

# *Exodus*

## *Introduction*

In Hebrew the name of this book is not “Exodus,” meaning “departure,” but in Hebrew it is, literally, “these are the names.” **twmV hlaw** The name Exodus came from the Greek translation which was made in Alexandria, Egypt in the third century BCE. This translation is known as the Septuagint, and is usually noted as LXX. Exodus describes the people of Israel leaving Egypt and their travels to the Promised Land. Additionally it gives information about the establishment of a place of worship, and above all, the Ten Commandments.

Exodus begins with the people of Israel as slaves in Egypt and Moses confrontation with Pharaoh over the Israelites moving from Egypt To culminate this confrontation plagues appear, causing much unrest, pain and grief for the Egyptians. The account then describes the movement of the people of Israel across the peninsula of Sinai, the pause at Mount Sinai when Moses goes to the top of the mountain, speaks with God, and receives the Ten Words, i.e. the Ten Commandments.

The book then transitions into detailed rules, sometimes symbolic in meaning, for the preparation of the tent of meeting, formerly called the tabernacle and its furnishings, being a kind of blue print of that which is to be prepared as a place of worship and as the dwelling place of God. Further instructions come in Leviticus, which gives the priests information as to how to conduct worship, offer sacrifices, and dealing with specific needs of the people. Because of this, Leviticus can be called the sequel to Exodus.

Some specific places described in the travels of the people have not been located, and their precise locations have been lost over the centuries. Additionally, we are not absolutely certain where the Israelites lived in Egypt, nor can we be certain as to who the pharaoh of the Exodus might be. While the answers to these questions would be interesting, and scholars have tried, without agreement, to answer these questions, it is not necessary that we have answers to all the questions, and we can still understand the meaning and significance of Exodus.

Scholars are generally in agreement that Exodus was not necessarily written by Moses, as had been held in earlier centuries. Recent scholarship seems to be turning to some degree from the Graf-Wellhausen Theory of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and gradually thinking of the sources as being streams of written or oral tradition that came together under the pen of an unknown editor, or editors, to prepare the book of Exodus in the form we have today.

The book not only tells of travels but reveals a clear understanding of the concept of the “name of God,” which across the centuries has been honored.

Some of the themes of the book reveal additional understanding about the following:

1. The name and character of God
2. The God who is holy.
3. The God who remembers.
4. The God who acts in saving his people.
5. The God who acts in judgment.
6. The God whose anger can be aroused.

7. The God who speaks.
8. The God who is transcendent.
9. The God who lives among his people.
10. The God who cares for his people.
11. The God who provides understanding and correction.

We have no knowledge of the date of the writing. Traditionalists would say it was during Moses' lifetime. Others feel it to be much later, in its final form. The exact time when the Israelites lived in Egypt is thought by some scholars feel they have found a reference in the Merneth's Stele, ca. 1220 BCE, which seems to have a cross-reference to Egyptian history.

There is a question as to where the "Red Sea" was crossed. First of all, in Hebrew the word is "yam sup," is better translated as "the Sea of Reeds." The translation, "Red Sea" comes from the Septuagint (LXX) and does not mean the area of the Red Sea found on 21<sup>st</sup> Century maps. There are two possible routes. The first is almost along the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea, along the northern edge of the Peninsula of Sinai, the other is called the Southern Route but is actually beginning in the central area of the peninsula, and then moves toward the south, following, rather closely, the southern coastline of the peninsula.

The exact location of Mount Sinai is also a mystery. Which one of several peaks was the actual Mount Sinai, climbed by Moses, is not clear. The Traditional location is marked, at the foot of the mountain, by the very ancient Greek Orthodox Monastery, St. Catherine's, which houses one of the most ancient libraries in the world.

The book falls into three parts:

1. The freeing of the people from Egyptian slavery.
2. God's contact with the people at Sinai.
3. The beginning of plans for a place of worship so the people might believe and respond in faith and action to their faith and their God.

The book, in Hebrew, in the Massoretic Text begins with the word "and," since it is, in a sense, the continuation of the story of Genesis.

As was the custom in Egypt, no mention is made of the Israelites being in Egypt and fleeing. Egyptian records never made mention of such events. They only recorded matters that were positive in the eyes of the Egyptian rulers.

Several times the Hebrew chapters and verses do not correspond with the chapters and verses in the English Bibles. In chapter 8, the heading for the chapter reads:

2. Frogs 8:1 – 14 [H.7:26 – 8:11].

The Hebrew chapters and verses are in the brackets. Similar notations are made in the text when the Hebrew chapters and verses differ.

# Exodus

## <CHAPTER 1>

### I. Preamble 1:1 – 22

#### A. Israel in Egypt 1:1 – 7

<sup>1</sup> These are the names of the sons of Israel who lived in Egypt with Jacob, each with his own family. <sup>2</sup> Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, <sup>3</sup> Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, <sup>4</sup> Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher. <sup>5</sup> These were all offspring of Jacob, who together [*with their families*] numbered seventy persons. <sup>6</sup> (Joseph was already in Egypt.) <sup>7</sup> Eventually Joseph died, as did all his brothers, as well as that entire generation. <sup>8</sup> Their descendants were very fertile and prolific, multiplying and increasing, and grew exceedingly strong, to the point that the land [*assigned to them*] was filled.

#### B. Israel Enslaved 1:8 – 14

<sup>8</sup> A new king ascended the throne of Egypt and he knew nothing about Joseph. <sup>9</sup> He reported to his people: “Be assured: the people of the Israelites are too numerous and too strong for us. <sup>10</sup> Together we will take careful steps to make sure that they will not increase any further, for if war were to come they might join forces with our enemy and become masters of our country. <sup>11</sup> Therefore they appointed gang foremen to supervise them and oppress them with forced labor. They built supply (*or, garrison*) cities, Pithom <sup>12</sup> and Rameses for Pharaoh. <sup>13</sup> The more they were subjected to cruel slavery, the more they multiplied, and spread to the point that the Egyptians were filled with fear and loathing. <sup>14</sup> The Egyptians ruthlessly imposed labor that the Israelites were forced to perform, making their lives bitter and their tasks difficult, making bricks and mortar and in every kind of field labor. The Egyptians were ruthless as they imposed tasks on the Israelites.

#### C. Prelude to Moses 1:15 – 22

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<sup>1</sup> The order of the names is the same as is found in Genesis 35:23 – 26.

<sup>2</sup> The LXX has 76 persons here and in Genesis 46:20. One Dead Sea Scroll has 75.

<sup>3</sup> The specific Pharaoh is not known. It is generally assumed it was one of the Pharaohs of the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty (1310 – 1299 BCE.) Some scholars feel it was Ramesses II, others say it was Seti I.

<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew is uncertain. TAN: “rise from the ground.”

<sup>5</sup> The name means: “house of the god Tum, (or, Atum.” The exact location is in question. Some scholars feel Pithom is Wadi Tumilai and Rameses was Timsan. Other scholars feel Tell er Reraben and another location in the same valley is the location. Other scholars feel the sites were at the eastern edge of the Nile Delta.

<sup>6</sup> Cf.: ANET pp. 259b, 470b.

15 The king of Egypt spoke to the mid-wives who provided help in birthing for the Hebrew women, one having the name Shiphrah and the other was named Purah <sup>7</sup> 16 “When you do your work as mid-wives to the Hebrew women and see them on the birth-stool, <sup>8</sup> if it is a boy, you are to kill it, if it is a girl, she is to live.” <sup>9</sup> 17 The mid-wives, however, were in awe of God and did not do what the king of Egypt had commanded them, but they let the boys live. 19 The mid-wives said to Pharaoh, “The reason the boys live is because these Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women. They are vigorous and they have a quick delivery. By the time we get there, the baby is already born. <sup>10</sup> 20 Because the mid-wives were in awe of God, God dealt kindly toward the mid-wives and the people increased in numbers and became very strong. 21 Because of their awe of God, he granted the mid-wives families. <sup>11</sup> 22 Then Pharaoh issued a command to all his people: “Every boy, born to the Hebrews, <sup>12</sup> is to be hurled into the Nile, but you are to let every girl of the Hebrews live.”

## <CHAPTER 2>

### *II. Preparation for Deliverance 2:1 – 7:13*

#### *A. God Provides for a Leader 2:1 – 25*

##### *1. Birth and Adoption of Moses 2:1 – 15a*

<sup>1</sup> Now a man from the house of Levi married a daughter of Levi. <sup>13</sup> <sup>2</sup> The woman conceived and bore a son, and seeing that he was a very fine baby, she hid him for three months. <sup>3</sup> When it became impossible for her to keep him any longer his mother made a basket of reeds (*or, a papyrus basket*), <sup>14</sup> and having daubed it with tar, <sup>15</sup> and, having placed the child in the basket, the basket was placed among the reeds along the river bank. <sup>4</sup> His sister stood some distance away to learn what would happen to him. <sup>5</sup> The daughter of Pharaoh (*or, the royal princess*) <sup>16</sup> came down to bathe at the river, along with her attendants who preceded her as they walked along the river bank. The daughter of Pharaoh saw the basket among the reeds, and ordered her attendants to retrieve it for her. <sup>6</sup> Upon opening the basket she saw the child, who was crying, and she was moved with pity, <sup>17</sup> saying, ‘It is one of the Hebrew’s children.’ <sup>7</sup> Just then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, ‘Would you like to have me call a wet nurse from among the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?’ <sup>18</sup> <sup>8</sup> Pharaoh’s daughter replied, ‘Go.’ The

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<sup>7</sup> In Hebrew there is a play on words in the last phrase, by changing one letter in the words. The names mean “beauty and splendor.”

<sup>8</sup> Literally: “the two stones” on which the women crouched (or knelt) when giving birth. Others describe Egyptian birth-stools as being made of brick or mortar and used as supports for women during delivery.

<sup>9</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 381d.

<sup>10</sup> Pharaoh was not too shrewd, for he was duped by the mid-wives.

<sup>11</sup> The Hebrew is unclear. Some translate: “gave them houses.”

<sup>12</sup> So: Samaritan Pentateuch & Targums. Hebrew lacks the word “Hebrews”

<sup>13</sup> A Hebrew legend says that Moses’ parents were separated for several years prior to his birth. The legend explains why Moses’ sister was old enough to speak to the daughter of Pharaoh and arrange for a wet nurse for the baby.

<sup>14</sup> I.e.: a miniature Nile rush basket. The story is similar to the birth story of Sargon of Agade. Cf.: ANET p. 119ac.

<sup>15</sup> Literally: “bitumen and pitch.”

<sup>16</sup> The apocrypha called her Tharmuth.

<sup>17</sup> Pharaoh’s daughter possessed a delicate sensitivity

<sup>18</sup> A very thinly veiled ruse.

girl left and called the child's mother. <sup>9</sup> Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take the child away and nurse him for me. I will provide payment of wages for you." <sup>19</sup> The woman then took the child and nursed it. <sup>10</sup> [*When he reached the age where he no longer nursed*] she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses for she said, "Because I drew him out of the water." <sup>20</sup>

### *2. Moses Discovers His People 2:11 – 15a*

<sup>11</sup> After Moses had grown up, he went out, one day, to his people, to see their burdens, <sup>21</sup> and saw an Egyptian beating <sup>22</sup> a Hebrew man, (one of his people). and he was filled with emotion. <sup>12</sup> He looked in all directions, and not seeing anyone, he killed <sup>23</sup> the Egyptian, hiding his body in the sand. <sup>13</sup> When he went out the next day he saw two Hebrew men fighting with each other. Moses said to the man who started the fight, <sup>24</sup> "Why did you strike your fellow?" <sup>14</sup> He replied, "Who made you a ruler and a judge among the people? Is it your intention to kill me the way you killed the Egyptian yesterday?" <sup>25</sup> <sup>15</sup> When Pharaoh learned of this he sought to kill Moses.

### *3. Moses in Exodus 2:15b – 23a*

Moses fled from Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian, <sup>26</sup> seating himself by a well. <sup>16</sup> The priest of Midian had seven daughters. <sup>27</sup> They came and drew water, filling the troughs, to water their father's flock. <sup>17</sup> However, some shepherds came and drove them away. Moses stood up and came to the defense of the daughters of the priest of Midian and watered their flock. <sup>18</sup> When they returned to their father Reuel <sup>28</sup> at an earlier time than usual he asked, "How did you manage to get home so soon today?" <sup>19</sup> They replied, "An Egyptian assisted us against the shepherds; he even drew water for us and watered the flock." <sup>20</sup> He asked his daughters, "Where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he might eat here." <sup>21</sup> Moses agreed to stay with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah. <sup>29</sup> <sup>22</sup> She gave birth to their son and Moses named him Gershom; for he said, "I have been an alien <sup>30</sup> who resides in a foreign land" <sup>31</sup> <sup>23</sup> After a period of many years the king of Egypt died. <sup>32</sup>

### *4. The Covenant With Abraham 2:23b – 25*

The people of Israel groaned under their slavery, and cried out for help. Out of their cries for help under slavery, their cries reached up to God. <sup>24</sup> God heard their

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<sup>19</sup> The Israelites took pride that Moses was raised by a Hebrew mother and was adopted by a princess of Egypt.

