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Lessons from the **Book of Exodus**

By Ken Raggio

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Exodus

This book is, at the outset, a biography of Moses - arguably the most significant human being ever born. Without Moses, there would have been no Bible, no Jews, no Christians, and no Muslims, and no rule of law as we know it. What man left his stamp on civilization for all time as Moses? Yet, if there had been no burning bush, no voice of God, no leprous hand, no rod changed to a serpent, we would never have heard of Moses. Without God, there had been no Moses.

Deuteronomy 33:1 - "Moses the man of God"

Twelve Tribes

Joseph was the first of the tribal elders into Egypt. The eleven brothers came later, in God's time, with their father. The Levites, as priests, would not inherit lands, leaving eleven. Joseph would be replaced by his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Hence, the number remained twelve. Twelve seems to be the number of divine government. Israel had twelve tribes. The church had twelve apostles. The city of Heaven has twelve foundations and twelve gates.

Exodus 1:2-5 - "Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. ...Joseph."

The Power of One

Jochebed was only one person, but salvation for all humanity hung by a thread on her actions. If she had not saved Moses, the world would never have heard of Abraham, Isaac or Jacob. The power of one is inestimable. We are indebted to many "ones." Don't you fail!

Exodus 2:3 - "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."

Pitched Within and Without

Jochebed saved baby Moses by daubing an "ark of bulrushes" with slime and pitch. That made it water-proof and made it float. Noah did a similar thing with the great Ark. "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; ...pitch it within and without," (Genesis 6:14). My brother, David, reminded me that if we want to be saved, we need to be pitched within and without with holiness and righteousness.

Exodus 2:3 - "...she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein."

Moses' Early Life

Pharaoh's daughter rescued baby Moses from the Nile River, and his sister, Miriam, offered his mother to her as a wet nurse. God was working wonderfully! Although raised in Egypt's royal household, Moses was a blue-blooded, one-God Hebrew. In his youth, he impulsively killed an Egyptian who was assaulting a Jewish brother. He quickly hid the corpse, but the news spread like wildfire. Moses fled Egypt to the wilderness near Midian.

Exodus 2:15 - "Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh."

When Slaves Pray

I have often wondered why God told Abraham his descendants must spend time in bondage in Egypt. Typologically, Egypt represents the world of sin. Every man and woman must suffer bondage in the world of sin. But when we earnestly cry out to God, He hears and He delivers.

Exodus 2:23-24 - "...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."

"Who Am I?"

There are times when we all feel that we are unworthy to serve the Lord. But God will give us courage to fulfill every task. He never calls us to do a job without empowering us to do it. Moses was VERY reluctant to accept the call of God to deliver Israel from Pharaoh, but God had answers to all his objections. God will surely enable us.

Exodus 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?"

Moses Interviews God

What do you want to know about God? What do you need to know about His will for your life? Ask Him. It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but it is the honor of kings to search it out. God delights in our interest in Him.

Exodus 3:13 - "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?"

I AM

Moses asked God His name, so he could tell the people. God said, "I AM." It means "the self-existent one." It also means, "the cause." Nothing else in the universe existed before God, and without Him, nothing would exist. His spirit nature is the primordial stuff - more elemental than atoms, particles, waves, hadrons, quarks, leptons and preons. God is the basis of all things.

Exodus 3:14 - "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."

Ye Shall Not Go Empty

How on earth could Moses ever evacuate two million Jews from Egypt? How on earth could such a multitude survive such an upheaval and transition? Well, he certainly could not do it if not for the mighty hand of God to work miracle after miracle in their behalf. NEVER underestimate the power of God. Israel left with a vast horde of Egypt's riches.

Exodus 3:21 - "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:"

What Is That In Thy Hand?

I love this vast spiritual principle. God uses whatever you have available. Never underestimate God's ability to use ordinary things mightily. Moses had a stick in his hand. God turned it into a snake. He parted the Red Sea with it. He drew water out of a rock with it. That was the mightiest stick in the history of man, but only because God Almighty made it so. What is in YOUR hand?

Exodus 4:2 - "And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod."

Aggravating Prayers

Moses actually made God angry by his cop-out excuse-making prayers. He wanted God to send somebody else to do the job. God promised to send Aaron to help him. He gave Moses some impressive miracle-working powers (turning sticks to snakes, a hand to leprosy, and water to blood). Some times our prayers aggravate God, but He graciously answers anyway.

Exodus 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."

I Will Be With Thy Mouth

When God calls a man, He assumes full responsibility for his future. God assured Moses that He would teach him everything he should say to Pharaoh. God also promised that Moses would "do signs" with the rod he carried with him. God foretold Moses of all the plagues He would send to Egypt and how Pharaoh would respond. Moses simply had to follow God's leading, and he did for forty more years.

Exodus 4:12 - "Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."

