. This involved two things: (1) he was to be compensated for his time (lost work time), and (2) his medical bills were to be paid until he could again go about his business. Too bad modern courts do not see the need to enact these punishments upon criminals.

Ex. 21:20-21 “And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money.”

“And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money.” (ASV)

“And when a man smiteth his man-servant or his handmaid, with a rod, and he hath died under his hand--he is certainly avenged; only if he remain a day, or two days, he is not avenged, for he is his money.” (YLT)

These verses deal with two aspects of a master’s

beating his servant, whether male or female. Verse twenty deals with a servant who died while his master was beating him. In that situation, the master was held accountable and was punished. Interestingly, it does not appear that the master would be put to death, since that punishment was not specified. JFB stated that the Jewish commentators said the master was put to death by the sword. Whatever the case, the punishment does appear to have been severe and was decided by a trial of some sort. He had used excessive force without restraint.

Verse twenty-one considers a master who did not intend to beat his servant to death. If the servant did not die while being beaten, but lived for a few days after the beating, then the master was not held accountable. Consider that the one being beaten might develop an infection because of one of the strokes breaking the skin, etc. **Why?** The fact that the servant lived indicated that the master had not intended to kill him. Second, a servant held value in that his labors provided gain for his master. Since he had lost the production of the servant, that appears to have been considered enough of a punishment.

Modern readers of these laws view them from the perspective of modern law; however, one should attempt to view these things, disgusting as they may be to the “modern” mind, from the common practices of that time. The common customs of the world at that time allowed a master to beat a servant to death for the most minor of offenses. Slaves were considered as just another piece of property to be used and disposed of as his master pleased. GOD’s law for Israel protected slaves from being intentionally beaten to death.

“...the Greek and Roman slave had no personal rights, but was under the absolute power of his master, to brand, torture, or kill him at pleasure, the Hebrew servant was fully protected by the law, and his owner was responsible for any excess of severity in the treatment – for any injury he might do to the life or person of his dependents” (JFB, p. 366).

Under the law of Moses, slaves had limited rights; nevertheless, they did have some rights (See Roper).

Ex. 21:22-25 “If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman’s husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”

“And if men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart, and yet no harm follow; he shall be surely fined, according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any harm follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.” (ASV)

“And when men strive, and have smitten a pregnant woman, and her children have come out, and there is no mischief, he is certainly fined, as the husband of the woman doth lay upon him, and he hath given through the judges; and if there is mischief, then thou hast given life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.” (YLT)

In his commentary, Coffman showed the mind set of the people of that time.

“The law as practiced by that shameful world was: (1) if you kill my child, I will kill you, your family, and your whole generation. (2) if you knock out my tooth, I will knock out all of yours and gouge out your eyes additionally! Etc. Etc.” (p. 310).

Let the modern reader see that the Mosaic law was given to be a schoolmaster, which was to bring the people to a better law. Thus, there are several things which might be observed regarding these laws. (1) This law effectively limited revenge. (2) As the Jews later came to interpret it, and practice it, a monetary value was substituted for retaliatory physical actions against another. (3) The world still has much to learn about the revenge motive — they need to listen to Jesus.

“Then came Peter to Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.” (Matthew 18:21-22).

Jesus' law could be called a law of unlimited forgiveness.

Verse twenty-two pictures a quarrel between two persons which escalated into physical violence. It is easy to see the possibility of one of the wives entering the fray to try to protect her husband. The picture is of a pregnant woman being struck in this confrontation, *“and her children have come out”* (YLT), i.e., she gives birth prematurely due to being struck. If there be no harm to the child, or herself, then the striker is not to be punished. But if harm comes to either of them, then the striker is to be punished. If either the mother or child died, then the striker was to be put to death.

Those in favor of abortion today will sometimes argue that the “fetus” is not as important as the baby after it comes forth from its mother's womb. They point to verse twenty-two as a basis for their argument. They argue that the “fetus” is nothing more than a mass of unviable tissue — a non-human. **What about the**

newborn baby or the infant of a few years? Can they take care of themselves? Are they viable? To be consistent, those who promote abortion would have to support the murder of that child which cannot take care of itself. Consider the text carefully, because it in no way supports the abortionist's argument. (1) The text says the woman was **"with child."** This shows that, in the "unborn state," it is still a child. (2) The word for **"fruit"** comes from the Hebrew word yehled, which is translated *"child, son, boy, offspring, youth"* (BDB, cf. Strong and Baker/Carpenter). (3) The word **"depart"** comes from yatsa, *"to go out, come out, exit, go forth"* (BDB, cf. Strong and Baker/Carpenter). There is nothing in the words noticed above which signifies being aborted. (4) **"no mischief"** (*"no harm"* – ASV). This is not exclusive to the mother. It simply says no harm period, i.e., to mother or child. (5) Even if a case was made that this were an abortion, it should be observed that the child was not purposely aborted. This would have been an abortion due to accidental violence against the mother.

Note that the instructions regarding **"life for life, Eye for eye..."** limited what could be done to the guilty party. Because one did something to another did not give the injured party the right to inflict as much damage on the attacker as he desired. Example: One causes another to lose an eye. The one who lost his eye could not demand that both of his attacker's eyes be put out — only one could be put out.

Ex. 21:26-27 "And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his manservant's tooth, or his maidservant's tooth; he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake."

"And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, and destroy it; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his man-servant's tooth, or his maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake." (ASV)

"And when a man smiteth the eye of his man-servant, or the eye of his handmaid, and hath destroyed it, as a freeman he doth send him away for his eye; and if a tooth of his man-servant or a tooth of his handmaid he knock out, as a freeman he doth send him away for his tooth." (YLT)

Basically, these verses list more rights of servants. If they were treated in some way which caused them to be "dismembered," they automatically received their freedom with no compensation given to the master who

caused the disfigurement.

Ex. 21:28-32 “If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death. If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him. Whether he have gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him. If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.”

“And if an ox gore a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be surely stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. But if the ox was wont to gore in time past, and it hath been testified to its owner, and he hath not kept it in, but it hath killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death. If there be laid on him a ransom, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatsoever is laid upon him. Whether it have gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him. If the ox gore a man-servant or a maid-servant, there shall be given unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.”

“And when an ox doth gore man or woman, and they have died, the ox is certainly stoned, and his flesh is not eaten, and the owner of the ox is acquitted; and if the ox is one accustomed to gore heretofore, and it hath been testified to its owner, and he doth not watch it, and it hath put to death a man or woman, the ox is stoned, and its owner also is put to death. If atonement is laid upon him, then he hath given the ransom of his life, according to all that is laid upon him; whether it gore a son or gore a daughter, according to this judgment it is done to him. If the ox gore a man-servant or a handmaid, thirty silver shekels he doth give to their lord, and the ox is stoned.” (YLT)

This section of Scripture declares the right of the public to be shielded from a dangerous animal, especially where negligence is involved.

The first thing to note is that these are domesticated animals which are under consideration. Though it is the ox which is under particular consideration, the restrictions here would apply to any domesticated animal. Second, verse twenty-eight deals with an animal which has never been known to hurt someone in the past. If the animal did something which killed a

human being, that animal was to be put to death. **Why was the animal to be put to death?** After all, it is just a dumb brute. Let one go back to a general law given by GOD in Genesis 9:5-6.

“And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of GOD made He man.”

Because man is made in the image of GOD, his blood is far more precious than that of an animal.

“Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” (Matthew 6:26).

Therefore, when a man is killed, whether by man or beast, his blood is required in payment for the life taken. This shows the sanctity GOD places upon human life. Further, the animal which caused a human to lose his life was to be killed and it could not be eaten. In this case, the owner of the beast was not to be held accountable for the death of the person it killed.

Verses twenty-nine through thirty-two describe a totally different scenario. The case here involved an animal that was known in the past to be violent toward humans. Further, it must have been reported to its owner that such was the case. The animal did not have to have killed or harmed anyone in the past, but it had tried in some way to hurt someone. If the owner had not done anything to protect the public from this animal, though warned about its propensity to violence, the animal was to be put to death and so was its owner. The owner was considered just as guilty of murder as was the animal. When seeing cases today where a vicious dog kills a child under the same kind of circumstances as the current text, **should not the owner be charged with murder?**

Verse thirty gave an exception where the owner's life could be spared — a monetary settlement. It is not clear as to who set the amount which should be paid. If this writer had to guess, it would be the fathers at the gate (judges). Note also that if a monetary amount were set, the owner of the murdering animal had no choice but to pay it.

The impartiality of this law is seen in verse thirty-one. It did not matter what family member may have been killed by such an animal. **What if the animal had killed a member of its owner's family?** He was still responsible according to the law. The animal was to be put to death.

What about a slave who was killed by another's animal? The animal was to be stoned, and the master

of the servant was to be paid thirty pieces of silver for the life of his servant. It might be noted in passing that the price paid to Judas for betraying Jesus was the same price as that paid for the death of a servant — **thirty pieces of silver.**

Why could not the flesh of the beast which had committed murder be eaten? This probably had to do with the proper blood-letting techniques required by the law for food. This flesh would have been badly bruised by the stoning, which would have caused blood vessels to be ruptured and thus spread blood in the animal.

Ex. 21:33-36 “And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein; The owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them; and the dead beast shall be his. And if one man's ox hurt another's, that he die; then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money of it; and the dead ox also they shall divide. Or if it be known that the ox hath used to push in time past, and his owner hath not kept him in; he shall surely pay ox for ox; and the dead shall be his own.”

“And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein, the owner of the pit shall make it good; he shall give money unto the owner thereof, and the dead beast shall be his. And if one man's ox hurt another's, so that it dieth, then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the price of it: and the dead also they shall divide. Or if it be known that the ox was wont to gore in time past, and its owner hath not kept it in, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead beast shall be his own.” (ASV)

“And when a man doth open a pit, or when a man doth dig a pit, and doth not cover it, and an ox or ass hath fallen thither, — the owner of the pit doth repay, money he doth give back to its owner, and the dead is his. And when a man's ox doth smite the ox of his neighbour, and it hath died, then they have sold the living ox, and halved its money, and also the dead one they do halve; or, it hath been known that the ox is one accustomed to gore heretofore, and its owner doth not watch it, he certainly repayeth ox for ox, and the dead is his.” (YLT)

Liability for the actions of one's animals is clearly recognized by GOD in these passages. The liability revolved around actions of negligence. If an animal of a neighbor fell into a pit which was not properly covered to prevent such, the one who dug the pit was to pay the worth of the dead animal to its owner.

A second scenario is shown where one animal kills another animal which was owned by someone else. In this case, the live ox was to be sold and the money divided between the two owners. But there was one

exception: when the animal which killed another was known in the past to harm or attempt to harm other animals. If its owner had not taken proper steps to protect other animals from his, then he was to replace the dead animal and take the dead animal for his own.

Exodus Chapter Twenty-two

Ex. 22:1-4 “If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double.”

“If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. If the thief be found breaking in, and be smitten so that he dieth, there shall be no bloodguiltiness for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be bloodguiltiness for him; he shall make restitution: if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft be found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep, he shall pay double.” (ASV)

“When a man doth steal an ox or sheep, and hath slaughtered it or sold it, five of the herd he doth repay for the ox, and four of the flock for the sheep. If in the breaking through, the thief is found, and he hath been smitten, and hath died, there is no blood for him; if the sun hath risen upon him, blood is for him, he doth certainly repay; if he have nothing, then he hath been sold for his theft; if the theft is certainly found in his hand alive, whether ox, or ass, or sheep—double he repayeth.” (YLT)

One of the things clearly shown in the laws GOD gave the Israelites is that one's home is his castle. The present section also emphasizes that GOD gave man the right to hold property while he is here on earth.

The first thing which one might notice here is the restitution commanded for that which was stolen. Four sheep for each sheep stolen and five oxen for every ox which was stolen. The difference for oxen was possibly due to their greater value in work. They were also more difficult to train; therefore, they were more valuable. There are some, such as Fields, who believe this would be the return of the ox/sheep with the payment of five/four.

Next, one sees a difference made with regard to the life of the thief, whether at night or daytime. If the thief broke in at night, he might be killed by the inhabitant. If such were the case, the owner was not to be punished — he was guiltless. But if the same thing happened in the daylight, the owner was charged as a murderer and would thus forfeit his own life. **Why the difference? A thief is a thief, is he not?** (1) During daylight hours, the thief might be easily identified, and thus be prosecuted for his crime. (2) During the night, it would not be easy,

because of darkness, to determine his intentions. What this shows is the right of one to protect his family from harm, even if the life of the thief was taken — self defense. (3) This also shows the value of a human being over property. If it could be determined that he was only there to steal property, then it was going too far to take his life.

“no blood be shed for him” This seems to indicate that the next of kin’s right to revenge the death of the thief was negated. But verse three shows that if he were killed in the daylight in the commission of his crime, then the murderer was himself to be executed.

Why is a distinction made between an animal found alive or that which was killed or sold?

“Apparently, as long as no final disposition of the animals had been made, the thief retained the right, or option, of returning them to the lawful owner. The lighter penalty was a presumptive mercy extended to the guilty on the possibility that he might have intended to restore them” (Coffman, p. 316).

Ex. 22:5-6 “If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man’s field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution. If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.”

“If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall let his beast loose, and it feed in another man’s field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution. If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the shocks of grain, or the standing grain, or the field are consumed; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.” (ASV)

“When a man depastureth a field or vineyard, and hath sent out his beast, and it hath pastured in the field of another, of the best of his field, and the best of his vineyard, he doth repay. When fire goeth forth, and hath found thorns, and a stack, or the standing corn, or the field, hath been consumed, he who causeth the burning doth certainly repay.” (YLT)

This section deals with restitution for crops destroyed because of one’s actions or carelessness. GOD decreed that people have a responsibility for injury caused to another’s agricultural endeavors, whether it be intentional or accidental.

Observe that many of the laws being studied here were preventive in nature. These were not simply laws given as penalties. Being enforced, these laws would cause one to stop and think before he did something which might cause damage to another, something which

he might regret later. If one today knew that his carelessness which caused a neighbor's house to burn down would mean that he had to replace the house — **Would he be more careful in what he did?** Considering laws already examined in the context, if he knew that stealing his neighbor's television meant that he would have to replace it with two — **Would he think twice before stealing it?** It can easily be recognized how such laws could decrease crime.

When initially looking at verse five, one might think that this was a purposeful act. But the emphasis is on his making sure that his fences are in order so that his neighbor's property, as well as his own, is protected. It is also seen that the loss suffered by one was to be replaced, but not with any old grain or fruit. It was to be replaced with his best.

The thorns of Palestine were sometimes used for fuel in fires because they were highly combustible. The fire could have been set in order to prepare the fields for the next season's crops or, as one writer suggested, in order to keep mice and other such critters from a food source which would help them to multiply. The fire could be one which was purposefully set to accomplish the above, or it could be something like a small cooking fire. If either got out of control, the result would be the same. Whoever started the fire was to be held accountable.

Ex. 22:7-9 "If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, let him pay double. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods. For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour."

"If a man shall deliver unto his neighbor money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, he shall pay double. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall come near unto GOD, to see whether he have not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods. For every matter of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, whereof one saith, This is it, the cause of both parties shall come before GOD; he whom GOD shall condemn shall pay double unto his neighbor." (ASV)

"When a man doth give unto his neighbour silver, or vessels

to keep, and it hath been stolen out of the man's house; if the thief is found, he repayeth double. If the thief is not found, then the master of the house hath been brought near unto GOD, whether he hath not put forth his hand against the work of his neighbour; for every matter of transgression, for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, for any lost thing of which it is said that it is his; unto GOD cometh the matter of them both; he whom GOD doth condemn, he repayeth double to his neighbour." (YLT)

As one looks at this section, he is reminded that there were no banks (or other such facilities) in those days for the safekeeping of valuable items. One going on a trip might find it necessary to get someone to watch and care for his animals while he was gone, or even his household items. GOD declared that one had the right to expect a safe return of those items left in trust with another. **What was to be done if these items came up missing, i.e., were stolen?** If the thief were caught, then he was to pay the owner of these items double their value.

What if the owner of these goods suspected that the one to whom he entrusted them had embezzled these things for himself? If such were the case, then the law demanded (for the welfare of all) that the case be taken before the **"judges."** It might be remembered that the original word being used here could signify either a human judge or GOD. Once a judgment was rendered, the case was settled.

The Septuagint renders the phrase **"unto the judges"** as **"before GOD"** in verse eight. If the correct rendering is "GOD," then the guilt or innocence could have been determined in one of three ways. (1) The casting of lots as directed by GOD (Joshua 18:10; Lev. 16:8-10; Acts 1:26). (2) The use of the Urim and Thummim (Ex. 28:30; Ezra 2:63; Deut. 1:16-17). (3) A sacred oath taken by the one entrusted with the goods of another that he had not embezzled his neighbor's possessions.

It is this author's opinion that, whichever of the two was ruled against, he had to pay the other double. **What was at stake here?** It was not simply the disposition of the goods. The reputation of the accused one was at stake. Imagine how such would stop a lot of frivolous lawsuits in the present day.

Ex. 22:10-13 "If a man deliver unto his neighbour an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it: Then shall an oath of the LORD be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods; and the owner of it shall accept

thereof, and he shall not make it good. And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. If it be torn in pieces, then let him bring it for witness, and he shall not make good that which was torn.”

“If a man deliver unto his neighbor an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it: the oath of Jehovah shall be between them both, whether he hath not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods; and the owner thereof shall accept it, and he shall not make restitution. But if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. If it be torn in pieces, let him bring it for witness: he shall not make good that which was torn.” (ASV)

“When a man doth give unto his neighbour an ass, or ox, or sheep, or any beast to keep, and it hath died, or hath been hurt, or taken captive, none seeing – an oath of Jehovah is between them both, that he hath not put forth his hand against the work of his neighbour, and its owner hath accepted, and he doth not repay; but if it is certainly stolen from him, he doth repay to its owner; if it is certainly torn, he bringeth it in – a witness; the torn thing he doth not repay.” (YLT)

Verses ten and eleven seem to deal primarily with natural causes, except for the phrase **“driven away.”** This phrase seems to indicate possible raiders from another land, or possibly war, et cetera. Evidence of this kind of action would probably be abundant. There is definitely a difference made between that which is **“driven away”** and that which was **“stolen”** in verse twelve. The key seems to be that no one saw it.

What should be done in such a case as is presented here? An oath was to be made before the Lord that the owner and the keeper had nothing to do with the disappearance of the animal in question. This was to settle the matter between the two. No compensation took place for the missing animal.

“if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof” This passage seems to imply that the keeper had not exercised due diligence in protecting the loaned animal from theft. It may be that the keeper was on the scene and had not attempted to stop the theft from taking place. Jacob mentioned the case of that which was stolen from him as being required by Laban to be reimbursed.

“That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night” (Genesis 31:39, emphasis added).

If this were the case, the keeper was to reimburse the owner for his loss.

Verse thirteen deals with a wild animal's attacking the loaned animal and killing it, since a domestic

animal's attacking another has already been dealt with. Part of the carcass would have been available, which would have borne witness that the keeper had not taken the animal for his own use. It may also have been that evidence could be observed by prints left on the ground, blood, animal parts, et cetera. In such cases, no restitution was to be made, because one cannot control the actions of a wild beast. Be it observed that an effort was required to show proof that the animal had been killed by another.

“As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear” (Amos 3:12).

Ex. 22:14-15 “And if a man borrow ought of his neighbour, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make it good. But if the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good: if it be an hired thing, it came for his hire.”

“And if a man borrow ought of his neighbor, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof not being with it, he shall surely make restitution. If the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good: if it be a hired thing, it came for its hire.” (ASV)

“And when a man doth ask anything from his neighbour, and it hath been hurt or hath died--its owner not being with it--he doth certainly repay; if its owner is with it, he doth not repay, --if it is a hired thing, it hath come for its hire.” (YLT)

These passages deal with laws regarding borrowing and lending. The general principles are: (1) If one borrow something, he is responsible for its safe, or undamaged, return. Too many times, this writer has seen people using something which does not belong to them in a careless way. If one knew there were a penalty for carelessness or misuse, he would take better care of that which belonged to another. This writer has always tried to return something borrowed in as good or better shape than when he borrowed it and believes all should do the same. (2) If the owner were present when damage occurred to his property, the borrower was not accountable for reimbursement. It may be that the owner was involved with working the animal when the loss occurred. Further, by being there, he would have direct knowledge that it was not the borrower's fault that his animal was hurt or died. No one would abuse an animal in the presence of its owner.

*“If the animal had been **hired**, the money already spent on hiring it was sufficient to pay for the use of the animal”* (Roper, p. 369).

Ex. 22:16-17 “And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow

her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins."

"And if a man entice a virgin that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely pay a dowry for her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins." (ASV)

"And when a man doth entice a virgin who is not betrothed, and hath lain with her, he doth certainly endow her to himself for a wife; if her father utterly refuse to give her to him, money he doth weigh out according to the dowry of virgins." (YLT)

"if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed"

There are several words of import in this phrase. The first is the word **"entice."**

"entice" — paw-thaw — *"delude"* (Strong); *"be simple, entice, deceive, persuade"* (BDB); *"a verb meaning to entice, to deceive, to persuade; to be gullible"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 929).

This word would seem to indicate one who was very young. The second word of importance here is the word **"maid."**

"maid" — bethula — *"virgin"* (Strong; BDB); *"a feminine noun meaning virgin"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 172).

What is seen in the present text is considered as rape today. The third "word" is **"not betrothed"** (araw) — engaged to be married. This seems to be the reason that the death penalty did not apply. Note that, in the text of Deuteronomy 22:23-27, if a bethula, were engaged to be married and had sexual intercourse (voluntarily) with one other than her espoused husband, she and the one she committed adultery with were to be stoned to death. (It must be taken into account that an espoused person was considered to be married in every way without the right of sexual intercourse and living together.) In the Deuteronomy case, if she cried out for help (cried out due to rape), it showed that she was not voluntarily doing this and thus was not to be put to death.

"and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife" If he took her virginity, he was to **"endow her."**

"endow" — mahar — *"to bargain (for a {wife}) that {is} to wed"* (Strong); *"to obtain or acquire by paying purchase price, give a dowry...to obtain in exchange"* (BDB); *"a verb indicating the giving of a dowry. It means to get a wife by paying the mohar, the marriage dowry; gifts to acquire one's wife"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 577).

Note the requirement: If a man *"raped"* a virgin, he was to marry her. But the father of the young woman could refuse to allow her to marry this man. One of the things to note here is that permission had to be given for one to be married. **What happened if the father refused to**

allow her to marry this man? In such case, the man had to pay the father fifty pieces of silver for his crime (Deuteronomy 22:29). Considering the customs of those times, it is hard to believe that a father would deny her marriage. If she were not a virgin, she was looked down upon in society and would have had a hard time finding a marriage partner. She would not have been considered a good candidate for marriage [Cf. Deuteronomy 22:14ff (The Hebrews and Arabs to this day practice this.)]. It should also be noted that a marriage confirmed in this way could not be broken — they were to be husband and wife for the rest of their lives — no exceptions.

“If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days” (Deuteronomy 22:28-29).

Some scholars dispute the word **“dowry”** (mahar) in this text, but all agree that he would have to pay a monetary penalty. Those who dispute the word **“dowry”** may do this to avoid the idea of “buying” a bride.

Ex. 22:18 **“Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.”**

“Thou shalt not suffer a sorceress to live.” (ASV)

“A witch thou dost not keep alive.” (YLT)

A **“witch”** [(*“sorceress”* (ASV))] deals with a female. But note that a man could be guilty of practicing the black arts (witchcraft).

“A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them” (Leviticus 20:27).

Often, men who practice such are called “warlocks” or “sorcerers.” **Are witches and warlocks real? Are there really people who are in contact with another world? Can they receive communications from the dead? The answer is NO!!!** But there are those who pretend to be such. Consider Acts 8:9-10 here.

“there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery [μαγεύω – *“practiced magic”* (Strong)], **and bewitched** [ἐξίστημι – *“to amaze, to astonish, throw into wonderment”* (Thayer)] **the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of GOD.”**

Note that the above passage clearly shows that those who pretend to be witches and warlocks use magical arts to deceive the people before whom they practice.

It should be considered that many people desire to be deceived, and some are simply gullible by nature. Understanding the creatures He created, GOD imposed this law to protect His people from such.

"The Greek translation of the Hebrew word for witch is pharmakeus, a close relative of our word pharmacy, meaning one who deals in drugs and poisons, a poisoner" (Fields, p. 491).

"One of the principle reasons for consulting witches of course was to arrange help in getting rid of an enemy; and the witches certainly knew how to help" (Coffman, p. 322).

Fraud is the name of the game for fortune tellers, palm readers, witches, faith healers, et cetera.

Ex. 22:19 "Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death."

"Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death." (ASV)

"Whoever lieth with a beast is certainly put to death." (YLT)

"And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast. And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them" (Leviticus 20:15-16).

"Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen." (Deuteronomy 27:21).

Coffman stated that many of the pagans lay with animals in their worship to Baal (p. 322). JFB also stated that the Egyptians did such in the worship of their idols (p. 369).

Most people cannot believe that such practices still take place today. But police reports across the nation unfortunately confirm that such still takes place (See Coffman, page 323, for an account in Houston, Texas.). One can talk to soldiers returning from the East today and can confirm that they saw these things (using night vision equipment) being practiced by inhabitants of the land. These were heard to say that *"Allah does not see at night."* GOD's penalty for bestiality was death.

Ex. 20:20 "He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed."

"He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto Jehovah only, shall be utterly destroyed." (ASV)

"He who is sacrificing to a god, save to Jehovah alone, is devoted." (YLT)

All worship other than that which belongs to GOD is strictly banned. **What was to happen to one who**

ignored this command? He was to be **“destroyed.”**

“destroyed” — charam — *“to ban, devote, destroy utterly, completely destroy, dedicate for destruction, exterminate”* (BDB); *“a verb meaning to destroy, to doom, to devote”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 379).

In studying the word charam, one notices one of the definitions is *“devote.”* If something were devoted to GOD, it could not be redeemed.

“None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death” (Leviticus 27:29).

This passage shows that worshiping GOD alone meant that those who worshiped a false god were to be utterly destroyed — put to death.

Sarna said that **“utterly destroyed,”** *“implies a greater stringency than does the simple death penalty formula. It implies total annihilation and includes the destruction of the criminal’s property”* (Quoted by Roper, p. 372).

“Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy GOD any bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any evilfavouredness: for that is an abomination unto the LORD thy GOD. If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy GOD, in transgressing His covenant, And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel: Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die” (Deuteronomy 17:1-5).

Not only was it strictly forbidden to worship any “god” other than GOD, but also the best one had must be offered to GOD when he offered a sacrifice. Further, if one were accused of worshiping another god, he was not to be executed until the charge was thoroughly investigated. This would eliminate false accusations.

Ex. 22:21-24 “Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry; And My wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.”

“And a sojourner shalt thou not wrong, neither shalt thou oppress him: for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt. Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them at all, and they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry; and My wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the

sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.” (ASV)

“And a sojourner thou dost not oppress, nor crush him, for sojourners ye have been in the land of Egypt. Any widow or orphan ye do not afflict; if thou dost really afflict him, surely if he at all cry unto Me, I certainly hear his cry; and Mine anger hath burned, and I have slain you by the sword, and your wives have been widows, and your sons orphans.” (YLT)

This section deals with laws of compassion which GOD, a compassionate GOD, expects of his people. Consider several passages similar in context to the text here.

“For the LORD your GOD is GOD of gods, and Lord of lords, a great GOD, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:17-19, emphasis added).

The **“strangers”** were non-Israelites, i.e., anyone from a different nation. In the above passage, note that GOD is not a respecter of persons.

“Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that GOD is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him” (Acts 10:34-35).

GOD has never been a respecter of people based on who they are, what nationality they are, what color their skin is, what their financial status is, et cetera. **Why were they not to “oppress a stranger?”**

“Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 23:9).

They knew what it was like to be oppressed, so **why would they wish that upon anyone else?**

“Love for aliens was not the practice in most ancient nations. The Egyptians hated ‘strangers’” (Fields, p. 493).

First, they were not to afflict people of other nations who lived among, or traveled through, their land — simply because it was **right** not to abuse them.

Second, GOD does not **“take reward,”** i.e., He does not take bribes to be a respecter of persons. It is easy to make judgments, when one is dishonest, based on how much money one may be offered, or whether he be a friend to one of the parties involved. It takes an honest man to stand for truth instead of rendering judgment against a poor widow or orphan.

Third, GOD said, **“Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child.”** Widows and orphans could easily be abused and were abused in many societies in those times (and in present times as well). GOD offered special provisions for the protection of widows and

orphans against afflictions. To abuse widows and orphans takes a particularly crass person.

If a family have widows within its extended family, it should take care of them.

“If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed” (1 Timothy 5:16).

“religion pure and undefiled with the GOD and Father is this, to look after [“visit,” (KJV, ASV)] orphans and widows in their tribulation--unspotted to keep himself from the world” [YLT, (James 1:27)].

What was the penalty for those who mistreated widows and/or orphans? **“My wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword”** The **“sword”** seems to indicate by war. Consider the following passage in Jeremiah 22:3-5.

“Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place. For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people. But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by Myself, saith the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation”
(Emphasis added).

Did this time of desolation come? And if so, when did it come? About what was Jeremiah warning them? The Babylonian captivity under Nebuchadnezzar. If several key things were done then this captivity would come upon them, and one of those things was doing violence to **“the fatherless”** and **“widow.”** What would be the punishment for abuse of strangers, widows and orphans? (1) They would be killed. (2) They would become strangers again in a strange land. (3) Their wives would be become widows. (4) Their children would be made orphans. All of these things came to pass in the Babylonian captivity (606 B.C.).

Ex. 22:25 “If thou lend money to any of My people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.”

“If thou lend money to any of My people with thee that is poor, thou shalt not be to him as a creditor; neither shall ye lay upon him interest.” (ASV)

“If thou dost lend My poor people with thee money, thou art not to him as a usurer; thou dost not lay on him usury;” (YLT)

Here restrictions are placed on the *“rich”* lending money to the *“poor.”* Who is rich? This would seem to be a relative term. To one who only has a hundred

dollars, one who has one thousand dollars is rich. It would seem that this term deals with those who are less fortunate, i.e., in such a way that they are *“poor, afflicted, humble, wretched”* (BDB).

If an Israelite loaned money to a poor Israelite, he was not to be to him as a **“usurer.”**

“usurer” — *nashah* — *“to lend or (by reciprocity) borrow on security or interest”* (Strong); *“to lend, be a creditor”* (BDB); *“a verb meaning to lend, to borrow...a creditor, a person who had extended a loan”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 756).

How do creditors act? They give reminders that a debt is due, and if the borrower fall behind in repayment, they harass and put pressure on the borrower to pay up (usually with threats, i.e., *“I will send you to a collection agency...”*). If a loan were made to a poor Israelite, he was not supposed to act in a harmful way to the poor. He was not to harass the borrower for repayment. There are some who believe that if money were loaned to a poor Israelite, and then he could not repay it, that the loan was to be considered an act of charity.

What is “usury?” It is the charging of interest for money which was borrowed.

“usury” — *neshek* — *“interest on a debt”* (Strong); *“interest”* (BDB); *“a masculine noun meaning interest, usury. It refers to the amount paid back to a creditor beyond the principal”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 758).

A poor Israelite was not to be charged interest on a loan made to him. There are those who believe that no interest could be charged to any Israelite. But that notion does not seem to hold water, because the Lord, living under the Law of Moses, endorsed the principle of taking interest.

“thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest” (Matthew 25:27 — ASV).

If banks could not charge interest on money they loaned, **how could they pay interest to those who made deposits with them?** Those banks would soon go bankrupt.

Interestingly, this prohibition did not apply to a non-Israelite who obtained a loan from an Israelite.

“Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury: Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the LORD thy GOD may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it” (Deuteronomy 23:19-20, emphasis added).

In his commentary, Coffman made an interesting observation with regard to how the Jews interpreted the meaning of this passage.

“Jewish writers insist upon a meaning in this passage which may well be valid. They give us an alternative meaning for the

words 'with thee that is poor,' making it read, 'even when poverty is with thee.' The meaning of this is: 'Even if you yourself are short of money, you must still set aside part of what you have for the poor'" (p. 324).

Ex. 22:26-27 "If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto Me, that I will hear; for I am gracious."

"If thou at all take thy neighbor's garment to pledge, thou shalt restore it unto him before the sun goeth down: for that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? And it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto Me, that I will hear; for I am gracious." (ASV)

"if thou dost at all take in pledge the garment of thy neighbour, during the going in of the sun thou dost return it to him: for it alone is his covering, it is his garment for his skin; wherein doth he lie down? and it hath come to pass, when he doth cry unto Me, that I have heard, for I am gracious." (YLT)

Considered in the context, this would be the garment (cloak) of the poor which could be taken as a pledge for repayment of a loan, but was not necessarily to be required. **Why was this garment to be returned to a poor man who used it as a pledge?** These garments were somewhat like a poncho placed over one's outer wear. They were often the only bedding the poor had (which shows just how poor the ones mentioned in the text were). They would be used many times as a blanket to keep them warm from the chill of the night. If they were deprived of this covering, they would have been most miserable.

Items of necessity were not to be taken as pledges from them. For instance, a millstone could not be taken as a pledge.

"No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh a man's life to pledge" (Deuteronomy 24:6).

Without the hand-mill or millstone, how was the borrower to grind his daily bread?

"it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto Me, that I will hear; for I am gracious" If the poor were defrauded in this way (in any way), GOD would hear their cry (prayer) of pain and agony. This implies that GOD would take punitive action toward any who treated the poor in this way. **Why?** Because GOD is a **"gracious"** GOD. Notice some descriptions of GOD in which His being **"gracious"** is included.

"And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD GOD, merciful and gracious,

longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,
Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and
transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the
guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children,
and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the
fourth generation” (Exodus 34:6-7, emphasis added).

GOD has always shown a special care for the poor and expects man to do the same.

Ex. 22:28 “Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.” (Poor translation)

“Thou shalt not revile GOD, nor curse a ruler of thy people.”
(ASV)

“GOD thou dost not revile, and a prince among thy people thou dost not curse.” (YLT)

According to Fields, the word Elohim, translated **“gods”** here, is sometimes used to signify judges or mighty rulers among men. The ASV, NKJV, and YLT all translate the word here as **“GOD,”** which seems to be the better translation. Yet, it very well could be the case that it refers to rulers of the people as does the rest of the passage.

“Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the High Priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people” (Acts 23:5).

This passage certainly does not refer to the “gods” of man, for in every place where such is referred to in the Scriptures — they are condemned or shown to be lightly esteemed.

This passage is sometimes used to say that one cannot disagree with the secular government under which he resides. Such is an abuse of the passage. It does teach that there is a certain respect which is to be rendered toward those who govern, as demonstrated by Paul’s quotation of the present passage under consideration. One may disagree with a decision made by his rulers, but he must not curse them (consider them of little value, insignificant, lightly esteem).

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Timothy 2:1-2, emphasis added).

How can honest prayer be made for one who is considered to be of no value, not worthy of any respect?

“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of GOD, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness,

but as the servants of GOD. **Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear GOD. Honour the king**" (1 Peter 2:13-17, emphasis added).

What is the **"will of GOD?"** To submit to kings and governors. This passage, and others like it, speaks about secular rulers. That one is to submit to his religious leaders (elders) is spoken of in passages like Hebrews 13:17 and James 4:7. It is perfectly all right to disagree with the policies enacted by evil rulers and even to attempt to change those policies, but it is never right to speak derogatorily against them. Deal with the issues — not the personality. Example: One can be assured that Jesus did not condone the illegal actions of the Sanhedrin and of Pilate in condemning Him to death. But one should note that in all of the interactions with them, He never cursed them. Instead He prayed for them. **"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"** (Luke 23:34).

Ex. 22:29-30 **"Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto Me. Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with his dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it Me."**

"Thou shalt not delay to offer of thy harvest, and of the outflow of thy presses. The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto Me. Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with its dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it Me." (ASV)

"Thy fulness and thy liquids thou dost not delay; the first-born of thy sons thou dost give to Me; so thou dost to thine ox, to thy sheep; seven days it is with its dam, on the eighth day thou dost give it to Me." (YLT)

These verses deal with offerings which were to be made to GOD. Again, another unfortunate rendering is found in the KJV — **"liquors."** In today's terminology, this word refers to alcoholic beverages. In the text, it refers to the liquids which came from their presses which were used as beverages.

"liquors" — dema — **"juice"** (Strong, BDB); *"a masculine noun meaning juice, overflowing, vintage"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 242).

The text is also comprehensive in that it stands for any produce that was grown.

"All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the firstfruits of them which they shall offer unto the LORD, them have I given thee. And whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the LORD, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thine house shall eat of it. Every thing devoted in Israel shall be

thine. Every thing that openeth the matrix in all flesh, which they bring unto the LORD, whether it be of men or beasts, shall be thine: nevertheless the firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem. And those that are to be redeemed from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem; they are holy: thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shalt burn their fat for an offering made by fire, for a sweet savour unto the LORD.” (Numbers 18:12-17).

Regarding the firstborn sons, they were not to be offered on the altar. Instead, they were to be redeemed by their parents’ giving five shekels given to the priests.

Regarding sheep, cattle and goats, the firstborn of these animals could not be redeemed, as seen above. They were offered on the altar — they belonged to GOD. All other domestic animals could be redeemed. Under normal circumstances, when those animals were sacrificed, the priests received a certain portion of the meat for themselves and their families. This was GOD’s way of providing for the care of His priests.

Ex. 22:31 “And ye shall be holy men unto Me: neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs.”