<sup>20</sup> The Hebrew word Moses, with different vowels but the same consonants would mean "to draw."

<sup>21</sup> The Hebrew word gives the thought of seeing – with emotion.

<sup>22</sup> The translation "beating" hardly seems adequate. A life for a life.

<sup>23</sup> To beat, kill or strike, in Hebrew all have the same root word and are various forms of the Hebrew verb.

<sup>24</sup> The Hebrew word that is used is one that would be used in courtroom.

<sup>25</sup> An example of saucy impudence.

<sup>26</sup> The exact location of Midian at this time in history is unknown. Midianites came from the same Abrahamic stock as the Hebrews.

<sup>27</sup> The LXX adds: "tending the sheep of their father, Jethro."

<sup>28</sup> The name Reuel means "friend of God" or "shepherd of God." In Exodus 3 he goes by the name Jethro. The name varies, sometimes being Reuel, Jethro, or Hobab.

<sup>29</sup> The name means "Warbler" or "Twitterer." It is the name of a variety of bird in the region.

<sup>30</sup> The Hebrew word for alien is "ger."

<sup>31</sup> Some scholars place 4:23 – 26 following 2:22. After 4:26 they continue with 2:23.

<sup>32</sup> This might have been either Seti I or Ramasses II, Pharaohs of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

groaning and God remembered the covenant he had with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 25 God looked upon the people of Israel, and took notice of them.

<CHAPTER 3>

*B. The Call and Commissioning of Moses 3:1 – 6:1*

*1. The Vision 3:1 – 6*

<sup>1</sup> Now Moses was the keeper of the flocks <sup>33</sup> of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock beyond <sup>34</sup> the wilderness, coming to Horeb, <sup>35</sup> the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> There the angel of the Lord <sup>36</sup> appeared to him in a flame of fire, <sup>37</sup> in the midst of a bush. He looked at it, and to his amazement, it was burning, yet it was not consumed. <sup>4</sup> Moses said, “I will alter my plan of travel, and go to see this great sight, [*to discover*] why the bush <sup>38</sup> has not been consumed. <sup>39</sup> <sup>4</sup> When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called out to him from the bush, <sup>40</sup> “Moses! Moses!” Moses replied: “Here I am.” <sup>5</sup> Then the Lord said, “Do not come near, remove your sandals from your feet <sup>41</sup> for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” <sup>6</sup> The Lord said, “I am the God of your father, <sup>42</sup> the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” Moses hid his face, <sup>43</sup> for he was not to look at God.

*2. The Audience 3:7 – 4:17*

*a. The Lord’s Plan 3:7 – 10*

<sup>7</sup> The Lord then said, “I have seen the misery of my people who live in Egypt; I have heard their cries, which resulted from their sufferings, because gang foremen have been appointed to rule them. I truly know their sufferings, <sup>8</sup> and I have come to provide deliverance for them from the Egyptians, to bring them up to a land flowing with milk <sup>44</sup> and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, Hittites, <sup>45</sup> Amorites, Perizzites <sup>46</sup> Hivites, <sup>47</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> The Hebrew words denote a continuous action on the part of Moses. Tending the flocks was his daily occupation. The area in which Moses traveled with the flocks had copper mines. The Kenites were known to be blacksmiths, but this is not anything Moses apparently did.

<sup>34</sup> Literally: “back of.” The term is perhaps a Midianite term which scholars feel means “beyond.”

<sup>35</sup> Horeb is another name for Sinai.

<sup>36</sup> Literally: “the messenger of the Lord” which in effect would be the Lord, himself.

<sup>37</sup> This apparently was understood by Moses as the bodily manifestation of the Lord, hence, his actual presence.

<sup>38</sup> The word used for “bush” is a hapax legomion, a word used only here in the Hebrew Scriptures.

<sup>39</sup> Moses is awed but also receptive.

<sup>40</sup> What exactly did Moses see? 1. A supernatural vision. 2. A bramble bush blazing in the dusk. 3. A shrub called ‘burning bush’ in fullest flower. 4. Sun shining on a thorn bush which appeared to be on fire.

<sup>41</sup> To be told to remove ones sandals is something that would be said to a servant. Slaves usually were barefoot. Was this a mark of acceptance? This was one of those moments when one needed to leave behind all forms of pretence in order to approach God. It is also a solemn reminder of the distance between God and humanity.

<sup>42</sup> The Samaritan Pentateuch has a plural, “fathers.”

<sup>43</sup> Presumably he hid his face, not in shame, but in awe.

<sup>44</sup> The words describe a land in which the cows produce so much milk that the milk oozes from their teats because their udders are so full.

<sup>45</sup> The larger settlements of the Hittites were located east of the Jordan.

<sup>46</sup> This is a derogatory description of the people in ten villages.

and Jebusites. <sup>48</sup> <sup>9</sup> The cry of the Israelites has come to me now. I have witnessed the Egyptian's brutality, as they terrorize the Israelites. <sup>10</sup> Come, for I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

### B. God Instructs Moses 3:11 – 22

<sup>11</sup> Moses said to God: "If I come to the Israelites, and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what am I to say to them?" <sup>49</sup> <sup>12</sup> God answered Moses: "I will be with you! This will be a sign for you that I have sent you. When you bring the people out of Egypt, you will worship on this mountain."

<sup>13</sup> Moses, however, said to God. "If I went to the people of Israel and said to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you, and if they ask me, 'What is his name?'" <sup>50</sup> what am I to say to them?" <sup>51</sup> <sup>14</sup> God told Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." <sup>52</sup> and he said, "Say to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" <sup>53</sup> <sup>15</sup> God said to Moses, "This is what you are to say to the people of Israel: 'The Lord [YHWH], <sup>54</sup> the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has sent me to you."

"This is my name forever,

And this is my title for all generations.

<sup>16</sup> "Go and assemble the elders of Israel and tell them: "The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has appeared to me and has said: 'I have observed you and am aware of all that has been done to you in Egypt. <sup>17</sup> I vow (*or, declare*) that I will take you away from the brutality of Egypt, to the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.' <sup>18</sup> They will be attentive to your voice: you and the elders of Israel will go to the king of Egypt, and say to him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Permit us now to go on a three day journey into the wilderness, so that we can sacrifice to the Lord our God.' <sup>19</sup> I know that the king of Egypt will not grant you permission unless he is compelled to do so by a mighty hand. <sup>55</sup> <sup>20</sup> Therefore I will stretch out my hand, and I will strike Egypt with all my wonders (*or, plagues*) that I will perform. After that he will permit you to go. <sup>21</sup> I will bring this nation into such favor with the Egyptians that when you go you will not leave empty handed. <sup>22</sup> Each woman will ask her neighbor, or any woman living in her neighbor's house, for silver or gold

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<sup>47</sup> The Hivites were also called Horites.

<sup>48</sup> These were the original inhabitants of Jebus, (Jerusalem). They were originally from the tribe of the Amorites.

<sup>49</sup> Moses has leaned to distrust himself. Self-distrust is good but only if it leads to trust in God.

<sup>50</sup> Literally: "what lies concealed behind that name."

<sup>51</sup> In effect the question is, "Under what new title has God appeared to you?"

<sup>52</sup> This could also be translated correctly as: "I AM WHAT I AM" or "I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE." God is always in the "present time." The "always now God," therefore the ever present God of action.

<sup>53</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 12d.

<sup>54</sup> The name YHWH was not pronounced. The person who chose to use the word would make a sound similar to a gasp. When the Masorettes inserted vowels into the Hebrew text which was entirely consonants they inserted incorrect vowels so the name, if one should attempt to say it would be mis-pronounced. The result was the word selected by some religious groups as being important and correct: "Jehovah".

<sup>55</sup> So: LXX and Vulgate. Hebrew: "no, not by a mighty hand."

jewelry, as well as clothing. You will clothe your children <sup>56</sup> with these clothes and you will plunder the Egyptians.”

<CHAPTER 4.

*C. Moses Taught Magic 4:1 – 9, 17*

<sup>1</sup> Thereafter Moses responded: “What if they do not believe me nor listen to my message? What if they say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you?’” <sup>2</sup> The Lord said to him, ‘What do you have in your hand?’ Moses said, “A rod.” <sup>57</sup> <sup>3</sup> He said, “Throw it on the ground.” So Moses threw it on the ground and it turned into a snake, <sup>58</sup> and Moses fled from it. <sup>4</sup> The Lord said to Moses, “Put your hand down and take it by its tail.” – so Moses did so as he was instructed and, upon catching the snake, it again turned into a rod. <sup>59</sup> <sup>5</sup> This will take place so that they believe that the Lord, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has appeared to you.”

<sup>6</sup> The Lord then said to Moses, “Put your hand inside the folds of your clothing.” Moses did as he had been told, and when he took his hand out, his hand was leprous, <sup>60</sup> encrusted with snowy scales. <sup>7</sup> Then God said, “Put your hand back inside the folds of your clothing.” So Moses did as directed, and when he took it out, his hand was restored, like the rest of his body. <sup>8</sup> God then said, “If they do not believe you, or are not attentive to the first sign, they might believe the second sign. <sup>9</sup> However, if they do not even believe these two signs, or do not accept your word, you are to take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water that you will have taken from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.” <sup>61</sup>

*d. Aaron as Spokesman 4:10 – 16*

<sup>10</sup> Moses said to the Lord, “Oh, my Lord, I have never been eloquent, not in the past, nor since you have spoken to me. I have a slow mouth and a slow tongue.” <sup>11</sup> Then the Lord said to him, “Who makes a man’s mouth? Who makes him mute or deaf? Who gives him sight or blindness? Is it not I; the Lord? <sup>12</sup> I will help your speech and instruct you in what to say.” <sup>13</sup> Moses said, “O my Lord, send someone else.” <sup>62</sup> This ignited the anger of the Lord against Moses. The Lord said, “Isn’t there your brother Aaron, the Levite? I know that he speaks well; <sup>63</sup> and be assured, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you his heart will be elated. <sup>15</sup> You will speak to him, and put words into his mouth, and I will be with you, in the words you speak, and with the words he speaks, and

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<sup>56</sup> Literally: “your sons and daughters.”

<sup>57</sup> Probably a shepherd’s crook. When a rod is in the hands of Aaron it is called a staff. Exodus 7:9.

<sup>58</sup> The Hebrew word is the one commonly used for a snake. In Exodus 7:9 the name is different when Aaron performs the sign. That word might even be used for a lizard or a young crocodile in the Nile. The signs given Moses by the Lord were used in the dramatic account of a contest in which the Lord vanquishes the enchanters and magicians of Egypt. Exodus 8:19; 9:11.

<sup>59</sup> The reader must deal with: 1. This is a supernatural manifestation of God’s power. 2. God is working in natural ways. 3. These are spiritual descriptive messages.

<sup>60</sup> The word describes several skin diseases; the precise meaning is uncertain. Scholars feel that Hanson’s Disease (genuine leprosy) had not reached that area of the world at such an early date. It was in Israel at the time of Jesus, however, though the word still held the meaning for several skin diseases. It is not reported that Moses used this second sign in Egypt.

<sup>61</sup> While Moses could do these signs, it is not in this way that the plagues of Egypt began.

<sup>62</sup> Literally: “send through whoever you will send.”

<sup>63</sup> The LXX adds: “for you.”



I will teach <sup>64</sup> you what to say. <sup>16</sup> He will be your spokesman, and you will play the role of God by speaking to him.”

*c. Moses Taught Magic (continued) 4:17*

<sup>17</sup> “You will hold this staff in your hand, with which you will perform signs.”

*3. Moses Returns to Egypt 4:18 – 31*

*a. Departure from Midian 4:18 – 23*

<sup>18</sup> Moses went back to his father-in-law, Jethro, <sup>65</sup> and said to him, “I ask you to allow me to go back to my relatives in Egypt, to see whether they are still living”:<sup>66</sup> Jethro answered Moses, saying, “Go in peace.” <sup>19</sup> The Lord spoke to Moses in Midian “Return to Egypt, for everyone who desired to kill you has died.” <sup>20</sup> Moses then took his wife and his sons, putting them on a donkey, and they went back to Egypt: and Moses carried the staff of the Lord.

<sup>21</sup> The Lord told Moses, “Keep in mind the wonders that I have given you: the power to display when you get back to Egypt: see that you display these wonders that I have put in your power, before Pharaoh;: but I will make him obstinate, <sup>67</sup> so that he will not let the people go. <sup>22</sup> You are to inform Pharaoh, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: Israel is my firstborn son.’ <sup>23</sup> I am telling you to say, ‘Let my son go that he can worship me. But if you refuse to let him go, because of this, your first born son will be killed.’”