Firstborn

God instructed Moses to inform Pharaoh that Israel was God's firstborn. If Pharaoh would not free Israel, God would destroy Pharaoh's firstborn. God claimed Abraham's firstborn - "thine ONLY SON Isaac" (as if Ishmael had never been born). When Esau and Jacob were born, Esau despised his role as firstborn, so God claimed Jacob as his firstborn. This is not saying that Israel was God's first son, "because ALL the firstborn are mine," Numbers 3:13.

Exodus 4:22 - "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn."

A Bloody Husband

Zipporah was Moses' wife, daughter of a Midianite priest whom he met during his personal exile. His name was Reuel, later referred to as Jethro (possibly a priestly title meaning "excellency"). Zipporah was hostile about the Jewish circumcision, refusing to allow Moses to circumcise their two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, until God forced the issue by threatening to kill Moses. Their disagreement was so sharp that Moses sent her back to her father for a while. The entire family rejoined Moses later.

Exodus 4:26 - "...then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision."

Aaron

You have to appreciate the timing of this miracle. Moses had been in the wilderness and had not seen his brother, Aaron for forty years. But after meeting God at the burning bush, God promised to send Aaron. Moses returned home to collect his wife and children. Aaron suddenly showed up. There was no postal service, telephones, or Internet. The only line of communication between Moses and Aaron was God.

Exodus 4:27 - "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."

When Expectations Backfire

Moses did what God told him to do. He and Aaron presented themselves to Pharaoh and delivered the message God gave him. But instead of freeing Israel, Pharaoh punished them harsher. God often allows our enemies to rage before He smites them. It may look like our prayers and obedient actions have totally backfired, but they haven't. Moses complained, but God assured him that judgment was coming for Pharaoh.

Exodus 5:22 - "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?"

Jehovah - LORD

Whenever you see the word LORD in all capital letters in the King James Version of the Bible, it is rendered thus from the Hebrew "YHWH," otherwise rendered "Jehovah." The Hebrew language contains no vowels as does the English. Many Orthodox Jews refuse to pronounce YHWH, so the word LORD is used. Either way, it means "self-existent One." In this verse, "God Almighty" is derived from "El Shaddai."

Exodus 6:3 - "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."

How Shall Pharaoh Hearken?

I probably would have asked the same question. "God, why should I believe the king of Egypt will listen to me?" But God had an answer. "I have made you a god in Pharaoh's eyes. And your brother, Aaron, will be your prophet." God can make a mountain out of a molehill. He can make ordinary men stand before kings and prevail. Stop seeing yourself through YOUR eyes and see yourself through God's eyes.

Exodus 6:30 - "...Moses said before the LORD, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?"

Futile Signs

Jesus criticized the Pharisees, saying, "an evil generation seeketh after a sign." That did not mean that God is unwilling to give miraculous signs to prove His power and glory. But God knows how fickle and self-possessed most men are. He knows that unless a man has faith toward God, no miracles on earth will save him. Few men ever saw more of the miraculous power of God than Pharaoh. Avoid the fatal trap of unbelief!

Exodus 7:3 - "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt."

Take Away The Frogs!

The second plague God sent upon Egypt by Moses was frogs. Frogs were everywhere - bedchambers, kitchen ovens, even in bread dough. Pharaoh begged Moses to ask God to "take away the frogs!" Moses said, "WHEN?"

Unbelievably, Pharaoh said, "TOMORROW!" Tomorrow?? Even today, people are as foolish as Pharaoh was, ignorantly postponing repentance and obedience even in calamitous times. Why not right now?

Exodus 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."

This Is The Finger Of God

Pharaoh promised to let Israel go free if Moses took away the frogs. Moses cried out to God because of the frogs, and God immediately killed the frogs in the houses, villages and fields. They piled them up until the whole land stank. But Pharaoh reneged. So God sent a plague of flies by Moses. Pharaoh's magicians tried to copy the miracle to appease Pharaoh, but could not. Ultimately, NOBODY will ever beat God at His game.

Exodus 8:19 - "Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God."

That Nation Will I Judge

When God visited Abraham during the horror of great darkness, Israel's deliverance from Egypt was prophesied. "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." Moses executed ten plagues on Egypt, and Israel walked out with their jewels.

Exodus 9:14 - "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."

Intreat the Lord

God sent ten horrifying plagues upon Egypt. Waters turned to blood. Frogs. Lice. Flies. Diseased livestock. Boils on men and beasts. Hail mixed with fire. Locusts. Black darkness. Death of all firstborn. Little by little, Pharaoh seemed to be humbling. He begged Moses to pray for him. But every time, Pharaoh double-crossed Moses. Do you nullify the force of your prayers by returning to sin?

Exodus 9:28 - "Intreat the LORD (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunders and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer."