“And ye shall be holy men unto Me: therefore ye shall not eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs.” (ASV)

“And ye are holy men to Me, and flesh torn in the field ye do not eat, to a dog ye do cast it.” (YLT)

GOD said the Israelites were to be **“holy men”** unto Himself. It should be remembered that **“holy”** refers to their being *“a sacred place or thing;”* therefore, sacred to GOD. They were to be pure, splendid and untarnished. The text shows that GOD was instructing them not to tarnish themselves by eating what He declared to be impure, i.e., only fit to be eaten by dogs. It might be considered that dogs were not pets in those times, but rather wild scavengers, themselves unclean.

“Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision” (Philippians 3:2).

“For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Revelation 22:15).

For health reasons, this would be something wise to consider as a prohibition even today (Do not eat road-kill.).

Exodus Chapter Twenty-three

Ex. 23:1 “Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.”

“Thou shalt not take up a false report: put not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.” (ASV)

“Thou dost not lift up a vain report; thou dost not put thy hand with a wicked man to be a violent witness.” (YLT)

The ASV gives a better sense of the first part of this verse, i.e., do not take up a false (“*vain*” – YLT) report.

“The word translated ‘report’ means something heard, a rumor, report, reputation, fame” (Fields, p. 506).

The idea is “*Do not take up something you hear and spread it around.*” One of the things to consider here is that something may be true, but it in spreading that knowledge, it may be harmful to another when no harm should be done. Example: When one was in his early teens, he stole something, was caught, and thus was a thief. Now the man is forty, has learned the error of his ways, and has never stolen another thing. **Is it helpful to that man to bring up the past, or is it harmful?** If followed, this would eliminate gossip or lies which might be told about someone or some instance. A false report is a lie!

“Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off” (Psalm 101:5).

“True decision must not be made upon the basis of what is popular, or upon the basis of pity for appellants, but upon the basis of what is just and equitable, favoring neither rich nor poor, young nor old, popular or unpopular men” (Coffman, p. 329).

“put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness” This phrase deals with conspiracy. It seems to deal with a place where more than one witness was needed to confirm or deny something — a trial. Under the Law of Moses, the penalty for one who made false charges against another was to subject himself to whatever penalty which would have been imposed upon the charged person. For instance if one brought a false charge against another would have caused his execution, then the one who made the false charge was to be put to death (Deut. 19:16-21). Imagine if false witnessing were dealt with that way today.

What is seen in the first nine verses of this chapter deals with justice.

“In ancient Israel, a man might be involved in a trial in one of four ways. He could either be (1) the defendant, (2) the prosecutor, (3) a witness, or (4) a judge. Trials could be held

at any time and were generally judged at the city gate by the elders who sat there (Deut. 21:19; 22:15; 25:7; Josh. 20:4)" (Roper, p. 382).

People were to be judged based on solid evidence — not hearsay or circumstantial evidence. Trials must be fair to all involved.

What would cause a person to bear false witness against another? It could be because of some advantage it might bring to them, or because of hatred toward a person. Consider the false witness Jezebel occasioned against Naboth for both of these categories (1 Kings 23), or that brought against Jesus and Paul by the religious leaders of their days. Sometimes false testimony is given against someone because the mob generates it, and an individual is afraid to go against prevailing opinion — the lies of the crowd. False witness might also be given to align oneself with either the poor or the rich. Any temptation to bring false charges against another must be resisted. Consider the rest of the current text through verse four.

Ex. 23:2 “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment:”

“Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to wrest justice:” (ASV)

“Thou art not after many to evil, nor dost thou testify concerning a strife, to turn aside after many to cause others to turn aside;” (YLT)

What a difference this verse could accomplish in modern society. No matter what the evidence may prove, many in today’s society are willing to follow some rumor or lie which has been declared and riot in the streets or take “justice” into their own hands to avenge a “perceived injustice.” Just because a position may be popular at the moment (political correctness), it does not give one the right to follow the crowd in condemning someone or siding with a wrong position.

It is also the case that one should not remain silent when wrong is done. Take heed to the wise counsel of Job.

“Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door” (Job 31:34)?

Job was not afraid to speak out against evil, no matter who, or how many, might be opposed to truth and justice.

“Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous” (Psalm 31:18).

“A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak” (Ecclesiastes 3:7).

The time to speak is when truth is under attack.

“The fact that in matters pertaining to right or wrong the majority has always been on the wrong side should be considered” (Zerr, p. 150).

Ex. 23:3 “Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause.”

“neither shalt thou favor a poor man in his cause.” (ASV)

“and a poor man thou dost not honour in his strife.” (YLT)

This writer does not know from whom or where he may have heard/seen the following quote, but it goes well with this verse.

“Justice favors neither the poor nor the rich, nor does it disfavor either the poor or the rich.”

Israel was told not to pervert judgment in order to favor a poor man.

“Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour” (Leviticus 19:15).

When a poor man broke the law, he was to be treated like anyone else who broke the law. In the present day, it seems as if every excuse known to man is looked for in order to justify the actions of the *“poor disadvantaged”* criminal. Again, considering the current passage, no advantage is to be given in a court proceeding to someone because he is poor. Everyone is responsible for his own actions!!!

Ex. 23:4-5 “If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.”

“If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, thou shalt forbear to leave him, thou shalt surely release it with him.” (ASV)

“When thou meetest thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou dost certainly turn it back to him; when thou seest the ass of him who is hating thee crouching under its burden, then thou hast ceased from leaving it to it--thou dost certainly leave it with him.” (YLT)

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of

your Father which is in Heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:43-45).

Just because someone is an enemy (foe) does not relieve one of his responsibility to do right by him. If an enemy is having trouble, then one has the responsibility to help him. One should not sit back and gloat that his enemy is having trouble, or that he is hurting (or being hurt) in some way.

“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:19-21, emphasis added).

From the present text, one learns that it is evil to allow animosity to cause one not to help another in need, no matter who he might be.

This writer was speaking at a lecture while Osama Ben Laden was still alive. The theme given him lent itself to telling of a little story along the lines of what is being studied in the present text. It went like this; *“You are traveling down a long, straight highway. Way up ahead, you see what looks like an police car slowing down because something is on the center line, and then you see it speed away. A little later, as you get closer, you see an ambulance slow down at about the same spot, and it is more obvious that something is in the road, of interest, but it is still not clear enough for you to identify. As you get closer, you see what appears to be a human being lying on the center line. As you stop and look down, you see it is Ben Laden, obviously bloody and in great distress. What do you do? Do you let him lie there and suffer? Do you let him die? The Bible clearly, in both Old and New Testaments, dictates that you help him.”* The interesting thing about this event was that quite a few elders and preachers who were there raked this writer over the coals for saying he should be helped. The question this writer asked them was **“Did not our Lord teach that one should stop and help his enemy and keep him alive and restore him to health if he came upon such?”**

“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:36-37 – Read the text prior to these verses.).

Doing good to an enemy is illustrated in the present text by treating him as you would want to be treated. **If one’s animal got out, would he not want someone to take the time to bring it back to him?**

Consider also that, even if that enemy had cruelly

overloaded his animal with some burden, so that it could not stand up under the burden, one should still help him get that animal back on its feet. The problem one may have with someone else (his enemy) should not be taken out on a poor, innocent animal. That would simply be an act of cruelty not to help him. Further, who knows if that act of kindness might help to break down the walls of animosity which exist.

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12).

Ex. 23:6-7 “Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.”

“Thou shalt not wrest the justice due to thy poor in his cause. Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.” (ASV)

“Thou dost not turn aside the judgment of thy needy one in his strife; from a false matter thou dost keep far off, and an innocent and righteous man thou dost not slay; for I do not justify a wicked man.” (YLT)

One is reminded here of the words of Coffman regarding justice shown to all.

“Justice must be impartial, equal, and blind to all such distinctions as race, social excellence, wealth, poverty, or anything else” (p. 332).

Verse three said not to favor a man in judgment because he is poor. The present passage shows that favor is not to be shown for the rich over the poor because of the poor man’s position. A common problem in societies is the taking of sides in a court case because of bribes. There are many examples of such in the Old Testament (1 Sam. 7:3; Psalm 26:10; Prov. 17:23; Isaiah 1:23; 5:23; Micah 3:9-11; Zeph. 3:3). The poor could not offer a bribe to turn the head of a judge, nor could they afford a smooth-talking lawyer to defend them.

“Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause”

“wrest” — *natah* — *“to stretch or spread out; by implication to bend away”* (Strong); *“to stretch out, extend, spread out, pitch, turn, pervert, incline, bend, bow”* (BDB); *“a verb meaning, to stretch out, to extend; to pay attention...turning from righteousness or justice”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 727).

In the case of this text, in comparison to what has been said before, one should not distort justice to favor a rich man.

“Keep thee far from a false matter” This reminds one of an old saying, *“I would not touch that with a ten-*

foot pole.” Be very careful not to make a false judgment. Judgment must be made according to GOD’s manner of judgment, based on the principles of His word.

“We must take heed to our court decisions, because God also holds court; and all our witnesses and judges are on trial before HIM. Our decisions must be in harmony with His” (Fields, p. 510).

Some would argue, “See, we should not make judgments about others in what they do or say.” Because judgments must be made carefully does not mean that judgments are not to be made.

“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24, emphasis added).

What kind of judgments are not to be made? Judgments based on appearance instead of facts (circumstantial evidence???). If the facts cannot be clearly demonstrated, then judgment must be withheld. What kind of judgments are to be made? “Righteous” judgments, i.e., judgments which are right, ones which will uphold true justice.

“the innocent and righteous slay thou not” What if one’s judgment is perverted, and it causes an innocent man to be slain? GOD will hold those who cause such a thing accountable. **“I will not justify the wicked”** GOD will not side with the wicked in any matter. Human beings might – but GOD never will. If one sides with the wicked in any matter, guess who is on the other side against him.

Ex. 23:8 “And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous.”

“And thou shalt take no bribe: for a bribe blindeth them that have sight, and perverteth the words of the righteous.” (ASV)
“And a bribe thou dost not take; for the bribe blindeth the open-eyed, and perverteth the words of the righteous.” (YLT)

What does a **“gift”** (bribe) do to one? It blinds him.
“Those whose eyes are usually open and watchful, and perverts (tangles, twists) the words of those usually righteous” (Fields).

Bribes were common then, as they have been in all ages. Bribes do not always deal with money. Some people use gifts, kind deeds or words, time, et cetera, as bribes. They expect to collect in the future for whatever they have done for another.

“I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right” (Amos 5:12).

Samuel’s sons turned away from righteousness in order to enrich themselves through bribes.

“his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after

lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment” (1 Samuel 8:3).

Ex. 23:9 “Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

“And a sojourner shalt thou not oppress: for ye know the heart of a sojourner, seeing ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt.” (ASV)

“And a sojourner thou dost not oppress, and ye--ye have known the soul of the sojourner, for sojourners ye have been in the land of Egypt.” (YLT)

They knew from past experience what it was like to be a stranger in a foreign land and to be mistreated because they were of another nationality. They were told that they were not to do as had been done to them (cf. 22:21).

“The alien is to be protected, not because he is a member of one’s family, one’s clan, or one’s religious community, but because he is a human being” (Coffman, p. 333).

“The rabbi’s interpreted this to apply to Jewish strangers” (Esses, Jesus in Exodus, p. 151).

The rabbis’ interpretation of this was not at all what the law said. This law, like others, dealt with those who were not citizens in their land. **Did this mean that those who might be of another nation or ethnicity should not face justice in their land?** He was to be treated no differently than an Israelite.

Friend, consider what this means with what is going on in so many places today. These people of another nationality (race) were to be treated no differently than anyone else. Further, the Israelites’ past abuse gave them no right to treat others unjustly or demand special treatment. One cannot control how he may sometimes be treated, but he can control how he reacts to such treatment. Again, one should treat others as one would hope to be treated, no matter how he himself is treated. **Is that not how Jesus reacted to what was unjustly done to Him?**

Ex. 23:10-11 “And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard.”

“And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the increase thereof: but the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie fallow; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they

leave the beast of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard.” (ASV)

“And six years thou dost sow thy land, and hast gathered its increase; and the seventh thou dost release it, and hast left it, and the needy of thy people have eaten, and their leaving doth the beast of the field eat; so dost thou to thy vineyard—to thine olive-yard.” (YLT)

One is now introduced to the Sabbatical Year. For six years they were to sow their crops and reap the benefit of their labors, but on the seventh year, they were not to prepare the land, plant, or care for the vineyards. During this seventh year, any “voluntary” crops which might grow belonged to the poor, the beast of the field, and the stranger among them. **How would they live if they could not plant and reap for a whole year?**

“And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: Then I will command My blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store” (Leviticus 25:20-22, cf. Deuteronomy 15).

GOD would bless them by causing the sixth year’s harvest to be three times the size it normally would be. They would have enough to get them through the seventh year and the first year until the new harvest came in.

Why would GOD place these restrictions on them regarding the land? They needed to be reminded that this land was not theirs — they were simply caretakers and sojourners. Further, they needed to be reminded that GOD would take care of them.

“The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me” (Leviticus 25:23).

By limiting them in the seventh year from working the land, GOD was also providing for the poor and the dumb beast.

“Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; Thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, Thou preservest man and beast” (Psalm 36:6).

“The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from GOD” (Psalm 104:21).

“Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and GOD feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls” (Luke 12:24)?

As the studies of GOD’s word continue, it will be seen that the Israelites abandoned GOD’s instructions regarding the Sabbatical Year.

“To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah,

until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years” (2 Chronicles 36:21).

From the above passage, it is learned that the Babylonian captivity was, in part, due to their refusal to keep the seventh-year sabbath.

Ex. 23:12-13 **“Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed. And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.”**

“Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may have rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the sojourner, may be refreshed. And in all things that I have said unto you take ye heed: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.” (ASV)

“Six days thou dost do thy work, and on the seventh day thou dost rest, so that thine ox and thine ass doth rest, and the son of thine handmaid and the sojourner is refreshed; and in all that which I have said unto you ye do take heed; and the name of other gods ye do not mention; it is not heard on thy mouth.” (YLT)

The humanitarian character of the sabbath day is shown. This day was to be a day of rest for all — human and beast. It was a day to renew one’s strength in both body and mind.

“refreshed” — naphash — *“to breathe, to breathe upon, i.e., refresh (as if by a current of air)”* (Strong); *“to take breathe, refresh oneself”* (BDB); *“a verb meaning to refresh, to rest, to refresh oneself. It refers to a renewal of energy in mind and body”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 745).

Verse thirteen gives a prohibition against mentioning the names of false gods. The word **“circumspect”** is the idea of carefully guarding one’s steps or actions.

“circumspect” — shamar — *“to hedge about as with thorns, i.e., guard...take heed”* (Strong); *“to keep, guard, observe, give heed...to be on one’s guard, take heed, take care, beware”* (BDB); *“a verb meaning to watch, to keep, to preserve, to guard, to be careful, to watch over, to watch carefully over, to be on one’s guard”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1171).

This would seem to imply guarding against using them in casual conversation, where the use of such would lessen the repulsion for them. This would be the same as some of the vulgar words which are coming to be used commonly in language today. The use of such in the past would have been repulsive and cause one to blush with embarrassment, but they have become so common that they are hardly thought about by most

people anymore.

Ex. 23:14-17 “Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto Me in the year. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before Me empty:) And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord GOD.”

“Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto Me in the year. The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep: seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month Abib (for in it thou camest out from Egypt); and none shall appear before Me empty: and the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labors, which thou sowest in the field: and the feast of ingathering, at the end of the year, when thou gatherest in thy labors out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord Jehovah.” (ASV)

“Three times thou dost keep a feast to Me in a year; the Feast of Unleavened things thou dost keep; seven days thou dost eat unleavened things, as I have commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month of Abib; for in it thou hast come forth out of Egypt, and ye do not appear in My presence empty; and the Feast of Harvest, the first fruits of thy works which thou sowest in the field; and the Feast of the In-Gathering, in the outgoing of the year, in thy gathering thy works out of the field. Three times in a year do all thy males appear before the face of the Lord Jehovah.” (YLT)

Three feasts are mentioned in these verses, two of which are mentioned for the first time. The feast of unleavened bread is not new, having been mentioned in 13:3ff. It is observed that all Jewish males were required to attend these feasts. In the wilderness, this would have been much easier to accomplish, since they lived around the Tabernacle. Later, in Palestine, it would have required long trips to Jerusalem, where the Temple was located. While only the males were required to go to these feasts, often their entire families went with them. Space will briefly be given here to consider these feasts.

Passover Feast (Feast of Unleavened Bread)

1. The Jews considered this the most important of the three feasts they were to observe.
2. The Passover meal was celebrated on the fourteenth

of Nisan and was immediately followed by seven days of the Passover feast (15-22 Nisan).

3. The feast was instituted by GOD to remind them of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage (Ex. 12:1-28).

Pentecost Feast (Feast of Harvest)

1. The Scriptures do not give any historical significance to this feast.

2. It was celebrated fifty days after the first sheaf of barley was cut during Passover (Lev. 23:11, 15-16; Deut. 16:9).

3. This feast is also known by the following names:

- a. Feast of Weeks (Ex. 34:22; Deut. 16:10, 16).
- b. The Day of Firstfruits (Num. 28:26).

Feast of Tabernacles (Feast of Ingathering)

1. The historical significance of this feast is their wandering in the wilderness. During this feast, the Jews built tent structures (non-permanent) and lived in them. This reminded them of the protection GOD had given His people.

2. This feast is also known by the following names:

- a. Festival of Tents [Tabernacles (2 Chron. 8:13; Ezra 3:4; Zech. 14:16, 18-19)].
- b. Festival of Jehovah (Lev. 23:39).

3. This feast lasted for seven days — 15-22 of Tishri. The sixth day was the day of atonement. (Unger's Bible Dictionary, p. 359).

Ex. 23:18-19 “Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until the morning. The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD thy GOD. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.”

“Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the fat of My feast remain all night until the morning. The first of the first-fruits of thy ground thou shalt bring into the house of Jehovah thy GOD. Thou shalt not boil a kid in it mother's milk.” (ASV)

“Thou dost not sacrifice on a fermented thing the blood of My sacrifice, and the fat of My festival doth not remain till morning; the beginning of the first-fruits of thy ground thou dost bring into the house of Jehovah thy GOD; thou dost not boil a kid in its mother's milk.” (YLT)

Israel's sacrifices were to be accompanied with a grain offering, which was sometimes in the form of baked bread (Lev. 2:4-5; Num. 15:1-9). **Why was this bread not to be leavened?** Leaven is often used in the Scriptures as a symbol of evil, corruption, and sin.

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

Since the blood was to be offered to GOD, no polluted thing could be offered with it.

“neither shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until the morning” Fields supposed that to leave the fat until the next day would be to treat it as common garbage. The fat of the animals offered belonged only to GOD and was to be burnt upon the altar. The people had been strictly instructed not to eat the fat or blood of the animals.

“And the priest shall burn them upon the altar: it is the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savour: all the fat is the LORD'S. It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood” (Leviticus 3:16-17, emphasis added).

In making these restrictions it appears that GOD was teaching them not to treat any aspect of these sacrifices in a common manner.

“The first of the firstfruits” The Septuagint reads, *“the first of the products of the land”* (JFB, p. 374). Before they took anything for themselves, they were to offer the very best of their crops at these three feasts (vv. 14-17). Note how Josephus stated this was done.

“They take an handful of the ears and dry them, then beat them small, and purge the barley from the bran; they then bring one-tenth deal to the altar to God, and, casting one handful of it upon the fire, they leave the rest a perquisite to the priest” (Antiquities).

“Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk” This indeed seems to be a strange command to today's student, and it is possible that he will never come to an adequate understanding of it. Varied explanations have been given for what this difficult passage may mean and are presented below for the reader's consideration.

“Now we know from the Ugaritic texts that the Canaanites prepared such a dish particularly at festal ceremonies pertaining to the fertility of the soil. In the Ugaritic tablet on ‘The gods pleasant and beautiful’ it is written (line 14):...‘boil a kid in milk, a lamb in butter.’ The custom of boiling small cattle in milk has been preserved to this day among Bedouins” (Cassuto, quoted by Roper).

“This law is now generally understood to make allusion to a Canaanite religious practice, in which a kid was boiled in its mother's milk. This practice was included in the rituals at Ugarit, when such a dish was prepared at festal ceremonies pertaining to the fertility of the soil” (Fields, p. 515).

“The pagan idea was that the new life of the kid added to its

mother's milk produced double fertility" (Unger).

Coffman revealed that this milk would then be sprinkled on the land.

It may also be that this is another humane act shown toward animals. A kid boiled in its mother's milk would indicate an animal not yet weaned. Those raised on a farm have seen the effects of an animal whose baby died at birth and therefore could not be naturally dried up.

Ex. 23:20-24 "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions: for My name is in Him. But if thou shalt indeed obey His voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For Mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images."

"Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee by the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Take ye heed before Him, and hearken unto His voice; provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgression: for My name is in Him. But if thou shalt indeed hearken unto His voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For Mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Canaanite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: and I will cut them off. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works; but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and break in pieces their pillars." (ASV)

"Lo, I am sending a Messenger before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee in unto the place which I have prepared; be watchful because of His presence, and hearken to His voice, rebel not against Him, for He beareth not with your transgression, for My name is in His heart; for, if thou diligently hearken to His voice, and hast done all that which I speak, then I have been at enmity with thine enemies, and have distressed those distressing thee. For My messenger goeth before thee, and hath brought thee in unto the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Canaanite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, and I have cut them off. Thou dost not bow thyself to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their doings, but dost utterly devote them, and thoroughly break their standing pillars." (YLT)

“Behold, I send an Angel before thee” Who was this **“Angel”** (messenger)?

“The angel promised was, in the judgment of some commentators following Tertullian, Joshua; in that of others, the column of smoke and fire; and of a third class, a mere figure of speech...but according to the vast majority of ancient, as well as modern interpreters, it was He who brought the Israelites out of Egypt” (JFB, p. 375).

“And when we cried unto the LORD, He heard our voice, and sent an Angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt” (Numbers 20:16).

A distinct personality is shown here, whom this writer believes to be the second person of the GODHEAD — **“the Word”** (John 1:1). This Angel (or Messenger) could not have been Moses for the following reasons: (1) This Angel was going to bring them into the promised land (Canaan). Moses was forbidden to enter the promised land, only being allowed to view it from afar. (2) This Angel had the power to withhold forgiveness of sins, A mortal, like Moses or Joshua, could not do this. The implication is that the Angel could forgive sins — again — something Moses could not do (nor any of the heavenly beings commonly referred to as angels).

“He is the same glorious Being who came to Joshua as the captain of the hosts of Jehovah, and the one who was among the myrtle trees of Zechariah 1:8” (Coffman, p. 337).

It might be added that He was the same One who spoke to Moses from the burning bush.

“Beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not” Israel was being cautioned to be very careful of this Angel — careful to obey Him. Further, they were warned not to provoke Him, i.e., provoke Him to anger.

“provoke” — *marar* — *“to be bitter...to show bitterness, to make bitter”* (BDB); *“a verb meaning to be bitter, to make bitter, to grieve. It has the sense of harshness, embitterment, offensiveness affliction...especially of the bitterness engendered by God’s judgments on his people”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 674).

To obey Him was to obey Him as He spoke through Moses. **Why were these instructions so important?**

“He will not pardon your transgressions” The idea of **“transgressions”** implies more than disobedience. It is total rebellion to Him, a rebellion which will never bow to His will.

“My name is in Him” This speaks of the very essence of GOD’s being in this Angel. His authority was in Him.

Verse twenty-two is a promise made to the Israelites if they obeyed GOD’s instructions. If they were obedient to the voice of the Angel, then their enemies would be His enemies. To be GOD’s enemy is to have no hope of victory. A marginal reading states, *“I will afflict them*

that afflict thee.” Interestingly, when GOD declared He would stand against Israel’s enemies, there is a corresponding action which He expected from Israel.

“Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate Thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against Thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies” (Psalm 139:21-22).

GOD hates the enemies of His people, and He expects His people to hate His enemies, which are basically one and the same.

“If I claim to be a friend of God I dare not be a friend of God’s enemies. That would make me also an enemy of God” (Zerr, p. 151).

In Acts chapter nine, persecution directed against GOD’s people is shown to be persecution against Christ Himself. Those who speak or act against GOD’s people are doing the same thing to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

Verse twenty-three shows that GOD would remove the inhabitants of Canaan and give the land to His people. All of this was conditioned upon Israel’s obeying the voice of GOD. **Why were these people to be removed from the land?** Because they had fallen into total depravity — worshiping the idols, offering their children to Molech, et cetera. When Israel entered the land of these people, they were to destroy all of their idols and images. They were not to do anything which might possibly be construed as honoring, recognizing, or serving them.

“Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy GOD: for every abomination to the LORD, which He hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods” (Deuteronomy 12:30-31).

The instructions given to the Israelites fit well with the instructions given to Christians today regarding the practices of the denominational world. Their works do not bare fruitful benefits.

“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret” (Ephesians 5:11-12).

Christians, like the Israelites of old, are actively to stand against that which is evil — the gods of denominationalism. It is one thing to avoid practicing evil. It is another thing to actively oppose evil. GOD’s people are to do both!

Emphasis is given to destroying the **“images”** of these gross nations.

“images” — *matstsebah* — “something {stationed}, i.e., a column or (memorial stone); by analogy an idol” (Strong); “pillar, mastaba, stump” (BDB); “a feminine noun meaning something set upright. The word often refers to a standing, unhewn block of stone utilized for religious and memorial purposes” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 652).

Ex. 23:25-26 “And ye shall serve the LORD your GOD, and He shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil.”

“And ye shall serve Jehovah your GOD, and He will bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. There shall none cast her young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil.” (ASV)

“And ye have served Jehovah your GOD, and He hath blessed thy bread and thy water, and I have turned aside sickness from thine heart; there is not a miscarrying and barren one in thy land; the number of thy days I fulfil.” (YLT)

GOD continued to declare the blessings He would give them if they were faithful to Him. The **“bread”** and **“water”** appear to represent their crops and the rains so badly needed by them.

Consider that GOD promised to take away sickness from among them. In Exodus 15:26, GOD promised that they would not suffer from the diseases He had brought upon the Egyptians.

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

This does not appear to be a blanket statement that there would be no sickness among them. Instead, it seems to indicate that their general health would be good.

Note a parallel passage in Deuteronomy 7:15.

“And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.”

Here it is learned that plague (“pandemic”) diseases would not be placed upon them, such as had been seen in Egypt.

Verse twenty-six shows that there would be no miscarriages in the land (**“cast their young”**). Further, both man and animals would be fruitful. This would indicate large population growth of both the Israelites and their animals.

“the number of thy days I will fulfil” GOD would

give them full, long, and fulfilled lives.

“So when David was old and full of days, he made Solomon his son king over Israel” (1 Chronicles 23:1, emphasis added).

“Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died; an hundred and thirty years old was he when he died” (2 Chronicles 24:15, emphasis added).

GOD promised them health, happiness, and length of life, but only if they obeyed the voice of His Angel. GOD’s blessings are abundant for those who obey Him, not just in the world to come, but in this world as well.

Ex. 23:27-28 “I will send My fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee.”

“I will send My terror before thee, and will discomfit all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. And I will send the hornet before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee.” (ASV)

“My terror I send before thee, and I have put to death all the people among whom thou comest, and I have given the neck of all thine enemies unto thee. And I have sent the hornet before thee, and it hath cast out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee;” (YLT)

GOD promised to drive the enemies of Israel before them, i.e., to destroy those enemies. Notice the phrase, **“I will send My fear before thee,”** and compare it with the following passages.

“The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which Thou hast purchased” (Exodus 15:14-16, emphasis added).

“Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel” (Numbers 22:2-3, emphasis added).

“This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee” (Deuteronomy 2:25, emphasis added).

“And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your GOD, He is GOD in Heaven above, and in earth beneath” (Joshua 2:9-11, emphasis added).

“When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, GOD is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness” (1 Samuel 4:6-8, emphasis added).

The people of Canaan saw what GOD had done through the Israelites and believed the Israelites were invincible.

Some believe that the **“hornet”** here is a literal infestation of hornets. If the reader has ever been attacked by hornets, he knows that they will indeed drive their enemy away from them. The word **“hornet”** is not speaking of literal hornets. Rather, it speaks of the many means GOD used to disquiet Israel’s enemies and cause their defeat.

Ex. 23:29-30 “I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land.”

“I will not drive them out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land.” (ASV)

“I cast them not out from before thee in one year, lest the land be a desolation, and the beast of the field hath multiplied against thee; little by little I cast them out from before thee, till thou art fruitful, and hast inherited the land.” (YLT)

It is now revealed that Israel’s conquest of Canaan is not going to be an “overnight” victory.

“Israel’s conquests of Canaan required six or seven years. See Joshua 14:7, 10; Num. 14:33. Jehovah cast out those nations before Israel little by little. Deut. 7:22” (Fields, p. 522).

The reason for an extended conquest of the land is

given. The land would become desolate if they were all driven out at once. One simply has to look at a piece of property which is not cared for to see how quickly nature can reclaim it. Consider what would happen to vineyards and orchards if they were not constantly attended to. The wild beasts would also multiply and therefore be troublesome to the people as they tried to resettle the land.

GOD had told Israel that their women would not be barren, nor would they miscarry. This would cause a population explosion which would allow them to populate the land as they slowly conquered it.

Ex. 23:31-33 “And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against Me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.”

“And I will set thy border from the Red Sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness unto the River: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand: and thou shalt drive them out before thee. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against Me; for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.” (ASV)

“And I have set thy border from the Red Sea, even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness unto the River: for I give into your hand the inhabitants of the land, and thou hast cast them out from before thee; thou dost not make a covenant with them, and with their gods; they do not dwell in thy land, lest they cause thee to sin against Me when thou servest their gods, when it cometh a snare to thee.” (YLT)

GOD established the boundaries of their conquest, i.e., the land which He promised them.

“From the Red Sea (probably from the tip of the gulf of Akabah at Elath) to the sea of the Philistines (the Mediterranean); and from the wilderness (probably the Sinai wilderness of Shur) unto the river (the Euphrates)” (Fields, p. 522).

Israel may have hoped the conquest would be rapid, but GOD’s plans for them reached far into the future. The occupation and control of all the land was fulfilled in the time of Solomon.

“Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life” (1 Kings 4:21).

“David smote Hadarezer king of Zobah unto Hamath, as he

went to stablish his dominion by the river Euphrates” (1 Chron. 18:3).

“Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods” No covenant was to be made with any of the people of the land, nor with any of their gods.

“Covenants were said to be witnessed by the gods of nations making them. Therefore, if Israel entered into such a covenant, they would, in effect, be acknowledging and making a covenant with the gods of the Canaanites” (Roper, p. 396).

Why was no covenant to be made with the Canaanites (general term for all the nations of the land)? Why were they all to be killed or driven from the land?

“They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against Me” The sin spoken of is obviously idolatry. (It might be reasonably said that all sin is idolatry.) GOD warned them that the people and their gods would become a snare to them if they were allowed to remain in the land.

“snare” — *moqesh moqesh* — *“a noose (for catching animals); by implication a hook (for the nose)”* (Strong); *“bait, lure, snare”* (BDB).

The picture drawn is that if Israel were not faithful to GOD and therefore made covenants with the people of the land, they would be caught in a trap. A trap one might add, set by Satan. Further, the “hook” was placed in the nose of the oxen in order to make it easier to lead them around. If Satan be allowed to get his hook into one, he will quickly lead him as far away from GOD as possible. That is what these Canaanites would do to Israel.

“They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols; which were a snare unto them...Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions” (Psalm 106:34-36, 39, emphasis added).

Consider the lesson for every generation which has lived on this earth. One is not to make close ties with the evil people around them.

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

“Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals” (ASV).

Exodus Chapter Twenty-four

Ex. 24:1-2 “And He said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him.”

“And He said unto Moses, Come up unto Jehovah, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off: and Moses alone shall come near unto Jehovah; but they shall not come near; neither shall the people go up with him.” (ASV)

“And unto Moses He said, Come up unto Jehovah, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and ye have bowed yourselves afar off; and Moses hath drawn nigh by himself unto Jehovah; and they draw not nigh, and the people go not up with him.” (YLT)

Moses had previously been told to take GOD's instructions to the Israelites. In the present passage, he is instructed to come back up and to bring certain men up with him. Aaron and two of his sons (Nadab and Abihu) were specifically designated, as well as seventy of the elders of the people.

When noting Nadab and Abihu, it is seen that, at the present time, they were faithful to GOD. But the Bible student cannot help but remember them later and recall the tragedy of their lives. These brothers had every advantage one could have for success, yet they failed. Today, one hears so much about people's not being “successful” because they did not have the opportunities others had. The truth is that all have opportunities. But success should not be measured by the achievements of others. Success is measured not by quantity, but rather by what one does with the opportunities he has. None will ever match the attainments of the apostle Paul; yet, each one can obtain the reward of eternity by using the opportunities and talents GOD has given him. That is true success.

Nadab and Abihu were privileged to go up on the mountain, to participate in a special time of worship with their father, the seventy and Moses. But they were destroyed by GOD because of their failure to keep on following His commands.

“Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD” (Leviticus 10:1-2).

They violated GOD's set rules for worship. They did not

believe they had to worship GOD exactly as He commanded them to do. Many today feel the same way; but, if they were able to ask Nadab and Abihu today if one must worship GOD just as He has commanded, they would hear them shout, “**Absolutely!**”

This group, in order to obey GOD, had to separate themselves in general from the rest of the nation. They were to go up on the mountain (beyond the barrier formerly imposed) in order to draw nearer to GOD. They would have been close to the glory of GOD, but only Moses was allowed to go all the way to the top.

Ex. 24:3 “And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.”

“And Moses came and told the people all the words of Jehovah, and all the ordinances: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which Jehovah hath spoken will we do.” (ASV)

“And Moses cometh in, and recounteth to the people all the words of Jehovah, and all the judgments, and all the people answer—one voice, and say, All the words which Jehovah hath spoken we do.” (YLT)

When GOD first appeared to the people in the cloud/ fire/lightening, et cetera, they had recoiled in fear and asked that Moses be GOD’s representative between them. This was granted by GOD. Moses received GOD’s instructions, which he then gave to the people. But these were not the full instructions, i.e., with all the details.

“They considered the words which Moses gave to them as words ‘which the Lord hath spoken.’ This was true and they did not attempt to make a distinction between the authority of God and that of Moses, as the sabbatarians today are doing” (Zerr, p. 152).

When the people heard what Moses said they unanimously declared, **“All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.”** This was nothing new, for in the past they had vowed to obey GOD in all things (Ex. 19:8). Note that about forty days later, in direct opposition to GOD’s law, they built a golden calf and bowed before it (Ex. 32). Lest one judge them too quickly, he should consider his own promise to obey GOD, and in some cases, how quickly he disobeyed Him. When a Christian has put the Lord on in baptism, he has promised to do all that GOD has told him to do. **Yet, how many times has he momentarily forgotten that promise and ventured where GOD wants no man to travel?** In declaring that they would obey all the

commands of GOD, they were making a covenant with Him.

Ex. 24:4 “And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.”

“And Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the mount, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.” (ASV)

“And Moses writeth all the words of Jehovah, and riseth early in the morning, and buildeth an altar under the hill, and twelve standing pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel;” (YLT)

Some modern critics loudly proclaim that Moses did not write Exodus. Instead, they say it was written by a number of authors who based what they wrote on the “oral traditions” of Moses which had been handed down through time. Some go so far as to say that this man who had been trained in the best schools of Egypt as a possible heir to the throne — could not write. They make these claims in order to advocate that “oral traditions” might be wrong and thus denigrate GOD’s holy word. These same people will accept the writings, not only of the Egyptians, but also those of Hammurabi as genuine, even though they were hundreds of years before Moses’ time. The fact is that the critics who appeal to “oral tradition” or “traditions” as the basis of Exodus (or any other book in the Bible) are merely confessing that they prefer their own imaginations to the Word of GOD.

*“Numerous passages affirm that **MOSES WROTE** a great amount of material. See Deuteronomy 31:9, 19, 24; Numbers 33:2; Exodus 17:14”* (Fields, p. 533).

The people had orally ratified the covenant with GOD. Preparations were now made by Moses to formally ratify the covenant. (1) Moses wrote down what GOD had said. (2) He built an altar, a universal symbol of worship. (3) He built twelve pillars as memorials of the covenant, which represented the twelve tribes of Israel.

Ex. 24:5 “And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD.”

“And he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto Jehovah.” (ASV)

“and he sendeth the youths of the sons of Israel, and they cause burnt-offerings to ascend, and sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings to Jehovah—calves.” (YLT)

Note that young men were sent to gather the animals for the burnt and peace offerings. This seems to imply that the Levitical priesthood had not been established as yet. Further, it is observed that the animals to be sacrificed were specified — oxen. The **“burnt offerings”** were probably a sin offering which indicated guilt on man’s part, and thus GOD’s condemnation. The **“peace offerings”** were probably made afterward. These would have signified a state of harmony which would exist after the offering for guilt had been properly made and the covenant ratified.

Ex. 24:6 “And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.”

“And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.” (ASV)

“And Moses taketh half of the blood, and putteth in basins, and half of the blood hath he sprinkled on the altar;” (YLT)

During this time, before the Levitical priesthood was established, it is not known who served as the priests. Connecting this with verse five, it appears that young men were the ones established as priests. It also appears that Moses was acting in the capacity that we know of as the High Priest, as well as the mediator between GOD and man. Here Moses took half of the blood of those animals which were sacrificed and put it into two basins (bowls, containers). One for later use, and the other to be sprinkled on the altar.

“The sprinkling of the blood on the altar indicated the blood was sprinkled God-ward (toward God) to sanctify the requirements of Divine justice” (Fields, p. 534).

