

## Understanding The Old Testament Week 7: The Exodus, The Red Sea, and Mount Sinai

### **Exodus 12 - The Passover and the Exodus.**

Passover Exodus 12:1-28. The Passover is going to point to Jesus, Jesus is our Passover Lamb for all time.

- Exodus 12:5: Lamb without blemish.
- Exodus 12:7: “take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat”. The blood provided propitiation (shielding from wrath) against the judgement/wrath coming against the Egyptians. Jesus is our propitiation for all time. (see *Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:10; Romans 3:23-25*)
- Exodus 12:10: “you shall let none of it remain...” The sacrifice could not go to waste. *How do we treat the sacrifice of Jesus with the lifestyle we are living and the thoughts we think?*
- Exodus 12:11: “Eaten with: belt fastened, sandals on feet, staff in hand, and in haste.” *This was not something to be taken lightly, this wasn't a lounging comfortable enjoyable meal, this was done with urgency and seriously. What is our response to the sacrifice of Jesus?*
- Exodus 12:12: “and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am Yahweh.” Remember Pharaoh in Ex. 5:1-2 “Who is Yahweh...?”
- Exodus 12:38: “A mixed multitude also went up with them...”

### **Exodus 13 - Consecration of Firstborn and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Lord leading the people.**

- Exodus 13:1-16: The firstborn of every family was to become the priesthood for the Lord (this would change because of rebellion). The feast of Unleavened Bread would be established. Both were to remind Israel that the Lord has set Israel free from Egyptian captivity.
- Exodus 13:21 Led by a manifestation of the Presence of God. Pillar of Cloud by day, Pill of Fire by night.

### **Exodus 14 - Crossing The Red (Reed) Sea.**

- The splitting of the Red Sea in the escape from Egypt shows that Yahweh is over chaos and death (*sea metaphor*).
- Foreshadow of Baptism and Salvation. As Israel descends beneath the waves they are entering the domain of death and chaos. They come up out of the Sea as a free nation.
- Egypt is swallowed up by the sea (death and chaos), a final judgement against Egypt.

### **The Crossing as Spiritual Warfare to an Egyptian:**

- The Red (Reed) Sea is the eastern border of the land of Egypt. Amon-Re (Re) their primary deity was thought to be ridding on his solar barge “the Sun”. When the Sun would rise each morning it was viewed as Re coming out of his domain and would spend the day overseeing his land in the east, and finally coming to Egypt where he set up Pharaoh (who remember is a god to Egypt and Re's son) to rule over Egypt which was a “special place” and finally return to his domain.
- The Reed Sea was considered the gateway to Re's domain, when an Egyptian died they would cross “the sea or field of reeds” and “be purified so they could enter the afterlife”. We have Egyptian texts that refer to deceased Egyptians as “drowned ones”.
- Imagine you have that belief in your head about your gods. Here comes Yahweh who parts the sea, takes His people across on dry ground, enters “Re's” land and destroys your army in the process, all without any fear of your god.
- It is a polemic (*written or verbal attack of a belief*) of the superiority and incompatibility of Yahweh against the gods of Egypt.

- Recall Moses told Pharaoh we are going to go out to the wilderness (in the East) to sacrifice to our God, Yahweh. To Pharaoh and the Egyptians this would have been offensive and religious slap to the face.

### **Exodus 15 - The Song of Moses, The Bitter Waters, and the 12 Springs of Water with 70 Palm Trees.**

- Exodus 15:14-18 notice: this hasn't happened yet.  
Remember, the bible is a Theology Book (the study of the nature of God and His relationship with His creation) not a History Book. It contains history but often the Bible will put things out of the historically accurate timeline to make a theological point. As an ancient book it's historicity and writing style are actually some of, if not the best examples of historical writing, but it will not live up to our idea of a "historical accurate document". (Our historical writings can't live up to our expectations if we are honest.)
- Exodus 15:22-26 - As the tree is thrown into the bitter waters the water becomes sweet. The tree is a garden imagery as well as a potential foreshadow of the cross. The Cross is the means of which we are brought back to God's presence (the Garden).
- Exodus 15:27: Garden Imagery. The 12 streams that water the 70 palm trees is a garden picture of Israel (12 streams representing 12 tribes, being a blessing and proclaiming Yahweh to the the one true God to the nations (remember the 70 nations of Babel).