*b. Circumcision of Moses 4:24 – 26*

<sup>24</sup> Along the route they traveled, at a place where they planned to spend the night, the Lord met Moses, <sup>68</sup> and tried to kill him. <sup>69</sup> <sup>25</sup> Zipporah took a piece of flint and cut off her son’s foreskin and touched the feet of Moses with the foreskin, saying, “You are certainly a bridegroom of blood to me!” <sup>70</sup> <sup>26</sup> So he let him alone. It was then that she said “A bridegroom of blood by circumcision.”

*c. Aaron Meets Moses 4:27 – 31*

<sup>27</sup> The Lord said to Aaron, “Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.” Then Aaron and Moses met at the mountain of God and kissed him. <sup>28</sup> Moses told Aaron everything that he had learned as the Lord had spoken to him, and sent him, along with the wonders he had learned and been ordered to use. <sup>29</sup> Moses and Aaron then went, assembling the elders of the people of Israel. <sup>30</sup> Aaron spoke all the words that Moses had told him to speak, as the Lord had instructed him, and demonstrated the wonders that he had received

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<sup>64</sup> The Hebrew root word is the word for “instruct.”

<sup>65</sup> Literally: “Jether.”

<sup>66</sup> This action of speaking to Jethro is what a married slave would do, asking for permission to be freed. Cf. Exodus 21:4

<sup>67</sup> Literally: “harden his heart.” In this passage 1. God hardens Pharaoh’s heart. (4:21, 5:2) 2. Pharaoh hardens his own heart (8:15) 3. Pharaoh’s heart is being hardened (7:13) The hardening refers to mind, will, and intrigue, not to emotion, as we might say today.

<sup>68</sup> Literally: “him.”

<sup>69</sup> Who? Moses or the child. The meaning of verses 25 – 26 are uncertain. It seems that circumcision was originally a practice of the Midianites. To touch the feet (some scholars feel it was the groin or the penis of Moses) with the foreskin was a kind of antidote based on some ancient practice to end a demonic action.

<sup>70</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 326b.

from the Lord, in the sight of the people. <sup>31</sup> The people believed, and when they realized that what they had heard [*and seen*] came from the Lord, who had concern for the Israelites, and that the Lord had seen their misery, they bowed down to the ground and worshiped.

<CHAPTER 5>

4. *Moses confronts the Pharaoh 5:1 – 6*

a. *Pharaoh Scorns the Lord 5:1 – 4*

<sup>1</sup> Some time later Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh <sup>71</sup> and said, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they can hold a festival to me in the wilderness (*or, a pilgrim feast in my honor*).’” <sup>2</sup> Pharaoh’s response was, “Who is this Lord that I should listen to his voice and permit Israel to go? I do not know this Lord, and furthermore, I will not permit Israel to go!” <sup>3</sup> They then replied, “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. We beg of you to let us go on a three day journey into the wilderness, to sacrifice to the Lord our God, or he will fall on us with a deadly disease or violence” <sup>72 4</sup> The king of Egypt said to them: “Moses and Aaron: What do you mean by distracting the people from their work? Get back to work!” <sup>73 5</sup> Pharaoh continued, saying: “The Hebrews are more numerous than the native people of this land, <sup>74</sup> and yet you want to stop working!”

b. *Pharaoh Retaliates 5:6 - 19*

<sup>6</sup> That very same day, Pharaoh commanded the Egyptian slave-drivers of the people, along with their gang-leaders: <sup>75 7</sup> “You are not to provide the people of the land with straw to make bricks, as has been provided in the past. They are to be permitted to go and gather straw for themselves. <sup>8</sup> However, you must demand that the same amount of piece work is required as they make bricks as they made when straw was provided. Do not reduce the quotas, for they are shirkers. They are lazy and that is why they cry out, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifices to our God.’ <sup>9</sup> Require heavier work of the men, so that they will be so busy and worn out that they won’t pay attention to deceptive words.”

<sup>10</sup> So the slave-drivers and the gang-leaders of the people demanded their people, saying: “Pharaoh demands that no straw be given. <sup>11</sup> Go and get it yourselves wherever you can find it, but your piecework goals will not be reduced. <sup>12</sup> The people scattered out over the country of Egypt in search of straw, but had to settle for stubble. <sup>13</sup> The slave-drivers were demanding, saying, “Complete your work. You must produce the same quota each day as when you were provided with straw. <sup>14</sup> The gang-leaders of the Israelites, who had been ordered to do their jobs by the slave-drivers of Pharaoh were

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<sup>71</sup> The Hebrew seems to imply that Moses and Aaron had visited Pharaoh several times prior to this visit.

<sup>72</sup> Moses requests again for a temporary respite from work in order to hold a religious festival.

<sup>73</sup> The Jerusalem Targum paraphrases: “Pharaoh’s reply: I have not found the name of the Lord in the Book of the Angels. I am not afraid of him nor will I be afraid.”

<sup>74</sup> So: Samaritan Pentateuch. Hebrew literally: “The people of the land are now many.”

<sup>75</sup> The “gang-leaders” were Hebrew who worked under the Egyptian “slave-drivers.”

beaten and were asked, “Why did you not provide the full quota of bricks yesterday? Why is there not a full quota of bricks today?”

*c. The Foremen (Gang-Leaders) Appeal to Pharaoh 5:15 - 21*

15 Then the gang-leaders of the Israelites went to Pharaoh and cried, “Why do you treat your laborers <sup>76</sup> like this? 16 No straw is provided for your workers, yet we are told ‘Make bricks!’ Look at how your laborers are being beaten! <sup>77</sup> You are unjust to those who work for you!” 17 Pharaoh said, “You are lazy, just lazy! That is why you say, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord.’ 18 Get out! Go to work! No straw will be given you but you must still provide the same quota of bricks each day!” 19 The Israelite gang-leaders saw that they were in trouble when they were told, ‘You must still provide the same quota of bricks each day.’” 20 As they left Pharaoh they met Moses and Aaron who were waiting to meet them. 21 They said to them, “The Lord will look at you, and judge you for you have brought a stench <sup>78</sup> to Pharaoh and his officials, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.”

*d. The Surrender of Faith 5:22 – 6:1*

22 Then Moses turned to the Lord again and said, “O Lord, why have you mistreated these people (*or, this nation*)? Why did you even send me? 23 Since I first came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has mistreated the people, and you have done nothing at all to deliver your people. 6:1 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. Indeed, by my mighty hand he will let them go: by a mighty hand he will drive them out of his land.” <sup>79</sup> 6:1 The Lord told Moses: “You are now about to see what I will do to Pharaoh: a greater might will send the people out, yes, with a powerful hand he will send them out.” <sup>80</sup>

<CHAPTER 6>

*C. The Renewed Call and Commission of Moses 6:2 – 7:13*

*1. God Discloses His Plan 6:2 – 9*

2 God said to Moses: “I am the Lord. 3 I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as God Almighty, <sup>81</sup> but I did not reveal myself with the name, “The Lord”. <sup>82</sup> 4 I also established my covenant with them, granting them the land of Canaan, the land in which they resided as aliens. 5 Additionally, I heard the moaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians are holding as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant with them. 6 Therefore, speak to the people of Israel, saying: ‘I am the Lord, and I will provide you with freedom from the burdens of the Egyptians and I will redeem <sup>83</sup> you with

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<sup>76</sup> Literally: “your servants.” So each time the word “laborers” is used. LXX: adds: “you sin against your people.”

<sup>77</sup> So: LXX, Syriac and Vulgate. Hebrew: “beaten, and the sin of your people.”

<sup>78</sup> Literally: “a stink in the nose of Pharaoh.”

<sup>79</sup> Now the stage is set. Pharaoh will release the Israelites.

<sup>80</sup> The defeat of Pharaoh, God says, is delayed, though actually this is the beginning of the victory of God over Pharaoh, and the security of Israel. God gives a renewed promise. The people will leave, for Pharaoh will expel them from his land.

<sup>81</sup> El Shaddai. The name appears 40 times in Hebrew Scripture. Another possible translation is “God of the mountain”. The word gradually grew in usage. Originally the root word meant “victorious”, expressing itself in destructive violence. The word changed in meaning over the years and finally came to be combined with the word “El” which is a word for “God.” Cf.: ANET p. 12d.

<sup>82</sup> In Hebrew: “YHWH”. See footnote 54. In many translations it is printed as “LORD”.

<sup>83</sup> Literally: “I will act as the redeemer”. Cf. Leviticus 25:25.

outstretched arms and with great acts of judgment (*or, chastisement*). <sup>7</sup> I will adopt you as my people. I will be your God. You will know that I am the Lord, your God, who has freed you from the burdens of Egypt. <sup>8</sup> I will bring you into the land I had vowed to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; I will give it to you as your possession. I am the Lord.” <sup>9</sup> Moses spoke in this manner to the people of Israel; but they did not listen to Moses, because of their complete exhaustion. <sup>84</sup>

### 2. *Inadequacy of Moses 6:10 – 13; 28 – 30*

<sup>10</sup> The Lord said to Moses: <sup>11</sup> “Enter and tell Pharaoh, king of Egypt, ‘Let the people of Israel go out of your land.’” <sup>12</sup> But Moses spoke to the Lord, ‘The people of Israel have not listened to me. How would Pharaoh listen to me, poor speaker that I am?’ <sup>85</sup> <sup>13</sup> As a result the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, giving them orders concerning the Israelites, <sup>86</sup> and Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, demanding that the Israelites should be freed from the land of Egypt.

### 3. *The Genealogy of Aaron and Moses 6:14 - 27*

<sup>14</sup> The following are the heads of the ancestral houses; the sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi; these are the families of Reuben. <sup>15</sup> The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul (*or, Saul*), the son of a Canaanite woman; these are the families of Simeon. <sup>16</sup> These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their genealogies: Gershon, (*also spelled Gershom*), Kohath, and Merari, and the length of Levi’s life was one hundred thirty-seven years. <sup>17</sup> The sons of Gershon (*also spelled Gershom*): Libni, and Shimei, by their families. <sup>18</sup> The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, and the length of Kohath’s life was one hundred and thirty- three years, <sup>19</sup> The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their genealogies. <sup>20</sup> Amram married Jochebed, his father’s sister, and she bore him Aaron and Moses, and the length of Amram’s life one hundred thirty-seven years. <sup>21</sup> The sons of Izhar: Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. <sup>22</sup> The sons of Uzziel: Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri. <sup>23</sup> Aaron married Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. <sup>24</sup> The sons of Korah: Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph, these are the families of the Korathites. <sup>25</sup> Aaron’s son Eleazar married one of the daughters of Putiel, she bore hm Phinehas. These are the heads of the ancestral houses of the Levites by their families.

<sup>26</sup> This was the same Aaron and Moses to whom the Lord said, “Bring the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, company by company.” <sup>27</sup> They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to bring the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, the very same, Moses and Aaron.. <sup>87</sup>

### 2. *Inadequacy of Moses (continued) 6:28 – 30* <sup>88</sup>

<sup>28</sup> On the day when the Lord spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, <sup>29</sup> he said to him, “I am the Lord: tell Pharaoh, king of Egypt, all that I am telling you. <sup>30</sup> Moses said, in the presence of the Lord, “Since I am a clumsy speaker, why would Pharaoh listen to me?”

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<sup>84</sup> LXX: “faint heartedness.” Samaritan Pentateuch: “complaint”.

<sup>85</sup> Literally: “me, I am uncircumcised of lips.”

<sup>86</sup> Literally: “people of the land.”

<sup>87</sup> Scholars do not know exactly how long the Israelites lived in Egypt. Genesis 15:13 speaks of four hundred years. It is generally assumed that the time was four generations, which would be about one hundred years.

<sup>88</sup> Verses 28 - 30 pick up the theme which has been interrupted by verses 20 – 27. (Wiederaufname.)