It should be remembered that GOD’s covenants have always been sealed with blood. The blood of animals in the Patriarchal and Mosaic ages, and the blood of GOD’s Son in the Christian age.

“But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us...For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which GOD hath enjoined unto you...For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of GOD for us: Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the High Priest entereth into the Holy Place every year with blood of others” (Hebrews

Ex. 24:7-8 “**And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.**”

“And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah hath made with you concerning all these words.” (ASV)

“and he taketh the Book of the Covenant, and proclaimeth in the ears of the people, and they say, All that which Jehovah hath spoken we do, and obey. And Moses taketh the blood, and sprinkleth on the people, and saith, Lo, the blood of the covenant which Jehovah hath made with you, concerning all these things.” (YLT)

“And he took the book of the covenant” This is the writing which was spoken of in verse four. This is the national covenant issued by GOD to His people.

“He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone. And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it” (Deuteronomy 4:13-14).

How did GOD “declare unto you His covenant?” He had Moses read what He had commanded him to write by inspiration (v. 4).

“A public reading of the terms of the covenant was a part of every covenant-renewal ceremony (See Josh. 24:25-27; 2 Kings 23:2; Neh. 8:5-9)” (Walton/Matthews as quoted by Roper, p. 403).

Consider that this was a covenant (law), made not with an individual, but with a whole nation.

What did the people do when they heard the law?

They took an oath — **“All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.”** This is the third time they took this oath of obedience.

“Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words” Moses took half of the blood of the sacrificial animals and sanctified the people in the same way he had sanctified the altar — he sprinkled this blood on the people. It is called the **“blood of the covenant,”** because it sealed the covenant. It would be

very much like a covenant (contract) one signs when he buys a car on credit. The contract does not go into effect until both he and the representative of the bank sign their names to the loan agreement. The covenant GOD made with Israel was not in effect until the blood sealed it, both on the altar and the people.

"Why was the covenant established in blood? Many reasons could be given, but here are a few: (1) it stressed the serious, even fatal, nature of sin, in that only blood, indicating death, could cleanse it; (2) particularly. It was a type of the sacrifice of Christ 'for the sins of the whole world;' (3) in God's view of a covenant, before it could be in force, a death must have occurred (Hebrews 9:15-17); (4) not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood (Hebrews 9:18); (5) This also constituted a reminder that death was the penalty of breaking the covenant; (6) it symbolized the unity between God and Israel, since the same blood was sprinkled upon both, upon God in a figure, at the altar, and upon the people also (v. 7); (7) the blood symbolizes the grace of God in man's redemption" (Coffman, p. 347).

"The blood of the covenant'...creates a solidarity between the two parties. This dramatic act is not rationally explicable, but no doubt arises from the recognition that 'blood' is the distinct element that makes life possible...Thus Israel now begins a new life of obedience, signified by sacrifice, the 'book of the covenant,' and the 'blood of the covenant'" (Brueggemann, quoted by Roper).

"Kaiser said that the sprinkling of blood was 'an act of dedication or consecration,' that the blood on the altar symbolized 'God's forgiveness and acceptance of the offering,' and that the people pointed to 'a blood oath' that bound them to be obedient" (Roper, 404).

It is remembered that GOD dictated the covenant. It was not a mutual agreement hammered out through negotiations. Imagine for a moment what the Bible would look like if GOD had sat down with man and allowed him to negotiate with Him on the laws to be followed. **Can one even begin to imagine what the New Testament would look like?** Yet, that is exactly what most of the religious world thinks they can do with GOD's word!

The Law of Moses was never written as a means for justifying one from sin. It showed man what his sins were, the consequences of sin, and acted as a preventive measure to curb acts of sin.

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20).

"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till The Seed should come to Whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Galatians 3:19).

“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:9-10).

How is the Old Testament an essential guide for those who would live a godly life?

“whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

“Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come” (1 Corinthians 10:11 – ASV).

How can one truly understand the New Covenant, the New Testament, if he does not study the types and shadows of the Old Testament? How can one understand the need for blood and the atoning sacrifice made by Jesus, and so many other things taught by the New Testament? The Old Testament is essential for one’s learning — but not as a law to guide him today.

Ex. 24:9-11 “Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the GOD of Israel: and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in His clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand: also they saw GOD, and did eat and drink.”

“Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. And they saw the GOD of Israel; and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the very heaven for clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand: and they beheld GOD, and did eat and drink.” (ASV)

“And Moses goeth up, Aaron also, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they see the GOD of Israel, and under His feet is as the white work of the sapphire, and as the substance of the heavens for purity; and unto those of the sons of Israel who are near He hath not put forth His hand, and they see GOD, and eat and drink.” (YLT)

“Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the GOD of Israel” How could this be? The Bible clearly states that a human being cannot see GOD and live. When Moses desired to see GOD, he was told, **“Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man**

see Me, and live” (Exodus 33:20). Was an exception made in the present context which allowed these elders, Aaron, his sons and Moses to see Him? Note what is said in Deuteronomy regarding the incident spoken of in the present text.

“Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude (“form” – ASV) on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female” (4:15-16).

“manner of similitude” [*“form, image, likeness, representation, semblance”* (BDB)].

In Exodus 19:21, Moses was told not to let the people break through and gaze upon Him, lest they perish, i.e., they were not allowed to go beyond a line at the base of the mountain. Yet, something unusual happens here, because these leaders were allowed to go beyond that line. Yet, GOD did not lay His hand upon them, i.e., they were not killed. What happened in the present context cannot be compared to Exodus 33:18-23, where Moses pleaded with GOD to be allowed to see His glory. There GOD repeated that His face could not be seen, but He did allow Moses to see His **“goodness”** (v. 19). After seeing this **“goodness,”** Moses’ face was so bright that when he came down from the mountain, the people could not look at his face because of its brightness (Ex. 34:29-35). He had to put a veil over his face to protect them. **If Moses had pled to see GOD on this occasion, why did he plead to see him later?**

“eat and drink” What did they eat? If this writer were to guess (and that is all anyone can do), he would suggest they may have eaten a part of the peace offering. Later, once all the Laws of Moses were in place, they were allowed to eat a portion of the peace offerings. Some believe they ate it as a ratification of the covenant GOD made with them. This writer believes that this was a recognition of fellowship with GOD. Eating a meal has long been a custom which signifies fellowship, and especially is this true in the East.

Consider the above thoughts with regard to Christians’ being commanded not to eat with a “withdrawn brother.”

“I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat” (1 Corinthians 5:11).

Why were they told not to eat with such a brother? Because of the intimate fellowship it implied. In another

case, Christians are not to have fellowship with the works of darkness (false teachers) to the extent that they should not let a false teacher into their houses.

“have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11)

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not GOD. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him GOD speed: For he that biddeth him GOD speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 9-11, emphasis added).

Ex. 24:12 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to Me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Come up to Me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee the tables of stone, and the law and the commandment, which I have written, that thou mayest teach them.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Come up unto Me to the mount, and be there, and I give to thee the tables of stone, and the law, and the command, which I have written to direct them.” (YLT)

There is little doubt that Moses was with these men when they went as far as they were allowed to go on the mountain. At this point, he was commanded to separate himself from them and go further up to meet with GOD by himself. **What was the purpose of going up to meet GOD?**

“I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written” The common view is that Moses was to receive the law and commandments which were written on the stones. This is a fallacy, for only the ten commands were written on the stones. Reading further in Exodus, one discovers that Moses received many laws while upon the mountain. If they had all been written on stone, he would not have been able to carry them. Further, it certainly would not have taken GOD forty days to write the ten commandments on stone. Moses was given laws regarding the building of the Tabernacle, ceremonial observances, the manner of dress for the priests, what laws would govern one as a priest, and on and on. Moses received many laws which he was to relay to the people. This is seen in the thirty-first chapter of Exodus, where GOD finished giving Moses a long list of laws for His people. Note carefully what GOD said in verse eighteen.

“He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of GOD.”

It is this writer’s belief that the phrase **“which I have written”** lets man know who the author of the Law of Moses was. It was not Moses — it was GOD. Moses was simply the earthen vessel chosen by GOD to deliver His law to the Israelites.

Ex. 24:13-14 “And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of GOD. And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them.”

“And Moses rose up, and Joshua his minister: and Moses went up into the mount of GOD. And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: whosoever hath a cause, let him come near unto them.” (ASV)

“And Moses riseth--Joshua his minister also--and Moses goeth up unto the mount of GOD; and unto the elders he hath said, Abide ye for us in this place, until that we turn back unto you, and lo, Aaron and Hur are with you--he who hath matters doth come nigh unto them.” (YLT)

“Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua”

Faithful Joshua is often seen with Moses as his servant. In the present text, he is seen going part of the way up the mountain with Moses as he went to see GOD.

“he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you” This phrase presents a little bit of a problem. **Where was it he told them to wait? Was it in this place where he had taken them after separating them from the congregation, sacrificing with them? Did they go back to the congregation, and he then told them to wait with the congregation for them?** Wherever it was, one thing is for certain — they were told not to follow him up the mountain. Further, they were told to wait for him; yet, when he came down later, they had gotten tired of waiting for him and were involved in idol worship.

“behold, Aaron and Hur are with you” It had already been determined that the judges were to handle all the cases brought before them. If a more difficult decision had to be made, these judges would then bring the matter to Moses. **Who would handle this responsibility while he was gone?** (He seemed to realize he would be gone for a while.) Aaron and Hur were given authority to handle these matters while he was gone. Not much is known about Hur, but it is

interesting to observe that this man Hur will not be seen again. All references to the name “Hur” will refer to a father of someone. **Could this have anything to do with the great error of the people in worshiping the golden calf?** The error in which they were about to engage was so great that, except for the intervention of Moses, GOD would have destroyed the entire nation (Ex. 32:9-14).

One is reminded here that Aaron was not yet the High Priest. His appointment would not come until at least chapter twenty-eight. It is this writer’s belief that what is seen in chapter twenty-eight are the instructions Moses was given while he was in the presence of GOD. Thus, Aaron would have been officially made High Priest after Moses came down the second time from the mount.

Ex. 24:15-16 “And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day He called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.”

“And Moses went up into the mount, and the cloud covered the mount. And the glory of Jehovah abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day He called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.” (ASV)

“And Moses goeth up unto the mount, and the cloud covereth the mount; and the honour of Jehovah doth tabernacle on mount Sinai, and the cloud covereth it six days, and He calleth unto Moses on the seventh day from the midst of the cloud.” (YLT)

“a cloud covered the mount” Why did the cloud cover the mountain? Because the **“glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai.”** If GOD’s glory had been allowed to be seen in all of its radiant beauty, with no cloud for a filter, none of the Hebrews would have lived.

“the seventh day He called unto Moses” Imagine the patience required by Moses. Many would have said, *“I am here. You wanted to see me.”* But GOD had taught Moses patience, beginning with his killing of the Egyptian taskmaster. He thought then that it was time to free the Israelites, but he had to flee into the wilderness for his life. For forty years GOD prepared Him to free his people. Then when he got to Egypt, instead of immediately freeing Israel, GOD took His time in humbling Pharaoh and his people. Then Moses’ patience was tested time and again by the murmuring, griping and complaining Hebrews.

“Men have a great deal of trouble with their impatience. Men are always in a hurry, but God is never in a hurry. Moses may have felt that he needed to be with Israel; and, as events developed, it is certain that such a need was there. But the

duty of Moses was to wait, as patiently as possible, until God revealed for him his next duty” (Coffman, p. 350).

It is sometimes very hard to wait. A need is seen, and one is willing to meet it, but the time may not be right to accomplish a task as it needs to be met — patience! On the seventh day — GOD was ready to reveal His purpose to Moses.

Ex. 24:17-18 “And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.”

“And the appearance of the glory of Jehovah was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.” (ASV)

“And the appearance of the honour of Jehovah is as a consuming fire on the top of the mount, before the eyes of the sons of Israel; and Moses goeth into the midst of the cloud, and goeth up unto the mount, and Moses is on the mount forty days and forty nights.” (YLT)

“the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire” To the Israelites, this sight was just as terrifying as when GOD first appeared on the mountain with thunder, lightning and clouds. GOD’s glory was seen in the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, which also represented GOD’s presence. Later in Matthew chapter seventeen, GOD’s presence was also seen in a cloud after Peter rashly spoke about building the tabernacles for Jesus, Moses and Elijah.

Since the glory of GOD was seen by them to be **“like devouring fire,”** it may explain their reaction when Moses did not come back for forty days and nights. **Is he still alive (Ex. 32:1)?**

“Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights” During this forty days, Moses fasted. He neither ate nor drank anything.

“When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water” (Deuteronomy 9:9, emphasis added).

One may go a long time without physical food, but he cannot live a week without water. The import of this is that he had no need for food or water — GOD sustained him. The Scriptures also reveal that, when he went up the second time, he fasted for forty days and nights again, eating or drinking nothing.

“I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes. And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger” (Deuteronomy 9:17-18).

Later, another of GOD’s great prophets fasted for forty days and nights — Elijah.

“he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of GOD” (1 Kings 19:8).

Still later, the greatest of all the prophets fasted for forty days, eating nothing — Jesus.

“when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungred” (Matthew 4:2).

Is their long fasting not interesting, when one considers who appeared on the mount of transfiguration — Moses, Elijah and Jesus (Matt. 17:1-6)?

Exodus – Chapter Twenty-five

Ex. 25:1-7 “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take My offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate.”

“And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they take for Me an offering: of every man whose heart maketh him willing ye shall take My offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them: gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and sealskins, and acacia wood, oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah speaketh unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the sons of Israel, and they take for Me a heave-offering; from every man whose heart impelleth him ye do take My heave-offering. And this is the heave-offering which ye take from them; gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins made red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil, and for the perfume of the spices, shoham stones, and stones for setting for an ephod, and for a breastplate.” (YLT)

These are instructions which were given to Moses while he was on the mountain. They include details pertaining to the materials needed for the building of the Tabernacle, as well as for the breastplate for the High Priest. The thing that stands out is that these were to be freewill offerings. The people were not assigned a certain amount or a specific tithe. Each person could give what he chose to give and as much or little as he chose.

A freewill offering has always been the kind of offering which pleases GOD. **Why?** Because such comes from the heart. Truly, GOD's people have much for which to be grateful.

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for GOD loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:6-7, emphasis added).

Consider another incident of giving in the New

Testament which shows the kind of giving which pleases GOD.

“Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of GOD” (2 Corinthians 8:4-5, emphasis added).

These Macedonian brethren were themselves very poor at this time, because of natural disasters which had fallen upon them. Yet, they begged Paul to take what little they were able to offer for the brethren. **How and why could they do this?** Because they gave themselves to the Lord. When one truly gives himself to the Lord, he dedicates all that he has to the service of GOD. He understands that he is but a caretaker of the physical blessings entrusted to him. He understands that everything belongs to GOD.

“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” (1 Timothy 6:7).

It should probably also be noted that the gifts the Israelites gave were valuable items. These were not simply left-overs. **Where did they get these valuable items which they gave?** No doubt they came from the Egyptians who gave them whatever they wanted when they left Egypt.

A second thing to be noted in this section is the wood which was to be used in the Tabernacle's construction. The KJV and YLT render it **“shittim wood,”** while the ASV and NKJV render it **“acacia wood.”**

“The acacia trees are the only trees in Sinai or Arabia from which planks may be cut” (Fields, p. 563).

Fields further stated that these trees have been so decimated by the Arab charcoal business that the ones found now are only about twenty feet tall.

A third thing which might be noted is the term **“badger skins,”** which appears to be a faulty translation.

“The Hebrew word tahash refers possibly to the sea cow (dugong, or manatee), which is found in the Red Sea...And Arabic word related to the Hebrew tahash refers to several kinds of sea animals – seals, dolphins, sharks, dogfish. Perhaps the Hebrew word is equally applicable to several marine creatures” (Fields, p. 563).

“The badger it cannot be, because, being an unclean beast, its skin was unsuitable to be used about the tabernacle, and because it is not a native of the East” (JEB, p. 383).

Ex. 25:8-9 “And let them make Me a Sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the Tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so

shall ye make it.”

“And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee, the pattern of the Tabernacle, and the pattern of all the furniture thereof, even so shall ye make it.” (ASV)

“And they have made for Me a sanctuary, and I have tabernacled in their midst; according to all that which I am shewing thee, the pattern of the Tabernacle, and the pattern of all its vessels, even so ye do make it.” (YLT)

Strong defined miqdash miqqedash (“**sanctuary**”) as *“a consecrated thing or place.”* BDB defined it as *a “sacred place, sanctuary, holy place.”* An interesting thing about this structure was not that GOD was going to live in it (for He was not), but that He wanted to be among His people.

“the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet” (Acts 7:48).

All Bible students know that GOD does not dwell in buildings made by humans. He abides in Heaven, while maintaining the ability to be everywhere. From other passages, it is learned that GOD met the people there from time to time.

The word **“Tabernacle”** refers to a dwelling place and generally refers to one which is temporary. When one considers the Tabernacle from the Christian perspective, he quickly sees that it was a type or shadow of that which was to come, i.e., the church. Unlike the Tabernacle of old, the new tabernacle is not a structure built with hands. Instead, Christians compose this spiritual building.

“Know ye not that ye are the Temple of GOD, and that the Spirit of GOD dwelleth in you” (1 Corinthians 3:16, emphasis added)?

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of GOD; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an Holy Temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of GOD through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:19-22).

When one views a tabernacle as a dwelling place, he might recall John 1:14.

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

Strong states that the word **“dwelt”** is σκηνόω, which he defined as *“to tent or encamp, i.e., to occupy (as a mansion).”* Note that Jesus **“dwelt among us.”** This is the same idea found in the Exodus text under consideration. **How was the Tabernacle to be built?**

“According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the Tabernacle” GOD gave a **PATTERN** for the Tabernacle. The fact is that GOD has given a pattern for everything He has commanded to be made (built) — including the church. Further, as noted in the text, when GOD says to build something a certain way, it is to be built exactly as He declares it to be built.

“Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of GOD when he was about to make the Tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount” (Hebrews 8:5).

GOD has always set a pattern for things which are holy. He has always set a pattern for worship! A pattern was set from the very beginning for worship, as exemplified in the case of Cain and Abel. Cain violated that pattern and suffered the consequences when he refused to repent and, instead, murdered his brother. Nadab and Abihu had a pattern which GOD had given to Moses on Mount Sinai. The penalty for disobedience was death. Today it is no different! GOD has given mankind a pattern for Christian worship and all things holy. Man cannot violate that pattern without reaping the consequences.

Ex. 25:10-16 “And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.”

“And they shall make an ark of acacia wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four feet thereof; and two rings shall be on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings on the sides of the ark,

wherewith to bear the ark. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.” (ASV)

“And they have made an ark of shittim wood; two cubits and a half its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height; and thou hast overlaid it with pure gold, within and without thou dost overlay it, and thou hast made on it a ring of gold round about. And thou hast cast for it four rings of gold, and hast put them on its four feet, even two rings on its one side, and two rings on its second side; and thou hast made staves of shittim wood, and hast overlaid them with gold, and hast brought the staves into the rings on the sides of the ark, to bear the ark by them, in the rings of the ark are the staves, they are not turned aside from it; and thou hast put unto the ark the testimony which I give unto thee” (YLT)

Instructions are given for the building of the ark which would be placed inside the Most Holy Place. Again, the pattern for it, including instructions for the material to be used, is given.

In looking at these verses, the first question might be, **What is a cubit?** A cubit is a measurement, generally agreed to be about eighteen inches in length. This would make the ark, in today’s measurements, three feet nine inches in length, and two feet three inches wide and high.

Several names are used for the ark.

1. **“Ark of GOD”** (1 Sam. 3:3).
2. **“Ark of the covenant”** (Num. 10:33).
3. **“Holy ark”** (2 Chron. 35:3).
4. **“Ark of the Lord”** (Joshua 6:7, 13).
5. **“Ark of the testimony”** (Ex. 25:22; 39:35).
6. **“Ark of thy strength”** (Psalm 132:8).
7. Simply the **“ark”** as seen in the text under consideration.

It should also be considered that the word **“ark”** in the original is not the same word as seen in Genesis 6:14 or Exodus 2:3. There the word is tebah, but in the present text, the word is aron aron.

tebah — “a feminine noun referring to an ark; a basket. It is used in two cases: to depict the ark of Noah; and to depict the basket in which Moses was hidden. In both cases, persons were rescued from water” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1211).

aron aron — “a common noun meaning a box, chest, or ark. It is treated as masculine in some passages and as feminine in others...In sacred context, the term identifies the ark of the covenant” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 93).

Both the inside and outside of the ark were to be covered with pure gold. Around the top there was to be a crown, also made of pure gold. Four rings of gold were also to be made, one for each corner. Two staves were to be made of shittim wood, and these were also to be covered with gold. These staves were

permanently placed in the rings so that the ark could be carried from place to place. No one, not even the priests, were supposed to touch the ark, as was later demonstrated when Uzzah touched the ark and died (2 Sam. 6). It was the responsibility of the Levites to move the ark from place to place using these staves to carry the ark.

What was going to be placed in the ark? **“the testimony”** Had the testimony already been given to Moses? The text clearly indicates that the giving of the testimony was yet future. What was the testimony? It was the ten words (ten commandments) which were carved on two stone tablets.

“And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of GOD” (Exodus 31:18)

“And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark” (Exodus 40:20).

Ex. 25:17-22 “And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”

“And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubim of gold; of beaten work shalt thou make them, at the two ends of the mercy-seat. And make one cherub at the one end, and one cherub at the other end: of one piece with the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof. And the cherubim shall spread out their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, with their faces one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the

ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.” (ASV)

“And thou hast made a mercy-seat of pure gold, two cubits and a half its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth; and thou hast made two cherubs of gold, beaten work dost thou make them, at the two ends of the mercy-seat; and make thou one cherub at the end on this side, and one cherub at the end on that; at the mercy-seat ye do make the cherubs on its two ends. And the cherubs have been spreading out wings on high, covering the mercy-seat over with their wings, and their faces are one towards another--towards the mercy-seat are the faces of the cherubs. And thou hast put the mercy-seat on the ark above, and unto the ark thou dost put the testimony which I give unto thee; and I have met with thee there, and have spoken with thee from off the mercy-seat (from between the two cherubs, which are on the ark of the testimony) all that which I command thee concerning the sons of Israel.” (YLT)

“Mercy seat” — *“a lid (used only of the cover of the sacred Ark)”* (Strong); *“Mercy-seat, place of atonement. The golden plate of propitiation on which the High Priest sprinkled the seat seven times on the Day of Atonement symbolically reconciling Jehovah and His chosen people”* (BDB); *“a noun meaning a lid, propitiation. This word refers to the lid that covered the ark of the testimony”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 522).

“The term mercy-seat was first used by Wm. Tyndale. It is an apt translation of the Hebrew kapporeth. Martin Luther rendered it Gnadenstuhl, meaning throne of mercy. Kapporeth has both the ideas of covering and of atonement for sins. The Latin propitiation is a good rendering, meaning ‘a place of propitiation’...The Greek rendering of kapporeth is hilasterion, meaning a place to please (or propitiate) and be reconciled to God, a propitiatory” (Fields, p. 571).

“It was (Martin) Luther, when translating the Old Testament into German, who first used the term ‘mercy seat.’ It is a beautiful, poetic phrase – but it also accurately communicates what the lid on the Ark really was, a place of mercy. It wasn’t simply a place of rigid, demanding Law; it became a place of tender, forgiving mercy” (Swindoll, quoted by Don Gary, 2020 MSOP Lectureship book).

Through a study of the above quotations, it is seen that the mercy seat was a cover or lid. But this lid does not appear to be a part of the ark, but rather an addition to it. The size of the mercy seat is the same size as the ark, thus sitting precisely on top of it. It suggested that, since the law was in the ark and the mercy seat was on top of the ark, then GOD’s mercy is above His law. This writer would not deny this, because the first time one sinned, he should have died. But right here a stern warning should be sounded for those who think this

means His law can be ignored so that one may rely upon GOD's mercy alone to save him. That would be no different from a "grace alone" proposition, and no theory which includes the word "alone" will save anyone — even when one is talking about GOD's mercy.

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only...For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:17, 24, 26).

"For not the hearers of the law are just before GOD, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Romans 2:13).

The mercy seat and the ark were furniture which GOD ordained to be placed in the Holy of Holies. This mercy-seat was to be made of pure gold.

The text then discusses **"cherubims."** They were to be made out of solid gold and were of one piece with the seat itself. Further, GOD said they were to be fashioned by being **"beaten."** This eliminates making them by casting them, or making various pieces and then putting them together and attaching them to the seat. Not much is known about the cherubim. What can be known is that they are some kind of being which serves GOD. Considering the present text and their position, they appeared to guard the throne and thus the glory of GOD when He appeared on the mercy seat. Consider Genesis 3:24 in connection with the fact that they were guards.

"So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

When man sinned and GOD drove him out of the perfect garden, He set a flaming sword and Cherubims to guard the tree of life so that man could not reach it.

What are the Cherubim? A popular belief is that they were angels. This is probably based upon the fact that the text says they have wings. This writer is not convinced that they were angels, based on Genesis 20:4.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth"

Some have stated that the above prohibition referred to making any object for the purpose of worshiping it. Some have thought that these were the "beasts" of Revelation 4:6ff. If they were, then these Cherubims had six wings each. When the posture of the Cherubim is considered, little is known. **Were they standing or kneeling?** What is known is that they were facing each other and apparently their heads were bowed, for they were looking at the mercy seat. Further, their wings surrounded the mercy seat. Thus, when GOD appeared

to Moses (or later to the High Priest) from this seat, he would not be able to see Him directly. **Why did GOD appear to them here, and how often did this take place?** He appeared once a year to the High Priest on the day of atonement. On that day, the High Priest sprinkled blood on the mercy seat.

“And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle (Holy Place - RK), accomplishing the service of GOD. But into the second (Most Holy Place - RK) went the High Priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people” (Hebrews 9:5-7).

“there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims” When GOD met with them, whether it were Moses or the High Priest, note again that the wings of the cherubim hid Him.

This writer believes that GOD was saying when He met with Moses, and only Moses, He would be above the mercy seat.

Consider something Fields stated here.

“Observe that God was not in the box, the ark! The presence of God was indicated by the glory-cloud (Shekinah) above the mercy-seat” (p. 575).

The enemies of the Israelites seemed to think there was something magical about this box (ark). And the Israelites supposed that the ark would give them victory.

“when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies...they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, GOD is come into the camp” (1 Samuel 4:3, 6-7).

Neither the Philistines nor the Israelites were right. The ark did not save Israel from defeat, nor did it defeat the Philistines.

Ex. 25:23-30 “Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. And

thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before Me alway.”

“And thou shalt make a table of acacia wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt make unto it a border of a handbreadth round about; and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. Close by the border shall the rings be, for places for the staves to bear the table. And thou shalt make the staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and the spoons thereof, and the flagons thereof, and the bowls thereof, wherewith to pour out: of pure gold shalt thou make them. And thou shalt set upon the table showbread before Me alway.” (ASV)

“And thou hast made a table of shittim wood, two cubits its length, and a cubit its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height, and hast overlaid it with pure gold, and hast made for it a crown of gold round about, and hast made for it a border of a handbreadth round about, and hast made a crown of gold to its border round about. And thou hast made to it four rings of gold, and hast put the rings on the four corners, which are to its four feet; over-against the border are the rings for places for staves to bear the table; and thou hast made the staves of shittim wood, and hast overlaid them with gold, and the table hath been borne with them; and thou hast made its dishes, and its bowls, and its covers, and its cups, with which they pour out; of pure gold thou dost make them; and thou hast put on the table bread of the presence before Me continually.” (YLT)

GOD now turned His attention to the furniture in the Holy Place. Whereas the Most Holy Place represented Heaven, the Holy Place represented the church (type and antitype).

“Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood”

GOD said the table should be three feet long (2 cubits), eighteen inches wide (a cubit), and two feet and three inches tall (cubit and a half). The size of this table seems startlingly small for the space in which it was to be placed. It had a crown of gold like the ark, and was completely covered in gold. Like the ark, it was to have four rings and two staves, by which it was carried from place to place.

Four kinds of utensils are mentioned — dishes, spoons, covers, and bowls. It is not known for what

these utensils were used. All of these items were to be made of pure gold.

Next, the use of this table is described as being a place for the shewbread (*“bread of faces, presence bread”*—JFB, p. 387). From other passages, it is known that there were twelve loaves which were placed in two stacks. It should be remembered that their “loaves” were flat and not rounded as is common today. Each sabbath day, the twelve old loaves were replaced with twelve new loaves. The old loaves were then eaten by the priests, and only by the priests. This obviously seems to be a type of what was to come — the Lord’s table where GOD’s priests partake of the bread weekly.

Ex. 25:31-40 “And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. And the tongs thereof, and the snuffdishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.”

“And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made, even its base, and its shaft; its cups, its knops, and its flowers, shall be of one piece with it. And there shall be six branches going out of the sides thereof; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof: three cups made like almond-blossoms in one branch, a knop and a flower; and three cups made like almond-blossoms in the other branch, a knop and a flower: so for the six branches going out of the candlestick: and in the

candlestick four cups made like almond-blossoms, the knops thereof, and the flowers thereof; and a knop under two branches of one piece with it, and a knop under two branches of one piece with it, and a knop under two branches of one piece with it, for the six branches going out of the candlestick. Their knops and their branches shall be of one piece with it; the whole of it one beaten work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the lamps thereof, seven: and they shall light the lamps thereof, to give light over against it. And the snuffers thereof, and the snuffdishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold shall it be made, with all these vessels. And see that thou make them after their pattern, which hath been showed thee in the mount.” (ASV)

“And thou hast made a candlestick of pure gold, of beaten work is the candlestick made; its base, and its branch, its calyxes, its knops, and its flowers are of the same; and six branches are coming out of its sides, three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the second side; three calyxes made like almonds in the one branch, a knop and a flower, and three calyxes made like almonds in one branch, a knop and a flower; so for the six branches which are coming out from the candlestick. And in the candlestick are four calyxes made like almonds, its knops and its flowers; and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, are to the six branches which are coming out of the candlestick; their knops and their branches are of the same, all of it one beaten work of pure gold; and thou hast made its seven lamps, and one hath caused its lights to go up, and it hath given light over-against its front. And its snuffers and its snuff dishes are of pure gold; of a talent of pure gold he doth make it, with all these vessels. And see thou and do them by their pattern which thou art shewn in the mount.” (YLT)

“The Hebrew word for lampstand is MENORAH [a beautiful word, derived from the verb nor (‘to shine’) and the noun or, ‘meaning ‘light’)]” (Fields, p. 579).

The first thing to be noted is that they did not have candles in those times. The KJV renders this in the language of its time, when candlesticks were in common use.

What does the lampstand signify? The lampstand is a type of the word of GOD. Note some interesting passages with regard to “light.”

“This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that GOD is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5, emphasis added).

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12, emphasis added).

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8, emphasis added).

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid” (Matthew 5:14, emphasis added).

“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of GOD, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15, emphasis added).

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:19, emphasis added).

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, Who is the image of GOD, should shine unto them” (2 Corinthians 4:4, emphasis added).

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Romans 13:12, emphasis added).

This writer would also recommend that the reader look at Coffman’s commentary on Exodus (pp. 363-364) for a fascinating comparison of the lampstand with the Scriptures.

The lampstand and its instruments were all to be made of solid gold. The lampstand itself was to be beaten, like the Cherubims, from one talent of pure gold. A talent is estimated to be about seventy-five pounds (Troy weight, about 1,050 ounces). This is equivalent to \$1,897,350.00 (December 2021). From this, it is seen that the furniture of the Tabernacle was the very best and extremely valuable.

“And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount”
Emphasis is again placed on following the pattern just as it was revealed on the mountain. It does no harm to repeat that GOD has always had a pattern for anything holy. Just as it was important for the Israelites to follow the pattern GOD gave them, today one must follow the pattern GOD gives in the New Testament. He must not deviate to the left or the right so that he may hear the Lord say, “Well done.”

Exodus — Chapter Twenty-six

Ex. 26:1-6 “Moreover thou shalt make the Tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them. The length of one curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and every one of the curtains shall have one measure. The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and other five curtains shall be coupled one to another. And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of another curtain, in the coupling of the second. Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is in the coupling of the second; that the loops may take hold one of another. And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches: and it shall be one Tabernacle.”

“Moreover thou shalt make the Tabernacle with ten curtains; of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubim the work of the skilful workman shalt thou make them. The length of each curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits: all the curtains shall have one measure. Five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and the other five curtains shall be coupled one to another. And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is outmost in the second coupling. Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is in the second coupling; the loops shall be opposite one to another. And thou shalt make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains one to another with the clasps: and the Tabernacle shall be one whole.” (ASV)

“And thou dost make the Tabernacle: ten curtains of twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet; with cherubs, work of a designer, thou dost make them; the length of the one curtain is eight and twenty by the cubit, and the breadth of the one curtain four by the cubit, one measure is to all the curtains; five of the curtains are joining one unto another, and five curtains are joining one to another. And thou hast made loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain, at the end in the joining; and so thou makest in the edge of the outermost curtain, in the joining of the second. fifty loops thou dost make in the one curtain, and fifty loops thou dost make in the edge of the curtain which is in the joining of the second, causing the loops to take hold one unto another; and thou hast made fifty hooks of gold, and hast joined the curtains one to another by the hooks, and the Tabernacle hath been one.” (YLT)

One thing which those who research these matters are quite aware of is that complete instructions are not given in the Scriptures regarding the construction of the Tabernacle. There is no need for one to know every single detail of its construction, because no one is commanded to build a Tabernacle today. But one can be assured that Moses was given every detail and commanded to follow the pattern he was given.

These verses deal with the inner covering of the Tabernacle. By noticing the materials which were to be used, and the instructions for the needlework, this inner curtain was very elaborate and expensive. Cherubims were to be embroidered into this curtain. Since the Cherubim always seem to be in close proximity to GOD, this may indicate the priests' closeness to GOD when they served in the Tabernacle. If so, it would seem to indicate the need for purity in service.

Ex. 26:7-14 “And thou shalt make curtains of goats' hair to be a covering upon the Tabernacle: eleven curtains shalt thou make. The length of one curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and the eleven curtains shall be all of one measure. And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shalt double the sixth curtain in the forefront of the Tabernacle. And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain that is outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second. And thou shalt make fifty taches of brass, and put the taches into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the backside of the Tabernacle. And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, it shall hang over the sides of the Tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it. And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering above of badgers' skins.”

“And thou shalt make curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the Tabernacle: eleven curtains shalt thou make them. The length of each curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits: the eleven curtains shall have one measure. And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shalt double over the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tent. And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain that is outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops upon the edge of the curtain which is

outmost in the second coupling. And thou shalt make fifty clasps of brass, and put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. And the overhanging part that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the back of the Tabernacle. And the cubit on the one side, and the cubit on the other side, of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, shall hang over the sides of the Tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it. And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of sealskins above.” (ASV)

“And thou hast made curtains of goats' hair, for a tent over the Tabernacle; thou dost make eleven curtains: the length of the one curtain is thirty by the cubit, and the breadth of the one curtain four by the cubit; one measure is to the eleven curtains; and thou hast joined the five curtains apart, and the six curtains apart, and hast doubled the six curtains over-against the front of the tent. And thou hast made fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain, the outermost in the joining, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain which is joining the second; and thou hast made fifty hooks of brass, and hast brought in the hooks into the loops, and hast joined the tent, and it hath been one. And the superfluity in the curtains of the tent—the half of the curtain which is superfluous—hath spread over the hinder part of the Tabernacle; and the cubit on this side, and the cubit on that, in the superfluity in the length of the curtains of the tent, is spread out over the sides of the tabernacle, on this and on that, to cover it; and thou hast made a covering for the tent, of rams' skins made red, and a covering of badgers' skins above.” (YLT)

These verses basically state that there were three coverings over the Tabernacle. In all, there were four coverings for this structure: (1) The fine linen woven with the cherubim, (2) covering of goat's hair, (3) rams skins dyed red, and (4) the final covering of sealskins.

Ex. 26:15-25 “And thou shalt make boards for the Tabernacle of shittim wood standing up. Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half shall be the breadth of one board. Two tenons shall there be in one board, set in order one against another: thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the Tabernacle. And thou shalt make the boards for the Tabernacle, twenty boards on the south side southward. And thou shalt make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons. And for the second side of the Tabernacle on the north side there shall be twenty boards: And their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. And for the sides

of the Tabernacle westward thou shalt make six boards. And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the Tabernacle in the two sides. And they shall be coupled together beneath, and they shall be coupled together above the head of it unto one ring: thus shall it be for them both; they shall be for the two corners. And they shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board."

"And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle of acacia wood, standing up. Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half the breadth of each board. Two tenons shall there be in each board, joined one to another: thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle. And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side southward. And thou shalt make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for its two tenons, and two sockets under another board for its two tenons. And for the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side, twenty boards, and their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. And for the hinder part of the tabernacle westward thou shalt make six boards. And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the hinder part. And they shall be double beneath, and in like manner they shall be entire unto the top thereof unto one ring: thus shall it be for them both; they shall be for the two corners. And there shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board." (ASV)

"And thou hast made the boards for the tabernacle, of shittim wood, standing up; ten cubits is the length of the board, and a cubit and a half the breadth of the one board; two handles are to the one board, joined one unto another; so thou dost make for all the boards of the tabernacle; and thou hast made the boards of the tabernacle: twenty boards for the south side southward; and forty sockets of silver thou dost make under the twenty boards, two sockets under the one board for its two handles, and two sockets under the other board for its two handles. And for the second side of the tabernacle, for the north side, are twenty boards, and their forty sockets of silver, two sockets under the one board, and two sockets under another board. And for the sides of the tabernacle westward, thou dost make six boards. And two boards thou dost make for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides. And they are pairs beneath, and together they are pairs above its head unto the one ring; so is it for them both, they are for the two corners. And they have been eight boards, and their sockets of silver are sixteen sockets, two sockets under the one board, and two sockets under another board." (YLT)

Again, the Scriptures do not provide one with all of the details. The tenons were projections made at the bottom of a board which would then fit into a socket. This would hold the boards firmly in place.