### **Exodus 16 - Manna From Heaven**

The writer is completing a narrative to teach a theological lesson here. It is chronologically impossible for all these events to take place at the same time. They haven't received the commandment for the Sabbath yet, nor have they received the instruction to build the "Testimony" (Ark of the Covenant).

We shouldn't be approaching the Bible as a historical text, we should be approaching it saying "Lord, what are you trying to speak and teach"

The Manna and Jesus - John 6:30-35: Much like the manna came from heaven to feed the Israelites, Jesus came to be our life. He is the bread of life and the living water.

- Exodus 16:32-34 - Manna was eventually put into a jar and kept **before** Ark of the Covenant. The Ark represented God's throne and presence in the midst of the Israelites. In Revelation 2:17 Jesus promises some of the hidden manna to the one who conquers. This is a promise to receive the bread of life in the presence of God forever.

### **Exodus 17 - Water From The Rock and the First Battle**

- Exodus 17:1-7: Moses is commanded to strike the rock to have water come out of it. 1st of 2 events like this see Numbers 20. See also 1 Corinthians 10:4. ***We'll talk more about this in Numbers***
- Exodus 17:8-16: Recall the 2nd Rebellion and the Nephilim (Gen 6:1-5). Amalekites descend from the Horites (Gen 36:12). We know the Horites are a Giant clan from the Nephilim (Deut 2:12, 22). **The Amalekites are always spoken of in the same terms** (blot out, utter destruction i.e. Exodus 17:14) **as the Giant Clans in the conquest narrative.** This is Spiritual Warfare taking place on earth. The Amalekites also attack Israel while they are in the area of Mount Sinai, which is at this moment in the narrative sacred space.

**Note: Every group that God will "devote to destruction" is directly connected with the Nephilim (Gen 6:4. Numbers 13:33).**

### **Exodus 18 - Moses Father-in-law Visits Moses, Moses sets up the Judicial System of Israel.**

Keep in Mind the Law hasn't been given yet. The part where Moses actually received the Law isn't until Exodus 24.

### **Exodus 19 - Israel Prepares To Make A Covenant with Yahweh**

## **Exodus 20 - The 10 Commandments and Laws about Alters**

## **Exodus 21 - 23 - Application of the 10 Commandments**

## **Exodus 23:20-33 - Promise of Inheriting the Promised Land**

## **Exodus 24 - Moses Ascends the Mountain And Receives the Law and Tells The Law to the People**

### **Structure:**

- There is a build up to Exodus 20 that serves multiple purposes at once. These purposes are recording the journey from Egypt to Sinai, the miraculous things Yahweh did for Israel, how some of the Laws yet to come would be applied, and the establishment of the Judicial System.
- This is both practical (it saves space in a day where paper was not easily obtained), and theological it teaches you lessons about God and His law with events that are happening leading up to the Covenant being made and the Law actually being given.
- In Exodus 20 the law is written, seemingly out of no where. This may seem odd to the modern reader, but this would have been how covenants would have been laid out in ancient days. It would have made perfect sense to an ancient reader. 1st the conditions of the covenant. i.e. the 10 Commandments and laws. Then what the Covenant entailed: Yahweh would be their God, Israel would be His people. He would lead, provide, protect, etc.
- The establishment of the Judicial System teaches us something very important about the law. God knew life happens and laws often had to be applied on a situation to situation basis.