Phony Promises

What do you call a person who promises to do good as long as there is an impending threat of severe punishment, but as soon as they think they can get by with mischief, they quickly break their promises and return to their old tricks? A con-man? A politician? Pharaoh was more. He was a cold-blooded rebel against God. Sounds like many in our generation.

Exodus 9:34 - "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."

When Darkness Shines

When God sent darkness upon Egypt by Moses, the Egyptians could not see each other for days. But the Jews could see! Crossing the Red Sea, a cloud darkened Pharaoh's army, but shined light on Israel! In the world's darkest hour, God's people have light!

Exodus 10:23: "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." Exodus 14:20: "...it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these"

I Will See Thy Face No More

Back in Noah's day, God said that His Spirit would not always strive with man. Sometimes, God decides that He will not waste any more time with certain people. That is a frightening truth. After Pharaoh played diabolical games with Moses, God said, in effect, "that's all - no more!" God judged all the firstborn of Egypt. Pharaoh's son died. Egypt suffered profound judgment. Beware, lest YOU cross the point of no return.

Exodus 10:29 - "And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more."

No Death Angel

Maybe you heard somewhere that a death angel passed through Egypt, killing all the firstborn. But you heard wrong. God did not send a death angel. HE came down! "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," (Exodus 12:29).

Exodus 11:4 - "And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt."

Passover

Passover marks the BIRTH of the nation of Israel. Until that fateful night, the children of Israel were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. God judged Egypt, but Israel was saved by the blood of the lamb they sacrificed that night. Passover foreshadowed Jesus' saving blood which was shed 1400 years later.

Exodus 12:13 - "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."

Worship at Passover

The Israelites marked their doorposts with blood from the "passover" lamb.

Those who observed the Passover feast were protected when God judged the Egyptians. At midnight, Egypt suffered calamity, as millions of firstborn died. But Israel lost not a soul. They bowed their heads and worshipped God. Thank God for His salvation.

Exodus 12:27 - "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."

Feast of Unleavened Bread

The seven days following Passover culminate in the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Jews celebrate deliverance from slavery in Egypt by the mighty hand of God under Moses' leadership. Wine and flatbread are served around a family table, with men, women and children hearing the story of the Exodus read aloud, and thanksgiving given to God for making Israel a nation. By this example, Christians should remember to give thanks for salvation through Jesus' blood.

Exodus 13:6 - "Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the LORD."

Stand Still

God deterred Israel from escaping through Philistine territory because He wanted to avoid war. Their route seemed senseless, but God knew what He was doing. Pharaoh pursued them with his full army, and the Red Sea locked them in. But God loves impossible situations. Just stand still and let Him work.

Exodus 14:13 - "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 Red Sea

In the "Song of Moses," the dramatic Red Sea crossing is rehearsed and celebrated. Many modern archaeological discoveries seem to confirm the scriptures. Egyptian chariots, wheels, weapons and even skeletons have been discovered at the bottom of the sea. But Israel came out of their "baptism" alive and well!

Exodus 15:19 - "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."

Miriam the Prophetess

God called the whole family into service - Moses, Aaron and Miriam. At the beginning, young Miriam negotiated with Pharaoh's daughter for Moses' mother, Jochebed, to be his nursemaid. Now all three children are leading the new nation of Israel. Miriam played her tambourine and led the multitude in

praising and worshiping God for taking them safely through the Red Sea. Families who serve God together will see wonderful, glorious things.

Exodus 15:21 - "Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

None Of These Diseases

Modern science now knows how dangerous many of the medical practices of the ancient world were. Multitudes died due to unsanitary and misguided medical practices. Israel's health and dietary laws seemed strange, but were divinely insightful.

Exodus 15:26 - "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee."

God Provides An Oasis

Elim is only briefly mentioned in Exodus, but it was Israel's first encampment past the Red Sea. It was an oasis of seventy palm trees and twelve wells of water. But immediately after departing Elim, the people began to murmur, in a place called (coincidentally?) the wilderness of Sin.

Exodus 16:1 - "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."

The Manna

When God led the children of Israel from Egypt into the wilderness, He fed them miraculously with manna. Manna means "what is it?" It was nutritious bread sent by God from heaven daily to over a million people for forty years. It tasted like "wafers made with honey" (Exodus 16:31). God instructed them to gather only one day's supply, except on the sixth day, they could gather extra for the Sabbath. Otherwise, it always spoiled overnight. Never doubt God's ability to meet your needs.

Exodus 16:23 - "They gathered manna every morning."

Gluttony Punished

God would surely have fed Israel promptly enough if they had not been so quick to murmur. But they would not restrain themselves. So God sent manna, with a commandment not to gather more than needed - no hoarding. Not surprisingly, some people could not resist over-indulging. God surprised them by rotting the excess. God disapproves of too much, too fast in just about every area of life.

Exodus 16:20 - "Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them."