## <CHAPTER 7>

### 4. *The Appointment of Aaron 7:1 – 7*

<sup>1</sup> The Lord said to Moses, “See. I have made you to be as a God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. <sup>2</sup> You are to speak what I command you to say, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites travel outside the land. <sup>3</sup> I, however, will make Pharaoh obstinate <sup>89</sup> even though I multiply the signs and wonders, <sup>90</sup> one after another, in the land of Egypt. <sup>4</sup> Pharaoh will not listen to you. I will lay my hand on Egypt and I will bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt, company by company, by great acts of judgment. <sup>91</sup> <sup>5</sup> The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out my hand against them, and bring the Israelites away from them.” <sup>6</sup> Moses and Aaron did exactly as the Lord commanded them. <sup>7</sup> Moses was eighty years old and Aaron was eighty-three when they spoke to Pharaoh.<sup>92</sup>

### 5. *The Equipment of Moses and Aaron 7:8 – 13*

<sup>8</sup> The Lord said to Moses: <sup>9</sup> “When Pharaoh says to you, ‘Demonstrate your remarkable ability; produce a spectacle.’ Then you are to tell Aaron, ‘Take your rod and throw it down before Pharaoh, that it might become a serpent.’” <sup>93</sup> <sup>10</sup> So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did exactly what the Lord had commanded. Aaron threw down his rod before Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a serpent. <sup>11</sup> Then Pharaoh summoned his wise men and sorcerers, <sup>94</sup> and they, along with the magicians <sup>95</sup> of Egypt did the same. <sup>12</sup> Each one threw down his rod and all their rods became serpents; but Aaron’s rod gulped down theirs. <sup>13</sup> In spite of this Pharaoh remained obstinate, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

## III. *God Reveals His Power 7:14 – 18:27*

### A. *God Multiplies Signs, Wonders, and Plagues 7:14 – 11:10*

#### 1. *The Pollution of the Nile 7:14 - 25*

<sup>14</sup> The Lord then said to Moses: “Pharaoh is obstinate: he refuses to let the people go. <sup>15</sup> Go to Pharaoh in the morning just as he is going out of the water, stand by the river bank and take your rod that had turned into a serpent, along with you. <sup>16</sup> Inform him, saying, ‘The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to tell you, ‘Let my people go, so they might worship in the wilderness,’ but up to now you have not listened.’ <sup>17</sup> Thus says the Lord: ‘By this you will know that I am the Lord.’ Look! With this rod that I have in my hand, I will strike the water of the Nile and it will be turned into blood. <sup>18</sup> The fish in the river will die, <sup>96</sup> the river will reek, and the Egyptians will be unable to drink water from the Nile.” <sup>19</sup> The Lord said to Moses: “Say to Aaron, ‘take your rod and stretch it

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<sup>89</sup> Literally: “harden Pharaoh’s heart.”

<sup>90</sup> Signs and wonder are synonymous. They are a special display of God’s power.

<sup>91</sup> These great acts of judgment are the signs and wonders that display the power of God which will overcome the opposition of Pharaoh. The signs and wonders are commonly called the plagues.

<sup>92</sup> Some times numbers seem to be symbolical. When one compares the age of Moses here and in Deuteronomy 34:7, they do not exactly jibe.

<sup>93</sup> LXX: “dragon.” This might mean a crocodile, or lizard. Cf.: footnote 58. The Hebrews, at this time were not too concerned about natural history.

<sup>94</sup> The Hebrew word used here is only used in the Pentateuch. Possibly it is an Egyptian loan word.

<sup>95</sup> An apt translation would be: “religious experts.”

<sup>96</sup> The water of the Nile was virtually the only source of water. Fish were a major source of food, making this a double disaster, no water, and no major food supply.

out over the rivers, canals and ponds of Egypt, along with all its pools (*or, cisterns*) of water so that they all will become blood: and there will be blood through the entire land of Egypt, even in containers made of wood or stone.”<sup>97</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Moses and Aaron did exactly as the Lord had commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and his officials he raised his rod and struck the water of the river and all the water in the river was turned into blood,<sup>98</sup> <sup>21</sup> and the fish in the river died. The river reeked so badly that the Egyptians were unable to drink its water, and there was blood through the entire land of Egypt.<sup>99</sup> <sup>22</sup> The magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts; so Pharaoh remained obstinate, and would not listen to them: just as the Lord had said. <sup>23</sup> Pharaoh turned and went into his house, not being concerned about what had just happened. <sup>24</sup> All the Egyptians had to dig pits along the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water from the river.

<sup>25</sup> Five days passed after the Lord had struck the water of the river.<sup>100</sup>

## <CHAPTER 8>

### 2. *Frogs* 8:1 – 14 [H. 7:26 – 8:11]

<sup>1</sup> [H. 7:26] The Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord: Let my people go, so they might worship me. <sup>2</sup> [H. 27] You can be assured that if you refuse to let them go I will plague your entire country, causing it to teem with frogs.<sup>101</sup> <sup>3</sup> [H. 28] The Nile will swarm with frogs which will come up into your house (*or, palace*) into your bed-room, in your bed, in the houses of your officials, and your entire population, and into your ovens and your kneading bowls. <sup>4</sup> [H. 29] The frogs will come up on you, on your people, and on all of your officials.’”<sup>102</sup> <sup>5</sup> [H. 8:1] The Lord said to Moses, “Say to Aaron; ‘Stretch out your hand with your rod, over the rivers, canals, and pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.’”<sup>6</sup> [H. 2] So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. <sup>7</sup> [H. 3] The magicians did the same by their secret lore, and brought frogs up on the land of Egypt.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>8</sup> [H. 4] Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron, and said, “Plead with the Lord to remove the frogs from me and my people, and your people be allowed to go to sacrifice to the Lord.”<sup>9</sup> [H. 5] Moses said to Pharaoh, “Please tell me (*or, Have it your own way*)<sup>104</sup> when I am to pray for you and for your officials, and for your people, that the frogs be removed from you and your houses, and the houses of your officials, and be left only in the Nile.”<sup>10</sup> [H. 6] Pharaoh said, “Tomorrow.” Moses said, “As you wish!” In this way you will know that there truly is no one like the Lord who is our God. <sup>11</sup> [H. 7] At that time the

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<sup>97</sup> Literally: “in vessels of trees and stones.”

<sup>98</sup> While it is called “blood” it is surely red algae. If it were blood the water in the pits in v. 24 would still be bloody. Since the water was potable the source of the red color was filtered out, giving the thought that it was red algae.

<sup>99</sup> An ancient Hebrew Mishnah includes the reply of Pharaoh: “If I can’t have water I’ll have wine.” Cf.: ANET p. 441c.

<sup>100</sup> Scholars puzzle as to whether this verse is related to chapter 7 or should be the first verse of chapter 8. It is to be noted that the chapter division and the verse numbering is different in the Hebrew Scripture.

<sup>101</sup> The word “frog” in Hebrew is a rather onomatopoeic word, like, ‘croakers’; which some scholars feel was a derogatory word, describing the Egyptians. Frogs were a part of an Egyptian fertility cult.

<sup>102</sup> Some scholars insert verses 8 – 13 here and then return to verse 5 following the inserted verses 15.

<sup>103</sup> The presence of frogs would be the least fearful. They do not bite or destroy property. They can provide an element of noise. They would surely cause fright for children. (Kindershreck).

<sup>104</sup> Literally: “glorify yourself.”

frogs will leave you, your houses, the houses of your officials and your people. they will remain in the Nile.”<sup>12</sup> [H. 8] Then Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh’s presence, and Moses cried out to the Lord concerning the frogs that he had brought on Pharaoh (*or, frogs, as he had agreed with Pharaoh*).<sup>13</sup> [H. 9] The Lord did what Moses requested, and the frogs died in the houses, courtyards, and fields.<sup>14</sup> [H. 10] The Egyptians gathered them into heaps, and the land stank.<sup>15</sup> [H. 11] Pharaoh, however, again became obstinate, and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had foretold.<sup>105</sup>

### 3. Gnats 8:16 – 19 [H. 8:12 – 15]<sup>106</sup>

<sup>16</sup> [H. 12] Then the Lord said to Moses, “Speak to Aaron, saying, ‘Stretch out your rod and strike the dust of the earth that it may become gnats<sup>107</sup> throughout the land of Egypt.’”<sup>17</sup> [H. 13] They did so.<sup>108</sup> Aaron stretched out his hand, holding his rod, and struck the dust of the earth, and gnats came on humans and animals alike. All the dust of the earth [*seemed to have become*] gnats, that covered the entire land of Egypt..<sup>18</sup> [H. 14] The magicians tried to produce gnats by their secret arts, but they were unable. There were gnats on both humans and animals.<sup>19</sup> [H. 15] The magicians told Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God!” Pharaoh again became obstinate and would not listen to them, exactly as the Lord had forecast.<sup>109</sup>

### 4. Flies 8:20 – 32 [H. 16 – 28]

<sup>20</sup> [H. 16] Then the Lord said to Moses: “Rise up early in the morning and wait for Pharaoh, as he goes up out of the water, and tell him: ‘Thus says the Lord: Let my people go, that they may worship me.’<sup>21</sup> [H. 17] In the event that you will not let them go, be assured, I will send swarms of flies<sup>110</sup> on you, your officers, your people, into your houses: the houses of all Egyptians will be filled with swarms of flies as well as all the surrounding land in which people live.<sup>22</sup> [H. 18] On that day, however, I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people reside, so that there will be no swarms of flies there. In that way you may know that I, the Lord, am in this land.<sup>23</sup> [H. 19] In that way you will know that I am making a division<sup>111</sup> between my people and your people. This sign will appear tomorrow.<sup>24</sup> [H. 20] The Lord did so, and huge swarms of flies came into the house of Pharaoh and into his official’s houses; in all of Egypt the land was ruined because of the flies.

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<sup>105</sup> Pharaoh seems to have misread the words of Moses and expected softness on the part of the Lord. Pharaoh is more interested in his own welfare, than the power of God. Some scholars insert verse 5 - 7 here.

<sup>106</sup> Some translators opt to translate the Hebrew word as “maggots.”

<sup>107</sup> These insects have been translated as bees, mosquitoes, sand flies, fleas, and gnats. Gnats seem to be the best translation. The LXX adds: “on man and beast” after the word “gnats.” The word is only used here in the Hebrew Scriptures. LXX translates the Hebrew word as “dog fly” or “gad fly.”

<sup>108</sup> This is absent in the LXX. They, presumably, is both Moses and Aaron.

<sup>109</sup> Pharaoh now must realize that he is in conflict with an actual deity.

<sup>110</sup> Some translators simply use the word “insects.” One translator translates the Hebrew word as “wild birds.”

<sup>111</sup> So: LXX. Hebrew literally: “set redemption.” In Hebrew there is a one letter difference between “redemption” and “division.”

25 [H. 21] Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron, and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God within the land.”<sup>112</sup> 26 [H. 22] Moses said, “It would not be right for us to do so, for the sacrifices that we offer to the Lord our God would be offensive to the Egyptians. If we were to offer these sacrifices in the sight of the Egyptians that are offensive to them, they would stone us. 27 [H. 23 ] We must go a three day journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to the Lord our God as he has commanded us. 28 [H. 24] Then Pharaoh said, “I will let you go to sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness, provided you do not go too far away. Pray for me.”<sup>113</sup> 29 [H. 25] Then Moses said, “Be assured: as soon as I leave you I will pray that the swarms of flies will depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, from his officials, and from his people. But, Pharaoh, do not deal falsely, by not permitting the people to go to sacrifice to the Lord.”

30 [H. 26] So Moses left the presence of Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord. 31 [H. 27] The Lord did as Moses asked. The swarms of flies were removed from Pharaoh and from his officials, as well as from the Egyptians. None remained. 32 [H. 28] Pharaoh again became obstinate, and would not let the people go.

#### <CHAPTER >.

##### 5. Cattle Plague 9:1 - 7

1 The Lord said to Moses “Go to Pharaoh and say to him: “Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews: ‘Let my people go, that they may worship me. 2 If you refuse to let them go and continue to hold them back, 3 be assured that the hand of the Lord will strike with a very deadly disease in your cattle<sup>114</sup> that are in the field, along with horses, donkeys, camels,<sup>115</sup> herds, and flocks. 4 However: the Lord will make a differentiation, for the animals owned by the people of Israel will not be affected, while the animals of the Egyptians will die, those of the Israelites will live.” 5 The Lord set a time when this would take place, saying, “This will be done by the Lord tomorrow:” 6 The next day the Lord did what he had said: – the Egyptian’s animals died, while not a single one of the Israelite’s animals perished. 7 Pharaoh made inquiry and learned that none of the animals of the Israelites died. Yet in spite of this Pharaoh remained obstinate and refused to let the people go.

##### 6. Boils 9:8 – 12

8 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot (*or, fly ash*) from the kilns and Moses is to throw it into the air, in the sight of Pharaoh. 9 It will become fine dust and spread over the entire land of Egypt and it will cause festering boils on humans as well as animals over the entire land of Egypt.” 10 They then took soot (*or, fly ash*) from the kilns, and while standing before Pharaoh Moses threw it into the air and it caused festering boils on humans and animals. 11 The magicians were unable to stand before Moses because of their boils<sup>116</sup> they and all their fellow Egyptians had. 12 The Lord

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<sup>112</sup> The people could go if they would not go far.

<sup>113</sup> An attempt by Pharaoh to gain preferential treatment.

<sup>114</sup> The KJV translates the Hebrew word as “murrain.” This is a word that, at that time, was already an archaic word. The disease was perhaps anthrax or some similar fatal cattle disease. Some translators still use the word “murrain,” –a word that is no longer understood.