### **Things to know about the Law:**

- God set up his moral law as an absolute. God then teaches them how to apply the law to their life and their culture.
- God DID NOT set up their culture, God came to a culture that was already there and moved in His people. It is important to understand the application and allowances of some of the laws is not the ideal. Jesus Himself spoke of laws given because of the stubbornness of the people NOT because God was approving of the practices. (see Matthew 19:1-8)
- God always intended for this culture (and ours) to pass away, His goal is to return to Eden where everything is perfect, there is no inequality, there is no injustice, there is no strife. The law is here to help the believing people of Israel **demonstrate their belief by follow God's laws to the best of their ability.**
- There is no passage in the OT that claims following the law is the means of salvation. The idea of salvation through works didn't come up in Israel's beliefs until after the return from Babylon. The Jews became so worried about being Exiled again after the Roman Empire took over that zealous law following became the focus of sects of Judaism, namely the Pharisees.
- Salvation in the OT is the same as the NT with just a slight difference. Salvation in the Old Testament was believing faith and love toward Yahweh and Yahweh alone. In the NT the belief shifts to Jesus (who is Yahweh) and His finished work of the cross as atonement for our sins. The Laws are given to help Israel demonstrate their believing loyalty and love toward Yahweh, they are not a means of salvation.
- The laws are going to be split into Moral Laws and Practical Laws and Priestly (Levitical) Laws. There is overlap between the two. They are not mutually exclusive.
- All laws are going to lead back to the 10 commandments in some way.
- Many laws (especially some of the weirder ones) are polemics against Canaanite religion.

Why are the Laws in Exodus 21-23 all over the place?

The 10 Commandments are non-negotiable laws set by God for the Israelites to obey. However there is a lot of ambiguity in the 10 commandments. For example what does it mean to honor your father and mother? What constitutes stealing? What is adultery in a society that is OK with having multiple wives (keep in mind the Bible is very clear that God's intention was one man and one woman and nothing else)?

The laws following the 10 Commandments can seem like they just jump all over the place, and seem inconsistent, sometimes even contradictory. So what's going on?

They are some examples of how to apply the 10 Commandments to everyday life:

- Exodus 20:22-23: No other gods; no carved images that you worship
- Exodus 20:24-25: No carved images
- Exodus 20:26: No other gods. (Canaanite religion had many religious activities that were sexual in nature. Some laws are going to be polemics against Canaanite and Babylonian Religion.)
- Exodus 21:1-11: Do not steal; do not lie
- Exodus 21:12-14: Do not murder
- Exodus 21:15: Honor your father and mother; do not murder
- Exodus 21:16: Do not steal
- Exodus 21:17: Honor your father and mother

God understands that real life happens. That circumstances can influence what is right and wrong in a certain situation. Keep in mind they don't always apply for all time. It is sometimes a case by case basis. What is acceptable in one situation may not be so in another. For example the making of the altar. When God speaks to Israel and they make an altar there to remember it they cannot use carved stone, however when it comes to the tabernacle and the future temple they are required to make them by hand. Each have their reasons for doing so. When they make an altar to remember the Lord and make sacrifices they couldn't use stones that were worked on because God should be the focus of the worship and the sacrifice not the craftsmanship. However the tabernacle/temple are designed to be the place where God dwells with his people, it is completely acceptable for the altar in the tabernacle to be built by man as it is a shared space between God and mankind.

### **Exodus 23:20-33 - The Angel of Yahweh is Yahweh and warning against following foreign gods.**

### **Exodus 24 - The Covenant confirmed; the Law is given**

Note: This literary style is very common in ancient documents and continues through a lot of the bible. The writer will state what happened last, and then what happened first. This is not a "problem" or an "inconsistency" it is an extremely common and poetic form of writing from the ancient world not only in Israel.

It is also how ancient covenant documents were written; with the terms of the covenant listed first then the conditions that led or come from the covenantal agreement.

- Exodus 24:1: 70 elders (Notice 70 - Babel) ascend with Moses, Aaron, and Aaron's sons and receive the 10 Commandments.
- Exodus 24:3-7: Moses writes down the words of the Lord (the 10 Commandments) and reads them to the people. The people agree to the Covenant.
- Exodus 24:9-11: The 70 elders ascend again with Moses, they see God as a man and have a meal with God "beholding" Him

- Exodus 24:12-18: See the reverse nature of this passage, the command for Moses to come and Moses and Joshua's ascending the mountain is recorded before the details of the calling are announced. This is Ancient writing structure. The authors of the OT were very good at what they did under the inspiration of God.