Interestingly, the sockets were made of pure silver. Each one would have weighed approximately ninety-five pounds or 1,100 troy ounces (about \$25,000.00 today). No expense was spared.

Ex. 26:26-30 “And thou shalt make bars of shittim wood; five for the boards of the one side of the Tabernacle, And five bars for the boards of the other side of the Tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the Tabernacle, for the two sides westward. And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall reach from end to end. And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold. And thou shalt rear up the Tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount.”

“And thou shalt make bars of acacia wood: five for the boards of the one side of the Tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the other side of the Tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the Tabernacle, for the hinder part westward. And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall pass through from end to end. And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold. And thou shalt rear up the Tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which hath been showed thee in the mount.” (ASV)

“And thou hast made bars of shittim wood: five for the boards of the one side of the Tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the second side of the Tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the Tabernacle at the two sides, westward; and one hath caused the middle bar in the midst of the boards to reach from end unto end; and the boards thou dost overlay with gold, and their rings thou dost make of gold places for bars, and hast overlaid their bars with gold; and thou hast raised up the Tabernacle according to its fashion which thou hast been shewn in the mount.” (YLT)

This section deals with what this author would call stabilizing bars. They held the structure together, much like the key in the Saint Louis arch.

Ex. 26:31-37 “And thou shalt make a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made: And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver. And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the Holy Place and the Most Holy. And

thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place. And thou shalt set the table without the vail, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the Tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side. And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework. And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, and their hooks shall be of gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them."

"And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: with cherubim the work of the skilful workman shall it be made. And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold; their hooks shall be of gold, upon four sockets of silver. And thou shalt hang up the veil under the clasps, and shalt bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony: and the veil shall separate unto you between the Holy Place and the Most Holy. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place. And thou shalt set the table without the veil, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the Tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side. And thou shalt make a screen for the door of the Tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the embroiderer. And thou shalt make for the screen five pillars of acacia, and overlay them with gold: their hooks shall be of gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them." (ASV)

"And thou hast made a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen, work of a designer; he maketh it with cherubs; and thou hast put it on four pillars of shittim wood, overlaid with gold, their pegs are of gold, on four sockets of silver. And thou hast put the veil under the hooks, and hast brought in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony; and the veil hath made a separation for you between the Holy and the Holy of Holies. And thou hast put the mercy-seat on the ark of the testimony, in the Holy of Holies. And thou hast set the table at the outside of the vail, and the candlestick over-against the table on the side of the Tabernacle southward, and the table thou dost put on the north side. And thou hast made a covering for the opening of the tent, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen, work of an embroiderer; and thou hast made for the covering five pillars of shittim wood, and hast overlaid them with gold, their pegs are of gold, and thou hast cast for them five sockets of brass." (YLT)

The instructions had been given for building the Tabernacle, but there were two things missing which are found in these verses — a veil to separate the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place, and a veil to be used as a door to the Holy Place.

Verses thirty-one through thirty-five describe the first

veil, which separated the two compartments of the Tabernacle proper. This is the veil which was torn from the top to the bottom when Jesus yielded up His Spirit (Matt. 27:51). This veil was a type of the flesh of Christ.

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh” (Heb. 10:19-20).

Unger thought there was some significance to the colors used in this veil.

“Blue signifies Christ’s heavenly origin. Purple suggests His royal lineage as David’s son. Scarlet indicates His sacrificial blood shed for fallen mankind” (Unger, p. 135).

The second veil seen in this passage was used as a door at the opening for the Holy Place. It was not like a door one imagines today. There was a space between where it was hung and the structure of the Tabernacle.

Another thing noticed is that the items of furniture previously seen have their places designated. The ark and mercy seat were to be placed in the Most Holy Place. The table of shewbread was placed along the north wall of the Holy Place, and the lampstand was placed by the south wall of the Holy Place. There is also one item missing in the account here, and that is the altar of incense.

Exodus — Chapter Twenty-seven

Ex. 27:1-8 “And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass. And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basons, and his fleshhooks, and his firepans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass. And thou shalt make for it a grate of network of brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brasen rings in the four corners thereof. And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with brass. And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it. Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.”

“And thou shalt make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof; the horns thereof shall be of one piece with it: and thou shalt overlay it with brass. And thou shalt make its pots to take away its ashes, and its shovels, and its basins, and its flesh-hooks, and its firepans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass. And thou shalt make for it a grating of network of brass: and upon the net shalt thou make four brazen rings in the four corners thereof. And thou shalt put it under the ledge round the altar beneath, that the net may reach halfway up the altar. And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with brass. And the staves thereof shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, in bearing it. Hollow with planks shalt thou make it: as it hath been showed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.” (ASV)

“And thou hast made the altar of shittim wood, five cubits the length, and five cubits the breadth--the altar is square--and three cubits its height. And thou hast made its horns on its four corners, its horns are of the same, and thou hast overlaid it with brass. And thou hast made its pots to remove its ashes, and its shovels, and its bowls, and its forks, and its fire-pans, even all its vessels thou dost make of brass. And thou hast made for it a grate of net-work of brass, and hast made on the net four rings of brass on its four extremities, and hast put it under the compass of the altar beneath, and the net hath been unto the middle of the altar. And thou hast made staves for the altar, staves of shittim wood, and hast overlaid them with

brass. And the staves have been brought into the rings, and the staves have been on the two sides of the altar in bearing it. Hollow with boards thou dost make it, as it hath been shewed thee in the mount, so do they make it.” (YLT)

These eight verses describe how the altar upon which their sacrifices were to be offered was to be made. It is later referred to as the **“altar of burnt offering.”**

The altar had four horns, one each on its four corners. It is not known how these horns were used when the sacrifices were made. They would have represented power, and it appears one could gain sanctuary by taking hold of them. Roper stated that archaeologists have found stone altars with four horns at Megiddo, Gezer, and Beersheba.

The altar was made of wood covered with bronze. There were also tools made to be used with the altar. These were also made of bronze. It is easy to understand why they were made of bronze, when one considers the fire for all of their sacrifices.

Staves were also made to carry the altar from place to place. This altar would have been quite heavy.

Pointed out again, as it has been repeated many times in Exodus, is the fact that every thing must be made according to the pattern Moses received in the mount.

Ex. 27:9-19 “And thou shalt make the court of the Tabernacle: for the south side southward there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen of an hundred cubits long for one side: And the twenty pillars thereof and their twenty sockets shall be of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. And likewise for the north side in length there shall be hangings of an hundred cubits long, and his twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver. And for the breadth of the court on the west side shall be hangings of fifty cubits: their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward shall be fifty cubits. The hangings of one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. And on the other side shall be hangings fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. And for the gate of the court shall be an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework: and their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four. All

the pillars round about the court shall be filleted with silver; their hooks shall be of silver, and their sockets of brass. The length of the court shall be an hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. All the vessels of the Tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, shall be of brass.”

“And thou shalt make the court of the Tabernacle: for the south side southward there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen a hundred cubits long for one side: and the pillars thereof shall be twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. And likewise for the north side in length there shall be hangings a hundred cubits long, and the pillars thereof twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. And for the breadth of the court on the west side shall be hangings of fifty cubits; their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward shall be fifty cubits. The hangings for the one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. And for the other side shall be hangings of fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. And for the gate of the court shall be a screen of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the embroiderer; their pillars four, and their sockets four. All the pillars of the court round about shall be filleted with silver; their hooks of silver, and their sockets of brass. The length of the court shall be a hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits, of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. All the instruments of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, shall be of brass.” (ASV)

“And thou hast made the court of the Tabernacle: for the south side southward, hangings for the court of twined linen, a hundred by the cubit is the length for the one side, and its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets are of brass, the pegs of the pillars and their fillets are of silver; and so for the north side in length, hangings of a hundred cubits in length, and its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets are of brass, the pegs of the pillars and their fillets are of silver. And for the breadth of the court at the west side are hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. And for the breadth of the court at the east side, eastward, are fifty cubits. And the hangings at the side are fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their sockets three. And at the second side are hangings fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their sockets three. And for the gate of the court a covering of twenty cubits, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen, work of an embroiderer; their pillars four, their sockets four. All the pillars of the court round about are filleted with silver, their pegs are silver, and their sockets brass. The length of the court is a hundred by the cubit, and the breadth fifty by fifty, and the height five cubits, of twined linen, and their sockets are brass, even all the vessels of the Tabernacle, in all its service, and all its pins, and all the pins of the court, are brass.” (YLT)

Surrounding the Tabernacle, there was to be a court which was defined by a wall of fine twined linen. This wall was one hundred and fifty feet in length, seventy-five feet wide and seven-and-a-half feet tall. On the eastern side of this wall, there was an opening in the curtain of thirty feet.

Only the priests could enter into the Holy Place, but the people as a whole were allowed to enter the court. It was here that they brought their sacrifices to the Lord. Note also that even the Gentiles ("**strangers**") who lived among the Israelites were allowed in the court.

"And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever be among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD; as ye do, so he shall do. One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you" (Numbers 15:14-16, emphasis added).

Ex. 27:20-21 "And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always. In the Tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel."

"And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause a lamp to burn continually. In the tent of meeting, without the veil which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall keep it in order from evening to morning before Jehovah: it shall be a statute for ever throughout their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel." (ASV)

"And thou--thou dost command the sons of Israel, and they bring unto thee pure beaten olive oil for the light, to cause the lamp to go up continually; in the tent of meeting, at the outside of the vail, which is over the testimony, doth Aaron--his sons also--arrange it from evening till morning before Jehovah--a statute age-during to their generations, from the sons of Israel." (YLT)

Why would "**pure oil olive beaten**" be required for this lamp? Beaten oil would indeed be the purest oil they could get. When olives were pressed, impurities would flow with the oil, thus contaminating it. Like everything else in the Tabernacle, only the best was acceptable to GOD.

Some have thought that, when considering these two verses, the light from these lamps was only had at night, i.e., they burned at night but were allowed to go out

during the day. There is a problem with that thinking, in that there were no windows in the Tabernacle. Therefore, when the priests exercised the various duties, how could they do so in the dark? No other light is mentioned. GOD further designated who was responsible for keeping this light lit — Aaron and his priestly sons. One might pose the thought that it was lit the same way the Holy of Holies was lit once a year when the High Priest went into it. Since there is no command for the High Priest to take anything into the Most Holy Place on the day of atonement, except blood, this writer would say that GOD's presence lit it up.

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of GOD did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Revelation 21:23).

This writer believes that the light spoken of here was probably the lampstand of pure gold mentioned earlier (Ex. 25:31ff).

Exodus Chapter Twenty-eight

Ex. 28:1-4 “And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office. And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office.”

“And bring thou near unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to sanctify him, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office. And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a coat of checker work, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office.” (ASV)

“And thou, bring thou near unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from the midst of the sons of Israel, for his being priest to Me, even Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, sons of Aaron; and thou hast made holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for honour and for beauty; and thou--thou dost speak unto all the wise of heart, whom I have filled with a spirit of wisdom, and they have made the garments of Aaron to sanctify him for his being priest to Me. And these are the garments which they make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and an upper robe, and an embroidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle; yea, they have made holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and for his sons, for his being priest to Me.” (YLT)

This chapter is devoted to establishing a priestly class and the garments they would wear. Before this time, the heads of families acted as priests for their families. Under the Mosaic system, this would change. Now the priesthood would remain in one family until the Christian age was realized, where all Christians are designated as priests of GOD and are to function as such.

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to GOD by Jesus Christ...But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:5, 9, emphasis added).

It should be noted that Moses did not appoint Aaron and his sons as priests out of a sense of patronage. GOD determined who would function in this office. Again, this carries over into the Christian age, where GOD has set the conditions for one’s becoming a priest, i.e., through obedience to His conditions of salvation.

It should be observed that the four sons of Aaron are named. It strikes this author that they are mentioned in pairs — one faithful pair and one unfaithful pair, as it will turn out. Nadab and Abihu would be executed for violating GOD’s laws of worship (offered strange fire). That paved the way for Eleazar to succeed Aaron as the High Priest.

“Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest’s office in the sight of Aaron their father...Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor: And strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there” (Numbers 3:4; 20:25-26).

“Still later the descendants of Ithamar became the high priests, from Eli through Abiathar (1 Sam. 2:27-28; 1 Kings 2:26-27). After that time the descendants of Eleazar resumed the priesthood, from Zadok onward (1 Chron. 6:8-15)” (Fields, p. 630).

Consider that Aaron was from the tribe of Levi. Yet, all descendants of Levi were not eligible to be priests. Only those who descended from Levi’s son — Aaron. Though Moses had been functioning as a priest, from the time Aaron was appointed, he could no longer function as such.

Verse two begins a section which deals with the garments GOD commanded to be made for these priests. Note that the garments made for the High Priest were designed for glory and beauty. The High Priest was thus to be set apart from the “ordinary” priests. He and his office were to be held in honor. Second, the Scriptures show that GOD surrounded Himself in beauty and glory. The Tabernacle’s materials show this; and, thus, His servant’s were to be clothed in **“holy garments.”** These were garments which magnified the purity with which GOD’s priests were to exhibit. Under the Christian dispensation, GOD’s priest are still to magnify this purity — not by wearing special

clothes, but by their lives.

Six special items are listed for the High Priest: (1) breastplate, (2) ephod, (3) robe, (4) brodered coat, (5) mitre (turban), and (6) girdle (belt or sash). In addition, he wore a gold plate on his turban. Aaron's sons' clothing was more simple: (1) coat, (2) girdle, (3) head covering, and (4) linen undergarments. These items of dress for the High Priest will be given in more detail later. When one looks at the type and antitype, he sees Christ as the High Priest and Christians as His priests. The role of the priest (in both systems) was/is important, but the role of the High Priest transcended/transcends the priestly role.

Ex. 28:5-14 “And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work. It shall have the two shoulderpieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and so it shall be joined together. And the curious girdle of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: Six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth. With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial. And thou shalt make ouches of gold; And two chains of pure gold at the ends; of wreathen work shalt thou make them, and fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches.”

“And they shall take the gold, and the blue, and the purple, and the scarlet, and the fine linen. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the skilful workman. It shall have two shoulder-pieces joined to the two ends thereof, that it may be joined together. And the skilfully woven band, which is upon it, wherewith to gird it on, shall be like the work thereof and of the same piece; of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the six that remain on the other stone, according to their birth. With the work of

an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones, according to the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be inclosed in settings of gold. And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, to be stones of memorial for the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before Jehovah upon his two shoulders for a memorial. And thou shalt make settings of gold, and two chains of pure gold; like cords shalt thou make them, of wreathen work: and thou shalt put the wreathen chains on the settings." (ASV)

"And they take the gold, and the blue, and the purple, and the scarlet, and the linen, and have made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen, work of a designer; it hath two shoulders joining at its two ends, and it is joined. And the girdle of his ephod which is on him, according to its work, is of the same, of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen. And thou hast taken the two shoham stones, and hast opened on them the names of the sons of Israel; six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the remaining six on the second stone, according to their births; the work of an engraver in stone, openings of a signet, thou dost open the two stones by the names of the sons of Israel; turned round, embroidered with gold, thou dost make them. And thou hast set the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod--stones of memorial to the sons of Israel--and Aaron hath borne their names before Jehovah, on his two shoulders, for a memorial. And thou hast made embroidered things of gold, and two chains of pure gold, wreathed work thou dost make them, work of thick bands, and thou hast put the thick chains on the embroidered things." (YLT)

The ephod must have been exceedingly beautiful, when one considers the colors used and the gold thread which was woven into the fabric.

"they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires, to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, with cunning work" (Exodus 39:3).

There are several ideas of what the ephod, would look like (Remember that no one today knows exactly what this garment looked like.).

"One view is that it was somewhat of a double apron, with one section over the front of the body and another section on the back. These were coupled at the shoulders by strips of cloth attached to the front section (28:25). These shoulder-pieces had upon them two engraved onyx stones resting upon the shoulders. A girdle at the waist held the two sections to the body" (Fields, p. 633).

"Another view of the form of the ephod is that it was sort of a loin-cloth, of one piece, held up by shoulder straps like suspenders, and having its two ends attached together in some way at the back of the body" (IBID).

On the shoulder pieces of the ephod, onyx stones were attached, which held the names of the twelve sons (tribes) of Israel. Since no one knows exactly what some of the materials were which were used, it should

come as no surprise that there are debates about them. The LXX says they were emeralds. Josephus said they were sardonyx (the best variety of onyx), Roper thought they were a kind of onyx not found today which would *“shine with the lustre of fire.”* These stones are called **“stones of memorial”** and seem to indicate the High Priest’s obligation to represent all the people of Israel. The names engraved on these stones were to be listed in order of birth. Some believe this meant by a strict order of birth, while others believe it meant the order of birth through Jacob’s “legitimate” wives and then the concubines. Again, no one knows positively which might be the case. This writer would tend to think it was by order of birth.

Ex. 28:15-30 “And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes. And thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains at the ends of wreathen work of pure gold. And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate. And the other two ends of the two wreathen chains thou shalt fasten in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulderpieces of the ephod before it. And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breastplate in the border thereof, which is in the side of the ephod inward. And two other rings of gold thou shalt make, and shalt put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart thereof, over

against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod. And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually. And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually."

"And thou shalt make a breastplate of judgment, the work of the skilful workman; like the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. Foursquare it shall be and double; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, four rows of stones: a row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle shall be the first row; and the second row an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be inclosed in gold in their settings. And the stones shall be according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names; like the engravings of a signet, every one according to his name, they shall be for the twelve tribes. And thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains like cords, of wreathen work of pure gold. And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings at the ends of the breastplate. And the other two ends of the two wreathen chains thou shalt put on the two settings, and put them on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod in the forepart thereof. And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breastplate, upon the edge thereof, which is toward the side of the ephod inward. And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and shalt put them on the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod underneath, in the forepart thereof, close by the coupling thereof, above the skilfully woven band of the ephod. And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be upon the skilfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod. And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before Jehovah continually. And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before Jehovah: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before Jehovah continually." (ASV)

"And thou hast made a breastplate of judgment, work of a designer; according to the work of the ephod thou dost make it; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen thou dost make it; it is square, doubled, a span its length, and a span its breadth. And thou hast set in it settings of stone, four rows of stone; a row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle is the first row; and the second row is emerald, sapphire, and diamond; and the third row is opal, agate, and amethyst; and the fourth row is beryl, and onyx, and jasper; embroidered with gold are they in their settings, and the stones are according to the names of the sons of Israel, twelve, according to their names, openings of a signet, each by his name are they for the twelve tribes. And thou hast made on the breastplate wreathed chains, work of thick bands, of pure gold; and thou hast made on the breastplate two rings of gold, and hast put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate; and thou hast put the two thick bands of gold on the two rings at the ends of the breastplate; and the two ends of the two thick bands thou dost put on the two embroidered things, and thou hast put them on the shoulders of the ephod over-against its face. And thou hast made two rings of gold, and hast set them on the two ends of the breastplate, on its border, which is over-against the ephod within; and thou hast made two rings of gold, and hast put them on the two shoulders of the ephod, beneath, over-against its front, over-against its joining, above the girdle of the ephod, and they bind the breastplate by its rings unto the rings of the ephod with a ribbon of blue, to be above the girdle of the ephod, and the breastplate is not loosed from the ephod. And Aaron hath borne the names of the sons of Israel in the breastplate of judgment, on his heart, in his going in unto the sanctuary, for a memorial before Jehovah continually. And thou hast put unto the breastplate of judgment the Lights and the Perfections, and they have been on the heart of Aaron, in his going in before Jehovah, and Aaron hath borne the judgment of the sons of Israel on his heart before Jehovah continually." (YLT)

The breastplate was a piece of fabric which was doubled over to form a kind of pocket. It was to be a square span (about nine inches). On this breastplate, twelve stones were to be placed, four rows with three stones each. These represented the twelve tribes of Israel. The breastplate pocket was designed to hold the Urim and Thummim.

"The instructions here are detailed and complicated; one would find it difficult to use them to reproduce the breastpiece today... these instructions were set down for people who knew what was being described" (Roper, p. 461).

Curiously, at the beginning and end of the description of this breastplate, it is called **"the breastplate of judgment."** This designation no doubt refers to the Urim and Thummim which were placed inside it. It is not known what these two items were. Some have thought they were stones, while others thought they were something else — no one knows for sure what they were. But in some way, they were used by GOD to reveal His judgment. It is commonly

believed that these were stones which were marked in some way to say "Yes" or "No" to a question which was asked. This meant that a question would have to be asked so that only a yes or no would be the answer. The question would be asked, and then the High Priest would reach into the breastplate and draw out one of the items which gave the questioner his answer. Again, no one knows for sure what these items were or how they were used. The breastplate was fastened to the ephod.

"when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets"
(1 Samuel 28:6).

Ex. 28:31-35 "And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. And there shall be an hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent. And beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about. And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the Holy Place before the LORD, and when he cometh out, that he die not."

"And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. And it shall have a hole for the head in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of a coat of mail, that it be not rent. And upon the skirts of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the skirts thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the skirts of the robe round about. And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and the sound thereof shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before Jehovah, and when he cometh out, that he die not." (ASV)

"And thou hast made the upper robe of the ephod completely of blue, and the opening for its head hath been in its midst, a border is to its opening round about, work of a weaver, as the opening of a habergeon there is to it; it is not rent. And thou hast made on its hem pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, on its hem round about, and bells of gold in their midst round about; a bell of gold and a pomegranate, a bell of gold and a pomegranate are on the hems of the upper robe round about. And it hath been on Aaron to minister in, and its sound hath been heard in his coming in unto the sanctuary before Jehovah, and in his going out, and he doth not die." (YLT)

This robe was worn under the ephod and was to be

made of blue cloth. Since it had an opening at the top, it was apparently of one piece. It would have been slipped on over the head, somewhat like a poncho. Some unusual items were placed on the hem of this garment — **“pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet”** and **“bells.”** These bells and pomegranates were alternated around the hem.

“his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the LORD, and when he cometh out, that he die not” As the High Priest moved about, the bells attached to his robe would have been heard. **Why were the bells to be heard when he entered the holy place? Was it to announce his presence, so that the other priests would not enter?** The reason he would die if the bells were not heard is not specified. Some have speculated that, if the sound of the bells were not heard while the High Priest was in the Tabernacle, it meant that he was dead because he had done something wrong.

Ex. 28:36-39 “And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD. And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle of needlework.”

“And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLY TO JEHOVAH. And thou shalt put it on a lace of blue, and it shall be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before Jehovah. And thou shalt weave the coat in checker work of fine linen, and thou shalt make a mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make a girdle, the work of the embroiderer.” (ASV)

“And thou hast made a flower of pure gold, and hast opened on it--openings of a signet--‘Holy to Jehovah;’ and thou hast put it on a blue ribbon, and it hath been on the mitre--over-against the front of the mitre it is; and it hath been on the forehead of Aaron, and Aaron hath borne the iniquity of the holy things which the sons of Israel do hallow, even all their holy gifts; and it hath been on his forehead continually for a pleasing thing for them before Jehovah. And thou hast

embroidered the coat of linen, and hast made a mitre of linen, and a girdle thou dost make--work of an embroiderer." (YLT)

Four items of the High Priest's official garments are specified — a golden **"plate," "mitre"** (turban), **"coat"** (tunic), and **"girdle"** (sash).

Rawlinson said the **"plate of pure gold"** should be translated as *"petal of a flower."* Strong says it is a *"burnished plate...flower...wing."* While Brown, Driver and Briggs say it is *"flower, bloom...feather, wing."*

This plate was placed on the mitre, or turban, and had the inscription **"HOLINESS TO THE LORD."** This seems to represent the relationship the people were to have, and particularly the High Priest, to GOD. Whenever they saw the High Priest, they would be reminded of his role and their responsibility toward GOD.

The turban, with its plate, was always to be worn by the High Priest. This made a distinction between him and the "regular" priests. The text goes on to say that Aaron would **"bear the iniquity of the holy things."**

This seems to indicate that Aaron was responsible, either for the offerings for the iniquities of the people, or the things (including sacrifices) which the people brought to GOD. It should also be considered that the gifts were accepted as they came through the hands of the High Priest (v. 38). This would seem to be a type of the Christian's High Priest, Jesus Christ. All gifts in Christianity are accepted by GOD through Him.

"whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to GOD and the Father by Him" (Colossians 3:17).

Today the word **"coat"** signifies an outer garment used in cold weather to keep one warm. The tunic was a tight-fitting garment which was worn under the robe, what today would be called an undergarment. Josephus noted that it came down to the ankles and was tight fitting. He also said that the sash was *"so loosely woven, that you would think it were the skin of a serpent"* (Antiquities 3.7.2).

Ex. 28:40-43 **"And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office. And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach: And they shall be upon**

Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the Tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the Holy Place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him."

"And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and head-tires shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and upon his sons with him, and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office. And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover the flesh of their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach: And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they go in unto the tent of meeting, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the Holy Place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute for ever unto him and unto his seed after him." (ASV)

"And for the sons of Aaron thou dost make coats, and thou hast made for them girdles, yea, bonnets thou dost make for them, for honour and for beauty; and thou hast clothed Aaron thy brother with them, and his sons with him, and hast anointed them, and hast consecrated their hand, and hast sanctified them, and they have been priests to Me. And make thou for them linen trousers to cover the naked flesh: they are from the loins even unto the thighs; and they have been on Aaron and on his sons, in their going in unto the tent of meeting, or in their drawing nigh unto the altar to minister in the sanctuary, and they do not bear iniquity nor have they died; a statute age-during to him, and to his seed after him." (YLT)

This section deals with the garments to be made for the priests. When GOD's priests came near to serve, they were to be dressed in special clothes. These clothes were not made to be as beautiful as those of the High Priest. Nevertheless, they were to be made for **"glory and beauty."** This writer wonders if there is not a lesson here for GOD's people today (all of them) who are described as the priests in His better kingdom.

It is emphasized that they also had a garment required for modesty — **"linen breeches to cover their nakedness."** GOD intended for His people to worship in modesty. Note that, if they did not, a death sentence applied.

Exodus Chapter Twenty-nine

Ex. 29:1-4 “And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto Me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish, And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of wheaten flour shalt thou make them. And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams. And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water.”

“And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto Me in the priest's office: take one young bullock and two rams without blemish, and unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened mingled with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of fine wheaten flour shalt thou make them. And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams. And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tent of meeting, and shalt wash them with water.” (ASV)

“And this is the thing which thou dost to them, to hallow them, for being priests to Me: Take one bullock, a son of the herd, and two rams, perfect ones, and bread unleavened, and cakes unleavened anointed with oil, of fine wheaten flour thou dost make them, and thou hast put them on one basket, and hast brought them near in the basket, also the bullock and the two rams. And Aaron and his sons thou dost bring near unto the opening of the tent of meeting, and hast bathed them with water;” (YLT)

This chapter deals with the consecration of the priests. These instructions will be repeated when the Tabernacle is consecrated (Ex. 40). More details of their consecration are found in Leviticus chapter eight. The primary thing seen in these verses is that they were to be washed before they could minister in the priest's office. Consider that the first thing Jesus did before He began His earthly ministry was to be immersed. Further, before a Christian can begin his ministry, his work for the Lord, he must be washed in the watery grave of baptism — cleansed, purified, in Christ.

Ex. 29:5-6 “And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre.”

“And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the

breastplate, and gird him with the skilfully woven band of the ephod; and thou shalt set the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre.” (ASV)

“and thou hast taken the garments, and hast clothed Aaron with the coat, and the upper robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and hast girded him with the girdle of the ephod, and hast set the mitre on his head, and hast put the holy crown on the mitre,” (YLT)

The next step in the priests’ consecration was to dress the High Priest in his special garments. He and the priests could not enter into their service in any old clothes. They had to wear their best.

“These men were not allowed to enter into active service to God until they had put on the holy garments. Likewise, men are not permitted to enter their active service to Christ today until they have put off their garments of sin and put on Christ” (Zerr, p. 162).

Ex. 29:7 “Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him.”

“Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him.” (ASV)

“and hast taken the anointing oil, and hast poured it on his head, and hast anointed him.” (YLT)

The final act of consecration for the High Priest was the anointing of oil. The oil used for this anointing was olive oil with some spices added to it, according to Leviticus 30:22-33.

Ex. 29:8-9 “And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest’s office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.”

“And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and bind head-tires on them: and they shall have the priesthood by a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.” (ASV)

“And his sons thou dost bring near, and hast clothed them with coats, and hast girded them with a girdle (Aaron and his sons), and hast bound on them bonnets; and the priesthood hath been theirs by a statute age-during, and thou hast consecrated the hand of Aaron, and the hand of his sons,” (YLT)

The clothing of the priests is now mentioned. Though it is glorious, it does not compare to that of the High Priest.

What does it mean that the **“priest’s office shall be**

theirs for a perpetual statute?” Does this mean that the office of a priest will be held by their family as long as time exists? If there were no other information to go on, this would certainly appear to be the case. One should pay careful attention to GOD’s prediction regarding another and different priesthood.

“The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek” (Psalm 110:4).

GOD said that, at some point in time, there would be another priest (Jesus Christ), who would not be from the lineage of Aaron. What GOD showed in the present text, was that, as long as the Mosaic age existed, no one from another tribe could serve as a priest. When the Mosaic age was replaced by the Christian age, the priesthood would have to be changed to accommodate it.

“If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For He of Whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For He testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof” (Hebrews 11:7-18).

This is simply one of many examples which points out the need for all Scripture to be interpreted in the light of all the information which can be found in GOD’s word.

Ex. 29:10-14 “And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the Tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. And thou shalt kill the bullock before the LORD, by the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation. And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar. And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul that is above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar. But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the

camp: it is a sin offering.”

“And thou shalt bring the bullock before the tent of meeting: and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock. And thou shalt kill the bullock before Jehovah, at the door of the tent of meeting. And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger; and thou shalt pour out all the blood at the base of the altar. And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul upon the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar. But the flesh of the bullock, and its skin, and its dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it is a sin-offering.” (ASV)

“and hast brought near the bullock before the tent of meeting, and Aaron hath laid--his sons also--their hands on the head of the bullock. And thou hast slaughtered the bullock before Jehovah, at the opening of the tent of meeting, and hast taken of the blood of the bullock, and hast put it on the horns of the altar with thy finger, and all the blood thou dost pour out at the foundation of the altar; and thou hast taken all the fat which is covering the inwards, and the redundance on the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat which is on them, and hast made perfume on the altar; and the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, thou to die dost burn with fire at the outside of the camp; it is a sin-offering.” (YLT)

After the priestly clothes were put upon Aaron and his sons, the next step in the consecration ceremonies was the offering of a bullock as a sin offering. When looking at other passages, the sin offering appears to be for sins of ignorance or those done unintentionally.

“Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them: If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering”

(Leviticus 4:2-3).

Aaron and his sons were to place their hands on the head of the animal, which seems to indicate that they identified in some way with the animal. This animal was literally taking their place. They deserved to die for their sins, but GOD, through His grace and mercy, provided this animal to die in their place. Later, it will be a man (Jesus Christ) who will die in the place of sinful man.

Two things were to be done with the blood of the bullock. Some was to be smeared on the horns of the altar where **“the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul that is above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them”** would be burned. The rest of the blood was poured around the altar. The rest of the bullock was to be burned outside the camp. There seems to be little doubt that the sin offering foreshadowed the antitype of the Son of GOD’s offering

Himself for the sins of the whole world.

“Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach” (Hebrews 13:12-13).

Observe that the priests could not serve in the Holy Place (High Priest in the Most Holy Place) until an atonement for their sins was made. So it is today in the church. Until one is willing to allow the blood of Jesus to make atonement for his sins, through his baptism, he cannot serve in the designated place for service — the church.

Ex. 29:15-18 “Thou shalt also take one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces, and wash the inwards of him, and his legs, and put them unto his pieces, and unto his head. And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt offering unto the LORD: it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD.”

“Thou shalt also take the one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the head of the ram. And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take its blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. And thou shalt cut the ram into its pieces, and wash its inwards, and its legs, and put them with its pieces, and with its head. And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt-offering unto Jehovah; it is a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah.” (ASV)

“And the one ram thou dost take, and Aaron and his sons have laid their hands on the head of the ram, and thou hast slaughtered the ram, and hast taken its blood, and hast sprinkled it on the altar round about, and the ram thou dost cut into its pieces, and hast washed its inwards, and its legs, and hast put them on its pieces, and on its head; and thou hast made perfume with the whole ram on the altar. It is a burnt-offering to Jehovah, a sweet fragrance; a fire-offering it is to Jehovah.” (YLT)

The bullock was offered as a **“sin offering.”** Next, the first of two rams was to be offered. This offering is referred to as a **“burnt offering.”** Notice that, whereas part of the bullock was to be offered on the altar and part outside the camp, this offering was different in that all of the ram was to be offered on the altar. The blood of the ram was first sprinkled on the altar, and then the ram was burnt thereon.

This offering is also said to be a **“sweet savor.”** To whom? In the traditional sense, this would not have smelled that good to human beings — it did not smell

like perfume (at least most perfumes). This is an ancient idiom which means that their action received GOD's approval, that it was pleasing to Him. This was an offering given to the Lord with no expectation, like some other offerings which were commanded, from which the giver received only one benefit — he had done what pleased GOD.

“Be ye therefore followers of GOD, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to GOD for a sweet-smelling savour” (Ephesians 5:1-2, emphasis added).

To the human mind, i.e., those which are carnal, none of the sacrifices which are discussed in this chapter seem to make sense. But obedience to these directions brought happiness and forgiveness (in prospect) to the one who offered them. Further, these sacrificial laws were preparing the Israelites simply to trust and obey GOD, to do what He told them for their well-being. He was preparing them to walk by faith, whether what GOD required seemed reasonable to them or not. The entire Mosaic system was guiding them toward the coming of a better lawgiver than Moses, and a better law than the law GOD delivered through Moses.

“Wherefore the law (Law of Moses, RK) was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Galatians 3:24-25).

Ex. 29:19-25 “And thou shalt take the other ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him. Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right shoulder; for it is a ram of consecration: And one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the LORD: And thou shalt put all in the hands of Aaron, and in the

hands of his sons; and shalt wave them for a wave offering before the LORD. And thou shalt receive them of their hands, and burn them upon the altar for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour before the LORD: it is an offering made by fire unto the LORD.”

“And thou shalt take the other ram; and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the head of the ram. Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of its blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him. Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat, and the fat tail, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul of the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right thigh (for it is a ram of consecration), and one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer, out of the basket of unleavened bread that is before Jehovah.” (ASV)

“And thou hast taken the second ram, and Aaron hath laid--his sons also--their hands on the head of the ram, and thou hast slaughtered the ram, and hast taken of its blood, and hast put on the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and on the tip of the right ear of his sons, and on the thumb of their right hand, and on the great toe of their right foot, and hast sprinkled the blood on the altar round about; and thou hast taken of the blood which is on the altar, and of the anointing oil, and hast sprinkled on Aaron, and on his garments, and on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him, and he hath been hallowed, he, and his garments, and his sons, and the garments of his sons with him. And thou hast taken from the ram the fat, and the fat tail, and the fat which is covering the inwards, and the redundance on the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat which is on them, and the right leg, for it is a ram of consecration, and one round cake of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one thin cake out of the basket of the unleavened things which is before Jehovah. And thou hast set the whole on the hands of Aaron, and on the hands of his sons, and hast waved them--a wave-offering before Jehovah; and thou hast taken them out of their hand, and hast made perfume on the altar beside the burnt-offering, for sweet fragrance before Jehovah; a fire-offering it is to Jehovah.” (YLT)

These verses show what was done with the second ram. This is a sacrifice made in conjunction with the consecration of Aaron and his sons into the priesthood. Aaron and his sons first put their hands on the ram's head, and then it was slaughtered. Then they were to do three things with the blood of the ram. (1) They were to take some of the blood and put it on the priests' right ears, right thumbs, and the big toes of their right foot.

(2) The blood which was left was to be sprinkled on the altar. (3) They were to take some of the blood from the altar and mix it with the **“anointing oil.”** This mixture was then to be sprinkled upon Aaron and his sons.

“The blood sprinkled ear must be always willing to hear God’s word; the blood sprinkled thumb on the right hand symbolizes hand that are ever ready to do God’s will; and the blood sprinkled toe is a symbol of feet ever committed to walk in the Way of righteousness and truth” (Coffman, p. 411).

The sprinkling of blood on Aaron and his sons **“hallowed”** (*“make or set apart as holy”*) both them and their garments. They were set aside for GOD’s use.

Then certain parts of the ram were placed in the hands of Aaron and his sons. They were to wave them (probably above their heads). These parts were taken from them (along with bread and a few other items) and placed on the altar beside the burnt offering. Note that among these items was the right shoulder of the ram. It is also said of these things burnt on the altar that they were a **“sweet savour to the Lord.”** One might also be reminded that Moses was conducting these actions like a High Priest would, though he is never called a High Priest.

Ex. 29:26-28 “And thou shalt take the breast of the ram of Aaron’s consecration, and wave it for a wave offering before the LORD: and it shall be thy part. And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave offering, and the shoulder of the heave offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of the consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons: And it shall be Aaron’s and his sons’ by a statute for ever from the children of Israel: for it is an heave offering: and it shall be an heave offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace offerings, even their heave offering unto the LORD.”