Prayer Under Threat

A lot has been said about Moses getting water out of a rock at Rephidim. But we seldom contemplate his circumstances. The people were "chiding" with Moses - that means "grappling," "tossing," "wrangling," "contending," with the poor guy. Most every man of God who ever lived has faced the wrath of people he was called to lead. But God legitimizes His anointed in inconceivable ways. Let the skeptics explain water out of a rock.

Exodus 17:4 - "And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me."

The Amalekites

This verse has enormous significance. The Amalekites declared war on Israel in the wilderness. Joshua led the defense. Moses stood on a nearby hill while Aaron and Hur held his hands up to God. Joshua won a great victory. God declared war on these people until the end of time. Saul was stripped of his kingship for failing to annihilate them. Samuel killed their king, Agag. David fought them. Hezekiah fought them. Esther defeated Haman, an Agagite (Amalekite). These descendants of Esau are perennial enemies of Israel.

Exodus 17:8 - "Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim."

Jethro

Moses benefited immensely from a godly father-in-law. Jethro led the elders of Israel in making a sacrifice unto the Lord with rejoicing over how God led Israel out of Egypt. When he saw the people burdening Moses heavily with their day-to-day problems, Jethro offered the solution of establishing judges over tens, fifties, hundreds and thousands. The seventy elders of Israel were eventually selected from these.

Exodus 18:5 - "And Jethro, Moses' father in law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God."

Going Up To God

Moses met God in Mount Sinai. That is when and where he received the Ten Commandments. Nothing is said about prayer, but in fact, the entire event was about Moses and God in conversation. Sometimes our conversations with God seem more like business as usual than like prayers, but that is the stuff of relationships. You do not have to be on your knees, or speaking in a sanctimonious tone of voice to have priceless communion with God.

Exodus 19:3 - "And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain."

A Kingdom of Priests

Even before God revealed the Tabernacle plan to Moses, He said Israel was

to be a kingdom of priests. A priest is an intercessor between God and men. Israel would be God's ministers-servants on earth. For all of time, Israel would be a message-bearer for the Creator of all men. In good times and in bad, God has a purpose for Israel. It will never be annihilated. Israel bore the great High Priest, Messiah, and the twelve apostles.

Exodus 19:6 - "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

Setting Boundaries

God forbid the congregation to come up into the holy mountain, and ordered Moses to set bounds to prevent any intruders. The man of God set the boundary. In today's church, men of God are responsible for defining borders to keep the church from transgressions. Men of God who fail this are responsible for senseless casualties.

Exodus 19:12 - "And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death."

God's Sound and Light Show

Modern rock concerts use pyrotechnics and state-of-the-art light and sound equipment to dazzle their audiences. But when Almighty God presented the Ten Commandments, the mountain quaked, covered in smoke, lightnings, and thunders. God spoke from a great ball of fire surrounded by thick darkness. A heavenly trumpet sounded so loudly that two million people ran far away from the mountain.

Exodus 19:16 - "...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."

Mount Sinai

Mount Sinai was in the Wilderness of Sin, (some believe) named after the "moon god," Sin. But it was not a moon god who made it famous. Today, "scholars" could drive you crazy with arguments about where Sinai is, but it does not really matter. What matters is that God spoke to Moses and Israel there, and forever changed the world.

Exodus 19:18 - "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly."

The Premise of Prayer

Prayer is the living connection between you and God. Dialogue, not monologue, is the stuff of relationships. How do you know and bond with others without conversation? Can a husband and wife spend happy years together without meaningful conversations? Can parents and children truly bond without frank and honest discussions? Even so, the bilateral exchanges of my words with God's binds me to Him. I pour out my heart to Him and He responds compassionately. Prayers are the terms of endearment.

Exodus 19:19 - "Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice."

The Ten Commandments

Before God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, He had already done many mighty miracles in behalf of the children of Israel (i.e., Deliverance from Pharaoh, Red Sea crossing, Manna, Quail, etc.). If they had been grateful, they should have been eager to conform to His commandments. But God had to remind them of His goodness. Let us remember that we owe Him far more than He will ever ask of us.

Exodus 20:2 - "I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

First Commandment - No Other Gods

What did any other god ever do for you? The God who created everything, including YOU and ME, deserves all the glory. It is a shame that He has to tell us not to worship anybody else. You can call it a commandment if you want, but it begs to be appreciated as a stark reality. There ARE no other gods. Whoever created all this universe, OWNS it. Worshiping anything else is just plain stupid. That may not be grammatically correct, but it is theologically incontrovertible.

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

Second Commandment - No Idolatry

Idolatry existed long before Abraham and his descendants worshiped the one, true God. But God will not share His glory with any other. Certainly, nothing man-made, whether carved, molten (molded) or beaten, could ever hear, and know, and respond like the true and living God.

Exodus 20:4-6 - "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them."