<sup>115</sup> No doubt a later editor added the word “camels.” At this point in history camels were just beginning to be domesticated. Camels were not widely domesticated until the time of Gideon, in the book of Judges.

<sup>116</sup> Some scholars feel these were malignant pustules. A question remains. If all the cattle perished in the previous plague, where did the cattle come from that had the boils in this plague.



caused Pharaoh to again become obstinate and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said.

#### 7. Hail 9:13 – 35

<sup>13</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Be up early in the morning, and present yourself to Pharaoh and say to him, “Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, so they may worship me. <sup>14</sup> If you do not listen I will send all my plagues on you, yourself, on your officials, and on your people, for then you will know that there is no one like me in this entire earth. <sup>15</sup> By now you should realize that I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with disease and you could have been erased from the earth. <sup>16</sup> But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. <sup>17</sup> You are still abusing your power against my people, not allowing them to go. <sup>18</sup> At this time tomorrow I will cause the most severe hail storm that has ever fallen in Egypt to take place, a storm that exceeds, in destruction, all storms in the history of Egypt, until now. <sup>19</sup> Therefore, issue an order that all the livestock, and everything you possess is in a secure place,<sup>117</sup> -- every animal, every person that is in an open field, and is not in a sheltered place will die when the hail falls on them. <sup>20</sup> Those officials who were in awe of the Lord hurried to get their slaves and their livestock into a securely sheltered place. <sup>21</sup> Those who had no regard for the word of the Lord left their servants and livestock in open places which were not secure.

<sup>22</sup> The Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, so that hail can fall on the entire land of Egypt, on humans and animals, along with all the plants of the fields in the land of Egypt. <sup>23</sup> Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and the Lord caused thunder, hail, and lightning to come down upon the earth. The Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt. <sup>24</sup> There was hail, and lightning was flashing continually in the midst of the hail. Such a heavy amount of hail had never fallen on Egypt in all its years of existence as a nation. <sup>25</sup> The hail destroyed everything that was in the open fields throughout the entire land of Egypt, humans, animals, and plants of the fields. It shattered all the trees in the land of Egypt. <sup>26</sup> The land of Goshen, the home territory of the Israelites, had no hail.

<sup>27</sup> Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “This time I have sinned: The Lord is in the right and my people and I are in the wrong. <sup>28</sup> Beseech the Lord! Enough of God’s thunder and hail! I will let you go, you will need to stay no longer.” <sup>29</sup> Moses replied to Pharaoh, “As soon as I have left the city, I will stretch out my hand to the Lord, and the thunder and hail will cease. There will not be any more hail. That will be the sign that you may know that the earth is the Lord’s. <sup>30</sup> Keep in mind that I know that as for you and your officials, you do not yet look to the Lord God with awe.” <sup>31</sup> The flax and barley crops were ruined for the barley was headed out and the flax was in bud. <sup>32</sup> Both the durum wheat and the emmer<sup>118</sup> had not been ruined for they were late in coming up (*or, had not come up.*) <sup>33</sup> Moses left Pharaoh, going out of the city, after which he stretched out his hand and the downpour of rain ceased. <sup>34</sup> When Pharaoh saw that the rain and the thunder had ceased, he sinned once again, and both he and his

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<sup>117</sup> Cattle were usually out in the field from January to April and then housed to protect them from the heat.

<sup>118</sup> Emmer is a variety of wheat. It is still grown in many parts of our world. In Italy it is often used in place of hard wheat in making pasta. Many translators use the word “spelt” but scholars have found that while “spelt” has been grown in Egypt for centuries, “emmer” was a more popular cereal grain than “spelt.”

officials once more became obstinate. <sup>119</sup> <sup>35</sup> Thus Pharaoh was again obstinate, and he would not grant the Israelites permission to go, just as the Lord had said through Moses.

#### <CHAPTER 10

#### 8. *Locusts 10:1 – 26, 28 – 20*

<sup>1</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses: “Go to meet Pharaoh: for I have caused him to be obstinate, as are his officers, that I may show these signs of mine to them, <sup>2</sup> and in order that you may be able to recount to your sons and their descendants how I made fools of the people of Egypt, and what signs I used among them – so that you will know [*and remember*] that I am the Lord.

<sup>3</sup> So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him: “Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews: ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me. <sup>4</sup> Now: if you refuse to let my people go, you can be assured that tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, <sup>5</sup> and they will cover the surface of the land, so that no one can see the earth, and they will eat those remnants that are left to you following the hail. They will eat everything that grows in the fields. <sup>6</sup> They will fill your palace, the houses of your officials, and the houses of all the Egyptians. This will be something that neither your parents or grandparents have witnessed, nor your ancestors since the creation of this earth.’” Then he turned and left Pharaoh’s presence.

<sup>7</sup> Pharaoh’s officers asked, “How long will this man keep on endangering us? Rid yourself of this man – let him go and let the people go to worship the Lord their God. Are you not aware that Egypt is ruined?” <sup>8</sup> So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, “Go, worship the Lord your God! But who is to go?” <sup>9</sup> Moses said, “We will go, accompanied by those who range from young to old. We will go with our sons and daughters along with our flocks and herds.” <sup>10</sup> Pharaoh said, “The Lord surely will be with you, if I ever let your little ones accompany you. It is obvious that you probably have some evil scheme in mind! <sup>120</sup> <sup>11</sup> No! Never! Your men may go to worship the Lord, for that is what you desire.” They were then driven from the presence of Pharaoh. <sup>121</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The Lord then said to Moses: “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come on the land of Egypt, and eat every plant in the land, that is, all that is still left after the hail.” <sup>13</sup> Moses then stretched out his hand, which was holding his rod, in all the directions of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind <sup>122</sup> that blew over the land that day and night. By morning the east wind had brought the locusts <sup>14</sup> The locusts came up over the land of Egypt, and settled on the entire region of Egypt. It was a more dense swarm of locusts than any that had ever been seen in Egypt and surely more dense than ever would be seen again. <sup>15</sup> They covered the entire surface of the land, so that the land was black and they ate all the plants in the land, all the fruit of the trees that had been left by the hail, so that nothing green was left, no tree, no plant in

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<sup>119</sup> Pharaoh reverted to his guilty ways, as did his officers.

<sup>120</sup> Literally: “before your faces.”

<sup>121</sup> From Pharaoh’s viewpoint this was reasonable. He would hold the children and women as hostages. From the religious viewpoint adult males engaged in full worship. The men represented the entire nation, but the intention was that the Israelites as a total nation would now move on to receive the promise of the Lord.

<sup>122</sup> The wind was called the “sirocco.” It crossed the Arabian Peninsula, the Red Sea, and reached Egypt, blowing the locusts. The Arabian Peninsula has had numerous invasions of locusts over the centuries.

any field, in all the land of Egypt. <sup>16</sup> Then Pharaoh hurriedly called Moses and Aaron back, and said, “I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you. <sup>17</sup> Now therefore forgive my sin this one time and entreat the Lord your God that he at least removes this deadly sin <sup>123</sup> from me.” <sup>18</sup> So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the Lord. <sup>19</sup> The Lord then changed the wind into a strong west wind which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Sea of Reeds. <sup>124</sup> Not a single locust remained in the entire country of Egypt. <sup>125</sup> <sup>20</sup> The Lord, however, caused Pharaoh to again become obstinate and he refused to permit the children of Israel to leave.

#### *9. Darkness 10:21 – 23, 27*

<sup>21</sup> The Lord then said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven so that there will be darkness over the entire land of Egypt, darkness that is so total that it can be felt.” <sup>126</sup> <sup>22</sup> So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was dense darkness <sup>127</sup> over the entire land of Egypt for three days. <sup>23</sup> People were unable to see each other, and for three days they were unable to move from where they were. The Israelites, however, had light where they lived. <sup>24</sup> Then Pharaoh called Moses and said, “Go! Worship the Lord! However, you must leave your flocks and your herds behind. Even your children are permitted to go!” <sup>25</sup> Moses said, “You must also grant permission for us to have sacrifices and burnt offerings which are sacrificed to the Lord our God. <sup>26</sup> Our livestock must also go with us. Not a single hoof is to be left behind, for we must select some of them for the worship of the Lord but we do not know what should be selected until we arrive at the place where the sacrifices and burnt offerings will take place.” <sup>27</sup> The Lord again caused Pharaoh to become obstinate and he would not let them go. <sup>128</sup> <sup>28</sup> Then Pharaoh ordered Moses, saying: “Get away from me! Be careful that you do not see my face again, or you will die!” <sup>129</sup> <sup>29</sup> Moses said, “What ever you say! I will never see your face again!”

### <CHAPTER 11>

#### *10. Death of First Born Announced 11:1 – 10* <sup>130</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Lord said to Moses: “Yet one more plague must be brought against Pharaoh and on Egypt: After this plague Pharaoh will permit you to leave; in fact, when he lets you go he will drive you away with your possessions. <sup>131</sup> <sup>2</sup> Speak now that the people will hear you, that they are to speak, every man to his neighbor and ever woman to her

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<sup>123</sup> Literally: “thing.”

<sup>124</sup> Tradition says the Red Sea. The Hebrew word is “reeds.” This was a swampy area, with lakes which is the scene in chapter 14:21 – 30.

<sup>125</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 471d.

<sup>126</sup> Literally: “the fifty to be felt.” This is based on a wind that blew intermittently for fifty days. Cf.: Genesis 8:6 – 12.

<sup>127</sup> Literally: “in a darkness of darkness.”

<sup>128</sup> Some scholars insert 4:22 – 23 here and then continue with verses 24 – 29.

<sup>129</sup> The attempt by Pharaoh to have the livestock stay was so he could hold them hostage. Pharaoh threatens Moses with death if he ever sees him again. Moses, in effect says, “Fair enough. You will not see my face again.” The plague of darkness foreshadows the next plague. Some scholars feel this plague is a sign of the ultimate judgment, as seen in the final plague.

<sup>130</sup> This entire plague is considered to be the Lord’s work. Moses only needs to warn the people of Israel that the end of these plagues is coming soon and they will gain release from Egypt. Pharaoh is about to be defeated and he will welcome the departure of the Israelites.

<sup>131</sup> REB: “drive you away as a man might dismiss a rejected bride.”

neighbor, asking for <sup>132</sup> objects of silver and gold.” <sup>3</sup> (The Lord caused the people to have favor in the sight of the Egyptians. In addition, Moses was a highly esteemed man in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh and his officials and in the sight of the people.) <sup>133</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Moses said, “This is what the Lord declares: About midnight I will pass through the entire land of Egypt. <sup>5</sup> Every single first born male, <sup>134</sup> of people and animals will die, beginning with the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on the throne to the first born of the female slave who operates the hand-mill, <sup>135</sup> and the firstborn of the livestock. <sup>6</sup> There will be a loud wail, <sup>136</sup> throughout the land of Egypt, the like of which had never been heard in Egypt, nor will it ever be heard again. <sup>137</sup> <sup>7</sup> In contrast, not the slightest harm will befall the people of Israel, either humans or animals: nor will any dog snarl at any of the Israelites, and thereby you can be assured that the Lord makes a distinction between Egyptians and Israelites. <sup>8</sup> Then all those officials of yours will come to me and, bowing low, will say, ‘Get out! You, and your people who follow you -- Leave!’ After that happens, I will leave.” Moses was very angry when he left the presence of Pharaoh.

<sup>9</sup> The Lord then spoke to Moses, saying: “Pharaoh will not let you go. Through this the marvels that I do will be increased in the land of Egypt.”

<sup>10</sup> Moses and Aaron spoke all these words before Pharaoh, but Pharaoh became obstinate, not permitting the people of Israel to depart from his land.

## <CHAPTER 12>

### *B. The Lord Takes Possession of Israel 12:1 – 13:15*

#### *1. Passover 12:1 – 14; 43 - 49*

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<sup>132</sup> The Hebrew word can properly be translated as “to borrow” or “to ask for.” Either would be correct. The request for silver and gold might need an explanation. Scholars have come up with several, but the question still remains: Was it proper morally, to ask for silver and gold? Possible explanations might be: 1. This would be equivalent to back wages that should have been paid to the Israelites who were enslaved. 2. A neighborly gift to old acquaintances. 3. Egypt had not made good use of the treasures they had. These would have been handled better had they been in the hands of the Israelites. 4. God causes this to happen because of the Mosaic law dealing with the freeing of slaves in the year of jubilee. No one who had been a slave was to be released without having the master providing some funds for the released slave to get started again, following his slavery. 5. The borrowed jewelry was needed for festive dancing. 6. A way of getting gold and silver to be used for the furnishings of the tabernacle which would be prepared soon after they left Israel. Within Judaism it was taboo for men to wear ornamental jewelry. In effect, the people plundered Egypt. Judaism has felt persecution over the years because of this event.

<sup>133</sup> While Moses was highly esteemed by the Egyptians, he is described as “meek” or “humble.” In Numbers 12:3, he felt himself to be God’s spokesman and thus did not think of himself, personally, as outstanding. He was God’s messenger. The Samaritan text is quite different, adding portions of Exodus 12:35 and 4:22 .