#### Exodus 25 - Instructions for the Tabernacle Begin

- Exodus 25:1-9: An overview of some of the things needed for the tabernacle.
- Exodus 25:18: Note the command to make Cherubim on the top of the ark. Does this contradict the 10 Commandments? No, this is imaging to allow Israel to know this is the throne of God, the very presence. Cherubim are "throne guardians" in the bible and in the ancient near east. Recall Cherubim were placed to guard the entrance to the Garden of Eden after the first rebellion.
- Exodus 25:23-40: The bread of the Presence and the Lampstand are garden images. The Golden Lampstand represents the tree of life, it is decorated with blossoms, flowers, 'branches' etc. Almonds were a wealthy commodity in the ancient world and well sought after. The almond blossoms were likely used to distinguish it from some more common fruit that is widely available and easily accessible. The lesson would be to not treat the sanctuary of the Lord and His Presence as common place. Common things tend to be less valuable to us. The bread of the Presence is just as it is, it's food, the idea of the garden of Eden and therefore the presence of God is provision and sustenance. This is why the promised land was a land "flowing with milk and honey". Jesus commonly used these metaphors of Himself: the Bread of Life and the Living Water.

The Lampstand also represented God's Presence in the Midst of Israel. The only light in the tabernacle would be this lampstand. It is similar to how it is sometimes common to leave lamps on when we are away from our houses, to make it look like we are home. The lampstand and its light were a reassurance to Israel that Yahweh was with His people, that he was "home" so to speak. This is why the Lord emphasized it needing to be kept lit from sundown to sun up and the oil could never run out (see Exodus 27:20-21).

Compare to Revelation 1-3 and the lampstand imagery. The lampstands represent His Presence, His Spirit with the churches. He also warns that the churches who do not love Him with first love and remove idolatry in their lives would lose their lampstand.

#### Exodus 26 - The Tabernacle Instructions

- The tabernacle is also decorated with Cherubim (Verse 1) and with the best of the materials.
- The tabernacle is set up in three parts. The outer court, where all believers were invited to come and spend time with God (more on this in Leviticus). The inner court or Holy Place where only the priests could enter and where the priests carried out their daily duties. And the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies where the glory of the Lord literally dwelt and spoke to the people from atop the Ark of The Covenant between the two Cherubim. This system is indeed not ideal. Only the High Priest and only once a year could enter the Holy of Holies and to do so He would need to burn incense so he could not clearly see the Lord's Glory and die. The New Covenant is so much superior in every way to this Old Covenant but it was the length God was willing to go through to dwell with His people and start the plan of salvation that would culminate with the birth of Jesus who was of the seed of Abraham.
- If you read through and lay it all out you will see that the closer you get to the Most Holy place the better the materials get. The outside contain bronze and animal skin, by time you get to the Most Holy Place it is all gold and the finest linen. *The closer we can get to the Lord the better the fruit that is produced in our lives will be. Gold vs Bronze. Bronze is better than nothing but gold is more ideal.*

## Exodus 27 - The Alter and The Court Instructions

This alter stood in the court just beyond the gate this is where most of the sacrifices would happen and be placed upon.

## Exodus 28 - The Priestly Garments

## Exodus 29 - Setting the Priests Apart

## Exodus 30 - The Alter of Incense, Supporting the Priesthood, Washing Basin, the Oil and the Incense.

- Exodus 30:1-10: The alter of incense was in the Holy Place and the priests were commanded to keep incense burning on it day and night (24-7). This had a representative effect and a practical effect. This incense represented the prayers of the people day and night continually before the throne (represented by the ark). The incense also would have helped cover up the smell of all the other sacrifices that were taking place.
- Exodus 30:17-21: The priests had to wash themselves before entering in to do their priestly duties it would have been a normal thing for the priests to get dirty simply by just being outside, the dirt, dust, and ashes. It is a reminder to us to continually come to the Lord to be cleaned of the sin that so easily entangles us.

## Exodus 31 - God provides the knowledge and skill to build the tabernacle. Command of the Sabbath reiterated.

- The Lord doesn't leave us with instructions to do things a certain way and leave us to figure it out. He gives us wisdom, knowledge, and other people to help us follow Him. This is a representation of God's grace. Grace is the unmerited gift and empowerment to live for Him.
- The Sabbath was (and could be said is today) supposed to be a time to look forward to, particularly in its a day that we get to rest with Him (for He rested on the 7th day). **An attitude of "having to take a day off" is not fulfillment of the command, if we do not enjoy His presence we should run to Him in repentance and ask for grace to love Him fully.**