Third Commandment - Keep His Name Holy

God demands our respect. He is holy, even beyond our wildest imaginations. He will not tolerate disrespect, sacrilege, mockery, or any kind of insult. God is not mocked. This third commandment instructs us to protect the sacredness of God's name. It is NOT a swear word, nor to be used in making oaths. Be safe. Give maximum honor to the Lord's name.

Exodus 20:7 - "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

Fourth Commandment - Sabbath

What a brilliant idea! One day off every week! God thought of it first. Rest! Every person needs rest. This is the only one of the ten commandments not

taught in the New Testament, because God gives believers rest every day when the Comforter comes in - the baptism of the Holy Spirit. (Isaiah 28:11-12.)

Exodus 20:8-11 - "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work."

Fifth Commandment - Honor Father and Mother

This is the first commandment with a promised blessing. At the very least, your parents have a 15-20 year experience ahead of you. They provided shelter, food and clothing while you were otherwise helpless. But that is only a fraction of countless reasons why we should respect, reverence, esteem, even obey our parents - our elders! Our world would be radically improved if this generation would obey this command.

Exodus 20:12 - "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."

Sixth Commandment - Thou Shalt Not Kill

Here is a stark warning from the Giver of all life to all the potential Takers of life. DON'T DO IT! There is no greater created miracle in all the universe than the human creature. Not even the angels have freedom of choice, or the ability to freely partake of both mortality and immortality, including their respective worlds. This marvelous entity called mankind is God's pride and joy. Not one of us should have the arbitrary prerogative to terminate another. And we do not.

Exodus 20:13 - "Thou shalt not kill."

Seventh Commandment - No Adultery

An adulterer is someone who is married, but commits sexual intercourse with someone other than their lawful spouse. *Strong's Concordance* compares adultery to apostasy. An apostate abandons faith, departing former beliefs. Adulterers abandon wedlock - breaking vows and destroying the sanctity of matrimony. Since marriage typifies God's relationship with His holy people, an adulterer grievously trespasses against holy principle. The Hebrew language from which "thou shalt not" comes is "lo, lo, lo," which is "no, no, no" or "never, never, never" commit adultery. God says, "NEVER commit adultery."

Exodus 20:14 - "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Eighth Commandment - Do Not Steal

God supplies all our needs according to His riches. Every person receives what God has appointed to him. According to the talents and abilities that God gives, we earn our daily sustenance. God forbids you and me from taking anything that belongs to others. That is THEIR portion. Imagine the world descended into chaos, where no one could keep that which he has worked to attain; a world without borders, boundaries, privacy or safety. That is the world of thieves. Obedience to God's laws would prevent such a world.

Exodus 20:15 - "Thou shalt not steal."

Ninth Commandment - No False Witness

God defends the integrity of the individual by forbidding false testimony. Slander is a heinous, grievous sin against anyone. Lives are destroyed by lies, false accusations and misrepresentations. God demands truth and right-doing in our relationships with others. The devastating sinfulness of malicious gossip and scandalous rumor-mongering ranks equally with murder and adultery in this context. If you cannot say something nice about someone, do not say anything at all. Get the stick out of your own eye before assailing their splinter.

Exodus 20:16 - "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

Tenth Commandment - Do Not Covet

Coveting is a synonym for lust. When Jesus warned that lusting after a woman was adulterous, He spoke of covetous desire. Since the Garden of Eden, God has always forbidden certain things. The desire for ANYTHING God forbids is covetousness. Learn what belongs to you, and leave everything else alone. The forbidden fruit is NEVER good.

Exodus 20:17 - "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."

God is Specific

God gave Adam everything in the garden except one specific tree. The story of Cain and Abel taught that God insists on a specific offering (blood sacrifices - not garden produce). Later, God even made specific requirements for the altar itself - unhewn stone. Learn a lesson. If you want to receive God's blessings, you have to do everything His specific way.

Exodus 20:25 - "...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."

Sundry Laws

Besides the Ten Commandments, God gave Moses countless "miscellaneous" laws. Every aspect of domestic life was considered. Laws about family, commerce, criminal and civil laws, moral, even sexual codes were defined. God's laws were to define right and wrong, with a prescription for punishment for non-compliance. Centuries earlier, Hammurabi of Babylon had written sundry laws on the now-famous stele, but his code has mostly perished. Today, in governments and societies around the world, the profound influence of "Moses" law can be seen.

Exodus 21:1 (to 22:31) - "Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them."

Let it Unfold

God never planned for Israel to take possession of the entire promised land in one large conquest. He knew there would be enormous challenges and changes to adapt to, even in God's will. Great victories best come in increments. Therefore, we should not fret when improvements in our lives come slowly. A rosebud must unfold gradually. Any effort to force it open will only destroy it. Relax. Be patient - God is!

Exodus 23:30 - "By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land."