<sup>134</sup> In the thinking of the Israelites the firstborn son is to be the Lord’s. Later in Israel there was an exchange and the tribe of Levi took the place of the firstborn son of each family, but a sacrifice was to be given as a part of that exchange. The firstborn son of the Egyptians was considered to be “the favorite of youths,” or ‘the cream of the crop.’ Darkness, in Egyptian mythology, had a special meaning. As the sun went down it was considered to have a fight with Apophis who symbolized hostile darkness. Pharaoh was understood to be a god, a representative of the sun, and thus darkness was hostile and Pharaoh’s enemy. It was at midnight that the Lord was bringing about the deaths.

<sup>135</sup> Literally: “to sit behind two millstones.” This was the lowest job that a female slave could have.

<sup>136</sup> Some scholars feel this is the cry of the idols who realize that this is the moment, for them, of God’s last judgment, for the Lord has overcome them.

<sup>137</sup> Interestingly, the people of Israel had cried out to the people of Egypt, because of their slavery. Now it was the time for the Egyptians and Pharaoh to cry out.

1 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, in the land of Egypt; 2 “This month will mark the beginning of the calendar for you. <sup>138</sup> This will be the first month of the year for you. Inform the entire congregation. 3 Tell the entire congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month they are to take a lamb <sup>139</sup> for each family; a lamb for each household. 4 In the event that the household is too small for an entire lamb, it is to join its closest neighbor <sup>140</sup> by sharing a lamb. The lamb is to be divided in proportion to the number of people who will eat it. 5 Your lamb is to be in perfect physical condition, a yearling male lamb <sup>141</sup> which can be taken from your flock of sheep or goats. 6 You are to keep it until the fourteenth day of this month. At that time the assembled congregation <sup>142</sup> of Israel is to slaughter the lambs at twilight. <sup>143</sup> 7 At that time some of the blood is to be taken and smeared on the two door posts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. <sup>144</sup> 8 They are to eat the flesh that night, roasted with unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. <sup>145</sup> 9 Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, <sup>146</sup> and inner organs. 10 None of the meat is to remain until morning, it is to be eaten in its entirety. Any leftovers are to be burned in the morning. 11 You are to eat it, being fully clothed for walking, sandals on your feet, your staff in your hand. It is to be eaten hurriedly. It is the Passover of the Lord. <sup>147</sup> 12 I will pass through the land of Egypt that night and I will strike down <sup>148</sup> every firstborn in the land of Egypt: firstborn of people and animals. I will carry out my judgment on all the gods of Egypt: I am the Lord! <sup>149</sup> 13 The blood will be a sign to you on the house in which you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. <sup>150</sup>

14 “This day is to be a day of remembrance for you! You are to celebrate it as a festival of the Lord, throughout each generation, observing it as a perpetual ordinance.”

## 2. Unleavened Bread 12:15 – 20; 13:3 - 10

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<sup>138</sup> Before Israel’s captivity in Babylon the year began in Autumn. During the time in Babylon Israel began to conform with Babylonian custom, beginning the year in the Spring.

<sup>139</sup> The Midrash says the lamb is to have been born during that year. The Hebrew word does not differentiate between lamb or kid (*sheep or goat*).

<sup>140</sup> The Hebrew literally: “the neighbor closest to this household in the number of persons.” LXX: “the neighbor that lives near him (*geographically*) as to the number of souls, each one according to his eating.” Josephus reports that the minimum number in a household was 10.

<sup>141</sup> The LXX says the lamb must be fully one year old. The Hebrew says the lamb must be in its first year.

<sup>142</sup> This is the first time the Hebrew word translated as “congregation” is used. It might be described as a physical union of the people of Israel.

<sup>143</sup> The last phrase, literally says, “small stock to be slaughtered between the two evenings.”

<sup>144</sup> The blood was a kind of apotropaic means of averting God’s stroke.

<sup>145</sup> In Deuteronomy 16:2 the lamb is to be boiled. Here it seems the lamb, because of haste, was eaten roasted over a fire, with bitter herbs, signifying Israel’s suffering. The bitter herbs consisted of lettuce, chicory, peppermint, snake root, and dandelion.

<sup>146</sup> Historically, in Judaism, there was a great controversy as to whether the legs were to be placed inside the carcass, or left outside the carcass.

<sup>147</sup> The Hebrew word gives the thought of fear as well as haste. The long robes that were worn were tucked into their belts so they would not interfere with their walking. The time has come. The preparation is over and the signal is ready to be given. The great event is started!

<sup>148</sup> In Hebrew the same word is used for “strike down” and “kill.”

<sup>149</sup> Many scholars feel the Pharaoh of the Exodus was Ramesses II, He had a very long rule and was followed by Merentah who was not his eldest son. Possibly Merentah’s older brother died at this time.

<sup>150</sup> Some scholars insert verse 28 here, followed by 21 – 17. This is then followed by 29 - 47.

<sup>15</sup> "You are to eat unleavened bread for seven days. On the first day you are to remove the leaven from your house, for whoever eats anything made with leaven will be cut off from Israel. <sup>16</sup> On the first day you are to hold a solemn assembly and another on the seventh day. No work is to be done in those days, though the preparation of food that is to be eaten is permitted, that alone. <sup>17</sup> You are to observe the festival of unleavened bread, for this is the very day that I brought your tribes out of the land of Egypt: you are to observe this day throughout your generations as a perpetual ordinance. <sup>18</sup> In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, from the evening of the fourteenth day, you are to eat unleavened bread until the evening of the twenty-first day of the month. <sup>19</sup> For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened will be cut off from the congregation of Israel. This is for any resident aliens as well as for citizens. <sup>20</sup> You are to eat nothing that is leavened; in all your settlements you must eat unleavened bread."

### 3. *Passover 12:21 – 28*

<sup>21</sup> Then Moses called together the elders of Israel, and said to them, "Select lambs for yourselves and your families, and slaughter the Passover lamb. <sup>22</sup> Take a bunch of hyssop, and smear the blood that is in the basin on the lintel and also smear the door posts with blood that is in the basin. <sup>151</sup> No one is to go outside the door until morning, <sup>23</sup> for the Lord will pass through to bring death to the Egyptians; where he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over that door and will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you down. <sup>24</sup> You will observe this rite as a perpetual observance for you and for your descendants for ever. <sup>25</sup> When you arrive at the land which the Lord your God is giving you, in fulfillment of his promise, you must keep this observance. <sup>26</sup> When your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this observance?' <sup>27</sup> you are to reply, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, but brought death upon the Egyptians and spared our houses.'" The people of Israel bowed down and worshiped.

<sup>28</sup> The people of Israel did exactly as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron.

### 4. *Death to Egypt's Firstborn 12:29 – 32* <sup>152</sup>

<sup>29</sup> At midnight the Lord caused death to befall all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, <sup>153</sup> and the firstborn of all the livestock. <sup>30</sup> Pharaoh arose in the night, and he and his advisors, along with all the Egyptians. There was a loud cry in Egypt, for there was not a single house without someone being dead. <sup>31</sup> Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron in the night and said, "Rise up! Go away from my people, both you and your Israelites. <sup>32</sup> Take your flocks and your herds, as you had requested, and be gone! Oh, also bless me!" <sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Scholars feel that a small basin was formed in front of the door so the blood could be there. Hyssop is also called marjoram. It was used in purification ceremonies and was considered by many people in the Near East as having magic powers. The LXX translates "threshold" instead of "lintel."

<sup>152</sup> Scholars have tried to determine the cause of the deaths. Black Death or polio are thought to be two possibilities.

<sup>153</sup> Literally: "the pit house." Pits were often used as dungeons. Cf. Genesis 37:24. These might originally have been cisterns.

<sup>154</sup> Or: "pray for me also" "And provide a blessing upon me also." There is nothing in Hebrew to imply that this was said sarcastically.

### 5. Sudden Departure 12:33 – 36

<sup>33</sup> The Egyptians urged the people of Israel to hurry in their departure from the land, for they said, ‘We will all be dead.’ <sup>34</sup> The people then took their dough before it was leavened, with their kneading bowls, wrapped up in their outer garments, and slung over their shoulders. <sup>35</sup> The people of Israel had also done what Moses had told them: they had asked the Egyptians for objects of silver and gold, as well as clothing. <sup>36</sup> Now, the Lord had given the Israelites favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have whatever they asked. This was the way that the Egyptians were plundered.

### 6. Israel Sets Out from Egypt 12:37 – 42

<sup>37</sup> The people of Israel journeyed from Ramses to Succoth. <sup>155</sup> six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. <sup>156</sup> <sup>38</sup> A mixed crowd [*of non Israelites*] also accompanied them, as did large droves of cattle, flocks and herds. <sup>39</sup> They baked unleavened cakes from the dough they had bought out of Egypt. It was unleavened because they had been rushed to get out of Egypt, and also – they had no time to prepare any provisions for themselves.

<sup>40</sup> (The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt <sup>157</sup> was four hundred thirty years. <sup>41</sup> At the end of four hundred thirty years, on exactly the same day as their arrival, they left the land of Egypt. <sup>42</sup> For the Lord, that was a night of vigil, to bring them out of Egypt. The same night of vigil is to be kept for the Lord by the Israelites throughout all generations.)

#### 1. Passover (continued) 12:43 – 49

<sup>43</sup> The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the ordinance of the Passover. No foreigner is to eat of it. <sup>44</sup> However, every slave who has been purchased may eat of it, following his having been circumcised.

<sup>45</sup> ”No temporary foreign worker or hired servant may eat of it. <sup>46</sup> It is to be eaten in one house, and you are not to break its bones. <sup>158</sup> <sup>47</sup> The entire congregation of Israel is to celebrate it. <sup>48</sup> In the event that a resident alien who lives with you desires to take part in the celebration of the Passover to the Lord, all his males are to be circumcised; then he may draw near and celebrate it, for he will then be regarded as a native of the land. No uncircumcised person will [*be permitted to*] eat of it. <sup>49</sup> There is to be one law for the native and the alien who resides in your midst.” <sup>159</sup>

#### Summary 12:50 - 51

<sup>50</sup> The Israelites did exactly as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron. <sup>51</sup> On that same day the Lord brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, tribe by tribe.

## <CHAPTER 13>

### 7. Dedication of First-Born 13:1 – 2; 11 – 16

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<sup>155</sup> The name means “cattle sheds.”

<sup>156</sup> The first day of the journey was on a popular road from Rameses to Succoth. The number is in question by scholars. Could such a huge number have lived in the desert? Would they have room to reside in Canaan?

<sup>157</sup> The LXX adds: “and Canaan.”

<sup>158</sup> The people who lived in the surrounding nations broke bones to get the marrow out. This was forbidden in Israel.

<sup>159</sup> There are differences in the celebration of the Passover that took place over the years.

<sup>1</sup> The Lord said to Moses: <sup>2</sup> "Consecrate <sup>160</sup> to me all the firstborn, <sup>161</sup> whoever opens the womb first, among the Israelites, be it human or animal, is mine ".

## 2. *Unleavened Bread (continued) 13:2 – 10*

<sup>3</sup> Moses said to the people, "Remember this day on which you came out of Egypt, out of the house of enslavement, because the Lord brought you out from there by his strength; <sup>162</sup> no leavened bread is to be eaten. <sup>4</sup> Today you are to move forward in the month of Abib. <sup>163</sup> <sup>5</sup> When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which he had sworn to your ancestors that he would do, to give you a land flowing with milk and honey, you are to keep the observance of this month. <sup>6</sup> You are to eat unleavened bread for seven days, and on the seventh day there is to be a festival to the Lord. <sup>7</sup> Unleavened bread is to be eaten, no leavened bread is to be seen in your possession, nor is any leavened bread to be found in your territory. <sup>8</sup> On that day you are to instruct your child, saying, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.' <sup>9</sup> It will be to you as a sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead, <sup>164</sup> so that the teaching of the Lord will be told, <sup>165</sup> for it was by the strength of the Lord that you were brought out of Egypt. <sup>166</sup> <sup>10</sup> You are to keep this ordinance at its proper time, year after year."