“And thou shalt take the breast of Aaron’s ram of consecration, and wave it for a wave-offering before Jehovah: and it shall be thy portion. And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave-offering, and the thigh of the heave-offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons: and it shall be for Aaron and his sons as their portion for ever from the children of Israel; for it is a heave-offering: and it shall be a heave-offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifices of their peace-offerings, even their heave-offering unto Jehovah.” (ASV)

“And thou hast taken the breast from the ram of the consecration which is for Aaron, and hast waved it--a wave-offering before Jehovah, and it hath become thy portion; and thou hast sanctified the breast of the wave-offering, and

the leg of the heave-offering, which hath been waved, and which hath been lifted up from the ram of the consecration, of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons; and it hath been for Aaron and for his sons, by a statute age-during from the sons of Israel, for it is a heave-offering; and it is a heave offering from the sons of Israel, from the sacrifices of their peace-offerings--their heave-offering to Jehovah." (YLT)

These verses deal with what GOD designated for the care of the priests. The priest was to give his life to the Tabernacle/Temple, its services, and the teaching of GOD's word to the people. They had the same needs as every other human being – food, shelter, clothing, et cetera. **How did GOD care for them?** By giving them a part of some of the sacrifices which the people brought to Him.

"it shall be thy part" **Whose part?** Since Moses was acting as High Priest at this time, this portion, the breast, was given to him.

"wave offering" The sacrifice known as a **"wave offering"** was taken by the priest and probably moved from side to side.

"Wave offering" — *tenuphah* — *"a feminine noun meaning swinging, waving, a wave offering. In a general sense, this word implies the side to side motion involved in waving. It is used specifically as a technical term for the wave offering"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1236); *"Swinging, waving, wave offering, offering"* (BDB).

The term **"heave offering"** signifies that which is lifted up. The New Oxford Annotated Bible says the **"heave offering"** refers *"to the act of moving the sacrifice toward and away from the altar, to symbolize presenting the gift to God and receiving it back as a portion"* (See Roper, p. 479).

"heave offering" — *terumah* *terumah* — *"a feminine noun meaning offering. This word comes from the verb rum, meaning to lift up. The basic idea of this Hebrew noun is something being lifted up, i.e., an offering"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1246).

As can be seen by the above definitions, how it was done is debatable. But the basic idea of a heave offering is that something is offered to GOD, and what is offered is given back to provide for the needs of the one making the offering.

Ex. 29:29-30 "And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them. And that son that is priest in his stead shall put them on seven days, when he cometh into the Tabernacle of the congregation to minister in the holy place."

"And the holy garments of Aaron shall be for his sons after him, to be anointed in them, and to be consecrated in them.

Seven days shall the son that is priest in his stead put them on, when he cometh into the tent of meeting to minister in the Holy Place.” (ASV)

“And the holy garments which are Aaron's, are for his sons after him, to be anointed in them, and to consecrate in them their hand; seven days doth the priest in his stead (of his sons) put them on, when he goeth in unto the tent of meeting, to minister in the Sanctuary.” (YLT)

This passage reaffirms that the office of High Priest would be passed down through the lineage of Aaron. The new High Priest went through an ordination process which lasted seven days. During that time, he was to wear the official garments of the High Priest for seven days as he ministered in the Holy Place.

Ex. 29:31-34 “And thou shalt take the ram of the consecration, and seethe his flesh in the holy place. And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation. And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy. And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it is holy.”

“And thou shalt take the ram of consecration, and boil its flesh in a holy place. And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, at the door of the tent of meeting. And they shall eat those things wherewith atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy. And if aught of the flesh of the consecration, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it is holy.” (ASV)

“And the ram of the consecration thou dost take, and hast boiled its flesh in the holy place; and Aaron hath eaten--his sons also--the flesh of the ram, and the bread which is in the basket, at the opening of the tent of meeting; and they have eaten those things by which there is atonement to consecrate their hand, to sanctify them; and a stranger doth not eat--for they are holy; and if there be left of the flesh of the consecration or of the bread till the morning, then thou hast burned that which is left with fire; it is not eaten, for it is holy.” (YLT)

At the consecration of Aaron and his sons, a ram of atonement was to be slain, as noted in the previous verses. The present text states that the parts which were given back, by GOD, were to be eaten by the priests and High Priest after their consecration to their

offices. Also to be eaten with this was the bread which had been left in the basket by the tent. Anything from this meal that was left until the next day was to be burned. Note two quotes which give a bit more understanding of this idea of atonement.

“‘Atonement’ in 29:33 (and elsewhere) refers to covering. The Hebrew word translated ‘make atonement’ (kaphar) is related to the word translated ‘mercyseat’ (kapporeth). This idea of atonement (covering) is very prominent in God’s covenant with Israel” (Fields, p. 664).

“At the root of the Hebrew word for atonement is the idea of ‘covering.’ Mosaic sacrifices covered sin from God’s sight in view of Christ’s future redemptive work. Thus the sinner’s forgiveness was secured by God’s passing over sin (Romans 3:25). Not until Christ died was sin finally ‘put away’ (Hebrews 9:15) and actual atonement made between God and man” (Unger, p. 139).

Ex. 29:35-37 “And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to all things which I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them. And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it. Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.”

“And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to all that I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them. And every day shalt thou offer the bullock of sin-offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou makest atonement for it; and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it. Seven days thou shalt make atonement for the altar, and sanctify it: and the altar shall be most holy; whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.” (ASV)

“And thou hast done thus to Aaron and to his sons, according to all that I have commanded thee; seven days thou dost consecrate their hand; and a bullock, a sin-offering, thou dost prepare daily for the atonements, and thou hast atoned for the altar, in thy making atonement on it, and hast anointed it to sanctify it; seven days thou dost make atonement for the altar, and hast sanctified it, and the altar hath been most holy; all that is coming against the altar is holy.” (YLT)

It is not clear as to whether the consecration of the priests and the altar were done at the same time. Interestingly, an atonement was not only made for human beings; but here, it is made for an object — the altar upon which the people’s sacrificial offerings were made to GOD. These ceremonies were conducted for seven days, in which seven bullocks were to be offered

as sin offerings. At the end of these days, the altar was considered consecrated and counted as holy. Anything which touched the altar was to be considered as holy.

Because the altar was considered **“most holy,”** maybe that is the reason that Adonijah fled to the altar and grabbed hold of its horns (1 Kings 1:50-51) when his life was endangered. In his case, he was given his life. But when the man who was trying to kill Adonijah (Joab) later sought refuge by grabbing hold of these same horns, his life was taken (1 Kings 2:28ff). Thus, it would appear to this author that the altar only made the sacrifices of those who offered them holy.

Ex. 29:38-42 “Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD. This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee.”

“Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar: two lambs a year old day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: and with the one lamb a tenth part of an ephah of fine flour mingled with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil, and the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink-offering. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meal-offering of the morning, and according to the drink-offering thereof, for a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. It shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations at the door of the tent of meeting before Jehovah, where I will meet with you, to speak there unto thee.” (ASV)

“And this is that which thou dost prepare on the altar; two lambs, sons of a year, daily continually; the one lamb thou dost prepare in the morning, and the second lamb thou dost prepare between the evenings; and a tenth deal of fine flour, mixed with beaten oil, a fourth part of a hin, and a libation, a fourth part of a hin, of wine, is for the one lamb. And the second lamb thou dost prepare between the evenings; according to the present of the morning, and according to its libation, thou dost prepare for it, for sweet fragrance, a fire-offering, to Jehovah: – a continual burnt-offering for your generations, at the opening of the tent of meeting, before

Jehovah, whither I am met with you, to speak unto thee there,”
(YLT)

These verses tell of two sacrifices which were to be made every day as burnt offerings to GOD as long as the Mosaic age lasted. These sacrifices were to be made by the priests. One lamb (lambs of the first year) was to be offered in the morning and one in the even. Along with each lamb, there was also the offering of flour mixed with beaten oil and wine. The measurements which are described are not known today.

Ex. 29:43-46 “And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the Tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. And I will sanctify the Tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to Me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their GOD. And they shall know that I am the LORD their GOD, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their GOD.”

“And there I will meet with the children of Israel; and the Tent shall be sanctified by My glory. And I will sanctify the tent of meeting, and the altar: Aaron also and his sons will I sanctify, to minister to Me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their GOD. And they shall know that I am Jehovah their GOD, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them: I am Jehovah their GOD.” (ASV)

“and I have met there with the sons of Israel, and it hath been sanctified by My honour. And I have sanctified the tent of meeting, and the altar, and Aaron and his sons I sanctify for being priests to Me, and I have tabernacled in the midst of the sons of Israel, and have become their GOD, and they have known that I am Jehovah their GOD, who hath brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I may tabernacle in their midst; I am Jehovah their GOD.” (YLT)

While the Israelites were in the wilderness, GOD would meet with them at the Tabernacle.

“And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8).

There He would rebuke them, bless them and give them directions. Note then what happened when the Tabernacle was finally set up.

“So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the Tabernacle” (Exodus 40:33-34).

The Tabernacle was to **“be sanctified by My glory,”** said GOD.

“they shall know that I am the LORD their GOD”

Coffman stated that the word “**know**” above means a knowledge which is gained through experience (p. 416). If that be the case, then they had plenty of opportunities to know Who GOD was. They had seen the mighty miracles in Egypt which finally caused Pharaoh to let them go. They had seen salvation at the Red Sea from the Egyptian army, as well as GOD’s provisions for them in the wilderness as they traveled to Mount Sinai. They had seen the evidence of GOD in the lightning, thunder and sounds of a mighty trumpet at Sinai. What amazing experiences and evidences they had been privileged to see.

*“The section concludes with the triumphant all-inclusive claim...**I am YHWH their God.** As in Exodus 20:2, such a pronouncement is adequate reason and justification for claim and demand made by God on His people, for it sets out God’s nature, and His relationship to us, expressed in gracious act. This verse, then, is the sum and crown of all that was done before”* (Cole, p. 205).

Exodus Chapter Thirty

Ex. 30:1-10 “And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it. A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.”

“And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of acacia wood shalt thou make it. A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be; and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of one piece with it. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. And two golden rings shalt thou make for it under the crown thereof; upon the two ribs thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make them; and they shall be for places for staves wherewith to bear it. And thou shalt make the staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon incense of sweet spices: every morning, when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn it, a perpetual incense before Jehovah throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt-offering, nor meal-offering; and ye shall pour no

drink-offering thereon. And Aaron shall make atonement upon the horns of it once in the year; with the blood of the sin-offering of atonement once in the year shall he make atonement for it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto Jehovah.” (ASV)

“And thou hast made an altar for making perfume; of shittim wood thou dost make it; a cubit its length, and a cubit its breadth, (it is square), and two cubits its height; its horns are of the same. And thou hast overlaid it with pure gold, its top, and its sides round about, and its horns; and thou hast made to it a crown of gold round about; and two rings of gold thou dost make to it under its crown; on its two ribs thou dost make them, on its two sides, and they have become places for staves, to bear it with them. And thou hast made the staves of shittim wood, and hast overlaid them with gold; and thou hast put it before the vail, which is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat which is over the testimony, whither I am met with thee. And Aaron hath made perfume on it, perfume of spices, morning by morning; in his making the lamps right he doth perfume it, and in Aaron's causing the lamps to go up between the evenings, he doth perfume it; a continual perfume before Jehovah to your generations. Ye do not cause strange perfume to go up upon it, and burnt-offering, and present, and libation ye do not pour out on it; and Aaron hath made atonement on its horns, once in a year, by the blood of the sin-offering of atonements; once in a year doth he make atonement for it, to your generations; it is most holy to Jehovah.” (YLT)

These verses give instructions for one more item of “furniture” in the Holy Place — the altar of incense. This altar was to be made with acacia wood and covered with pure gold. It was to be square (1½ feet), and the height thereof was to be three feet. On the four corners of this altar, there were to be projections like horns. Around its upper edge was to be a crown of pure gold. Gold rings were also to be made for it so that it could be carried with staves of acacia wood covered with gold.

Where was this item to be placed? Before the veil in the room of the Holy Place. JFB believes this altar of incense was to be placed in front of the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Note their words which are very interesting.

“It occupied a spot on the outside of the great partition veil, but directly in front of the mercyseat, which was within that sacred inclosure – so that although the priest who ministered at this altar could not behold the mercyseat, he was to look towards it, and present his incense in that direction. This was a special arrangement, and it was designed to teach the important lesson – that though we cannot with the eye of sense see the throne of grace, we must ‘direct our prayer to it and look up’” (JFB, p. 400).

There is no doubt that the altar of incense was placed in the Holy Place because the priests were to burn this incense daily. The High Priest burned incense in the

Most Holy Place once each year on the day of atonement.

Initially, Aaron was to burn the incense on this altar twice each day (morning and evening). Later, at some point, the priests would take turns burning the incense.

“It came to pass, that while he (Zacharias, RK) executed the priest's office before GOD in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the Temple of the Lord”
(Luke 1:8-9).

Regarding this altar of incense, the warning should be carefully observed that nothing was to be placed on it except that which GOD authorized. Only the special blend of incense was to be placed thereon, and this prohibition also included the fire which was put upon it to burn the incense. The fire that was to be used on this altar was to come from the altar of burnt offerings.

“And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail”
(Leviticus 16:12).

This is further observed when one considers the fate of Nadab and Abihu, who were struck dead because they used the wrong fire in their censers to light the altar of incense.

“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD” (Leviticus 10:1-2, emphasis added).

One other thing should be considered here and that is the authority of the silence of the Scriptures. GOD did not have to say not to use campfire, or any other kind of fire, on the altar of incense. He specified a particular place from which the fire was to be taken, and that eliminated any other kind of fire from any other place!

The significance of the incense placed on this altar is seen in Revelation 5:8 and 8:4-5 — the fumes rising represent the prayers of the saints.

“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints” (5:8).

“And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before GOD out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake” (8:4-5).

“LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto Thee. Let my prayer be set forth

before Thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice” (Leviticus 141:1-2).

Ex. 30:11-16 “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the Tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.”

“And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, according to those that are numbered of them, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto Jehovah, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth over unto them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary; (the shekel is twenty gerahs;) half a shekel for an offering to Jehovah. Every one that passeth over unto them that are numbered, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the offering of Jehovah. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when they give the offering of Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money from the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tent of meeting; that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls” (ASV)

“And Jehovah speaketh unto Moses, saying, When thou takest up the sum of the sons of Israel for their numbers, then they have given each an atonement for his soul to Jehovah in their being numbered, and there is no plague among them in their being numbered. This they do give, every one passing over unto those numbered, half a shekel, by the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs); half a shekel is the heave-offering to Jehovah; every one passing over unto those numbered, from a son of twenty years and upwards, doth give the heave-offering of Jehovah; the rich doth not multiply, and the poor doth not diminish from the half-shekel, to give the heave-offering of Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls. And thou hast taken the atonement-money from the sons of

Israel, and hast given it for the service of the tent of meeting; and it hath been to the sons of Israel for a memorial before Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls.” (YLT)

These verses deal with a ransom price which was to be paid by every male over the age of nineteen (twenty years old and above). This was a kind of tax which was levied on each man — not the youth or women. This was paid when the people were numbered **“that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them.”** This is interesting when one considers a later event, when king David numbered the people, and a great plague came upon them.

“the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah...And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel” (2 Samuel 24:1, 25).

The Israelites were to pay a half-shekel (probably about half an ounce of silver) as a ransom for their souls. Note that the amount was the same for all — no more and no less, whether rich or poor. One should not make the mistake of considering this to be anything except an offering to GOD.

For what was this redemption price to be used? The upkeep of the Tabernacle and later the Temple. It should be observed that this was not a collection which was to be used to build the Tabernacle. The first time this was taken was after the Tabernacle had been finished (Num. 1:1).

Ex. 30:17-21 “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the Tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: When they go into the Tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.”

“And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and the base thereof of brass, whereat to wash. And thou shalt put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. And Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: when they go into the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, that

they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah speaketh unto Moses, saying, And thou hast made a laver of brass (and its base of brass), for washing; and thou hast put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and hast put water there; and Aaron and his sons have washed at it their hands and their feet, in their going in unto the tent of meeting they wash with water, and die not; or in their drawing nigh unto the altar to minister, to perfume a fire-offering to Jehovah, then they have washed their hands and their feet, and they die not, and it hath been to them a statute age-during, to him and to his seed to their generations.” (YLT)

There were two items in the courtyard of the Tabernacle — the altar of burnt offerings and the laver. The directions for making the altar were given in Exodus chapter twenty-seven. Here, the laver is described. No dimensions are given, but it must have been quite large. This laver was to be placed between the altar of burnt offering and the Tabernacle proper.

“thou shalt put water therein” The laver was filled with water from which the priests were to wash their hands and feet before they rendered their service to GOD. Considering the types and antitypes, the Holy Place was the type of the church. Carefully consider that they were to be purified by water before they could enter the Holy Place. Just so today, one must be purified by the waters of baptism before he may enter the church. If a priest did not purify himself before entering the Holy Place, he was to die.

Initially (at their consecration), they were washed from head to foot. The present text shows that, afterwards, they would be cleansed for service by having only their feet and hands washed at the laver. Christians are initially cleansed by total immersion (baptism). **But how would they be cleansed after that? Do they have to go to the baptistry and go through some type of cleansing?** Christians today, just like the priests of the Mosaic age, are not perfect. Unfortunately, Christians sometimes give in to the temptations of the world around them (far too often) and thus become defiled by sin. Like the priests of this bygone time, they need to be cleansed before they can give proper service in their worship, just as priests did. **So how do they do this?** Through repentance and prayer, asking GOD for forgiveness.

A good example of the method of cleansing by prayer is seen in Acts chapter eight. There, Philip is found preaching to the people of Samaria (vv. 5, 12).

Another man is also found there, but he is not proclaiming the Gospel or living a godly life. Instead, he was preaching himself, **“giving out that he was some great one”** (v. 9). He had bewitched the people with his magic tricks, deceiving them into thinking that he was **“the great power of GOD”** (v. 10). But an amazing thing happened. He realized that the Gospel being taught by Philip was “the real deal” — he became a Christian (vv. 12-13). At this point, it must be recognized that worldly “Christians” will say that he was only a pretend Christian. But the Bible says, **“Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip.”** (v. 13). **What did Simon do?** Just what Jesus said a person must do in order to be saved, i.e., be His servant, be a Christian, be a part of His kingdom.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”
(Mark 16:15-16, emphasis added).

But then Simon, like all Christians given time, sinned. His particular sin was offering money to the apostles in order to receive the Spirit. He wanted the ability to perform the miracles they were doing (vv. 18-19). He was then rebuked by Peter (vv. 20-22). **What did Peter tell Simon to do so that he could be forgiven?**

“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray GOD, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee”
(v. 22, emphasis added).

So, what does a Christian have to do to be forgiven when he sins? The same thing Simon was told to do — repent and pray. Contact with the blood of Jesus in that watery grave of baptism is not a one-time thing, i.e., all sins forward are automatically forgiven. But, His blood can cleanse His people through repentance and prayer when they transgress His law. It is also noted that Simon asked others to pray on his behalf for his forgiveness as well (v. 24).

“If we (Christians, RK) say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light (according to the Scriptures, RK), as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Ex. 30:22-33 “Moreover the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: And thou shalt make it an oil

of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil. And thou shalt anoint the Tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense, And the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot. And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy. And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto Me throughout your generations. Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people."

"Moreover Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take thou also unto thee the chief spices: of flowing myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty, and of cassia five hundred, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil a hin. And thou shalt make it a holy anointing oil, a perfume compounded after the art of the perfumer: it shall be a holy anointing oil. And thou shalt anoint therewith the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the table and all the vessels thereof, and the candlestick and the vessels thereof, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt-offering with all the vessels thereof, and the laver and the base thereof. And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy. And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be a holy anointing oil unto Me throughout your generations. Upon the flesh of man shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any like it, according to the composition thereof: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, he shall be cut off from his people." (ASV)

"And Jehovah speaketh unto Moses, saying, And thou, take to thyself principal spices, wild honey five hundred shekels; and spice-cinnamon, the half of that, two hundred and fifty; and spice-cane two hundred and fifty; and cassia five hundred, by the shekel of the sanctuary, and olive oil a hin; and thou hast made it a holy anointing oil, a compound mixture, work of a compounder; it is a holy anointing oil. And thou hast anointed with it the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the table and all its vessels, and the candlestick and its vessels, and the altar of perfume, and the altar of

burnt-offering and all its vessels, and the laver and its base; and thou hast sanctified them, and they have been most holy; all that is coming against them is holy; and Aaron and his sons thou dost anoint, and hast sanctified them for being priests to Me. And unto the sons of Israel thou dost speak, saying, A holy anointing oil is this to Me, to your generations; on flesh of man it is not poured, and with its proper proportion ye make none like it; it is holy; it is holy to you; a man who compoundeth any like it, or who putteth of it on a stranger--hath even been cut off from his people." (YLT)

If one desires to know more about the spices mentioned in these verses, he would do well to read Coffman's comments on pages 427-428 of his commentary on Exodus, and Fields' remarks in his commentary, page 685. To say the very least, these spices were quite expensive.

These spices were to be blended after the art of the perfumer. After blending all of these spices, they would then be added to a medium which allowed for easy use — in this case, olive oil. This was a special oil, a **"most holy oil,"** which was not to be copied for personal use. It would seem that it must have had a very unusual smell, and a very pleasant one. If any person copied this recipe for personal use, he was to be **"cut off from his people."** Once all of this was mixed, it was to be used to anoint the Tabernacle, all of the furniture and utensils within, as well as the altar and laver. Interestingly, whatever touched an item which was anointed by this oil **"shall be holy."**

"cut off from his people" The idea of being **"cut off"** has two possible meanings: (1) execution, and (2) dying at an early age without descendants.

Ex. 30:34-38 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight: And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the Tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the LORD. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people."

"And Jehovah said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight; and thou

shalt make of it incense, a perfume after the art of the perfumer, seasoned with salt, pure and holy: and thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. And the incense which thou shalt make, according to the composition thereof ye shall not make for yourselves: it shall be unto thee holy for Jehovah. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereof, he shall be cut off from his people.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Take to thee spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, spices and pure frankincense; they are part for part; and thou hast made it a perfume, a compound, work of a compounder, salted, pure, holy; and thou hast beaten some of it small, and hast put of it before the testimony, in the tent of meeting, whither I am met with thee; most holy it is to you. As to the perfume which thou makest, with its proper proportion ye do not make to yourselves, holy it is to thee to Jehovah; a man who maketh any like it--to be refreshed by it--hath even been cut off from his people.” (YLT)

Here is another perfume which is to be made by skilled apothecaries. It is to be holy like the one which was used in the above passages. If anyone made a perfume like it, he was to be cut off from his people. This perfume was made for GOD, not for human beings. It was to be put **“before the testimony in the Tabernacle of the congregation”** (probably before the curtain which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place).

Exodus — Volume 4

Chapter thirty-one

Ex. 31:1-5 “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the Spirit of GOD, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise skilful works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of workmanship.”

“And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the Spirit of GOD, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise skilful works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of workmanship.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah speaketh unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel, son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I fill him with the Spirit of GOD, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all work, to devise devices to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in graving of stone for settings, and in graving of wood to work in all work.” (YLT)

GOD chose the man who would supervise the work of the Tabernacle by name. There is an implication here that may be startling to some. GOD knows the name of every person! Further, He knows the minutest detail about everything and everyone He created.

“The very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Matthew 10:30, emphasis added).

Beyond that, He knows every one who has ever lived and has their names written in a book from which He will judge each one.

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before GOD; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Revelation 20:12).

It is also noted that GOD gave him specific gifts which would allow him to complete his work perfectly. It also must not be forgotten that he was already a skilled workman, as indicated by verse six. This should remind one that, when he uses the talents GOD has already given him, then GOD will increase them (Cf. Matthew 25:14-30).

“I have filled him with the Spirit of GOD”

“S.R. Driver noted that the Spirit of God is ‘regarded in the [Old Testament] as the source of any exceptional power or activity

of man, as well as of supernatural spiritual gifts' and added that here the expression is used 'of exceptional artistic capacity'" (Quoted by Roper, p. 506).

Consider the word **"understanding"** (tabun tebunah tobunah) in verse three.

"understanding, intelligence...understanding, insight" (BDB); "a feminine noun meaning understanding, insight. It occurs primarily in the Wisdom Literature and is associated with both wisdom and knowledge; and is contrasted with foolishness" (Baker/Carpenter); "'Understanding' refers to insight, understanding, and intelligence" (Fields, p. 693).

Considering **"wisdom,"** one finds a very interesting definition in Webster's 1824 Dictionary.

"The right use of knowledge; the choice of laudable ends, and of the best means to accomplish them. This is wisdom in act, effect, or practice. If wisdom is to be considered as a faculty of the mind, it is the faculty of discerning or judging what is most just, proper and useful, and if it is to be considered as an acquirement, it is the knowledge and use of what is best, most just, most proper, most conducive to prosperity or happiness...Quickness of intellect; readiness of apprehension; dexterity in execution; as the wisdom of Bezaleel and Aholiab. Exodus 31."

"'Wisdom' seems to be the ability to use intelligence effectively" (Fields, p. 693).

The wide range of skills given to Bezalel should be considered. He was skilled in cutting gemstones, working as a carpenter and carver, and molding precious metals. These items which he was to make were not haphazardly thrown together. They were truly works of art on the highest level. **Would one not be amazed at their beauty if he could view these items in all their splendor?**

Ex. 31:6-11 "And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee; The Tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the Tabernacle, And the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture, and the altar of incense, And the altar of burnt offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot, And the cloths of service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office, And the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the Holy Place: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do."

"And I, behold, I have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the heart of all that are

wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee: the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy-seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the Tent, and the table and its vessels, and the pure candlestick with all its vessels, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt-offering with all its vessels, and the laver and its base, and the finely wrought garments, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office, and the anointing oil, and the incense of sweet spices for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do." (ASV)

"And I, lo, I have given with him Aholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, and in the heart of every wise-hearted one I have given wisdom, and they have made all that which I have commanded thee. The tent of meeting, and the ark of testimony, and the mercy-seat which is on it, and all the vessels of the tent, and the table and its vessels, and the pure candlestick and all its vessels, and the altar of the perfume, and the altar of the burnt-offering and all its vessels, and the laver and its base, and the coloured garments, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, for acting as priests in; and the anointing oil, and the perfume of the spices for the Sanctuary; according to all that I have commanded thee--they do." (YLT)

GOD also chose another person by name to act, apparently, as an assistant to Bezalel — Aholiab. Aholiab's main work appears to be with regard to the fabrics used in making the Tabernacle and the clothes for the High Priest and priests. One might also notice that Aaron is called **"the priest"** in comparison to his sons' being designated simply as **"priests."** Moses was given the plan for the Tabernacle, priests, et cetera; but GOD gave a supervisor and laborers. These workers were also invested with wisdom which enabled them to make all that GOD commanded. A summary is then given as to what was to be made by these workers.

Ex. 31:12-17 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their

generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed."

"And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily ye shall keep My sabbaths: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifieth you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that profaneth it shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to Jehovah: whosoever doeth any work on the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed." (ASV)

"And Jehovah speaketh unto Moses, saying, And thou, speak unto the sons of Israel, saying, Only, My sabbaths ye do keep, for it is a sign between Me and you, to your generations, to know that I, Jehovah, am sanctifying you; and ye have kept the sabbath, for it is holy to you, he who is polluting it is certainly put to death--for any who doeth work in it--that person hath even been cut off from the midst of his people. Six days is work done, and in the seventh day is a sabbath of holy rest to Jehovah; any who doeth work in the sabbath-day is certainly put to death, and the sons of Israel have observed the sabbath; to keep the sabbath to their generations is a covenant age-during, between Me and the sons of Israel it is a sign--to the age; for six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, and in the seventh day He hath ceased, and is refreshed." (YLT)

This section is basically a repetition of the sabbath law. There are a few additional bits of information which were not supplied earlier.

"As is so frequently the case in the word of God, a given subject is returned to again and again, with new and pertinent information being supplied in each new mention of it; and the same is true here. Two facts of utmost importance are here revealed for the first time: (1) that the sabbath day was a sign of the covenant between God and Israel, and (2) that the profanation of it was a capital offense to be punished by the execution of all violators" (Coffman, p. 435).

"The sabbath is the sign, the identifying mark of the Jew. Just as the sign on the door of a home indicates who lives inside, so the Sabbath is the sign marking the place where a Jew dwells. Likewise, the shop that is closed on the sabbath is marked as a Jewish enterprise. But if, heaven forbid, that shop should be open on the Sabbath, the mark indicates the reverse" (Hayyim, p. 182).

*"The **sabbath** was a **sign** between **the Lord** and **Israel**; it*

was the sign of the covenant that God made with Israel”
(Roper, p. 509).

“Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.” Some have deemed the word **“perpetual”** as indicating that the sabbath day law would be kept until the end of time. But the context in which it is found signifies that it was a covenant that had been made with Israel — not anyone else. Further, one should note the phrase **“throughout their generations”** (emphasis added). If this meant that the sabbath was to be celebrated until the end of time, it would still be only for the Jews.

Ex. 31:18 “And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of GOD.”

“And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of GOD.” (ASV)

“And He giveth unto Moses, when He finisheth speaking with him in mount Sinai, two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written by the finger of GOD.” (YLT)

This verse is the quiet before the storm of the next few chapters. GOD has told Moses everything he needed to know to this point in time. He has given him the core of the law and various other laws, as well as describing how the tent of meeting should be built. Some are curious as to how Moses came down the mountain with all of these laws. They speculate that Moses may have written them down on a scroll as GOD gave them, or maybe he simply memorized them as they were given. It makes no difference. Maybe GOD refreshed his memory as He did with the apostles.

“But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak” (Matthew 10:19).

“when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come” (John 16:13).

But GOD did something special with regard to the core of the law — the ten words. He wrote the ten commandments on two tables of stone. **“written with the finger of GOD”** This statement is giving GOD human characteristics (anthropomorphism) to describe how the law was engraved on these tablets.

Exodus Chapter Thirty-two

Ex. 32:1-6 “And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.”

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden rings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden rings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received it at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made it a molten calf: and they said, These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow shall be a feast to Jehovah. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.” (ASV)

“And the people see that Moses is delaying to come down from the mount, and the people assemble against Aaron, and say unto him, Rise, make for us gods who go before us, for this Moses--the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt--we have not known what hath happened to him. And Aaron saith unto them, Break off the rings of gold which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring in unto me; and all the people themselves break off the rings of gold which are in their ears, and bring in unto Aaron, and he receiveth from their hand, and doth fashion it with a graving tool, and doth make it a molten calf, and they say,

These thy gods, O Israel, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And Aaron seeth, and buildeth an altar before it, and Aaron calleth, and saith, A festival to Jehovah--to-morrow; and they rise early on the morrow, and cause burnt-offerings to ascend, and bring nigh peace-offerings; and the people sit down to eat and to drink, and rise up to play." (YLT)

"when the people saw that Moses delayed" He had been on the mountain for over a month, and some were beginning to wonder if he were alive. Note that the basic cause of their words was fear.

"the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods" Did all of the people gather themselves to Aaron? Were many of those gathered before Aaron simply caught up in a mob, or is this an indication that most were favorable to this request? It would seem to this writer that this is an indication of just how much the religious practices of Egypt had affected them over the years. JFB mentions that the original may simply refer to *"a god"* (p. 405), which makes perfect sense from an Egyptian standpoint.

When Moses answered GOD's call to ascend the mountain, he left Aaron and Hur in charge. But from this account, it seems that they did not have the strength of character needed to withstand the evil demands of the people. Josephus said that Hur was stoned for opposing this idol. If so, what a demonstration of true faith in the face of tremendous pressure. This may also indicate a lack of respect for the authority that had been given to Aaron and Hur. At any rate, Aaron is shown not to be a strong leader on this occasion. Thankfully, one will see tremendous growth on his part when GOD strikes two of his sons dead for violating His law. The Bible clearly shows that where there is strong leadership, the people will generally follow and do that which is right.

Another interesting thing, to this writer, is the phrase **"this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt"** (emphasis added). Whoever the spokesman for these people was, he did not attribute GOD as the One who brought them from Egypt. This is so strange in that they were at the foot of Mount Sinai and could simply look up and see the majesty and glory of GOD on display. Those who followed this group leader were probably saying "Amen" to his words.

Fearful Aaron commanded them to **"Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters."** The Septuagint here only says wives and daughters. This idol was going to be made of pure gold. Second, It was

made of molten gold. **What is the significance of this fact?** It was not made of wood and then covered with gold, which indicates it would have been pure, solid gold. The finishing touches were made with a **“graving tool.”** This small detail will be important later, when Aaron gives his excuse as to how this idol came about. **What was the result?** A golden calf, which when the people saw it they shouted, **“These be thy gods, O Israel.”** **From where did the idea of a calf (bull) come?** The Egyptians worshipped many animals, one of which was the bull of Apis, which they considered sacred.

“The depiction of a god in the form of a bull was widespread throughout the entire ancient Near East. That animal was a symbol of lordship, strength, vital energy, and fertility, and was either deified and made an object of worship, or, on account of these sovereign attributes, was employed in representation of deity” (Sarna, p. 520).

Consider how foolish it is to worship something one’s own hands have manufactured!

“And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands” (Acts 7:41).

How quickly they forgot their GOD and the covenant to which they had pledged allegiance. How quickly they refused and ignored the evidence which was before their eyes on the mountain.

“They forgot GOD their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red Sea” (Psalm 106:21-22).

“when Aaron saw it” **What did he do when he saw the idol and saw the reaction of the people?** **“he built an altar before it”** This would indicate that the instructions Moses was receiving on the mount were not in effect yet. For if they had been, Aaron would probably have simply moved the altar GOD commanded of Moses and placed it in front of this golden calf. Further, **“Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD.”** It is obvious that the people asked for a god (idol) and that Aaron made one for them. It then follows that the altar and feast were made and proclaimed in honor to this god.

The text then tells about the people’s gathering early with their burnt offerings and peace offerings for this god of their imagination. This indicates their desire to get started, and their actions show they intended to party. **“and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play”** Note the final four words here — **“rose up to play”** There are a few ideas of what it means to rise up and **“play.”** (1) There are those who contend that this means nothing more than that the people were laughing, mocking, jesting, et cetera. (2) Another view is that the Israelites were involved in

immorality — a kind of sexual orgy. Why does this author believe that this second option is the correct idea of the word **“play?”**

“play” — tsachaq — *“a verb meaning to laugh, to make jokes, to mock...it may have sexual, licentious overtones”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 946).

“The fact that they ‘rose up to play’ suggests that they engaged in ‘coarse and excessive carousing’ which was a typical feature of pagan fertility festivals” (Roper, p. 522).

When one considers the orgies which were often held, and which have been well documented in historical literature, this makes perfect sense.

“Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play” (1 Corinthians 10:7).

Further, one should note the word **“sporting”** in Genesis 26:8, where the original word is the same as in this text and obviously refers to sexual activity of some sort.

“And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife.”

Whatever Abimelech saw, he obviously understood that it was something a man only did with his wife.

“And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister” (Genesis 26:9)?

Ex. 32:7-10 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.”

“And Jehovah spake unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, that thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said, These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And Jehovah said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a

great nation.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Go, descend, for thy people whom thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt hath done corruptly, they have turned aside hastily from the way that I have commanded them; they have made for themselves a molten calf, and bow themselves to it, and sacrifice to it, and say, These thy gods, O Israel, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And Jehovah saith unto Moses, I have seen this people, and lo, it is a stiff-necked people; and now, let Me alone, and My anger doth burn against them, and I consume them, and I make thee become a great nation.” (YLT)

GOD told Moses to get down (off the mountain), because the people had **“corrupted”** themselves.

“corrupted” — *shachath* — “to decay, i.e., ruin...destroy, waste” (Strong); “to destroy, corrupt, go to ruin, decay” (BDB); “A verb meaning to spoil, to ruin, to destroy, to pervert, to corrupt, to become corrupt, to wipe out” (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1124).

In the very shadow of the mountain where they had previously pledged themselves to be faithful to GOD, they now abandoned Him. When looking at the definitions above, one can see that they were perverting themselves in such a way as to cause them to be wiped out. It was GOD who brought them out of the land of Egypt, but He did it through the instrumentality of Moses.

How had they turned away from GOD? They had made a molten calf. But that was not the worst of it — **“worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto.”** It was bad enough that they had made the calf, but the real tragedy was their worshiping the product of their imagination and hands. They had offered to the dumb calf what belonged to the living GOD. They attributed to this calf what GOD had done — **“brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”** It might be suggested here that many people do exactly what the Israelites did here, i.e., attribute what GOD has done to another. Is that not the case when a man ascribes his food, clothes, and material blessings to his own abilities of mind and work? In humility, man must realize that he would have nothing, would not even exist, if it were not for GOD.

How did GOD describe this ungrateful multitude whom He had rescued from a life of hard slavery? **“a stiffnecked people”** Zerr gives a good definition of what it means to be stiffnecked.

“To be stiffnecked as used in the Scriptures means to be stubborn or obstinate or contrary. Inclined to have one’s own way and to be disrespectful of authority” (p. 166).

Not only were they disrespectful of GOD’s authority, but they also disrespected their own vows of fidelity.

What did GOD say He would do to these

disrespectful, ungrateful, Hebrews? **“that I may consume them”** Basically, He told Moses not to interfere, because His anger against them was **“hot.”** **What does fire do?** It consumes through heat. GOD said that after He consumed them, then He would make a great nation out of Moses’ posterity. This did not negate GOD’s plan to establish a fit people from which to bring a Savior into the world. It would have still come through the lineage of Abraham through Moses. It is also observed that GOD does not refer to these Hebrews as His people. **Why not?** They broke the covenant; He no longer had an obligation to them. They had been called to be a “holy nation,” but now they were no better than a pile of rotten, decayed, humanity.