By Little and Little

This prophecy is based on a divine principle. Everything God does is progressive. "By little and little I will drive them out..." is God's daily reminder that HE is giving us the land, and that we are not taking the land by our own brilliance or devices. He truly governs our daily progress, sometimes giving more, sometimes giving less than we expect, but always reminding us that He is the benevolent master of all things.

Exodus 23:30 - "By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land."

The Body of Heaven

We are forced to reconcile verses that appear to contradict. Again and again, the scripture says that God is invisible. But the seventy elders saw "the body of heaven in his clearness," on His throne upon a sapphire foundational stone. The key word here is "clearness." They saw a bright shining light representing God's presence. See, [The Oneness of God](#)

Exodus 24:10 - "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."

The Tabernacle Plan

The Tabernacle plan was as prophetic as anything in the Bible. Virtually everything about the Tabernacle and its furnishings carried a message about the coming Messiah and His plan to redeem men from their sins. If Moses had not followed God's pattern meticulously, a profound message would have been skewed or totally lost.

Exodus 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."



The Ark of the Covenant

The first item God commissioned for the Tabernacle was the Ark of the Covenant. Built of shittim wood, roughly about 4ft-L x 3ft-W x 3ft-H, overlaid with and crowned with gold. Staves permanently slid through rings on four corners for carrying by priests. The "testimony" (Ten Commandments) inside was covered by a beaten-golden "mercy seat" with two winged cherubims facing each other. It prefigured Jesus Christ; the embodiment and mouthpiece of everything divine.

Exodus 25:22 - "...there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat."



The Table of Shewbread

The second item prescribed for the Tabernacle was the Table of Shewbread, made of shittim wood and overlaid and crowned with gold. It had rings and staves so the priests could carry it when they traveled, and sat past the altar, before the golden candlestick. It ALWAYS contained a loaf of bread for each tribe of Israel. It foreshadowed Jesus Christ, the bread of life. God wanted us to know that there is always bread on His table. Hungry? Jesus will fill you.

Exodus 25:30 - "And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me alway."



The Golden



Candlestick

Jews call it the Menorah. It was a beaten-gold candlestick with seven branches. Jesus is the light of the world. The oil that burned in the light represents the Holy Ghost of Jesus Christ burning in the seven original New Testament churches. Now, His Spirit fills everyone who will receive it. The candlestick was to burn continuously. This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine.

Exodus 25:37 - "Thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it."

The Tabernacle Curtains and Boards

God told Moses every detail of the Tabernacle, including the number of boards with their measurements, wood type, and overlays. He defined all the curtains and coverings by material, color and measurement, and how they were to be placed. The principal colors were blue, purple and scarlet. The metals were gold and silver. The skins were goat and badger. It is inconceivable that a God of such detail doesn't care about the minutiae of our lives.

Exodus 26:30 - "And thou shalt rear up the Tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount."

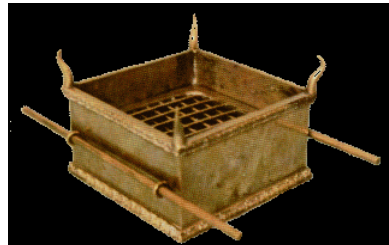
The Veil

The veil prevented anyone from entering the Most Holy Place where the Ark of the Covenant was. The veil was blue, purple and scarlet. Blue is the color of water, and red is the color of blood. Purple is the color of royalty - kingship. By the blood of Calvary and the water of baptism, the Son of Man, prince of peace, Jesus, was exalted to royalty - King of Kings.

Exodus 26:31 - "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."

The Brazen Altar

Everything that happened in the Tabernacle began at the brazen altar. Animals were killed and burned. Since the Garden of Eden, God required death for sin. At the altar, the debt began to be paid, the blood was shed, and remission of sins began. Without shedding blood, there can be no remission for sins. This animal blood appeased God until the perfect lamb was slain - Jesus Christ. ALL remission of sins ultimately comes by HIS blood.



Exodus 27:1,8 - "And thou shalt make an altar... as it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it."

The Court

The Tabernacle plan included only one entrance, and that was on the east side. Nearly all the pagan religions worshiped the sun god, facing east. God made them face west when they entered the tabernacle. The single entrance typifies Jesus Christ, the ONLY door of our salvation. There is salvation in no other. We must turn our backs on all other gods.

Exodus 27:13,14 - "...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."

The Priests' Holy Garments

A priest is an intercessor between God and men. From its inception, the priesthood was the highest office a man could occupy. Accordingly, God instructed Moses to dress them appropriately. Holy garments would be glorious and beautiful. Herein is a great precept. Our appearance should reflect our value. The world would have us "dumb-down", dressing grungy, sloppily, like worthless creatures. God would have us look holy, glorious, beautiful. Are you a godly person? Dress the part!

Exodus 28:2 - "And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty."