## 7. *Dedication of First Born (continued) 13:11 – 16*

<sup>11</sup> "When the Lord has brought you into the land of the Canaanites, as he had sworn to you and to your ancestors, and has given it to you, <sup>12</sup> you are to set apart to the Lord, all that first open the womb. All the firstborn of your livestock that are male are to be the Lord's. <sup>13</sup> However, every firstborn donkey you are to redeem (*or, buy back*) with a sheep; if you do not redeem it you must break its neck. You are to redeem every firstborn male child. <sup>167</sup> <sup>14</sup> When the child asks, at some future time, 'What does this mean?' You are to inform him, 'By the strength of the Lord, the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of enslavement, <sup>15</sup> for when Pharaoh became obstinate, refusing to let us go, the Lord caused death to all firstborn males in the land of Egypt: firstborn among humans and livestock Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord every male that first opens the womb, but

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<sup>160</sup> This is a technical priestly term. It could mean "sacrifice" or have the concept of "belonging to God." In Numbers 3:40 – 51 the Levites were designated as those who would be the religious leaders of the Israelites. This took place because the number of those who were firstborn was virtually equal to the number of males in the tribe of Levi. In order to transfer the responsibility the firstborn needed to be redeemed. A ritual and payment for the 'exchange' was to take place when the child was one month old. Cf. Exodus 22:29 – 30.

<sup>161</sup> What a contrast! The firstborn of the Egyptians are killed, the firstborn of the Israelites are dedicated to God.

<sup>162</sup> Literally: "strength of hand." So also in verse 9.

<sup>163</sup> Abib was March/April. After the Babylonian exile the name was changed to Nisan, a Babylonian loan word. The translation could also read: "a new month, Abib."

<sup>164</sup> Literally: "between your eyes."

<sup>165</sup> Literally: "be on your lips."

<sup>166</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 131b.

<sup>167</sup> Unclean animals were not to be sacrificed. Unclean animals were sacrificed in other cultures. Under extreme conditions unclean animals were eaten. Cf. II Kings 6:25. Donkey milk was acceptable. Cf. Genesis 49:2. Was the herd in Job 1:3 solely for breeding purposes or was the milk used? Even the unclean animals were to be dedicated to God but needed to be redeemed by a lamb, which was clean. The word "redeem" might be translated as "to buy back."



every firstborn son I redeem.’<sup>16</sup> It will serve as a sign on your hand and an emblem<sup>168</sup> on your forehead that by the strength of the Lord we were brought out of Egypt.”<sup>169</sup>

### *C. The Lord’s Victory: Emancipation of Israel 13:17 – 15:21*

#### *1. From Succoth to Etham 13:17 – 22*

<sup>17</sup> When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the Philistia Road,<sup>170</sup> although that was the shorter route. God thought, “If the people face war, they might change their minds and want to return to Egypt.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore God led the people by a roundabout way of the wilderness<sup>171</sup> toward the Sea of Reeds.<sup>172</sup> The Israelites went up out of the land of Egypt prepared for battle.<sup>173</sup> <sup>19</sup> Moses took Joseph’s mummified body<sup>174</sup> for Joseph had required a solemn oath of the Israelites, saying, “God will surely take notice of you, and then you must carry my bones with you from here.”<sup>20</sup> They started out from Succoth,<sup>175</sup> and camped at Etham,<sup>176</sup> on the edge of the wilderness. <sup>21</sup> The Lord led them in a pillar of cloud<sup>177</sup> by day, leading them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might be able to travel by day or by night. <sup>22</sup> Neither the pillar of cloud nor the pillar of fire left its place in front of the people.

### <CHAPTER 14>

#### *2. Cries at the Frontier 14:1 – 14*

<sup>1</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses: “Tell the people of the land to reverse their direction and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon, camping opposite it, by the sea.”<sup>178</sup> <sup>3</sup> Pharaoh will say, ‘They are confused

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<sup>168</sup> “Emblem” or “frontlet”: The meaning is uncertain. In later Judaism phylacteries began to be used as a fulfillment of this and other similar verses. Brief sections of the Law were (and are) enclosed in leather containers and fastened with leather thongs on the forehead and arm. While, in Judaism this came to be thought of literally, many feel this to be a metaphor.

<sup>169</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 131b.

<sup>170</sup> “The Philistia Road” is a much later name for that road. The Philistines did not enter the area in which they lived until 1145 BCE. The editor no doubt used the later name since it would be understood by the people.

<sup>171</sup> This was called “the road to the steppes,” or “the road to the grazing grounds.”

<sup>172</sup> The Hebrew words, “yam sup” mean “the sea of reeds.” They were going through a section of lakes, swamps, and streams which would make for a difficult crossing. They were not going through the Red Sea that we find on our maps just south of the west shore of the Sinai peninsula.

<sup>173</sup> Several early Rabbis changed the thought, saying, “armed with good works.” The Hebrew is uncertain.

<sup>174</sup> Cf.: Genesis 50:25; Joshua 24:32. The last person to leave Egypt was the person who brought the Hebrew people into Egypt by providing a haven for them in a time of drought.

<sup>175</sup> Probably Tell el-Mashkutah.

<sup>176</sup> The location was adjacent to the Sea of Reeds.

<sup>177</sup> The Targums are not unanimous concerning the cloud. Some felt the cloud led as special protection. Others said there were seven clouds which surrounded the Israelites shading them from an evil sun.

<sup>178</sup> The exact locations are not definite. What is known by scholars is as follows: Pi-hahiroth means “salt marsh.” Migdol is a name used for several locations, meaning “watch tower.” Baal zephron might be one of two locations: Lake Sibonis near the Mediterranean Sea or Lake Timsan. Cf.: ANET pp.256a; 259b; 485b.

in the wilderness which has closed in on them.’<sup>4</sup> I will cause Pharaoh to become obstinate, and he will pursue them. I will gain glory for myself over (*or, through*) Pharaoh and all his warriors; and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord.” The Egyptians did exactly as the Lord had said.

<sup>5</sup> When the king of Egypt was informed that the people had fled, the minds of Pharaoh, and his advisors were changed toward the people, and they said, “What have we done, in permitting the people who have been our servants to leave?”<sup>6</sup> So his chariots were made ready<sup>179</sup> and he took his army. <sup>7</sup> He took a detachment of six hundred select chariots, along with all his additional chariots of Egypt, along with the officers who were over the entire army.<sup>180</sup> <sup>7</sup> The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued the Israelites, who had departed from his land boldly.<sup>181</sup> <sup>8</sup> The Egyptians pursued them with the entire Egyptian army of charioteers, and warriors, overtaking them at Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephron where they had camped at the sea.

<sup>10</sup> When Pharaoh came near, the Israelites suddenly looked up,<sup>182</sup> catching sight that Pharaoh had pursued them, the people panicked, and clamored to the Lord,<sup>183</sup> <sup>11</sup> and said, to Moses, “What a way to treat us!” Are there no graves in Egypt,<sup>184</sup> that you have taken us away to the wilderness? What have you done to us, by bringing us out of Egypt? <sup>12</sup> Is not this just what we told you in Egypt? ‘Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians.’ It would have been better for us to have served the Egyptians than to die in this wilderness.” <sup>13</sup> Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish today, for those Egyptians you are seeing today you will never see again. <sup>14</sup> The Lord will do battle for you. Now be quiet.”

### 3. *Israel Covers the Sea 14:15 – 22*

<sup>15</sup> The Lord then said to Moses: “What is the reason for all this clamor? Tell the people to move forward. <sup>16</sup> Lift up your rod and stretch your hand over the sea, and split<sup>185</sup> <sup>ii</sup>, that the people may move through the sea on dry ground. <sup>17</sup> Then I will cause the Egyptians to become obstinate so that they will go in after the people of Israel, and I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and his entire army: chariots, and charioteers. <sup>18</sup> The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots and his charioteers.”

<sup>19</sup> The angel of God who was accustomed to leading the Israelite army went behind them: and a pillar of cloud shifted from in front of them and took its place behind them, <sup>20</sup> and it came between the Israelites and the army of Egypt. There was the cloud and there was darkness. It cast a spell upon the night (*or, it lit up the night*), so that one army did not come near the other army at any time during the night.<sup>186</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and the sea turned into dry land; and the waters were split.

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<sup>179</sup> The LXX says: “Pharaoh himself prepared the chariots.”

<sup>180</sup> In Egypt there was a charioteer who drove the horses, and a warrior on each chariot. In other nations there were one charioteer, a warrior and an armor bearer.

<sup>181</sup> Literally: “with high hands.”

<sup>182</sup> The Hebrew gives the thought of surprise .

<sup>183</sup> There is a contrast: the people of Israel panic and shout to the Lord. Moses is calm.

<sup>184</sup> Note the irony: Egypt with all its huge tombs, and the question : “Are there no graves in Egypt?”

<sup>185</sup> “Split” accurately translates the Hebrew word.

<sup>186</sup> LXX appears to have a different recension: “and there was darkness and blackness, and the night passed.”

22 The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming walls for them on their right and left. <sup>187</sup>

#### 4. *God Destroys the Enemy 14:23 – 31*

23 The Egyptians pursued, going into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's army: [*including all warriors*], horses, chariots and horsemen. <sup>188</sup> 24 At the time of the morning watch <sup>189</sup> the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down on the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into a panic, 25 by clogging <sup>190</sup> the wheels of the chariots [*with mud*] so that they had difficulty turning. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt."

26 The Lord then said to Moses: "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water will come back on the Egyptians, on their chariots, and their chariot drivers." 27 Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians tried to flee before it, the Lord tossed <sup>191</sup> the Egyptians into the sea. 28 The water returned and covered the chariots and the charioteers, and the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea were drowned, there was not a single survivor. <sup>192</sup> 29 However, the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on both their right and left.

30 It was in this manner that the Lord saved Israel on that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 Israel saw the great work that the Lord had accomplished against the Egyptians. Therefore the people were in great awe of the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

#### <CHAPTER 15>

#### 5 *Hymns in Praise of the Lord. 15:1 – 21*

##### a. *The Song of Moses 15:1 - 18* <sup>193</sup>

- 1 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord, saying:  
"I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously,  
he has thrown the horses and riders into the sea.  
2 The Lord is my strength and my might (*or, song*);  
he has become my deliverance. <sup>194</sup>  
This is my God, and I will praise (*or, enshrine*) him;  
my father's God, and I will exalt him. <sup>195</sup>  
3 The Lord is a warrior,  
the Lord is his name.

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<sup>187</sup> The reedy salt marsh would have a very soft bottom of muck, for it seems to have been connected with the sea. The word translated as "wall" is the same word that is used in Nehemiah when he speaks about rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

<sup>188</sup> Some scholars insert verses 26 – 29 here, followed by 21, 24, 25, 27, 30 – 31.

<sup>189</sup> The morning watch was from 2 – 6 A.M.

<sup>190</sup> So: Samaritan Pentateuch, LXX, and Syriac. Hebrew: "removed." This would result in broken wheels and broken axles.

<sup>191</sup> The Hebrew word might be aptly translated as "shook off."

<sup>192</sup> It is not clear if Pharaoh perished. Later translators assumed that he also died. There is no record, within Egypt, of this even taking place. The Egyptian Pharaohs were all very careful to have only accomplishments recorded for their reigns.

<sup>193</sup> Scholars have not agreed on the purpose of this psalm.

<sup>194</sup> The Hebrew word is problematic.

<sup>195</sup> The KJV mistranslates this phrase.

4 “Pharaoh’s chariots and his army were thrown into the sea,  
his carefully selected officers were sunk in the Sea of Reeds.  
5 The floods covered them;  
they went down into the depths <sup>196</sup> like a stone.  
6 Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power –  
your right hand shattered the enemy.  
7 In the greatness of your might you overthrew your adversaries,  
you sent out your fury and it consumed them like stubble.  
8 At the blast of your nostrils (*the east wind*) the waters piled up;  
the floods stood up like a hill, <sup>197</sup>  
the depths congealed in the heart of the sea.  
9 The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will capture them,  
I will divide the spoil, I will take whatever I want from them.  
I will draw my sword, my hand will dispose of them.’  
10 You blew with your wind and the whirlpool covered them,  
for they sank like lead in your mighty waters.

11 “Who among the gods is like you, O Lord?  
Who is comparable to your majesty and holiness,  
awesome in splendor, and doing wonders?  
12 You stretched out your right hand,  
and the earth swallowed them. <sup>198</sup>

13 “In your steadfast love you led people whom you redeemed,  
you guided them by your strength to your holy abode. <sup>199</sup>  
14 The people trembled as they listened,  
pangs seized the inhabitants of Philistia. <sup>200</sup>  
15 Then the chiefs of Eden were dismayed,  
trembling seized the rulers of Moab,  
and all the inhabitants of Canaan fainted with fear.  
16 Terror and dread descended on them;  
for by the might of your arm, they became still as stone  
until your people, O Lord, passed by,  
until the people who had become faithful to you <sup>201</sup> passed by.  
17 You brought them in and placed them  
on the mountain of your possession, <sup>202</sup>  
the place, O Lord, that you made your abode,”

<sup>196</sup> The Hebrew word gives the sound of a ‘gurgle.’

<sup>197</sup> The Targums say “a wall.” The Hebrew word might also be translated as “heap.”

<sup>198</sup> Some scholars feel the underworld swallowed them.

<sup>199</sup> The line could be translated, “you guided them by the strength of your holy law.” LXX: “your righteousness.”