Ex. 32:11-14 “And Moses besought the LORD his GOD, and said, LORD, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people, which Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants, to whom Thou swarest by Thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.”

“And Moses besought Jehovah his GOD, and said, Jehovah, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people, that Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, saying, For evil did He bring them forth, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants, to whom Thou swarest by Thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And Jehovah repented of the evil which he said he would do unto his people.” (ASV)

“And Moses appeaseth the face of Jehovah his GOD, and saith, Why, O Jehovah, doth Thine anger burn against Thy people, whom Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a strong hand? why do the Egyptians speak, saying, For evil He brought them out to slay them among mountains, and to consume them from off the

face of the ground? turn back from the heat of Thine anger, and repent of the evil against Thy people. Be mindful of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, Thy servants, to whom Thou hast sworn by Thyself, and unto whom Thou speakest: I multiply your seed as stars of the heavens, and all this land, as I have said, I give to your seed, and they have inherited to the age; and Jehovah repenteth of the evil which He hath spoken of doing to His people.” (YLT)

How did Moses react to GOD’s declaration of destruction? He pleaded with GOD not to destroy them on the basis of three arguments: (1) the special relationship of GOD and His people, (2) the Egyptians would hear about their destruction and think that GOD had only delivered them from Egypt in order to destroy them in the wilderness, and (3) by reminding GOD of the covenant he made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses showed his own faith by describing how Israel had been brought out of Egypt. **“Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand”** He did not claim any part in bringing the people out of bondage — instead giving all credit to GOD.

“Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Thy people” The word rendered **“repent”** in this passage is different from the one in the New Testament. The New Testament uses this word to indicate a change of mind. The word in the present text is naham.

“A verb meaning to be sorry, to pity, to comfort, to avenge”
(Baker/Carpenter, p. 723).

It seems to this writer that Moses was calling for GOD to show pity for His people. Instead of destroying them, to comfort them (by forgiveness). In order to show pity, to comfort them, GOD would have to change His mind about destroying them. A good example of the principle involved here would be Jonah and the Ninevites. GOD had determined to destroy the Ninevites, but after Jonah preached to them, they repented in sackcloth and ashes. GOD showed His pity and mercy and comforted them by allowing them to live. There is a difference in the case being studied here. GOD did not spare Israel the people of because they repented, but because Moses pleaded for them. Hail the amazingly wonderful power of prayer.

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

It should also be considered that man has to repent because he has done something wrong. That is never the case with GOD! His change of mind came from pity and mercy.

Note here a prophecy given by Moses in

Deuteronomy 18:15.

“The LORD thy GOD will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken;”

The Prophet of which Moses spoke was the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a particular role of Jesus that this writer wishes to consider here. When our Lord returned to Heaven, He then began acting as intercessor for His people. **What was Moses doing on this occasion?** He was interceding for His people. The Hebrews did not deserve GOD’s mercy, but Moses pleaded their case, and they were spared. One today does not deserve GOD’s mercy, but Jesus pleads His people’s case to the Father, allowing them to be given salvation. One might also point out that the word for **“repented”** in this text is also translated as **“relented”** in the NKJV and a number of other translations.

“God’s repentance or ‘relenting’ is an anthropomorphism (a description of God in human forms) that aims at showing us that he can and does change in his actions and emotions to men when given proper grounds for doing so, and thereby he does not change in his basic integrity or character (cf. Pss 99:6; 106:45; Jer 18:8; Amos 7:3, 6; Jonah 3:10; James 5:16). The grounds for the Lord’s repenting are three: (1) intercession (cf. Amos 7:1-6); (2) repentance of the people (Jer 18:3-11; Jonah 3:9-10); and (3) compassion (Deut 32:36; Judg 2:18; 2 Sam 24:16)” (Kaiser, quoted by Roper, p. 526).

Ex. 32:15-20 “And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of GOD, and the writing was the writing of GOD, graven upon the tables. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.”

“And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, with the two tables of the testimony in his hand; tables that were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of GOD, and the writing

was the writing of GOD, graven upon the tables. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it with fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it." (ASV)

"And Moses turneth, and goeth down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony are in his hand, tables written on both their sides, on this and on that are they written; and the tables are the work of GOD, and the writing is the writing of GOD, graven on the tables. And Joshua heareth the voice of the people in their shouting, and saith unto Moses, A noise of battle in the camp! and he saith, It is not the voice of the crying of might, nor is it the voice of the crying of weakness--a voice of singing I am hearing. And it cometh to pass, when he hath drawn near unto the camp, that he seeth the calf, and the dancing, and the anger of Moses burneth, and he casteth out of his hands the tables, and breaketh them under the mount; and he taketh the calf which they have made, and burneth it with fire, and grindeth until it is small, and scattereth on the face of the waters, and causeth the sons of Israel to drink." (YLT)

With Moses' pleas for GOD to refrain from destroying the Hebrews answered, he no doubt immediately turned and went down the mountain. Moses had an unpleasant task before him, but he did not shirk his responsibility. It is never a pleasant task when one must rebuke another for wrongdoing. But in order for Christians to be obedient to GOD it is sometimes necessary.

"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him" (Luke 17:3).

Note four points in the passage in Luke cited above: (1) **"Take heed to yourself."** This not only declares the need to rebuke a brother but look carefully at oneself. **Are you doing the same thing they are?** (2) **"If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him"** **"If"** signifies that one may think a brother has trespassed, but he may not have. Nevertheless, if he actually trespasses against one, there is the responsibility of the one trespassed against to rebuke the offender. (3) **"and if he repent"** He has offended, but now has had a change of heart. (4) **"forgive him"** The obligation has changed. Forgiveness must be granted to him without reservation. **Why must forgiveness be rendered without reservation?** Because if forgiveness is not given

when one repents, then the one who should have forgiven cannot have his own sins forgiven.

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14-15).

Since GOD is willing to forgive man of his sins when asked to do so — **then who is man not to forgive another when asked?**

Moses did not leave empty handed. GOD had taken two tablets and carved the ten words into them. Note that they are called **“tables of the testimony.”** **What if the Hebrews broke the laws GOD gave them?** Then those very laws would serve as a testimony against them. There is no difference today with regard to the Law of Christ, even if a person refuses to recognize it. The day will come when that very law will condemn him.

“when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted” Somewhere on his way down the mountain, Moses rejoined Joshua. It is remembered that Joshua had previously been allowed to go partway up the mountain with Moses (Ex. 24:13). **What did Joshua think about the noise he heard from the people?** **“he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp”** He thought someone had attacked them and they were fighting. Apparently, Joshua had been on this mountain the whole time Moses was communing with GOD, because he did not know what was going on in the camp. Moses informed him that this was not the noise of war.

“he saw the calf, and the dancing” This seems to indicate that the **“dancing”** was going on around the idol. This also seems to show that they were acting no differently from their pagan neighbors. Paganism often spawns immorality in its worship.

“and Moses' anger waxed hot” Now Moses understood why GOD was so angry at the Hebrews, and his reaction mirrors GOD's — he is extremely angry. He had pled for their lives, not knowing how far they had gone, and he still did not desire that they should die. But his anger does manifest itself in a very pointed way.

“he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount” There has been a great argument over the years among Bible students as to whether or not Moses sinned when he broke these tablets. There is one thing this writer knows on such a debate: there is no recorded reprimand of Moses for his actions; thus, this writer does not believe he sinned. **What would Moses do now that his anger has “waxed hot?”**

“he took the calf which they had made, and

burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it” Note another passage which speaks of Moses’ actions on this occasion.

“I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, even until it was as small as dust: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount”
(Deuteronomy 9:21).

Surely they must have realized their stupidity when they saw how Moses treated their “god” and nothing happened to him. It is impossible for this writer to think of GOD’s being unable to defend Himself when attacked. This writer also believes that Moses’ actions were intend to shame the people. Further, after pounding all of that gold into dust, he scattered it upon the waters and made the people drink it. This was, no doubt, a bitter pill to swallow; but then, the consequences of all sin, for any human being, are just as bitter.

Ex. 32:21-24 “And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.”

“And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought a great sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on evil. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off: so they gave it me; and I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.” (ASV)

“And Moses saith unto Aaron, What hath this people done to thee, that thou hast brought in upon it a great sin? and Aaron saith, Let not the anger of my lord burn; thou--thou hast known the people that it is in evil; and they say to me, Make for us gods, who go before us, for this Moses--the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt--we have not known what hath happened to him; and I say to them, Whoso hath gold, let them break it off, and they give to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf cometh out.” (YLT)

How did Moses know that Aaron was to blame for making the calf? There are only two possibilities: (1) He

asked who made it, or (2) GOD told him. It is interesting to this author that Moses thought the people must have done something horrible to Aaron and forced him to make the calf. The point: he did not want to believe that his brother would willingly commit such a sin. That is the way brethren should act in all ages when they hear of a brother who may be accused of doing some wrong. Note that Moses said this was a “great” sin. In fact, it was so great that, if Moses had not interceded for Aaron, GOD would have taken his life.

“And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time”
(Deuteronomy 9:20).

Aaron basically offered two excuses for his actions. (1) *“The people made me do it.”* That is the same excuse king Saul used to try and escape GOD’s judgment. But note what Saul was told.

“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Samuel 15:22).

Moses had trusted Aaron with leadership responsibilities while he was away. As a leader, he had a grave responsibility to do what was right. Timothy was told to keep teaching what GOD commanded, even though the people wanted something other than the Gospel (2 Tim. 4:1-5). Aaron would not have been in danger of losing his life from GOD, if he had refused to make that calf. (2) *“I did not make it,”* it just suddenly appeared out of the fire. If one had been Moses, did he think Moses might have wondered if Aaron had lost his mind? Aaron said he melted the gold and out popped this golden calf. Sounds a lot like the false theories tossed about today for how everything came into existence. Aaron should have admitted his sin and asked GOD for forgiveness — instead, he offered excuses for his behavior.

Ex. 32:25-29 “And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD’S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD GOD of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that

he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.”

“And when Moses saw that the people were broken loose, (for Aaron had let them loose for a derision among their enemies,) then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Whoso is on Jehovah's side, let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith Jehovah, the GOD of Israel, Put ye every man his sword upon his thigh, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. And Moses said, Consecrate yourselves to-day to Jehovah, yea, every man against his son, and against his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.” (ASV)

“And Moses seeth the people that it is unbridled, for Aaron hath made it unbridled for contempt among its withstanders, and Moses standeth in the gate of the camp, and saith, Who is for Jehovah? --unto me! and all the sons of Levi are gathered unto him; and he saith to them, Thus said Jehovah, GOD of Israel, Put each his sword by his thigh, pass over and turn back from gate to gate through the camp, and slay each his brother, and each his friend, and each his relation. And the sons of Levi do according to the word of Moses, and there fall of the people on that day about three thousand men, and Moses saith, Consecrate your hand to-day to Jehovah, for a man is against his son, and against his brother, so as to bring on you to-day a blessing.” (YLT)

Verse twenty-five shows a principle that everyone trying to obey GOD must understand. When GOD's people abandon the practices of true religion and accept false practices, they bring the reproach of the world on themselves and GOD. *The sins of saints cause unbelievers to blaspheme God*” (Fields, p. 725). Christians sometimes forget that unbelievers may not want to follow true religion, but they usually know enough about what Christians believe to mock them when they violate GOD's laws. *Who made GOD's people on this occasion to be objects of scorn?* Aaron. He did not exercise the control needed to maintain their sensibilities, so they got out of control.

When Moses arrived back at the camp, he saw that they were out of control; so, he stood outside of the camp (“**Moses stood in the gate**”). He called out a pertinent question for any age — “**Who is on the LORD'S side?**” The question is not, “*Who is on my side?*” “**unto me**” — Moses was simply saying, “If you are on the Lord's side, come to me.” Pay close attention to who responded to Moses' invitation — the Levites. It is possible that not all of the Levites placed themselves on the Lord's side. One of them had joined, apparently, wholeheartedly in this idolatry — Aaron. Note an important lesson here; Aaron was the leader of the

Levites, but the Levites as a whole did not follow him no matter what he said or did. Moses next told these Levites who joined him to slay the rebellious people. Possibly some of them did not stop what they were doing. The text shows that about three thousand of those in rebellion were put to death. (Here, three thousand foes of righteousness died. On Pentecost, three thousand foes were conquered by the Gospel.)

“slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour” No fleshly ties, no friendships, were to stop these men from carrying out the command of GOD. Sometimes families are divided because of obedience or disobedience to GOD, and such was probably the case here. Notice the words of Jesus, because His followers all too often find themselves in the same position.

“Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law” (Luke 12:51-53).

“If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:26, emphasis added).

“He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me” (Matthew 10:37).

This writer has seen too many over the years who would not obey the Gospel because they knew it would cause problems in their physical family. Further, this writer has seen far too many who would compromise or simply refuse to obey GOD's commands because a family member or friend was involved — church discipline. This has been seen even among elderships.

There is one other thing this writer would like to emphasize. Moses gave everyone the opportunity to come back to GOD. All they had to do was walk across that line in the sand that he had figuratively drawn for them.

Verse twenty-nine offers a promise because of these Levites' obeying GOD's command. They had declared their allegiance to GOD (v. 26), obeyed His command to get rid of the leaders of this rebellion (v. 28), and now they were promised a blessing (v. 29). **What was the blessing?** The priesthood was theirs, in spite of Aaron's sin. Further, those who could not serve as priests were given the privilege of serving the priests in the

Tabernacle/Temple (Num. 3:6-9).

GOD does not command His people today to use physical violence against those who disobey, whether they are believers who have apostatized or unbelievers. Nevertheless, the warning is clear that a day of reckoning is coming — the judgment day. Those who refuse to obey Him in this life will rue the day they refused Him.

“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

Ex. 32:30-35 “And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, Mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.”

“And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto Jehovah; peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book. And now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, Mine angel shall go before thee; nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them. And Jehovah smote the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.” (ASV)

“And it cometh to pass, on the morrow, that Moses saith unto the people, Ye--ye have sinned a great sin, and now I go up unto Jehovah, if so be I atone for your sin. And Moses turneth back unto Jehovah, and saith, Oh this people hath sinned a great sin, that they make to themselves a god of gold; and now, if Thou takest away their sin--and if not--blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written. And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Whoso hath sinned against Me--I blot him

out of My book; and now, go, lead the people whithersoever I have spoken to thee of; lo, My messenger goeth before thee, and in the day of my charging--then I have charged upon them their sin. And Jehovah plagueth the people, because they made the calf which Aaron made.” (YLT)

Moses reiterated the greatness of their sin and told the people that he would speak to GOD. Further, Moses was going to see if he could make an atonement for their great sin. When Moses spoke to GOD, note what he said — **“this people have sinned a great sin.”** Unlike Aaron, he did not try to make excuses for their transgression (**“thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief”**). Moses simply stated the obvious. It should also be noted that this is the third time in this chapter that it is said that they committed a **“great sin”** (vv. 21, 30, 31). This shows how bad idolatry is in the eyes of GOD.

“if Thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which thou hast written” The first thing to notice is that Moses pled for Israel's sin to be forgiven. The second thing is that he offered himself in their place, i.e., that he would be blotted out of GOD's book of life. Like the Prophet Who would be like him, he was willing to give his life for the sins of the people. Moses was willing to be the atonement for their sin; but with all of his greatness, only Christ could fulfill that role. Look at another who was willing to lose his reward if his people could be saved.

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Romans 9:1-3).

What was GOD's answer to Moses' request? **“Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book”** GOD basically told Moses that He does not punish the innocent — only the guilty. Ezekiel was also told to speak about this aspect of GOD.

“Behold, all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die...The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezekiel 18:4, 20).

Note a very important principle which GOD lays before both Moses and Ezekiel. Only the one who has actually committed the sin is held as guilty. **Why is that important?** Because it shows that the doctrine that one is born in sin is absolutely false! **“The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father”** It cannot be more

clearly said than what GOD said.

“blot out of My book” In this passage is found, the first mention of a record book which GOD has. It will be mentioned many more times in the Scriptures. Yes, GOD is keeping a book, a record book. Ancient cities kept a register which had all of the names of its citizens in it. If the citizen lost his citizenship, or if he died, his name was erased (blotted) out of this record.

“In China the names of persons tried on criminal processes are written in two distinct books, called the book of life and the book of death; those acquitted, or not capitally convicted, are written in the former, those found guilty, in the latter. These are presented to the emperor, who has a right to erase any name from either” (JFB, p. 411).

On GOD’s judgment day, nobody wants to be found not written in GOD’s book of life. John was given a vision of His judgment day.

“I saw the dead, small and great, stand before GOD; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:12-15, emphasis added).

What is clearly seen is that the ancient ones had knowledge of a coming judgment. In fact, one could declare GOD unjust if He did not have a standard which man is to follow and warn him of the eternal consequences of not obeying that standard. Further, GOD would be unjust if He did not do what He said He would do.

In verse thirty-four, GOD told Moses to lead the people to the place of which He had told him. He further told Moses that he would send His **“Angel”** (messenger) to lead the way. Note that the translators capitalized the word **“Angel,”** which indicates that this messenger was Deity, i.e., the second person of the GODHEAD. Consider the last part of this verse, **“nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them.”** About three thousand had already died for their part (apparently the leadership) in the idol worship. Yet, GOD declared there would be more punishment ahead for their disobedience. What this teaches is that there are consequences for one’s actions. Just because one is forgiven of a sin does not mean that the consequences of that sin are taken away, too. A murderer may be forgiven of his sin against GOD (all sin is against GOD), but he will still have to endure prison, possibly for the rest of his life. The Israelites

were going to have to pay a price in this present world for their idolatry.

“And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made” Note that GOD followed through with His threat — they were **“plagued”** (*“smote”* – ASV). Threats of punishment which are never administered only cause more rebellion to law. GOD told them they would suffer for their worship of the golden calf, and he administered it. Society as a whole in America (2022) has seen the rise of crime, because criminals are being caught and released without consequences. All such does is embolden the criminal to increase his crimes in intensity. GOD does not approve!!!

Exodus Chapter Thirty-three

Ex. 33:1-3 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swore unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way.”

“And Jehovah spake unto Moses, Depart, go up hence, thou and the people that thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land of which I swore unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: and I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiffnecked people, lest I consume thee in the way.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah speaketh unto Moses, Go, ascend from this place, thou and the people, whom thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I have sworn to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, To thy seed I give it, (and I have sent before thee a messenger, and have cast out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite,) unto a land flowing with milk and honey, for I do not go up in thy midst, for thou art a stiff-necked people--lest I consume thee in the way.” (YLT)

GOD instructed Moses to go ahead and guide the people away from Sinai toward the land He had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 12:7; Psalm 105:9-12). Further, He promised to send a messenger before them. Another promise made is that GOD would drive the people of the land out so that He could put His own people in this land which overflowed with plenty. The phrase **“flowing with milk and honey”** is an interesting way to show that this was a rich land. Strong stated that **“flowing”** means *“to flow freely...also to overflow.”* But what do the words **“milk and honey”** show? If there were an abundance of milk, it meant that there were lots of cattle and goats. But there could not be many cattle, unless there were rich fields in which they ate. Further, the fields would need to be pollinated by bees, which then produced lots of honey.

Next, GOD told Moses something which would upset the people — “I will not go with you.” Then GOD gave Moses the reason He would not go with them — because He might destroy them. Apparently, GOD’s

anger over their idolatrous practices was not yet fully abated.

“Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation” (Exodus 32:10).

If GOD had stayed among the people, He might have destroyed them if they rebelled again. GOD's refusal to be among them actually protected them. He would still meet with Moses, but not in the camp. Moses would have to set his tabernacle up outside the camp, and GOD would meet him there (v. 7).

Ex. 33:4-11 “And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments. For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb. And Moses took the Tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the Tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp. And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the Tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the Tabernacle. And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the Tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the Tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the Tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tabernacle.”

“And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people; if I go up into the midst of thee for one moment, I shall consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments from mount Horeb onward. Now Moses used to take the tent and to pitch it without the camp, afar off from the camp; and he called it, The tent of meeting. And it came to

pass, that every one that sought Jehovah went out unto the tent of meeting, which was without the camp. And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the Tent, that all the people rose up, and stood, every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the Tent. And it came to pass, when Moses entered into the Tent, the pillar of cloud descended, and stood at the door of the Tent: and Jehovah spake with Moses. And all the people saw the pillar of cloud stand at the door of the Tent: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door. And Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his minister Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tent.” (ASV)

“And the people hear this sad thing, and mourn; and none put his ornaments on him. And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Say unto the sons of Israel, Ye are a stiff-necked people; one moment--I come up into thy midst, and have consumed thee; and now, put down thine ornaments from off thee, and I know what I do to thee; and the sons of Israel take off their ornaments at mount Horeb. And Moses taketh the tent, and hath stretched it out at the outside of the camp, afar off from the camp, and hath called it, Tent of Meeting; and it hath come to pass, every one seeking Jehovah goeth out unto the tent of meeting, which is at the outside of the camp. And it hath come to pass, at the going out of Moses unto the tent, all the people rise, and have stood, each at the opening of his tent, and have looked expectingly after Moses, until his going into the tent. And it hath come to pass, at the going in of Moses to the tent, the pillar of the cloud cometh down, and hath stood at the opening of the tent, and He hath spoken with Moses; and all the people have seen the pillar of the cloud standing at the opening of the tent, and all the people have risen and bowed themselves, each at the opening of his tent. And Jehovah hath spoken unto Moses face unto face, as a man speaketh unto his friend; and he hath turned back unto the camp, and his minister Joshua, son of Nun, a youth, departeth not out of the tent.” (YLT)

Verse four shows what they did — they put their ornaments off. Verses five and six show why they were not wearing them. GOD had commanded them not to wear them. Thus, verses five and six are a parenthetical statement showing why they acted as they did. Coffman and some of the other commentators believe they were instructed to get rid of them permanently. **But if they did that, where would they get the gold for all of the things in the Tabernacle when it was built?**

Why were they to put off these ornaments? Some believe they were images or amulets of false gods, as in Genesis 35:4. Fields believed this was the first sign of mourning over their transgressions. An example would be when the people of Nineveh heard Jonah’s message, believed it, and repented. **What did they do to show**

their repentance? They exchanged their normal clothing for sackcloth and ashes.

“So the people of Nineveh believed GOD, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes” (Jonah 3:5-6).

The **“tabernacle”** Moses took and set up outside the camp was not **“the Tabernacle.”** There are four reasons for thinking this: (1) the Tabernacle had not been set up yet, according to the time frame (Num. 2:1-2), (2) the Septuagint reads *“And Moses took his tabernacle...”* (3) **“the Tabernacle”** was to be set up in the center of the camp, and (4) Joshua, a non-Levite remained in the tent after Moses left it. Moses did not simply take his tabernacle outside the camp. He took it way outside the camp.

GOD would no longer be in the midst of Israel. His glory would no longer be easily accessible to them. When Moses went out to his tent (the tent of meeting), then the presence of GOD descended (**“cloudy pillar”**) and stood at the door. Notice the significance of this. **Where is Aaron?** Moses is meeting GOD to speak with him, not Aaron. It is Moses’ servant, Joshua, who remains in the tent. The views given of Joshua in this book show why he was chosen to succeed Moses.

When Moses went out to the tent to meet with GOD, the people gathered outside the doors of their tents. **Why?** They knew Moses was going to talk with GOD. Further, they used this as a time to bow down before the **“cloudy pillar,”** which represented GOD, and they worshiped. Until the Tabernacle was set up, this tent of Moses was the place where Israel could meet GOD.

“the LORD spake unto Moses face to face” The term **“face to face”** is accommodative language which means they spoke directly to each other. What a contrast to the human prophets which came before and after Moses. All of those prophets were spoken to by GOD in *“dreams and visions.”* Interestingly, the prophet like unto Moses also spoke **“face to face”** with the Father.

“Hear now My words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all Mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against My servant Moses” (Numbers 12:6-8)?

Moses had a very close relationship with his GOD, as is verified by the phrase **“as a man speaketh unto his**

friend.”

Ex. 33:12-17 “And Moses said unto the LORD, See, Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with Me. Yet Thou hast said, I know Thee by name, and Thou hast also found grace in My sight. Now therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, shew me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight: and consider that this nation is Thy people. And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? is it not in that Thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name.”

“And Moses said unto Jehovah, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and Thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found favor in My sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found favor in Thy sight, show me now Thy ways, that I may know Thee, to the end that I may find favor in Thy sight: and consider that this nation is Thy people. And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein now shall it be known that I have found favor in Thy sight, I and Thy people? is it not in that Thou goest with us, so that we are separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth? And Jehovah said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found favor in My sight, and I know thee by name.” (ASV)

“And Moses saith unto Jehovah, See, Thou art saying unto me, Bring up this people, and Thou hast not caused me to know whom Thou dost send with me; and Thou hast said, I have known thee by name, and also thou hast found grace in Mine eyes. And now, if, I pray Thee, I have found grace in Thine eyes, cause me to know, I pray Thee, Thy way, and I know Thee, so that I find grace in Thine eyes, and consider that this nation is Thy people; and He saith, My presence doth go, and I have given rest to thee. And he saith unto Him, If Thy presence is not going--take us not up from this place; and in what is it known now, that I have found grace in Thine eyes--I and Thy people--is it not in Thy going with us? and we have been distinguished--I and Thy people--from all the people who are on the face of the ground. And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Even this thing which thou hast spoken I do; for thou hast found grace in Mine eyes, and I know thee by name.” (YLT)

Moses was pleading with GOD for a complete restoration of the covenant and the relationship between GOD and His people. It has already been noticed that GOD had withdrawn His presence from their midst. Until this point in time, GOD had shown no inclination that He would restore the relationship He previously held with Israel. Moses' goal was to restore that relationship, and he appeared to be willing to do whatever it took to regain that relationship for Israel (He already offered GOD his life for all of theirs.) In all of this He understood that, without GOD's help, they had no hope of success. How true.

“My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest” GOD would go with Moses. If He went with Moses, He went with Israel. Further, He reaffirmed that they would receive rest. Consider that GOD knows that the people are going to rebel again in such a way that that entire generation would have to die in the wilderness. Basically, GOD was renewing the covenant with Moses that had originally been given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Also, GOD was, in effect, stating that He would protect them from their enemies.

The admission in verse fifteen is striking. Moses was stating that the wilderness of Sinai was better with GOD than being in the promised land without Him. This is true in every area of life. Anything one may have, any position he may gain, is extremely empty if GOD is not with him. It is better to have little or nothing with GOD than it is to have all of this world's goods and pleasures without Him.

“For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight?” Moses was asking GOD for something that could absolutely show that GOD was with them. GOD promised to go with them, and His being with them was what separated them from all the other people of the earth. **What caused GOD to be with them?** He had demonstrated to them in a very forceful way that He would not be with them unless they were obedient to Him. This is a valuable lesson for all to learn. No matter how one may claim that GOD is with him, if he is not striving to be what GOD wants him to be — GOD is not with Him. GOD has always required His people to be separate from the world. That does not mean that one has to leave this world or isolate himself from the world. It means that one must not do those things which displease GOD.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord

Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:17-18, emphasis added).

Christians can attain this status of being GOD's children by following the example of Jesus.

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter 2:21-23, emphasis added).

The world will scorn those who refuse to join in its sins, but GOD will bless His faithful children.

Ex. 33:18-23 "And he said, I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory. And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And He said, Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by: And I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts: but My face shall not be seen."

"And he said, Show me, I pray Thee, Thy glory. And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see My face; for man shall not see Me and live. and Jehovah said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon the rock: and it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand until I have passed by: and I will take away My hand, and thou shalt see My back; but My face shall not be seen." (ASV)

"And he saith, Shew me, I pray Thee, Thine honour; and He saith, I cause all My goodness to pass before thy face, and have called concerning the Name of Jehovah before thee, and favoured him whom I favour, and loved him whom I love. He saith also, Thou art unable to see My face, for man doth not see Me, and live; Jehovah also saith, Lo, a place is by Me, and thou hast stood on the rock, and it hath come to pass, in the passing by of Mine honour, that I have set thee in a cleft of the rock, and spread out My hands over thee, until My passing by, and I have turned aside My hands, and thou hast seen My back parts, and My face is not seen." (YLT)

It is abundantly obvious that Moses was allowed to see what no other human being had ever seen or would see until eternity. When Jesus told Thomas, for

example, that in seeing Himself, he had seen the Father, Thomas did not see the Father as Moses saw Him. Thomas saw a representation of what the Father was in Jesus.

“will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy” Moses, as great as he was, as faithful as he was, had not earned GOD’s graciousness or mercy on this occasion. GOD let Moses see this limited view of His glory based solely upon His undisputed and sovereign will. By His sovereign will, GOD granted Moses’ request, which would give Moses the assurance that GOD would be with them as they continued their journey. Again, GOD did not have to do anything to assure Moses except give him His word. This shows the tremendous growth of Moses from when he was first seen and the friend-to-friend relationship that he had with GOD.

“God’s blessings throughout history have always been related to and consistent with the lives and character of those whom he blessed” (Coffman, p. 463).

When GOD determines to show His grace upon man, to show His mercy, there is no room to question Him. **HE IS GOD!!!**

In verses twenty-one through twenty-three, GOD told Moses how He was going to show him His glory. Recall that, if any man saw GOD’s face, he would die. **How could GOD show Moses His glory without Moses’ dying?** As usual, as in all things, GOD had the answer. He would place Moses in a cleft of a rock, place His hand over the cleft to prevent Moses from seeing Him as He passed by, and then take away His hand so Moses could see His back. Fields made this interesting observation about this event.

“It would be like seeing the sun by seeing its afterglow just after it set; or seeing a ship by the magnitude of the wake it left behind. There is no other way man can behold God” (p. 745).

Cole also had an interesting observation here, as quoted by Roper.

“In vivid pictorial language, the passage says that man may see only where God has passed by (verses 22, 23) and so know Him by His past doings and acts” (p. 549).

Exodus Chapter Thirty-four

Ex. 34:1-4 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to Me in the top of the mount. And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount. And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tables, which thou brakest. And be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to Me on the top of the mount. And no man shall come up with thee; neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount. And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as Jehovah had commanded him, and took in his hand two tables of stone.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Hew for thyself two tables of stone like the first, and I have written on the tables the words which were on the first tables which thou hast broken; and be prepared at morning, and thou hast come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and hast stood before Me there, on the top of the mount, and no man cometh up with thee, and also no man is seen in all the mount, also the flock and the herd do not feed over-against that mount. And he heweth two tables of stone like the first, and Moses riseth early in the morning, and goeth up unto mount Sinai, as Jehovah commanded him, and he taketh in his hand two tables of stone.” (YLT)

Some believe that there is a mild rebuke of Moses in this verse: *“I gave you those tablets, and what did you do with them — you broke them.”* One is reminded that GOD did not give them new laws at this time. Many today would probably say GOD’s laws are too hard to follow and ask Him to water them down. GOD gave Moses and His people the same words He had given them before. GOD’s word does not change because of what man may do them. Many today water down GOD’s words in their pretend bibles and think He will accept such, but He will not. Moses’ actions in breaking the tablets were symbolical of the fact that Israel had broken the covenant. Now GOD renewed the covenant, with

the same words. It also seems evident to this writer that GOD wanted/wants His words written down.

Note that GOD again gave Moses specific instructions as to what he was to do: (1) make two new tablets, (2) come to the top of the mountain in the morning, (3) come alone, (4) no other man allowed on the mountain while Moses was there with GOD, and (5) animals not to come near the mountain. This reminds one that GOD has always given specific instructions to man and expects man to follow them to the letter.

“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18).

GOD’s law is not given as generalized concepts which He then allows man to flesh out.

Verse four shows that Moses did exactly as he was commanded to do. No wonder GOD loved Moses and loves those in any age who do their best to obey Him.

Ex. 34:5-8 “And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.”

“And Jehovah descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of Jehovah. And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a GOD merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth, keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah cometh down in a cloud, and stationeth Himself with him there, and calleth in the Name of Jehovah, and Jehovah passeth over before his face, and calleth: Jehovah, Jehovah GOD, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in kindness and truth, keeping kindness for thousands, taking away iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and not entirely acquitting, charging iniquity of fathers on children, and on children's children, on a third generation, and on a fourth. And Moses hasteth, and boweth to the earth, and doth obeisance,” (YLT)

Moses had asked GOD to show him His glory (33:18), and GOD promised that He would. When Moses took the blank tablets and ascended back up the mountain, the first thing GOD did was fulfill that promise. He descended in the cloud, as before, and **“stood”** with Moses.

“the LORD passed by before him” In the previous chapter, GOD prepared Moses for the event recorded here. It is now recorded that GOD did indeed allow Moses to see His glory, just as GOD had revealed it would happen, but the details are not repeated.

In verses six and seven, GOD made Himself known to Moses, again, as requested and promised. As He did so, He told Moses, **“The LORD, The LORD GOD.”** He proclaimed His exalted name to Moses: yehovah, **“the existing One”** (BDB), the self-existent One. GOD next listed six clear attributes He held.

1. Merciful (compassionate)
2. Gracious
3. Long-suffering
4. Abundant lovingkindness (**“goodness”**)
5. Abounding in truth
6. Forgiving iniquity — transgressions, sins.

One of the major truths here is that GOD would remain faithful to the covenant He made with them, whether they or not did.

“will by no means clear the guilty” The guilty may only be cleared of their guilt as they are humbly willing to submit to GOD. Mercy belongs to those who will obey Him — not to those who refuse submitting to Him.

“visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation” GOD's statement shows that there are consequences for disobeying Him. Yes, He will forgive man of his sins, but though forgiven, the consequences still remain. Further, the consequences for sin may last for generations. Many times children suffer because of the sins of their fathers; but they are not guilty of the father's sins, unless they themselves commit the same sin. Look at the consequences of the original sins of Adam and Eve — once sin entered the world, it could not be removed. The consequences of sin are many; adultery, murder, theft, war, rape....

What was Moses' reaction to this display and proclamation of GOD? **“Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.”**

“What is worship other than a heartfelt acknowledgment of the greatness of the Lord” (Fields, p. 756)?

Roper stated that when one encountered GOD, there were only two proper responses: (1) humility, and (2)

worship (p. 558). Worship can only come from a heart which recognizes the all-powerful One for what He is and that he is nothing in comparison. GOD has all ability. Man is very limited. If such a recognition does not create humility, then nothing will.

Ex. 34:9 “And he said, If now I have found grace in Thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray Thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance.”

“And he said, If now I have found favor in Thy sight, O Lord, let the Lord, I pray Thee, go in the midst of us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.” (ASV)

“and saith, If, I pray Thee, I have found grace in Thine eyes, O my Lord, let my Lord, I pray Thee, go in our midst (for it is a stiff-necked people), and thou hast forgiven our iniquity and our sin, and hast inherited us.” (YLT)

After seeing the glory of GOD pass by, and upon hearing GOD’s pronouncement, Moses spoke again. Because of their great sin, GOD had proclaimed that He would not go up among them. Moses now pleaded with GOD to change His mind about that, too. GOD had proclaimed His forgiveness for the Israelites, so Moses took advantage of this opportunity to **BEG** GOD to go up in their midst as He had done before. Moses had not committed the great sin of the people, but his humility recognized that he was not perfect, so he included himself with the people.

“take us for Thine inheritance” As pointed out earlier in this study, Moses did not offer excuses for their sins. He simply stated the obvious — they had been stiffnecked. Now Moses asked GOD to *“to take possession”* (BDB) of them. These are words of submission. Moses did not demand, *“Give us our inheritance!”* He humbly asked, *“Take us as your possession and do with your people as you will!”*

Ex. 34:10-13 “And He said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee. Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a

covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves:"

"And He said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been wrought in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of Jehovah; for it is a terrible thing that I do with thee. Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: but ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and ye shall cut down their Asherim;" (ASV)

"And He saith, Lo, I am making a covenant: before all thy people I do wonders, which have not been done in all the earth, or in any nation, and all the people in whose midst thou art have seen the work of Jehovah, for it is fearful that which I am doing with thee. Observe for thyself that which I am commanding thee to-day: lo, I am casting out from before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite; take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitant of the land into which thou art going, lest it become a snare in thy midst; for their altars ye break down, and their standing pillars ye shiver, and its shrines ye cut down;" (YLT)

"Behold, I make a covenant" What is now seen, since Israel broke the covenant, is a renewal of the covenant. This covenant would be in effect until Christ came, giving His new law to mankind under the Christian dispensation.

"I will do marvels" To do **"marvels"** (pala) was to do that which was **"extraordinary"** and **"difficult"** (BDB). These marvels were so difficult, in fact, that only an all-powerful GOD could do them. Consider before whom GOD was going to do these marvels. **"before all thy people"** Moses' people, the Israelites. **What could be as difficult or more extraordinary than what they had already seen?** The ten plagues, deliverance at the Red Sea, the manna, the display of GOD at Mount Sinai. GOD was telling Moses that He had more things in store for them that they had not seen. A sampling of these things might be the fact that, in their wandering for forty years, their clothes and shoes would not wear out. This author's wife would tell you that she never saw a pair of his athletic shoes last more than about nine months – tops. It would have been amazing to her for him to have a pair last two years, much less forty years. Looking ahead even more, there would be the way they crossed the Jordan River and none of their enemies attacked

them, the fall of Jericho, and the list could continue for pages. **What would GOD do with them?**

“all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee” Note carefully not what GOD would do to them, but with them. There are two possible thoughts here: (1) what GOD would do by using them as His instrument, and (2) what GOD would do beside (along with) them. This writer believes, looking ahead, that both are in play. This writer also believes that this is not talking about the time they spent in the wilderness, but rather the conquering of Canaan. GOD said that what He would do would be a **“terrible thing.”**

“terrible thing” — yare — “to fear, revere, be afraid” (BDB); “to frighten” (Strong).