Bells and Pomegranates

The High Priest's robe had golden bells and woven pomegranates around its hemline. Many theories about their symbolism are mostly mystical, contradictory and unprovable. Pomegranates are perceived as a symbol of the righteousness of the Priesthood. The joyous sound of the bells notified outsiders that the High Priest was still alive after entering the Holy of Holies - he had not died.

Exodus 28:35 - "And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the LORD, and when he cometh out, that he die not."

The Consecration of the Priesthood

The Priesthood was consecrated AFTER the Tabernacle was complete. It took a Tabernacle plan to accomplish the task. The blood sacrifices, unleavened bread, anointing oil, water of washing, garments, ephod, mitre, various offerings - ALL were necessary to make the priest holy. Similarly, the New Testament church must be assembled before Jesus returns to ascend to His High Priesthood in Jerusalem for 1000 years.

Exodus 29:44,45 - "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."

The Altar of Incense

The Altar of Incense was roughly four-feet-cubed, gold-plated, gold-crowned shittim wood, with horns on the top corners, and rings for the staves with which the priests carried it. It stood before the Veil, immediately outside the Mercy Seat, where the High Priest met God. The Priest offered holy incense morning and evening, perpetually before the Lord. Once annually, a blood atonement was made here. Incense represents the sweet odors of the prayers of the saints.

Exodus 30:1 - "...thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it."

The Brazen Laver

After the Priest sacrificed at the Brazen Altar, he had to wash himself at the Brazen Laver before entering the Holy Place. The laver is a typological and prophetic symbol of water baptism in the New Testament. The altar represents repentance. The laver followed, illustrating our need to be baptized for the remission of our sins after we have repented.

Exodus 30:18,20 - "Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal... When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not."

The Holy Anointing Oil

God called for a specially concocted holy anointing oil to be used in the

Tabernacle. The proprietary apothecary formula was forbidden to ANYONE outside the Tabernacle. It had myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, cassia, and olive oil, all in specific measurements. Everything in the Tabernacle had to be anointed (rubbed) with it, including the priests. This oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit which, in the New Testament church, comes to fill every believer.

Exodus 30:25 - "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."

Anointed Craftsmen

God gave Moses explicit instructions for the construction of all artifacts, vessels and furniture in the Tabernacle. Better yet, He called specific men into service and gave them powerful anointing to do that work. When God wants a thing done, He will bring it to pass. Jesus' parable of the talents indicates that our abilities multiply as we apply ourselves to fulfill His will. You will do an outstanding job. God will enable you!

Exodus 31:3 - "I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship."

The Law

God instructed Moses to command the people to eat unleavened bread at the first passover, before escaping Egypt, saying, "that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth." The bread of God represents His awesome law, which nourishes us all. God's word is our life. Manna from heaven nurtured their bodies, but the Law handed down at Sinai gave life to the nation.

Exodus 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."

Moses the Intercessor

After meeting God in Sinai, Moses found Israel riotously worshipping a golden calf. God started to utterly destroy them, offering to make Moses a great nation instead. But Moses wanted to be *blotted out of the book of life* if God would not save Israel. That was dramatic intercession!

Exodus 32:31-32 - "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."

Forbidden Ornaments

This is one of the most overlooked and neglected items in the Bible. Aaron and the children of Israel infuriated God Almighty for creating and worshipping the golden calf. It all began with the jewelry they brought from Egypt. After that incident, God utterly hated jewelry on His people. He demanded they give it to Him. Read my essay on the topic, entitled ["Ornaments of Jewelry."](#) and you will see that God spoke to the issue all throughout the Bible.

Exodus 33:6 - "And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb."

Face to Face with God

God punished Israel for worshiping the golden calf, but Moses' intercession saved their lives. Immediately, God again promised to give them a land flowing with milk and honey. But the people were unmoved. Ultimately, it was Moses' profound relationship with God that salvaged the entire project. Israel could easily see that when Moses entered the Tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and the voice of God spoke to Moses. Remember, whole nations can depend on one man's prayers.

Exodus 33:11 - "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend."

Show Me Thy Glory

God is invisible. Three times, the Bible says, "No man hath seen God at any time." When Moses asked to see God's glory, God showed him His "back parts." That could not possibly mean God's back, buttocks or thighs. He is invisible. Moses saw God's past goodness - the Genesis story revealed! 1400 years later, Moses saw the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Exodus 33:23 - "I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen."

The Stone Tablets

The first set of the Ten Commandments were hewn and written on stone by God Himself. Moses broke them in rage when he found Israel worshiping the golden calf. God made Moses prepare new tablets and bring them into the mountain where God would again write the law. Those tablets were stored in the Ark of the Covenant for centuries.

Exodus 34:1 - "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."

Jealous God

God promised Israel a holy land, but commanded them to remove every false god. God will not share His glory or tolerate spiritual adultery. Our love for Him must be undivided. Love not the world.