What GOD was going to do was so extraordinary that it would cause great fear among the people of the land. The proper fear of GOD is the beginning of true knowledge.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverb 1:7).

It led Abraham to offer his son to GOD,

“And He said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest GOD, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me” (Genesis 22:12).

It caused people to keep GOD’s laws.

“That thou mightest fear the LORD thy GOD, to keep all His statutes and His commandments” (Deuteronomy 6:2).

It caused people to respect and reverence GOD.

“Ye shall keep My sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:30; 26:2).

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD” (Hebrews 10:31).

GOD said that He would drive out the people who inhabited the land of Canaan (v. 11), but He also inserted a condition for what He would do. **“Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest”** They were not to make any covenants (beriyth — “*covenant, alliance, pledge*” — BDB) with the inhabitants of the land.

Why not?

“lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee” A snare is an instrument of death. One snares an animal in order to kill and eat it. GOD was saying that, if they made treaties with these people, if they compromised with these people, it would lead to their destruction. There can be no treaties, no compromises, with evil!

“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11).

How were the Israelites to reprove the works of the

Canaanites?

“ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves” They were to **DESTROY** all of the altars, their idols, and their places of worship. Why were all of these places and things to be destroyed? So that GOD’s people would not be deceived into worshiping these false gods, would not be compromised into adopting their false practices of worship when they worshiped GOD. Bringing this into the Christian era, a Christian is also to destroy the worship of any god that is not GOD in his life. It is not to be done by physically destroying their worship places and, in some cases, the handmade idols of their religions. Nevertheless, these ideas and religions must be fought against and destroyed. How? Through the armor and weapon GOD has given him! Nothing else will accomplish the task GOD has set before a Christian.

“We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth (The Gospel – RK), and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of GOD: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel”
(Ephesians 6:12-19, emphasis added).

In verse thirteen, the ASV reads, *“but ye shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars, and shall cut down their Asherim.”* In a footnote in the ASV, it states the following about the Asherim.

“Probably the wooden symbols of a goddess Asherah.”

“Asherim is the plural, the name of a Syrian-Canaanite goddess of fertility. She was the wife of the war-god Asir. The symbols of this goddess, made frequently of green trees, that being the type that Manasseh introduced into God’s temple at Jerusalem (2 Kings 21:3, 7). And also of carved posts, ‘wooden poles made in the shape of the male sex organ,’ in time, came to be called ‘the Asherim’” (Coffman, p. 470).

GOD next told Moses and the Israelites more about why they were to destroy the objects and places of false worship.

Ex. 34:14-17 “For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, Whose name is Jealous, is a jealous

GOD: Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods."

"for thou shalt worship no other god: for Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous GOD: lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot after their gods, and sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee and thou eat of his sacrifice; and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters play the harlot after their gods, and make thy sons play the harlot after their gods. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods." (ASV)

"for ye do not bow yourselves to another god--for Jehovah, whose name is Zealous, is a zealous GOD. Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitant of the land, and they have gone a-whoring after their gods, and have sacrificed to their gods, and one hath called to thee, and thou hast eaten of his sacrifice, and thou hast taken of their daughters to thy sons, and their daughters have gone a-whoring after their gods, and have caused thy sons to go a-whoring after their gods; a molten god thou dost not make to thyself." (YLT)

"a jealous GOD" This writer remembers as a boy being taught that jealousy is wrong, a sin. But GOD is referred to as a **"jealous GOD;"** therefore, jealousy cannot always be wrong.

"jealous" — qanna — *"an adjective meaning jealous. This word comes from the verb qana, meaning to be jealous or zealous. In every instance of this word, it is used to describe the character of the Lord. He us a jealous God who will not tolerate the worship of other gods. This word is always used to describe God's attitude toward the worship of false gods, which arouses His jealousy and anger in judgment against the idol worshipers"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1000).

From the definition above, it should be considered that GOD is not jealous in the way people normally use the word today. He does not exhibit the green eyed monster which is so commonly thought of and acted upon. His jealousy is not without merit, for it is an attitude which says, *"I will not tolerate any rival for ones affections."* "Friend, if you do not feel that way about your mate, then there is something wrong with your professed love for them."

"It ("jealous," RK) expresses none of the pettiness that is sometimes associated with jealousy, but means to burn with zeal, or be provoked to wrath" (Fields, p. 758).

What is it that excites GOD's jealousy (zealousness)?
Devotion which belongs to Himself which is instead claimed and given to gods which be no gods.

“For the LORD thy GOD is a consuming fire, even a jealous GOD...(For the LORD thy GOD is a jealous GOD among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy GOD be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 4:24; 6:15).

“Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land” Why were the Israelites not to make a covenant with the people of Canaan? It was to keep them from adopting and following the gods of these people. **Why does GOD give Israel so many warnings about following these imaginary gods?** As evidenced at Sinai, the people had been conditioned to some degree in Egypt to accept these false gods. There, when they thought they had lost their leader, they quickly adopted the golden calf for the purpose of worshiping it.

What kind of covenants in particular is the present context speaking about? He was speaking about the covenant of marriage. True, a “peace treaty” was also a covenant in which they were not to engage. They were not to intermarry with the people of the land. Everyone who has ever been married understands that, when two people marry, there are often many compromises which one must make to have a harmonious marriage. Oftentimes, this writer has observed people of different religions marrying, and then one or the other adopts the religion of the other to maintain peace. GOD warns His people never, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER to compromise their faith in Him.

How does GOD view His people when they involve themselves in idol worship? “they go a whoring after their gods” The ASV reads, *“play the harlot.”* Another, more plain, way of saying it is, *“They act like a prostitute.”* GOD often portrays His people as being in a marriage relationship with Himself in both the Old and New Testaments. His people are His bride and are expected to maintain the purity of the marriage relationship with Him.

“For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The GOD of the whole earth shall He be called” (Isaiah 54:5).

“Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 31:32).

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the saviour of the body...I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Ephesians 5:23, 32).

Consider the aspects of harlotry (prostituting one's self) for a moment. **What does such a person do?** He

sells himself for some benefit, whether real or imagined. Years ago, when this writer was taking classes at the Alabama Christian School of Religion, he was assigned a topic for a paper he was to write. The subject given him was the religion of the Babylonians. As he did his research, he was stunned to discover that the participants of Babylon religions often were engaged in orgies as service to their gods. Further, he also discovered that every woman in the kingdom had to offer herself as a temple prostitute once in her life to their primary god and it could not be with their husband (he could not pay her).

“play the harlot with their gods. This expression refers primarily to the spiritual adultery of forsaking the Lord, Israel’s true ‘husband,’ and going after ‘lovers,’ or false gods (Ezek. 16; Hos. 2). However, sexual activities were often part of the religious ceremonies of the notoriously promiscuous pagan peoples” (Roper, p. 560).

This paragraph ends with a repeated warning about serving the gods of the nations. **“Thou shalt make thee no molten gods”** Note that it appears that it was not enough to warn them about thinking about worship, or going to some place and bowing down to some so-called god. They were warned not to make **“molten”** images, some of which would have been carried around by the individual as amulets. One remembers Rachel’s hiding such items from her father and also the silversmiths of Paul’s day. Simply put, they were not to make manufactured items having anything to do with false religion. This was a common practice of those times and is often done superstitiously today by pagans, and even by some who profess themselves to be Christians, as if simply having these items does something for them or protects them.

Ex. 34:18-20 “The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. All that openeth the matrix is Mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male. But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before Me empty.”

“The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month Abib; for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. All that openeth the womb is Mine; and all thy cattle that is male, the firstlings of cow and sheep. And the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and

if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break its neck. All the first-born of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before Me empty.” (ASV)

“The feast of unleavened things thou dost keep; seven days thou dost eat unleavened things, as I have commanded thee, at an appointed time, the month of Abib: for in the month of Abib thou didst come out from Egypt. All opening a womb are Mine, and every firstling of thy cattle born a male, ox or sheep; and the firstling of an ass thou dost ransom with a lamb; and if thou dost not ransom, then thou hast beheaded it; every first-born of thy sons thou dost ransom, and they do not appear before Me empty.” (YLT)

The feast of unleavened bread coincided with the feast of Passover. The feast was to be typified by eating unleavened bread (bread without yeast) to remind the Israelites of their deliverance from Egypt. It was also to remind them that they had not had time to prepare food for themselves as they hurriedly left. More details about this feast may be seen in Exodus chapter twelve.

“That these verses indeed are a reference to the Passover is certain, because (1) the mention of the month Abib (Nisan), (2) the unleavened bread, (3) the sanctity of the firstborn, and (4) their coming out of Egypt, absolutely forbid that they could apply to anything else” (Coffman, p. 472).

Why this short mention of this feast at this time? Could it have to do with the fact that they had just recently violated GOD’s laws for their worship — the golden calf? Were they approaching the anniversary of it?

The **“matrix”** is the womb. All that were firstborn belonged to the Lord, and a substitution sacrifice had to be made for them. This should not seem strange because all the earth belongs to GOD, of which this writer believes He was reminding them. The firstborn of the animals were to be sacrificed to GOD, and the first born of human beings were to be redeemed. A purchase price was made for them. The context shows that it was not every firstborn which was to be offered, but only the males — both animal and human. Further, the firstling of an ass, since it was an unclean animal, could not be sacrificed. A lamb was to be substituted for it, but if the owner could not or would not offer this substitution, then it was to be killed.

“none shall appear before Me empty” At these feasts times, the people were warned that they must not appear before GOD, to worship Him, without an offering.

Ex. 34:21-24 **“Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest. And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest,**

and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord GOD, the GOD of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy GOD thrice in the year."

"Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in plowing time and in harvest thou shalt rest. And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, even of the first-fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before the Lord Jehovah, the GOD of Israel. For I will cast out nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou goest up to appear before Jehovah thy GOD three times in the year." (ASV)

"Six days thou dost work, and on the seventh day thou dost rest; in ploughing-time and in harvest thou dost rest. And a feast of weeks thou dost observe for thyself; first-fruits of wheat-harvest; and the feast of in-gathering, at the revolution of the year. Three times in a year do all thy males appear before the Lord Jehovah, GOD of Israel; for I dispossess nations from before thee, and have enlarged thy border, and no man doth desire thy land in thy going up to appear before Jehovah thy GOD three times in a year." (YLT)

The sabbath observance is again considered, with emphasis on the fact that no excuse could be given for not observing it. GOD emphasized this by speaking about two times of the year which were/are critical for farmers — *"plowing time and in harvest"* (ASV). This would take faith on their part to interrupt these activities to observe the sabbath.

Verse twenty-two repeats GOD's command for His people to keep two other assigned feasts — **"feast of weeks"** (Pentecost) and **"feast of ingathering"** (Tabernacles). Details of these feasts are dealt with in other sections.

"year's end" This phrase literally means *"revolution of the year."* This is *"a scientific reference to the circling of the earth around the sun in its annual orbit, producing the years"* (Coffman, p. 473).

Verses twenty-three and twenty-four show GOD's making it mandatory for all males to attend three feasts per year (Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles). This further implies that there was to be a central gathering point. This point would be wherever the ark was — at first the Tabernacle, and later the Temple. Some might have been concerned about what would happen to "their" property and possessions while they were away from home. GOD gave them an assurance that, during these times, no one (enemy) would encroach on their

land nor take their goods. This writer assumes that this would include an Israelite neighbor who might attempt to take his goods. GOD said He would cast out the nations, and He could keep them from coming back to harm them during these feasts.

Ex. 34:25-26 “Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning. The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the LORD thy GOD. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.”

“Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning. The first of the first-fruits of thy ground thou shalt bring unto the house of Jehovah thy GOD. Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk.” (ASV)

“Thou dost not slaughter with a fermented thing the blood of My sacrifice; and the sacrifice of the feast of the passover doth not remain till morning: the first of the first-fruits of the land thou dost bring into the house of Jehovah thy GOD; thou dost not boil a kid in its mother's milk.” (YLT)

Nothing new is given in these passages with regard to their subjects. GOD is reminding the people of their obligations to Him. This also shows GOD's recognition of the forgetfulness of His creatures, who need to be reminded constantly of their obligations.

“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour”
(2 Peter 3:1-2).

Ex. 34:27-28 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And He wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.”

“And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with Jehovah forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.” (ASV)

“And Jehovah saith unto Moses, Write for thyself these words, for, according to the tenor of these words I have made with thee a covenant, and with Israel. And he is there with Jehovah forty days and forty nights; bread he hath not eaten, and water

he hath not drunk; and he writeth on the tables the matters of the covenant--the ten matters." (YLT)

"Write thou these words" What words was Moses supposed to write? If one only had these two verses to go by, he would declare it was the ten words, i.e., the Ten Commandments. The simple truth is that Moses was not commanded to write the ten words on this second set of tablets.

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest" (Exodus 34:1, emphasis added).

GOD said He would write the words on these tablets which had been written on the first set. **So what was Moses commanded to write?** Moses was commanded to write the laws which are often referred to as the "ceremonial laws," i.e., the rest of the sundry laws GOD gave him.

"Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto Me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood. And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark. And I made an ark of shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand. And He wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me" (Deuteronomy 10:1-4, emphasis added).

Just like on the first occasion, Moses spent **"forty days and forty nights"** with the Lord. Further, the text indicates that, during this time he fasted — eating and drinking **NOTHING**.

"When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water" (Deuteronomy 9:9).

"He wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments" What did GOD write on these tablets? **"the covenant"** What was the covenant? **"the ten commandments"** **This is very important to observe!** Why? There are those who say that the ceremonial laws were done away with, but the Ten Commandments are still in effect. The Bible clearly shows that the first covenant has been done away with, i.e., replaced by another.

"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, (What letter killeth? RK) but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could

not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness (Christ's law, RK) exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth (What glory excelleth? The Law of Christ, RK). For if that which is done away (What was done away? The Law of Moses. RK) was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished (What was abolished? The law represented by Moses, RK)" (2 Cor. 3:6-13, emphasis added). GOD said this covenant (Ten Commandments) would be replaced.

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 31:31-32, emphasis added).

When was this covenant given to Israel when GOD brought them out of Egypt to be replaced? With what was it to be replaced? GOD does not leave one to guess.

"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a GOD, and they shall be to Me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Hebrews 8:7-13, emphasis added).

The old covenant (Law of Moses) passed away. It has been replaced with a better law than that given to the Israelites at Sinai. The old law passed away and was replaced with a law which had a better lawgiver than Moses — Christ. The whole book of Hebrews is about a comparison between the old covenant and the new

covenant, and it proclaims the new to be far superior to the old, where sins are forgiven and never remembered again.

Ex. 34:29-35 “And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while He talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai. And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face. But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.”

“And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of the testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone by reason of His speaking with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses spake to them. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that Jehovah had spoken with him in mount Sinai. And when Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But when Moses went in before Jehovah to speak with Him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.” (ASV)

“And it cometh to pass, when Moses is coming down from mount Sinai (and the two tables of the testimony are in the hand of Moses in his coming down from the mount), that Moses hath not known that the skin of his face hath shone in His speaking with him, and Aaron seeth--all the sons of Israel also--Moses, and lo, the skin of his face hath shone, and they are afraid of coming nigh unto him. And Moses calleth unto them, and Aaron and all the princes in the company return unto him, and Moses speaketh unto them; and afterwards

have all the sons of Israel come nigh, and he chargeth them with all that Jehovah hath spoken with him in mount Sinai. And Moses finisheth speaking with them, and putteth on his face a vail; and in the going in of Moses before Jehovah to speak with Him, he turneth aside the vail until his coming out; and he hath come out and hath spoken unto the sons of Israel that which he is commanded; and the sons of Israel have seen the face of Moses that the skin of the face of Moses hath shone, and Moses hath put back the vail on his face until his going in to speak with Him.” (YLT)

The two tables of stone are mentioned again. Deuteronomy 10:1-5 states that Moses made an ark of acacia wood in which to place the tablets. This seems to be a temporary storage place for them until the ark of the covenant was finished.

“the skin of his face shone” Moses did not realize that his face glowed. When he approached the people, they were afraid of him. This reminds this writer of a time in his life when he was preparing to go to the Memphis School of Preaching. He had a full beard and a mustache then and (since neither were allowed at Memphis at that time), he went into the bathroom and shaved them off. When he went into the living room, his two oldest children (3 years old and 1 year old at the time) were afraid of him. They recognized the voice but were confused as to who was standing before them. This may have been somewhat the situation faced by Moses at the time of this text.

Consider that Moses gave them **ALL** the words which GOD commanded him to give them. If all GOD gave him were the Ten Commandments, there would have been nothing for him to say — they could have read it. He spoke “words” to them in addition to the ten words.

The next six chapters are, a repetition of past instructions. There are some differences. For instance, *“the imperatives are changed to the declaratives, and the tenses from future to past”* (Coffman, p. 479). Considering this fact, the text will basically be presented, with a few notes where deemed appropriate.

Exodus Chapter Thirty-five

Ex. 35:1-3 “And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These are the words which the LORD hath commanded, that ye should do them. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.”

“And Moses assembled all the congregation of the children of Israel, and said unto them, These are the words which Jehovah hath commanded, that ye should do them. Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a sabbath of solemn rest to Jehovah: whosoever doeth any work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.” (ASV)

“And Moses assembleth all the company of the sons of Israel, and saith unto them, These are the things which Jehovah hath commanded--to do them: Six days is work done, and on the seventh day there is to you a holy day, a sabbath of rest to Jehovah; any who doeth work in it is put to death; ye do not burn a fire in any of your dwellings on the sabbath-day.” (YLT)

The sabbath day was to be a holy day of rest and worship. Anyone who performed any work on this day was to be put to death. An example is given: they were not even to kindle a fire (start a fire). This would have been one of the easiest acts of work in which one could have engaged. Of course, in their time, that meant that a meal could not be produced. Consider the Sabbatarian of today for a moment, who claims the sabbath must still be kept today. The modern equivalent would be that he could not turn on his stove. It should also be pointed out that to keep the sabbath as GOD decreed, it meant that one had to make the proper animal sacrifices. This writer has never seen or heard of Sabbatharians keeping that part of the sabbath.

Ex. 35:4-9 “And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD commanded, saying, Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass, And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, And oil for the light, and spices for anointing oil, and for the sweet

incense, And onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate.”

“And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which Jehovah commanded, saying, Take ye from among you an offering unto Jehovah; whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, Jehovah's offering: gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and sealskins, and acacia wood, and oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, and onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate.” (ASV)

“And Moses speaketh unto all the company of the sons of Israel, saying, This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded, saying, Take ye from among you a heave-offering to Jehovah; every one whose heart is willing doth bring it, --the heave-offering of Jehovah, --gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins made red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, and oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil, and for the spice perfume, and shoham stones, and stones for settings, for an ephod, and for a breastplate.” (YLT)

The items listed here were those needed for the building of the Tabernacle and the making of the High Priest's garments. The thing most worthy of note here is that all of these items were to be given from **“a willing heart.”** Free-will offerings have always been the kind of giving which pleases GOD.

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for GOD loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

What is the secret of a willing heart in giving of one's material blessings?

“Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of GOD” (2 Corinthians 8:4-5, emphasis added).

Indeed, GOD commands one to give, but the amount one gives is left up to each individual. Nevertheless, one's love for GOD will be seen in what he gives.

Ex. 35:10-19 “And every wise hearted among you shall come, and make all that the LORD hath commanded; The Tabernacle, his tent, and his covering, his taches, and his boards, his bars, his pillars, and his sockets, The ark, and the staves thereof, with the mercy seat, and the vail of the covering, The table, and his staves, and all his vessels, and the shewbread, The candlestick also for the light, and his furniture, and his lamps, with

the oil for the light, And the incense altar, and his staves, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the door at the entering in of the Tabernacle, The altar of burnt offering, with his brasen grate, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot, The hangings of the court, his pillars, and their sockets, and the hanging for the door of the court, The pins of the Tabernacle, and the pins of the court, and their cords, The cloths of service, to do service in the Holy Place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office."

"And let every wise-hearted man among you come, and make all that Jehovah hath commanded: the Tabernacle, its tent, and its covering, its clasps, and its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; the ark, and the staves thereof, the mercy-seat, and the veil of the screen; the table, and its staves, and all its vessels, and the showbread; the candlestick also for the light, and its vessels, and its lamps, and the oil for the light; and the altar of incense, and its staves, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the screen for the door, at the door of the Tabernacle; the altar of burnt-offering, with its grating of brass, its staves, and all its vessels, the laver and its base; the hangings of the court, the pillars thereof, and their sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court; the pins of the Tabernacle, and the pins of the court, and their cords; the finely wrought garments, for ministering in the Holy Place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office." (ASV)

"And all the wise-hearted among you come in, and make all that Jehovah hath commanded: The Tabernacle, its tent, and its covering, its hooks, and its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets, The ark and its staves, the mercy-seat, and the vail of the covering, The table and its staves, and all its vessels, and the bread of the presence, And the candlestick for the light, and its vessels, and its lamps, and the oil for the light, And the altar of perfume, and its staves, and the anointing oil, and the spice perfume, and the covering of the opening at the opening of the Tabernacle, The altar of burnt-offering and the brazen grate which it hath, its staves, and all its vessels, the laver and its base, The hangings of the court, its pillars, and their sockets, and the covering of the gate of the court, The pins of the Tabernacle, and the pins of the court, and their cords, The coloured garments, to do service in the sanctuary, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons to act as priest in." (YLT)

These verses show a call for the skilled workers needed to build and furnish the Tabernacle. **Who was to build these things?** **"every wise hearted among you"** How were they to build and make the items required? **"make all that the LORD hath commanded"** Inclusive in this command was to make everything exactly as GOD required it to be. **Did these**

Hebrews build everything according to the pattern GOD delivered to Moses?

“Thus was all the work of the Tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they” (Exodus 39:32).

Ex. 35:20-29 “And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD'S offering to the work of the Tabernacle of the congregation, and for all His service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto the LORD. And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the LORD'S offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it. And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair. And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate; And spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.”

“And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and brought Jehovah's offering, for the work of the tent of meeting, and for all the service thereof, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought brooches, and ear-rings, and signet-rings, and armlets, all jewels of gold; even every man that offered an offering of gold unto Jehovah. And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and sealskins, brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought Jehovah's offering; and every man,

with whom was found acacia wood for any work of the service, brought it. And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, the blue, and the purple, the scarlet, and the fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun the goats' hair. And the rulers brought the onyx stones, and the stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate; and the spice, and the oil; for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. The children of Israel brought a freewill-offering unto Jehovah; every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all the work, which Jehovah had commanded to be made by Moses." (ASV)

"And all the company of the sons of Israel go out from the presence of Moses, and they come in--every man whom his heart hath lifted up, and every one whom his spirit hath made willing--they have brought in the heave-offering of Jehovah for the work of the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments. And they come in--the men with the women--every willing-hearted one--they have brought in nose-ring, and ear-ring, and seal-ring, and necklace, all golden goods, even every one who hath waved a wave-offering of gold to Jehovah. And every man with whom hath been found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins made red, and badgers' skins, have brought them in; every one lifting up a heave-offering of silver and brass have brought in the heave-offering of Jehovah; and every one with whom hath been found shittim wood for any work of the service brought it in. And every wise-hearted woman hath spun with her hands, and they bring in yarn, the blue, and the purple, the scarlet, and the linen; and all the women whose heart hath lifted them up in wisdom, have spun the goats' hair. And the princes have brought in the shoham stones, and the stones for settings, for the ephod, and for the breastplate, and the spices, and the oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the spice perfume; every man and woman (whom their heart hath made willing to bring in for all the work which Jehovah commanded to be done by the hand of Moses) of the sons of Israel brought in a willing-offering to Jehovah." (YLT)

"The gifts then were given willingly, voluntarily, cheerfully, prompted not by external pressure but by inner impulses" (Roper, p. 579).

Ex. 35:30-35 "And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; And He hath filled him with the spirit of GOD, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. And He hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath He filled with

wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.”

“And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, Jehovah hath called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And He hath filled him with the Spirit of GOD, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and to devise skilful works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of skilful workmanship. And He hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath He filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of workmanship, of the engraver, and of the skilful workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any workmanship, and of those that devise skilful works.” (ASV)

“And Moses saith unto the sons of Israel, See, Jehovah hath called by name Bezaleel, son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and He doth fill him with the Spirit of GOD, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all work, even to devise devices to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in graving of stones for settings, and in graving of wood to work in any work of design. And to direct He hath put in his heart, he and Aholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; He hath filled them with wisdom of heart to do every work, of engraver, and designer, and embroiderer (in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in linen), and weaver, who do any work, and of designers of designs.” (YLT)

GOD had told Moses who the men were who should oversee the construction of the Tabernacle, its furnishings and the priestly garments — Bezaleel and Aholiab. Further, the text notes that GOD filled them with His Spirit, so that they became skilled workman in many different disciplines. Also, He made them able teachers. These men were required to make sure that everything was done exactly as GOD commanded it through Moses.

Exodus Chapter Thirty-six

Ex. 36:1 “Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded.”

“And Bezalel and Oholiab shall work, and every wise-hearted man, in whom Jehovah hath put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all the work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that Jehovah hath commanded.” (ASV)

“And Bezaleel, and Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man, in whom Jehovah hath given wisdom and understanding to know to do every work of the service of the sanctuary, have done according to all that Jehovah commanded.” (YLT)

Bezaleel and Aholiab are again mentioned, along with all the wise men. The point is twofold: (1) the work was begun, and (2) it was to be done as GOD had directed. There would be no input by human beings as to how things were to be done. Everything was done to please GOD, not man (opposed to what is so often the case today).

Ex. 36:2-7 “And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it: And they received of Moses all the offering, which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it withal. And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning. And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made; And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.”

“And Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab, and every wise-hearted man, in whose heart Jehovah had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it: and they received of Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, wherewith to make it. And they brought yet unto him freewill-offerings every morning. And all the wise men,

that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they wrought. And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which Jehovah commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.” (ASV)

“And Moses calleth unto Bezaleel, and unto Aholiab, and unto every wise-hearted man in whose heart Jehovah hath given wisdom, every one whom his heart lifted up, to come near unto the work to do it. And they take from before Moses all the heave-offering which the sons of Israel have brought in for the work of the service of the sanctuary to do it; and still they have brought in unto him a willing-offering morning by morning. And all the wise men, who are doing all the work of the sanctuary, come each from his work which they are doing, and speak unto Moses, saying, The people are multiplying to bring in more than sufficient for the service of the work which Jehovah commanded to make. And Moses commandeth, and they cause a voice to pass over through the camp, saying, Let not man or woman make any more work for the heave-offering of the sanctuary; and the people are restrained from bringing, and the work hath been sufficient for them, for all the work, to do it, and to leave.” (YLT)

The workmen were appointed to begin the work, and the people brought their gifts of gratitude to them. But there was a problem. They were bringing too much. This author has never known of a congregation that had to be told not to bring anymore, i.e., there is too much already. Most elderships have to “beg” their members for funds to do some work, just to get enough for that work. The Lord’s people need to be reminded on a regular basis that what they have belongs to GOD.

Ex. 36:8-13 “And every wise hearted man among them that wrought the work of the Tabernacle made ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work made he them. The length of one curtain was twenty and eight cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: the curtains were all of one size. And he coupled the five curtains one unto another: and the other five curtains he coupled one unto another. And he made loops of blue on the edge of one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling: likewise he made in the uttermost side of another curtain, in the coupling of the second. Fifty loops made he in one curtain, and fifty loops made he in the edge of the curtain which was in the coupling of

the second: the loops held one curtain to another. And he made fifty taches of gold, and coupled the curtains one unto another with the taches: so it became one Tabernacle.”

“And all the wise-hearted men among them that wrought the work made the Tabernacle with ten curtains; of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubim, the work of the skilful workman, Bezalel made them. The length of each curtain was eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits: all the curtains had one measure. And he coupled five curtains one to another: and the other five curtains he coupled one to another. And he made loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling: likewise he made in the edge of the curtain that was outmost in the second coupling. Fifty loops made he in the one curtain, and fifty loops made he in the edge of the curtain that was in the second coupling: the loops were opposite one to another. And he made fifty clasps of gold, and coupled the curtains one to another with the clasps: so the Tabernacle was one.” (ASV)

“And all the wise-hearted ones among the doers of the work make the Tabernacle; ten curtains of twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubs, work of a designer, he hath made them. The length of the one curtain is eight and twenty by the cubit, and the breadth of the one curtain four by the cubit; one measure is to all the curtains. And he joineth the five curtains one unto another, and the other five curtains he hath joined one unto another; and he maketh loops of blue on the edge of the one curtain, at the end, in the joining; so he hath made in the edge of the outmost curtain, in the joining of the second; fifty loops he hath made in the one curtain, and fifty loops hath he made in the end of the curtain which is in the joining of the second; the loops are taking hold one on another. And he maketh fifty hooks of gold, and joineth the curtains one unto another by the hooks, and the Tabernacle is one.” (YLT)

These passages show the work being done on the Tabernacle and how it all fit together. It is remembered that the Tabernacle consisted of two compartments — the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place — **“it became one Tabernacle.”**

Ex. 36:14-19 “And he made curtains of goats' hair for the tent over the Tabernacle: eleven curtains he made them. The length of one curtain was thirty cubits, and four cubits was the breadth of one curtain: the eleven curtains were of one size. And he coupled five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves. And he made fifty loops upon the uttermost edge of the curtain in the coupling, and fifty loops made he upon the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second. And he made fifty taches of brass to couple the tent

together, that it might be one. And he made a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of badgers' skins above that.”

“And he made curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the Tabernacle: eleven curtains he made them. The length of each curtain was thirty cubits, and four cubits the breadth of each curtain: the eleven curtains had one measure. And he coupled five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves. And he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that was outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops made he upon the edge of the curtain which was outmost in the second coupling. And he made fifty clasps of brass to couple the tent together, that it might be one. And he made a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of sealskins above.” (ASV)

“And he maketh curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the Tabernacle; eleven curtains he hath made them; the length of the one curtain is thirty by the cubit, and the breadth of the one curtain is four cubits; one measure is to the eleven curtains; and he joineth the five curtains apart, and the six curtains apart. And he maketh fifty loops on the outer edge of the curtain, in the joining; and fifty loops he hath made on the edge of the curtain which is joining the second; and he maketh fifty hooks of brass to join the tent--to be one; and he maketh a covering for the tent of rams' skins made red, and a covering of badgers' skins above.” (YLT)

The Tabernacle was a tent, in and of itself, so that it could be moved from one place to another, as opposed to being a permanent building. From the description given, it is thought that there was a separate tent built over it. In Roper's commentary on Exodus, he has a picture of a Replica of the Tabernacle in Timna Park, Israel. This picture has been included at the end of this chapter. One should remember, as he views it, that it is what someone thinks it may have looked like. This author believes it is probably a close representation.

Ex. 36:20-30 “And he made boards for the Tabernacle of shittim wood, standing up. The length of a board was ten cubits, and the breadth of a board one cubit and a half. One board had two tenons, equally distant one from another: thus did he make for all the boards of the Tabernacle. And he made boards for the Tabernacle; twenty boards for the south side southward: And forty sockets of silver he made under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons. And for the other side of the Tabernacle, which is toward the north corner, he made twenty boards, And their forty sockets of silver; two

sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. And for the sides of the Tabernacle westward he made six boards. And two boards made he for the corners of the Tabernacle in the two sides. And they were coupled beneath, and coupled together at the head thereof, to one ring: thus he did to both of them in both the corners. And there were eight boards; and their sockets were sixteen sockets of silver, under every board two sockets.”

“And he made the boards for the Tabernacle, of acacia wood, standing up. Ten cubits was the length of a board, and a cubit and a half the breadth of each board. Each board had two tenons, joined one to another: thus did he make for all the boards of the Tabernacle. And he made the boards for the Tabernacle: twenty boards for the south side southward. And he made forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for its two tenons, and two sockets under another board for its two tenons. And for the second side of the Tabernacle, on the north side, he made twenty boards, and their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. And for the hinder part of the Tabernacle westward he made six boards. And two boards made he for the corners of the Tabernacle in the hinder part. And they were double beneath; and in like manner they were entire unto the top thereof unto one ring: thus he did to both of them in the two corners. And there were eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; under every board two sockets.” (ASV)

“And he maketh the boards for the Tabernacle of shittim wood, standing up; ten cubits is the length of the one board, and a cubit and a half the breadth of the one board; two handles are to the one board, joined one unto another; so he hath made for all the boards of the Tabernacle. And he maketh the boards for the Tabernacle; twenty boards for the south side southward; and forty sockets of silver he hath made under the twenty boards, two sockets under the one board for its two handles, and two sockets under the other board for its two handles. And for the second side of the Tabernacle, for the north side, he hath made twenty boards, and their forty sockets of silver, two sockets under the one board, and two sockets under the other board; and for the sides of the Tabernacle, westward, hath he made six boards; and two boards hath he made for the corners of the Tabernacle, in the two sides; and they have been twins below, and together they are twins at its head, at the one ring; so he hath done to both of them at the two corners; and there have been eight boards; and their sockets of silver are sixteen sockets, two sockets under the one board.” (YLT)

The description given here appears to be concerning the framework of the Tabernacle.

Ex. 36:31-34 “And he made bars of shittim wood; five for the boards of the one side of the

Tabernacle, And five bars for the boards of the other side of the Tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the Tabernacle for the sides westward. And he made the middle bar to shoot through the boards from the one end to the other. And he overlaid the boards with gold, and made their rings of gold to be places for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.”

“And he made bars of acacia wood; five for the boards of the one side of the Tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the other side of the Tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the Tabernacle for the hinder part westward. And he made the middle bar to pass through in the midst of the boards from the one end to the other. And he overlaid the boards with gold, and made their rings of gold for places for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.” (ASV)

“And he maketh bars of shittim wood, five for the boards of the one side of the Tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the second side of the Tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the Tabernacle, for the sides westward; and he maketh the middle bar to enter into the midst of the boards from end to end; and the boards he hath overlaid with gold, and their rings he hath made of gold, places for bars, and he overlayeth the bars with gold.” (YLT)

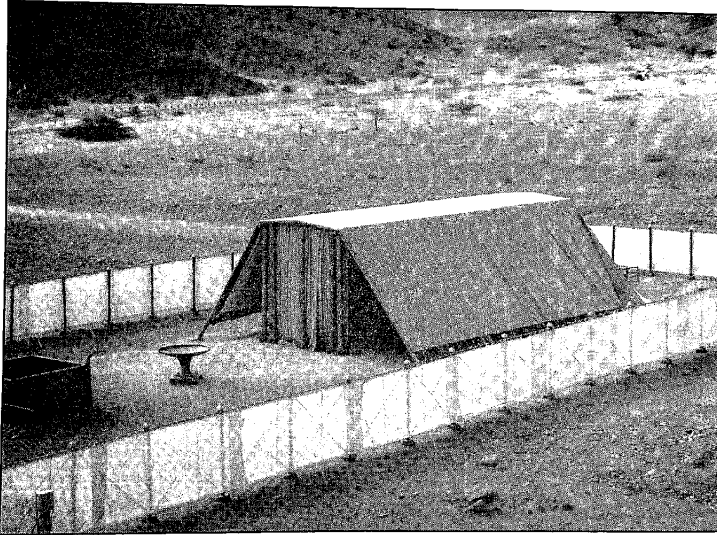
The description of the framework of the Tabernacle is continued. One should note the extensive use of gold in all of this. This structure would have been an amazing display of beauty and could have only come from the mind of GOD.

Ex. 36:35-38 “And he made a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: with cherubims made he it of cunning work. And he made thereunto four pillars of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold: their hooks were of gold; and he cast for them four sockets of silver. And he made an hanging for the Tabernacle door of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, of needlework; And the five pillars of it with their hooks: and he overlaid their chapiters and their fillets with gold: but their five sockets were of brass.”

“And he made the veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: with cherubim, the work of the skilful workman, made he it. And he made thereunto four pillars of acacia, and overlaid them with gold: their hooks were of gold; And he cast for them four sockets of silver. And he made a screen for the door of the Tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the embroiderer; and the five pillars of it with their hooks: and he overlaid their capitals and their fillets with gold; and their five sockets were of brass.” (ASV)

“And he maketh the vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen, work of a designer he hath made it, with cherubs; and he maketh for it four pillars of shittim wood, and overlayeth them with gold; their pegs are of gold; and he casteth for them four sockets of silver. And he maketh a covering for the opening of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen, work of an embroiderer, also its five pillars, and their pegs; and he overlaid their tops and their fillets with gold, and their five sockets are brass.” (YLT)

This chapter ends by giving a description of the work done on the veil which separated the two compartments of the Tabernacle. Also seen is the work done for what served as a door to the Holy Place.



Replica of the Tabernacle (Timna Park, Israel)

Exodus Chapter Thirty-seven

Ex. 37:1-9 “And Bezaleel made the ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half was the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it: And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about. And he cast for it four rings of gold, to be set by the four corners of it; even two rings upon the one side of it, and two rings upon the other side of it. And he made staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold. And he put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, to bear the ark. And he made the mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half was the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat; One cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the other end on that side: out of the mercy seat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy seat, with their faces one to another; even to the mercy seatward were the faces of the cherubims.”