Exodus 34:12 - "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: For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."

Moses' Fast

Moses spent forty days in the holy mount, presumably without food. God miraculously engraved the Ten Commandments on stone tablets. Moses descended and found Israel sinfully rioting. He broke the tablets in fury, and returned up the mount for another forty days without food and water – a truly miraculous fast. Ordinarily, no man could attempt that and survive. Nevertheless, his fasting yielded supernatural results. Holy fasting will sanctify you unto God with miraculous results.

Exodus 34:28 - "...he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water."

Forfeiting Gold

Nowadays, people do not talk about this much, but it is a big deal in the ancient story. After the children of Israel offended God so profoundly by worshiping the golden calf, they turned in all their gold. Eventually, God commanded that all gold be surrendered either to the Tabernacle or the kingdom - no privately held gold.

Exodus 35:22 - "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."

Aholiab and Bezaleel

Two men oversaw the creation and production of the entire Tabernacle and all its furnishings, in a VAST range of workmanship - metalworkers, stone cutters, woodworkers, tailors, weavers, furniture makers, apothecaries, and more. They made everything from incense and oil to the priests' robes, even the Ark of the Covenant. When God gives you a job, He will fully enable you.

Exodus 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."

The Tabernacle Materials

God instructed Moses to collect a free-will offering from the people to construct and furnish the Tabernacle. Gold, silver, brass, linens, skins, wood, oil, spices, precious stones, and much more. "...whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD," (Exodus 35:5). Soon, Moses had more than he needed. God's work is the most worthy cause. We should be excited to give all we can to support His work.

Exodus 36:7 - "For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much."

Wood Overlaid With Gold

The Tabernacle furniture was made of shittim wood, overlaid with gold, silver or brass. The furnishings and walls inside the Holy Place were covered in gold. The Ark represents Christ. Wood symbolized the humanity of Christ; gold, His deity. God said, in Isaiah 13:12, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold." Shittim wood is now obscure. No one knows with certainty

what kind of tree it was. The significance of our humanity will be obscured in heaven after God changes our corruption to incorruption.

Exodus 37:1 - "Bezaleel made the ark of shittim wood."

Sweetness

God ordered sweet-smelling oil and sweet-smelling incense to be used perpetually in the Tabernacle. We are so accustomed to the odious and unsavory effects of sin in the world that we forget that everything in God's universe was beautiful beyond our ability to comprehend BEFORE SIN came. God demanded that His earthly house be as beautiful and pleasing as it could be, reminding us that in His presence are pleasures forevermore.

Exodus 37:29 - "And he made the holy anointing oil, and the pure incense of sweet spices, according to the work of the apothecary."

Touch Not

Everything in the Tabernacle was portable, because Israel was on a journey. God required them to put rings on the four corners of the holy furniture to slide staves into for the priests to lift and carry the items. The Ark of the Covenant could NEVER be touched by any man, and the staves must never be removed. This teaches reverence and sanctity for the things of God and the ministry. Modern Christians desperately need to re-learn this lesson.

Exodus 38:7 - "...he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the altar, to bear it withal."

The Breastplate

The priest's breastplate was attached to the ephod (vestment) by golden rings. It had twelve stones, each representing a tribe of Israel. This dramatized the role of the High Priest as the intercessor before God in behalf of the twelve tribes. Some believe that individual stones became illuminated when God had a special message for a particular tribe. A man of God carries the burden of the people continually over his heart.

Exodus 39:8 - "And he made the breastplate of cunning work, ...It was foursquare; ...And they set in it four rows of stones."

Obeying a Mystery

Moses' team created the entire Tabernacle with literally hundreds of intricate details as prescribed by God. The furnishings, the consumables (incense, oil, sacrifices), the garments (robes, mitres, vestments, etc.) and much, much more. There is no way they could have understood the amazing prophetic significance of all those things. In like manner, we must also obey God many times when we have NO CLUE what His purpose is.

Exodus 39:43 - "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."

The Glory Cloud

The ultimate purpose of the Tabernacle was to be a place where people could see God's glory. On the first day the first service was conducted, God covered the place with His glory. Jesus built the church (us) for the same reason - to be a habitation of God's glory.

Exodus 40:34-35 - "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."

Follow the Cloud

From the first day the Tabernacle was in service, for thirty-eight years, God's glory was manifest as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night in the sight of all the people. When the cloud moved, they moved. When it stayed, they stayed. Always follow God where ever He leads.

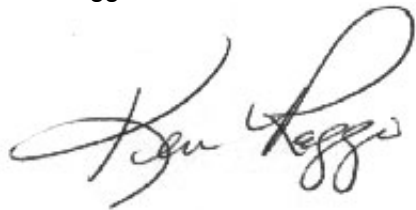
Exodus 40:36-37 - "And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up."

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