“And Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood: two cubits and a half was the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it: and he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about. And he cast for it four rings of gold, in the four feet thereof; even two rings on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it. And he made staves of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold. And he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the ark, to bear the ark. And he made a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half was the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And he made two cherubim of gold; of beaten work made he them, at the two ends of the mercy-seat; one cherub at the one end, and one cherub at the other end: of one piece with the mercy-seat made he the cherubim at the two ends thereof. And the cherubim spread out their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, with their faces one to another; toward the mercy-seat were the faces of the cherubim.” (ASV)

“And Bezaleel maketh the ark of shittim wood, two cubits and a half its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height; and he overlayeth it with pure gold within and without, and maketh for it a wreath of gold round about; and he casteth for it four rings of gold, on its four feet, even two rings on its one side, and two rings on its second side; and he maketh staves of shittim wood, and overlayeth them with gold, and he bringeth in the staves into the rings, by the

sides of the ark, to bear the ark. And he maketh a mercy-seat of pure gold, two cubits and a half its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth; and he maketh two cherubs of gold, of beaten work he hath made them, at the two ends of the mercy-seat; one cherub at the end on this side, and one cherub at the end on that, out of the mercy-seat he hath made the cherubs, at its two ends; and the cherubs are spreading out wings on high, covering over the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces are one towards another; towards the mercy-seat have the faces of the cherubs been” (YLT)

This chapter begins with the making of the items which went into the Most Holy Place. From the description given here, it appears that the Mercy Seat and the two Cherubim were made out of a single chunk of gold — **“beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat.”** There is an alternate view expressed here — that the Mercy Seat was made from one solid piece of gold, and then the Cherubim were made of a separate one. For this to be the case, it would require the Cherubim to be united. It seems far more likely for the former to be the case.

Ex. 37:10-16 “And he made the table of shittim wood: two cubits was the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof: And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made thereunto a crown of gold round about. Also he made thereunto a border of an handbreadth round about; and made a crown of gold for the border thereof round about. And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings upon the four corners that were in the four feet thereof. Over against the border were the rings, the places for the staves to bear the table. And he made the staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold, to bear the table. And he made the vessels which were upon the table, his dishes, and his spoons, and his bowls, and his covers to cover withal, of pure gold.”

“And he made the table of acacia wood: two cubits was the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold, and made thereto a crown of gold round about. And he made unto it a border of a handbreadth round about, and made a golden crown to the border thereof round about. And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that were on the four feet thereof. Close by the border were the rings, the places for the staves to bear the table. And he made the staves of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold, to bear the table. And he made the vessels which were upon the table, the dishes thereof, and the spoons thereof, and the bowls thereof, and the flagons thereof, wherewith to pour out,

of pure gold.” (ASV)

“And he maketh the table of shittim wood; two cubits its length, and a cubit its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height, and overlayeth it with pure gold, and maketh for it a wreath of gold round about. And he maketh for it a border of a handbreadth round about, and maketh a wreath of gold for its border round about; and he casteth for it four rings of gold, and putteth the rings on the four corners which are to its four feet; over-against the border have the rings been, places for staves to bear the table. And he maketh the staves of shittim wood, and overlayeth them with gold, to bear the table; and he maketh the vessels which are upon the table, its dishes, and its bowls, and its cups, and the cups by which they pour out, of pure gold.” (YLT)

Beginning with this section, the text speaks of the items which were made for the Holy Place. It begins with the Table in the Holy Place, upon which the unleavened bread would be placed each week. It has been noted that the items of furniture in both the Holy Place and Most Holy Place were made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold. This writer does not believe this refers to an extremely thin layer, like that which was placed on the capitol building of Georgia. He believes it was more substantial. The Scriptures do not state how much gold was used to overlay these items. Where amounts may be listed in various texts, it will speak of items which were made entirely of pure gold. An example is given here, where all of the “utensils” are spoken of as being of pure gold.

Ex. 37:17-24 “And he made the candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work made he the candlestick; his shaft, and his branch, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, were of the same: And six branches going out of the sides thereof; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof: Three bowls made after the fashion of almonds in one branch, a knop and a flower; and three bowls made like almonds in another branch, a knop and a flower: so throughout the six branches going out of the candlestick. And in the candlestick were four bowls made like almonds, his knops, and his flowers: And a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches going out of it. Their knops and their branches were of the same: all of it was one beaten work of pure gold. And he made his seven lamps,

and his snuffers, and his snuffdishes, of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold made he it, and all the vessels thereof.”

“And he made the candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work made he the candlestick, even its base, and its shaft; its cups, its knops, and its flowers, were of one piece with it: and there were six branches going out of the sides thereof; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof: three cups made like almond-blossoms in one branch, a knop and a flower, and three cups made like almond-blossoms in the other branch, a knop and a flower: so for the six branches going out of the candlestick. And in the candlestick were four cups made like almond-blossoms, the knops thereof, and the flowers thereof; and a knop under two branches of one piece with it, and a knop under two branches of one piece with it, and a knop under two branches of one piece with it, for the six branches going out of it. Their knops and their branches were of one piece with it: the whole of it was one beaten work of pure gold. And he made the lamps thereof, seven, and the snuffers thereof, and the snuffdishes thereof, of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold made he it, and all the vessels thereof.” (ASV)

“And he maketh the candlestick of pure gold; of beaten work he hath made the candlestick, its base, and its branch, its calyxes, its knops, and its flowers, have been of the same; and six branches are coming out of its sides, three branches of the candlestick out of its one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of its second side; three calyxes, made like almonds, in the one branch, a knop and a flower; and three calyxes, made like almonds, in another branch, a knop and a flower; so to the six branches which are coming out of the candlestick. And in the candlestick are four calyxes, made like almonds, its knops, and its flowers, and a knop under the two branches of the same, and a knop under the two branches of the same, and a knop under the two branches of the same, are to the six branches which are coming out of it; their knops and their branches have been of the same; all of it one beaten work of pure gold. And he maketh its seven lamps, and its snuffers, and its snuff-dishes, of pure gold; of a talent of pure gold he hath made it, and all its vessels.” (YLT)

When noting the Lampstand, it is observed that it was **“beaten work.”** This term (also found with regard to other items) declares that these items were not cast and then engraved with tools to beautify them, as Aaron did with the golden calf. This would have been done somewhat like a blacksmith, who heats up the material he is using and then takes a hammer to it. The precision needed to make this entire lampstand in such a manner must have taken extreme skill. Also, one is told that all of the tools which were used to facilitate the use of the lampstand were made of pure gold.

Ex. 37:25-29 “And he made the incense altar of

shittim wood: the length of it was a cubit, and the breadth of it a cubit; it was foursquare; and two cubits was the height of it; the horns thereof were of the same. And he overlaid it with pure gold, both the top of it, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns of it: also he made unto it a crown of gold round about. And he made two rings of gold for it under the crown thereof, by the two corners of it, upon the two sides thereof, to be places for the staves to bear it withal. And he made the staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold. And he made the holy anointing oil, and the pure incense of sweet spices, according to the work of the apothecary.”

“And he made the altar of incense of acacia wood: a cubit was the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, foursquare; and two cubits was the height thereof; the horns thereof were of one piece with it. And he overlaid it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns of it: and he made unto it a crown of gold round about. And he made for it two golden rings under the crown thereof, upon the two ribs thereof, upon the two sides of it, for places for staves wherewith to bear it. And he made the staves of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold. And he made the holy anointing oil, and the pure incense of sweet spices, after the art of the perfumer.” (ASV)

“And he maketh the perfume-altar of shittim wood; a cubit its length, and a cubit its breadth (square), and two cubits its height; its horns have been of the same; and he overlayeth it with pure gold, its top and its sides round about, and its horns; and he maketh for it a wreath of gold round about; and two rings of gold he hath made for it under its wreath, at its two corners, at its two sides, for places for staves to bear it with them. And he maketh the staves of shittim wood, and overlayeth them with gold; and he maketh the holy anointing oil, and the pure spice-perfume--work of a compounder.” (YLT)

The third item made for the Holy Place was the Altar of Incense. It was made, like all the other items, exactly as GOD said to make it. In the original instructions, it was mentioned as to where this item was to be placed, but here it only mentions its being made.

The chapter ends by stating that Bezaleel also made the anointing oil and the incense of spices.

Exodus Chapter Thirty-eight

Ex. 38:1-7 “And he made the altar of burnt offering of shittim wood: five cubits was the length thereof, and five cubits the breadth thereof; it was foursquare; and three cubits the height thereof. And he made the horns thereof on the four corners of it; the horns thereof were of the same: and he overlaid it with brass. And he made all the vessels of the altar, the pots, and the shovels, and the basons, and the fleshhooks, and the firepans: all the vessels thereof made he of brass. And he made for the altar a brasen grate of network under the compass thereof beneath unto the midst of it. And he cast four rings for the four ends of the grate of brass, to be places for the staves. And he made the staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with brass. And he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the altar, to bear it withal; he made the altar hollow with boards.”

“And he made the altar of burnt-offering of acacia wood: five cubits was the length thereof, and five cubits the breadth thereof, foursquare; and three cubits the height thereof. And he made the horns thereof upon the four corners of it; the horns thereof were of one piece with it: and he overlaid it with brass. And he made all the vessels of the altar, the pots, and the shovels, and the basins, the flesh-hooks, and the firepans: all the vessels thereof made he of brass. And he made for the altar a grating of network of brass, under the ledge round it beneath, reaching halfway up. And he cast four rings for the four ends of the grating of brass, to be places for the staves. And he made the staves of acacia wood, and overlaid them with brass. And he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the altar, wherewith to bear it; he made it hollow with planks.” (ASV)

“And he maketh the altar of burnt-offering of shittim wood, five cubits its length, and five cubits its breadth (square), and three cubits its height; and he maketh its horns on its four corners; its horns have been of the same; and he overlayeth it with brass; and he maketh all the vessels of the altar, the pots, and the shovels, and the sprinkling-pans, the forks, and the fire-pans; all its vessels he hath made of brass. And he maketh for the altar a brazen grate of net-work, under its border beneath, unto its midst; and he casteth four rings for the four ends of the brazen grate--places for bars; and he maketh the staves of shittim wood, and overlayeth them with brass; and he bringeth in the staves into the rings on the sides of the altar, to bear it with them; hollow with boards he made it.” (YLT)

Bezaleel again is pictured as overseeing the work of the items in the courtyard and the courtyard itself (“**he**”). The item under consideration here is the Altar

of Burnt Offering. There is nothing new given from the instructions on how it was to be made.

Ex. 38:8 “And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the lookingglasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation.”

“And he made the laver of brass, and the base thereof of brass, of the mirrors of the ministering women that ministered at the door of the tent of meeting.” (ASV)

“And he maketh the laver of brass, and its base of brass, with the looking-glasses of the women assembling, who have assembled at the opening of the tent of meeting.” (YLT)

The manufacture of the Laver is now mentioned and special note is made of the women who assembled at the door of the Tabernacle. The work that they did is not described, but one thing is clear — they were not prostitutes like those which served the idol gods. Some have insinuated, and some have even declared, that they were such, based upon the actions of the evil sons of Eli in First Samuel 2:22. Since the purity of everything about the worship of GOD is emphasized over and over, such a claim of immoral behavior on their part is blasphemy.

The **“lookingglasses”** are what would be deemed *“mirrors”* today. The mirrors of their time were not made of glass, but burnished metal. These would reflect somewhat of an image, but nothing like the clear images seen in mirrors today. Their special and costly sacrifice of brass was used to make the laver.

Ex. 38:9-20 “And he made the court: on the south side southward the hangings of the court were of fine twined linen, an hundred cubits: Their pillars were twenty, and their brasen sockets twenty; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver. And for the north side the hangings were an hundred cubits, their pillars were twenty, and their sockets of brass twenty; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver. And for the west side were hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver. And for the east side eastward fifty cubits. The hangings of the one side of the gate were fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. And for the other side of the court gate, on this hand and that hand, were hangings of fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. All the hangings of the court round about were of

fine twined linen. And the sockets for the pillars were of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver; and the overlaying of their chapters of silver; and all the pillars of the court were filleted with silver. And the hanging for the gate of the court was needlework, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: and twenty cubits was the length, and the height in the breadth was five cubits, answerable to the hangings of the court. And their pillars were four, and their sockets of brass four; their hooks of silver, and the overlaying of their chapters and their fillets of silver. And all the pins of the tabernacle, and of the court round about, were of brass.”

“And he made the court: for the south side southward the hangings of the court were of fine twined linen, a hundred cubits; their pillars were twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver. And for the north side a hundred cubits, their pillars twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. And for the west side were hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. And for the east side eastward fifty cubits. The hangings for the one side of the gate were fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three; and so for the other side: on this hand and that hand by the gate of the court were hangings of fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. All the hangings of the court round about were of fine twined linen. And the sockets for the pillars were of brass; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver; and the overlaying of their capitals, of silver; and all the pillars of the court were filleted with silver. And the screen for the gate of the court was the work of the embroiderer, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: and twenty cubits was the length, and the height in the breadth was five cubits, answerable to the hangings of the court. And their pillars were four, and their sockets four, of brass; their hooks of silver, and the overlaying of their capitals, and their fillets, of silver. And all the pins of the Tabernacle, and of the court round about, were of brass.” (ASV)

“And he maketh the court; at the south side southward, the hangings of the court of twined linen, a hundred by the cubit, their pillars are twenty, and their brazen sockets twenty, the pegs of the pillars and their fillets are silver; and at the north side, a hundred by the cubit, their pillars are twenty, and their sockets of brass twenty; the pegs of the pillars and their fillets are silver; and at the west side are hangings, fifty by the cubit; their pillars are ten, and their sockets ten; the pegs of the pillars and their fillets are silver; and at the east side eastward fifty cubits. The hangings on the side are fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their sockets three, and at the second side at the gate of the court, on this and on that, are hangings, fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their sockets three; all the hangings of the court round about are of twined linen, and the sockets for the pillars of brass, the pegs of the pillars and their

fillets of silver, and the overlaying of their tops of silver, and all the pillars of the court are filleted with silver. And the covering of the gate of the court is the work of an embroiderer, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen; and twenty cubits is the length, and the height with the breadth five cubits, over-against the hangings of the court; and their pillars are four, and their sockets of brass four, their pegs are of silver, and the overlaying of their tops and their fillets are of silver; and all the pins for the Tabernacle, and for the court round about, are of brass.” (YLT)

These verses speak of the fence which enclosed the courtyard of the Tabernacle.

Ex. 38:21-23 “This is the sum of the Tabernacle, even of the Tabernacle of testimony, as it was counted, according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, son to Aaron the priest. And Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD commanded Moses. And with him was Aholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a cunning workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and fine linen.”

“This is the sum of the things for the Tabernacle, even the Tabernacle of the testimony, as they were counted, according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest. And Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that Jehovah commanded Moses. And with him was Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a skilful workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and in fine linen.” (ASV)

“These are the numberings of the Tabernacle (the Tabernacle of testimony), which hath been numbered by the command of Moses, the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest. And Bezaleel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, hath made all that Jehovah commanded Moses; and with him is Aholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and designer, and embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and in linen.” (YLT)

These verses announce that an accounting of the materials used in the Tabernacle complex was going to be given. The accounting was done by Ithamar, one of the sons of Aaron.

It is also shown that Bezaleel and Aholiab finished their work. It is said that they **“made all that the LORD commanded Moses.”** The important principle again is being emphasized — they did not add or take away any items. They made everything exactly as GOD told Moses it was to be done.

Ex. 38:24-31 “All the gold that was occupied for the work in all the work of the holy place, even the gold of the offering, was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men. And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail; an hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket. And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five shekels he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapiters, and filleted them. And the brass of the offering was seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels. And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation, and the brasen altar, and the brasen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar, And the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court gate, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about.”

“All the gold that was used for the work in all the work of the sanctuary, even the gold of the offering, was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was a hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: a beka a head, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that passed over to them that were numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men. And the hundred talents of silver were for casting the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the veil; a hundred sockets for the hundred talents, a talent for a socket. And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five shekels he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their capitals, and made fillets for them. And the brass of the offering was seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels. And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tent of meeting, and the brazen altar, and the brazen grating for it, and all the vessels of the altar, and the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the gate of the court, and all the pins of the Tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about.” (ASV)

“All the gold which is prepared for the work in all the work of

the sanctuary (and it is the gold of the wave-offering) is twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary. And the silver of those numbered of the company is a hundred talents, and a thousand and seven hundred and five and seventy shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary; a bekah for a poll (half a shekel, by the shekel of the sanctuary,) for every one who is passing over unto those numbered, from a son of twenty years and upwards, for six hundred thousand, and three thousand, and five hundred and fifty. And a hundred talents of silver are to cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail; a hundred sockets for the hundred talents, a talent for a socket; and the thousand and seven hundred and five and seventy he hath made pegs for the pillars, and overlaid their tops, and filleted them. And the brass of the wave-offering is seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels; and he maketh with it the sockets of the opening of the tent of meeting, and the brazen altar, and the brazen grate which it hath, and all the vessels of the altar, and the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the gate of the court, and all the pins of the Tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about.” (YLT)

“It takes 300 shekels to make one talent. The approximate weights of the materials listed, in today’s measures, are as follows: 2,193.25 pounds of gold, 7,544.38 pounds of silver, 5,310 pounds of bronze. To put it in perspective, the total weight in precious metals the Israelites carried out of Egypt was about 15,000 pounds. This may seem like an excessively heavy amount in the abstract but it comes to only approximately .025 pounds for every adult male Israelite – pocket change. There is no need to suggest, as some have done, that these weights are exaggerated numbers” (Enns, quoted by Roper, p. 613).

Exodus Chapter Thirty-nine

Ex. 39:1 “And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made cloths of service, to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses.”

“And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made finely wrought garments, for ministering in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as Jehovah commanded Moses.” (ASV)

“And of the blue, and the purple, and the scarlet, they made coloured garments, to minister in the sanctuary; and they make the holy garments which are for Aaron, as Jehovah hath commanded Moses.” (YLT)

The making of the priestly garments begins here with a description of the High Priest's garments.

Ex. 39:2-5 “And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires, to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, with cunning work. They made shoulderpieces for it, to couple it together: by the two edges was it coupled together. And the curious girdle of his ephod, that was upon it, was of the same, according to the work thereof; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; as the LORD commanded Moses.”

“And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires, to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, the work of the skilful workman. They made shoulder-pieces for it, joined together; at the two ends was it joined together. And the skilfully woven band, that was upon it, wherewith to gird it on, was of the same piece and like the work thereof; of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; as Jehovah commanded Moses.” (ASV)

“And he maketh the ephod, of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen, and they expand the plates of gold, and have cut off wires to work in the midst of the blue, and in the midst of the purple, and in the midst of the scarlet, and in the midst of the linen--work of a designer; shoulder-pieces they have made for it, joining; at its two ends it is joined. And the girdle of his ephod which is on it is of the same, according to its work, of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen, as Jehovah hath commanded Moses.” (YLT)

The making of the Ephod is now emphasized. Note how the gold is described as being worked into the material of the Ephod. Also look at the repetition of a

particular phrase found seven times in this chapter and seven times in chapter forty — **“as the LORD commanded Moses.”** Since seven is one of the sacred numbers used to signify completion, the Spirit was emphasizing the complete obedience of GOD’s people in the making of these items commanded by Him.

Ex. 39:6-7 “And they wrought onyx stones inclosed in ouches of gold, graven, as signets are graven, with the names of the children of Israel. And he put them on the shoulders of the ephod, that they should be stones for a memorial to the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses.”

“And they wrought the onyx stones, inclosed in settings of gold, graven with the engravings of a signet, according to the names of the children of Israel. And he put them on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, to be stones of memorial for the children of Israel; as Jehovah commanded Moses.” (ASV)

“And they prepare the shoham stones, set, embroidered with gold, opened with openings of a signet, by the names of the sons of Israel; and he setteth them on the shoulders of the ephod--stones of memorial for the sons of Israel, as Jehovah hath commanded Moses.” (YLT)

Since the High Priest represented all of the people, these two stones were set on his shoulders. Thus, when he went before the Lord, the names of each of the tribes went with him — six names on each stone. He himself represented the thirteenth tribe of Levi.

Ex. 39:8-21 “And he made the breastplate of cunning work, like the work of the ephod; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. It was foursquare; they made the breastplate double: a span was the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof, being doubled. And they set in it four rows of stones: the first row was a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this was the first row. And the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row, a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper: they were inclosed in ouches of gold in their inclosings. And the stones were according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, every one with his name, according to the twelve tribes. And they made upon the breastplate chains at the ends, of wreathen work of pure gold. And they made two ouches of gold, and two gold

rings; and put the two rings in the two ends of the breastplate. And they put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breastplate. And the two ends of the two wreathen chains they fastened in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulderpieces of the ephod, before it. And they made two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, upon the border of it, which was on the side of the ephod inward. And they made two other golden rings, and put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart of it, over against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. And they did bind the breastplate by his rings unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it might be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate might not be loosed from the ephod; as the LORD commanded Moses.”

“And he made the breastplate, the work of the skilful workman, like the work of the ephod; of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. It was foursquare; they made the breastplate double: a span was the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof, being double. And they set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle was the first row; and the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jaspar: they were inclosed in inclosings of gold in their settings. And the stones were according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names; like the engravings of a signet, every one according to his name, for the twelve tribes. And they made upon the breastplate chains like cords, of wreathen work of pure gold. And they made two settings of gold, and two gold rings, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. And they put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings at the ends of the breastplate. And the other two ends of the two wreathen chains they put on the two settings, and put them on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, in the forepart thereof. And they made two rings of gold, and put them upon the two ends of the breastplate, upon the edge thereof, which was toward the side of the ephod inward. And they made two rings of gold, and put them on the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod underneath, in the forepart thereof, close by the coupling thereof, above the skilfully woven band of the ephod. And they did bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it might be upon the skilfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastplate might not be loosed from the ephod; as Jehovah commanded Moses.” (ASV)

“And he maketh the breastplate, work of a designer, like the work of the ephod, of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen; it hath been square; double they have made the breastplate, a span its length, and a span its breadth, doubled. And they fill in it four rows of stones; a row of a sardius, a

topaz, and a carbuncle is the one row; and the second row an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; and the third row an opal, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper--set, embroidered with gold, in their settings. And the stones, according to the names of the sons of Israel, are twelve, according to their names, openings of a signet, each according to his name, for the twelve tribes. And they make on the breastplate wreathed chains, work of thick bands, of pure gold; and they make two embroidered things of gold, and two rings of gold, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate, and they put the two thick bands of gold on the two rings on the ends of the breastplate; and the two ends of the two thick bands they have put on the two embroidered things, and they put them on the shoulders of the ephod, over-against its front. And they make two rings of gold, and set them on the two ends of the breastplate, on its border, which is on the side of the ephod within; and they make two rings of gold, and put them on the two shoulders of the ephod below, over-against its front, over-against its joining, above the girdle of the ephod; and they bind the breastplate by its rings unto the rings of the ephod, with a ribbon of blue, to be above the girdle of the ephod, and the breastplate is not loosed from off the ephod, as Jehovah hath commanded Moses." (YLT)

The breastplate of the High Priest is in focus here. There are two ideas of how these stones were arrayed: (1) four rows going from right to left or (2) four columns going from top to bottom. This author has considered that, since the Hebrews wrote from right to left, the order on these stones may have been right to left, or started on the right side from top to bottom. However they were placed is not of importance today. What is important is the phrase **"as the LORD commanded Moses."**

It is interesting that the names of the twelve tribes were engraved, one per stone. Also the names of the twelve tribes were carried by the High Priest — twelve on his shoulders and twelve on his chest. This writer wonders if the significance is that he carried the weight of the twelve tribes on his shoulders, and also carried them next to his heart.

The original instructions also mentioned the Urim and Thummim. They are not mentioned here, which does not mean they were not made. Remember — **"as the LORD commanded Moses."** It is very possible that they had already been made and were simply inserted into their special pocket after the breastplate was finished.

Ex. 39:22-26 "And he made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. And there was an hole in the midst of the robe, as the hole of an habergeon, with a band round about the hole, that it should not rend. And they made upon the hems of the robe pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and

twined linen. And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates upon the hem of the robe, round about between the pomegranates; A bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, round about the hem of the robe to minister in; as the LORD commanded Moses.”

“And he made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. And the hole of the robe in the midst thereof, as the hole of a coat of mail, with a binding round about the hole of it, that it should not be rent. And they made upon the skirts of the robe pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen. And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates upon the skirts of the robe round about, between the pomegranates; a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, upon the skirts of the robe round about, to minister in; as Jehovah commanded Moses.” (ASV)

“And he maketh the upper robe of the ephod, work of a weaver, completely of blue; and the opening of the upper robe is in its midst, as the opening of a habergeon, a border is to its opening round about, it is not rent; and they make on the hems of the upper robe pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, twined. And they make bells of pure gold, and put the bells in the midst of the pomegranates, on the hems of the upper robe, round about, in the midst of the pomegranates; a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, are on the hems of the upper robe, round about, to minister in, as Jehovah hath commanded Moses.” (YLT)

The robe of the High Priest is now described as being finished. This robe was of blue, whereas the robes of the priests were white. Along with the rest of the garments of the High Priest, he would really have stood out from them, which was as GOD intended. Today, the glory which belongs to the High Priest (Jesus Christ) stands out from His priests (Christians) through the pages of the Scriptures.

Ex. 39:27-29 “And they made coats of fine linen of woven work for Aaron, and for his sons, And a mitre of fine linen, and goodly bonnets of fine linen, and linen breeches of fine twined linen, And a girdle of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, of needlework; as the LORD commanded Moses.”

“And they made the coats of fine linen of woven work for Aaron, and for his sons, and the mitre of fine linen, and the goodly head-tires of fine linen, and the linen breeches of fine twined linen, and the girdle of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, the work of the embroiderer; as Jehovah commanded Moses.” (ASV)

“And they make the coats of linen, work of a weaver, for Aaron and for his sons, and the mitre of linen, and the beautiful bonnets of linen, and the linen trousers, of twined linen, and

the girdle of twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, work of an embroiderer, as Jehovah hath commanded Moses.” (YLT)

The text now passes to garments for all of the priests. The one distinction made is that the **“mitre”** was only worn by the High Priest, and the bonnets were made for the “regular” priests.

Ex. 39:30-31 “And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And they tied unto it a lace of blue, to fasten it on high upon the mitre; as the LORD commanded Moses.”

“And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like the engravings of a signet, HOLY TO JEHOVAH. And they tied unto it a lace of blue, to fasten it upon the mitre above; as Jehovah commanded Moses.” (ASV)

“And they make the flower of the holy crown of pure gold, and write on it a writing, openings of a signet, Holy to Jehovah; and they put on it a ribbon of blue, to put it on the mitre above, as Jehovah hath commanded Moses.” (YLT)

The text returns to an item peculiar to the High Priest. It was a plate or crown which he wore on the mitre. It was made of pure gold and inscribed with the words **“HOLINESS TO THE LORD.”** It would seem that this was not intended as a description of the High Priest. He and the rest of the priests were indeed holy, but considering the breastplate and the stones on his shoulders, it would seem to this writer to indicate what Israel as a whole was to be to GOD. This is also carried over, it would seem, to GOD’s people today — Christians.

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to GOD by Jesus Christ...But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light:” (1 Peter 2:5, 9, emphasis added).

Ex. 39:32-34 “Thus was all the work of the Tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they. And they brought the Tabernacle unto Moses, the tent, and all his furniture, his taches, his boards, his bars, and his pillars, and his sockets, And the covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering

of badgers' skins, and the vail of the covering, The ark of the testimony, and the staves thereof, and the mercy seat, The table, and all the vessels thereof, and the shewbread, The pure candlestick, with the lamps thereof, even with the lamps to be set in order, and all the vessels thereof, and the oil for light, And the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the Tabernacle door, The brasen altar, and his grate of brass, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot, The hangings of the court, his pillars, and his sockets, and the hanging for the court gate, his cords, and his pins, and all the vessels of the service of the Tabernacle, for the tent of the congregation, The cloths of service to do service in the Holy Place, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and his sons' garments, to minister in the priest's office. According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work. And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them."

"Thus was finished all the work of the Tabernacle of the tent of meeting: and the children of Israel did according to all that Jehovah commanded Moses; so did they. And they brought the Tabernacle unto Moses, the Tent, and all its furniture, its clasps, its boards, its bars, and its pillars, and its sockets; and the covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering of sealskins, and the veil of the screen; the ark of the testimony, and the staves thereof, and the mercy-seat; the table, all the vessels thereof, and the showbread; the pure candlestick, the lamps thereof, even the lamps to be set in order, and all the vessels thereof, and the oil for the light; and the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the screen for the door of the Tent; the brazen altar, and its grating of brass, its staves, and all its vessels, the laver and its base; the hangings of the court, its pillars, and its sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court, the cords thereof, and the pins thereof, and all the instruments of the service of the Tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; the finely wrought garments for ministering in the holy place, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office. According to all that Jehovah commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did all the work. And Moses saw all the work, and, behold, they had done it; as Jehovah had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them." (ASV)

"And all the service of the Tabernacle of the tent of meeting is completed; and the sons of Israel do according to all that Jehovah hath commanded Moses; so they have done. And they bring in the Tabernacle unto Moses, the tent, and all its vessels, its hooks, its boards, its bars, and its pillars, and its

sockets; and the covering of rams' skins, which are made red, and the covering of badgers' skins, and the vail of the covering; the ark of the testimony and its staves, and the mercy-seat; the table, all its vessels, and the bread of the presence; the pure candlestick, its lamps, the lamps of arrangement, and all its vessels, and the oil for the light. And the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the spice-perfume, and the covering of the opening of the tent; the brazen altar and the brazen grate which it hath, its staves, and all its vessels, the laver and its base. The hangings of the court, its pillars, and its sockets; and the covering for the gate of the court, its cords, and its pins; and all the vessels of the service of the Tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; the coloured clothes to minister in the sanctuary, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to act as priest in. According to all that Jehovah hath commanded Moses, so have the sons of Israel done all the service; and Moses seeth all the work, and lo, they have done it as Jehovah hath commanded; so they have done. And Moses doth bless them.” (YLT)

All of the work for the Tabernacle, its courts, “furniture,” and priestly garments has been finished. The implication seems to be that, before they put all of these items together, they brought them to Moses. **Why?** It would seem they did it to get his approval that they had done exactly what GOD had instructed them to do.

“Thus was all the work of the Tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they” (v. 32); “According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work” (v. 42); “they had done it as the LORD had commanded” (v. 43).

Exodus Chapter Forty

Ex. 40:1-16 “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the Tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the vail. And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it; and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof. And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door to the Tabernacle. And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the Tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and shalt put water therein. And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the hanging at the court gate. And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the Tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy. And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy. And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it. And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water. And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office. And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats: And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations. Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he.”

“And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, On the first day of the first month shalt thou rear up the Tabernacle of the tent of meeting. And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and thou shalt screen the ark with the veil. And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are upon it; and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof. And thou shalt set the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the screen of the door to the Tabernacle. And thou shalt set the altar of burnt-offering before the door of the Tabernacle of the tent of meeting. And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and shalt put water therein. And thou shalt set up the

court round about, and hang up the screen of the gate of the court. And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the Tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the furniture thereof: and it shall be holy. And thou shalt anoint the altar of burnt-offering, and all its vessels, and sanctify the altar: and the altar shall be most holy. And thou shalt anoint the laver and its base, and sanctify it. And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tent of meeting, and shalt wash them with water. And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments; and thou shalt anoint him, and sanctify him, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office. And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them; and thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office: and their anointing shall be to them for an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations. Thus did Moses: according to all that Jehovah commanded him, so did he." (ASV)

"And Jehovah speaketh unto Moses, saying, On the first day of the month, in the first month, thou dost raise up the Tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and hast set there the ark of the testimony, and hast covered over the ark with the vail, and hast brought in the table, and set its arrangement in order, and hast brought in the candlestick, and caused its lamps to go up. And thou hast put the golden altar for perfume before the ark of the testimony, and hast put the covering of the opening to the Tabernacle, and hast put the altar of the burnt-offering before the opening of the Tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and hast put the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and hast put water there. And thou hast set the court round about, and hast placed the covering of the gate of the court, and hast taken the anointing oil, and anointed the Tabernacle, and all that is in it, and hallowed it, and all its vessels, and it hath been holy; and thou hast anointed the altar of the burnt-offering, and all its vessels, and sanctified the altar, and the altar hath been most holy; and thou hast anointed the laver and its base, and sanctified it. And thou hast brought near Aaron and his sons unto the opening of the tent of meeting, and hast bathed them with water; and thou hast clothed Aaron with the holy garments, and anointed him, and sanctified him, and he hath acted as priest to Me. And his sons thou dost bring near, and hast clothed them with coats, and anointed them as thou hast anointed their father, and they have acted as priests to Me, and their anointing hath been to be to them for a priesthood age-during, to their generations. And Moses doth according to all that Jehovah hath commanded him; so he hath done." (YLT)

These verses highlight that the Israelites did everything GOD told them to do. They also show that Moses was again acting as the High Priest. GOD also gave him the exact time when they should construct the Tabernacle — the first day of their calendar's first month— Abib. (One is reminded that the Jews had two calendar's — one religious and the other secular. This was the beginning of the religious calendar.) Moses was to anoint everything, including the priests.

"Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD

commanded him, so did he" (Exodus 40:16).

Ex. 40:17-33 "And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the Tabernacle was reared up. And Moses reared up the Tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars. And he spread abroad the tent over the Tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the LORD commanded Moses. And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark: And he brought the ark into the Tabernacle, and set up the vail of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the LORD commanded Moses. And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the Tabernacle northward, without the vail. And he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moses. And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the Tabernacle southward. And he lighted the lamps before the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses. And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the vail: And he burnt sweet incense thereon; as the LORD commanded Moses. And he set up the hanging at the door of the Tabernacle. And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the Tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; as the LORD commanded Moses. And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash withal. And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat: When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses. And he reared up the court round about the Tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work."

"And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the Tabernacle was reared up. And Moses reared up the Tabernacle, and laid its sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up its pillars. And he spread the tent over the Tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as Jehovah commanded Moses. And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put

the mercy-seat above upon the ark: and he brought the ark into the Tabernacle, and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony; as Jehovah commanded Moses. And he put the table in the tent of meeting, upon the side of the Tabernacle northward, without the veil. And he set the bread in order upon it before Jehovah; as Jehovah commanded Moses. And he put the candlestick in the tent of meeting, over against the table, on the side of the Tabernacle southward. And he lighted the lamps before Jehovah; as Jehovah commanded Moses. And he put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil: and he burnt thereon incense of sweet spices; as Jehovah commanded Moses. And he put the screen of the door to the Tabernacle. And he set the altar of burnt-offering at the door of the Tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered upon it the burnt-offering and the meal-offering; as Jehovah commanded Moses. And he set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water therein, wherewith to wash. And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat; when they went into the tent of meeting, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as Jehovah commanded Moses. And he reared up the court round about the Tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court. So Moses finished the work.” (ASV)

“And it cometh to pass, in the first month, in the second year, in the first of the month, the Tabernacle hath been raised up; and Moses raiseth up the Tabernacle, and setteth its sockets, and placeth its boards, and placeth its bars, and raiseth its pillars, and spreadeth the tent over the Tabernacle, and putteth the covering of the tent upon it above, as Jehovah hath commanded Moses. And he taketh and putteth the testimony unto the ark, and setteth the staves on the ark, and putteth the mercy-seat on the ark above; and bringeth in the ark unto the Tabernacle, and placeth the vail of the covering, and covereth over the ark of the testimony, as Jehovah hath commanded Moses. And he putteth the table in the tent of meeting, on the side of the Tabernacle northward, at the outside of the vail, and setteth in order upon it the arrangement of bread, before Jehovah, as Jehovah hath commanded Moses. And he putteth the candlestick in the tent of meeting, over-against the table, on the side of the Tabernacle southward, and causeth the lamps to go up before Jehovah, as Jehovah hath commanded Moses. And he setteth the golden altar in the tent of meeting, before the vail, and maketh perfume on it--spice-perfume--as Jehovah hath commanded Moses. And he setteth the covering of the opening to the Tabernacle, and the altar of the burnt-offering he hath set at the opening of the Tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and causeth the burnt-offering to go up upon it, and the present, as Jehovah hath commanded Moses. And he putteth the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and putteth water there for washing, and Moses and Aaron and his sons have washed their hands and their feet at the same; in their going in unto the tent of meeting, and in their drawing near unto the altar, they wash, as Jehovah hath commanded Moses. And he raiseth up the court round about the Tabernacle, and about the altar, and placeth the covering of the gate of the court; and Moses completeth the work.” (YLT)

The exact time when the Tabernacle was put together is given — the beginning of the second year after they left Egypt. **Who oversaw the erection and placing of all of the Tabernacle furniture and instruments?** Moses. **Why?** Because GOD had revealed to him how everything should be set — not the workmen. It should also be noted that Moses, as well as the priests, washed themselves (hands and feet) when they approached the Tabernacle.

Ex. 40:34-38 “Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the Tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the Tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up from over the Tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the LORD was upon the Tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.”

“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the Tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of Jehovah filled the Tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up from over the Tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward, throughout all their journeys: but if the cloud was not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of Jehovah was upon the Tabernacle by day, and there was fire therein by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.” (ASV)

“And the cloud covereth the tent of meeting, and the honour of Jehovah hath filled the Tabernacle; and Moses hath not been able to go in unto the tent of meeting, for the cloud hath Tabernacled on it, and the honour of Jehovah hath filled the Tabernacle. And in the going up of the cloud from off the Tabernacle the sons of Israel journey in all their journeys; and if the cloud go not up then they journey not, until the day of its going up: for the cloud of Jehovah is on the Tabernacle by day, and fire is in it by night, before the eyes of all the house of Israel in all their journeys.” (YLT)

In these verses, one sees GOD’s acceptance of the Tabernacle by His “lighting upon” it in a cloud by day and fire by night. By remaining upon the Tabernacle, His glory demonstrated that He was again among His people.