<sup>200</sup> The source the writer used must have been late, since the Philistines did not arrive in the area called Philistia (*Gaza*) until 1158 BCE.

<sup>201</sup> Literally: “you purchased.”

<sup>202</sup> Literally: “the mountain of your inheritance.”

the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hands have established.

18 The Lord will reign for ever and ever.:

*b. The Song of Miriam 15:19 - 21*

19 [When the horses of Pharaoh, with their chariots and with their chariot drivers went into the sea, the Lord brought back the waters of the sea upon them; but the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground.]<sup>203</sup>

20 Then Miriam, the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out, following her, carrying tambourines, and danced. 21 Miriam then sang to them:<sup>204</sup>

“Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;  
horse and rider have been thrown into the sea by him.”

*D. The Pilgrimage to Sinai 15:22 – 18:27*

*1 The crisis 15:22 – 17:16*

*a. March 15:22 – 27*

22 Then Moses led Israel setting out from the Sea of Reeds, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They remained in the wilderness for three days, but found no water. 23 When they came to Marah, they were unable to drink the water of Marah because it was bitter. (It was for this reason that the site was called Marah (*or, bitterness*).) 24 The people grumbled [*not only about the bitter water, but also*] against Moses, saying, “What are we to drink?” 25 Moses cried out to the Lord, who then showed him a piece of wood (*or, tree*);<sup>205</sup> and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet.

There the Lord made a statute and an ordinance and there he put them to the test. 26 He said, “If you will listen intelligently to the voice of the Lord, and do what is right, in the Lord's sight, and give careful attention to his commandments, keeping all of his laws, I will not cause you to have any of the diseases through which I afflicted the Egyptians: for I am the Lord who hears you.”

27 They then came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there beside the water.

<CHAPTER 16>

*b. The Manna 16:1 - 21*

1 The entire congregation of Israelites set out from Elim,<sup>206</sup> and they came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from Egypt.<sup>207</sup> 2 The entire congregation of the people of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, 3 saying to them, “If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots

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<sup>203</sup> Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

<sup>204</sup> Miriam sings because she is called a prophetess. The women then, most surely, sang, repeating the words that had been sung. Moses was perhaps Miriam's half-brother. Cf.: ANET p. 22a.

<sup>205</sup> Possibly barberry which is still used by Arabs who use it to give the water sufficient flavor that the bitterness of the water is bearable.

<sup>206</sup> The Israelites were “donkey” nomads, not “camel” nomads. They could not cross desert areas, thus where they led their flocks and herds was determined by a water source.

<sup>207</sup> This was one month after leaving Egypt. The location of the wilderness of Sin (*also called Zin*) The exact location is unknown. Some scholars place it in the general area of Sinai, others feel it was south of Judah in the Negeb area. The name has nothing to do with “sinfulness.”

<sup>208</sup> and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us into this wilderness to starve us to death.”

<sup>4</sup> The Lord then said to Moses: “Be assured: I will shower food on you from the sky, and the people will go out and gather a portion that is sufficient for each day, for I will put them to the test to see whether they will follow my instructions or not. <sup>5</sup> On the sixth day, when they gather what they bring in, the available supply will be twice as much as they gather on the other days. <sup>209</sup> <sup>6</sup> Moses and Aaron then told the people of Israel, “When evening comes you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, <sup>7</sup> and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord (*or, Presence*), because he has heard your murmuring against him. Of what importance are we that you should murmur against us?” <sup>8</sup> [Moses said, “When the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, it is because the Lord has heard the complaining that you voice against him – what are we? Your complaining is not against us, it is against the Lord.”] <sup>210</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Then Moses said to Aaron, “Speak to the entire congregation of the Israelites, saying, ‘Come near, gather before the Lord! The Lord has heard your complaining.’” <sup>10</sup> Just as Aaron was speaking to the entire congregation of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord (*or, the Presence*) appeared in the cloud. <sup>11</sup> The Lord spoke to Moses, and said, <sup>12</sup> “I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; tell them, ‘You will eat meat at twilight and in the morning you will eat your fill of bread; then you will know that I am the Lord, your God.’”

<sup>13</sup> In the evening quails <sup>211</sup> came up, and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. <sup>14</sup> When the dew lifted, on the surface of the wilderness there appeared a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost, on the ground. <sup>212</sup> <sup>15</sup> When the Israelites saw it they said to one another, “What is it?” <sup>213</sup> for they had no idea what it was. Moses informed them, “It is the bread the Lord has provided for you to eat. <sup>214</sup> <sup>16</sup> This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Gather as much as each one of you needs, an omer <sup>215</sup> for each person, based on the number of persons, everyone providing for all those who reside in their tent.’” <sup>17</sup> The Israelites followed their instructions, some gathering more, some gathering less. <sup>18</sup> However, when they measured it in an omer those who had gathered a great deal did not have any left over, and those who gathered

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<sup>208</sup> The people are complaining that they do not have sufficient meat. Slaves did not have the opportunity to eat much meat, but the meat cauldron remained in their memories.

<sup>209</sup> Some scholars insert verses 9 – 12 here. Some scholars also make emendations to this verse to clarify the meaning that the people are to gather double the amount on the sixth day, to be prepared for the Sabbath.

<sup>210</sup> Some scholars feel this verse is an interpolation. Other scholars insert verses 13-36 after verse 8. The verses 7 & 8 seem to suffer from dittography.

<sup>211</sup> Quails migrate from southern Europe to Arabia and records show that there have been several times when they were so exhausted that when they arrived over the Sinai Peninsula that they almost dropped from the sky and were immobile. They fly north in March/April.

<sup>212</sup> The Hebrew word is a hapax legomenon. The translation is based on an Arabic cognate. The LXX translates: “like white coriander seed.” Coriander seed is normally not white.

<sup>213</sup> The Hebrew word “*man hu*” from which we get the word “Manna,” which means “What is it?” Some translators make an emendation so that the line reads, “It is manna.”

<sup>214</sup> The ancient Targum says, “He is the bread. which the Lord has given you,” the reference being Moses.

<sup>215</sup> An “omer” was about two quarts. Later in Hebrew history the size changed to almost a gallon.

less had no shortage: they all gathered based on the amount they would eat. <sup>216</sup> <sup>19</sup> Moses told them, “No one is to leave any until morning.” <sup>20</sup> They, however, did not listen to Moses; some left a portion of it until morning, but it became wormy <sup>217</sup> and stank. Moses was angry with them. <sup>21</sup> Morning after morning they gathered it, as much as each needed; but when the sun became hot, it melted.

*1. Institution of the Sabbath 16:22 - 30*

<sup>22</sup> On the sixth day they gathered twice as much food, two omers apiece. When the leaders of the congregation came to tell Moses, <sup>23</sup> he said to them” “This is what the Lord commanded. ‘Tomorrow is to be a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord; bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil, and all that is left over is to be put aside, to be kept until morning.’” <sup>24</sup> So they put that portion aside until morning, as Moses had commanded them; and it did not spoil, nor did it become wormy. <sup>25</sup> Moses said, “Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord, today you will not find it in the field. <sup>26</sup> You will be able to gather it for six days; but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, none will be provided.” <sup>27</sup> On the seventh day some people went out to gather, and they did not find any. <sup>28</sup> The Lord said to Moses, “How long must I put up with the refusal to follow my commandments and instructions? <sup>29</sup> Let it be clear: the Lord has given you the Sabbath, therefore on the sixth day he gives you food for two days. All persons are to stay where they are; do not leave your place on the seventh day.” <sup>218</sup> <sup>30</sup> So the people rested on the seventh day.

*2. The Memorial Manna 16:31 – 36*

<sup>31</sup> The people <sup>219</sup> of Israel called it manna; it was like coriander seed, white, and the taste was like wafers <sup>220</sup> made with honey. <sup>32</sup> Moses said, “This is what the Lord commanded: ‘Let an omer of manna be kept throughout your generations, in order that the people in succeeding generations might be able to see the food I provided to feed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.’” <sup>33</sup> Moses told Aaron, “Take a jar <sup>221</sup> and put an omer of manna in it, and place it before the Lord, to be kept throughout your generations.” <sup>34</sup> Aaron did just as the Lord had commanded Moses, placing it before the holy place <sup>222</sup> for safekeeping. <sup>35</sup> The Israelites ate manna for forty years; until they came to the habitable land they continued to eat manna. This ceased when they arrived at the border of the land of Canaan. <sup>36</sup> (An omer is a tenth of an ephah.)

<CHAPTER 17>

*c. Massah = Meriba 17:1 – 7* <sup>223</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Despite greed and fear, everyone had just enough.

<sup>217</sup> Some scholars prefer to say it was ants. To keep a portion until morning was an example of lack of faith as well as obstinacy.

<sup>218</sup> The Mishnah attempted to describe the taste of manna but had difficulty doing so. The result was that they proclaimed its wonderful properties, for it supplied the dietary needs but tasted like a delicacy.

<sup>219</sup> Literally: “the house of Israel.” LXX: “the children of Israel.” This is also found in several Hebrew manuscripts.

<sup>220</sup> The Hebrew is uncertain.

<sup>221</sup> A hapax legomenon. The LXX says: “golden vessel.” The Hebrew root word has the thought of “basket.” The most suitable translation might be: “a container.”

<sup>222</sup> The word, in Hebrew, might be translated as “treaty, testimony, covenant.”

<sup>223</sup> This is the second of three accounts concerning murmuring.

<sup>1</sup> The entire congregation of the people of Israel journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, <sup>224</sup> but there was no drinking water for the people. The people found fault <sup>225</sup> with Moses, saying, “Give us water for the people to drink.” Moses responded, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?” <sup>3</sup> The people, however, were thirsty for water; and they raised an outcry against Moses, saying, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” <sup>4</sup> Moses then cried out to the Lord, “What am I to do with these people? They are on the very verge of stoning me.” <sup>5</sup> The Lord said to Moses, “Go ahead of the people, accompanied by some of the elders of Israel. Take the staff in your hand that you used when you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup> Be assured, I will be standing in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock and water will flow out of it, so that the people will be able to drink. Moses did what the Lord had said, in the presence of the elders of Israel. <sup>7</sup> He called the place Massah (*or, Test*) and Meribah (*or, Quarrel*) because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

*d. The Amalekites 17:8 – 16*

<sup>8</sup> Then Amalek <sup>226</sup> came and fought with the Israelites at Rephidim. <sup>9</sup> Moses said to Joshua, “Pick some men to go out to fight against the Amalekites. Tomorrow <sup>227</sup> I will stand at the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand. “ <sup>10</sup> Joshua did as he had been told by Moses, and fought with Amalek; while Moses, Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill. <sup>11</sup> Whenever Moses held up his hand <sup>228</sup> Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand Amalek prevailed. <sup>12</sup> However, when Moses hands became weary, they took a stone and placed it under him, and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on each side, so that his hands were steady until sunset. <sup>229</sup> <sup>13</sup> Joshua defeated <sup>230</sup> Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. <sup>231</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write this as a memorial on a scroll (*or, in a book*) and recite it in the hearing of Joshua: I will annihilate Amalek and the memory of him will no longer exist. <sup>15</sup> Moses built an altar, and called it, “The Lord is the one who does things for me.” <sup>232</sup> <sup>16</sup> He said, “Hold fast to the one who does things for us.” <sup>233</sup> The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

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<sup>224</sup> The location is unknown.

<sup>225</sup> The Hebrew word here is different, using a legal term for their quarreling.

<sup>226</sup> Amalek was related to Esau. Genesis 36:12. They were a nomadic tribe that usually lived in the area just north of Kadesh. The area in which they lived was considered to be the most fruitful area in the Sinai peninsula.

<sup>227</sup> Does “tomorrow” refer to the previous sentence or is it the beginning of a new sentence.

<sup>228</sup> The Samaritan Pentateuch and LXX say: “Moses lifted up both hands.”

<sup>229</sup> Scholars have presented three possible theories: 1. When Moses hands were up he was signaling to the warriors, ‘You are winning.’ When his hands were down the warriors felt they were being defeated. 2. Since Moses was carrying “the rod of God” he certainly displayed it in his upraised hands. This would give reassurance to the warriors. 3. During prayer it was the custom to hold up one’s hands, that being considered as a prayerful attitude. Thus, having his hands up, signified that Moses was praying. Neither theory is supported by the writing.

<sup>230</sup> The Hebrew word is rare. It might be translated, “mowed down.”

<sup>231</sup> The tribe of Amalek was not totally destroyed. The Amalekites were annihilated in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE during the time of Hezekiah. Cf. I Chronicles 4:41 – 43.

<sup>232</sup> One of the two Hebrew words is a hapax legomenon. It’s meaning is uncertain. The LXX translates: “my refuge.” Jerome translated it as: “The Lord is my Banner.”

<sup>233</sup> The Hebrew meaning is uncertain.



<CHAPTER 18>

2. *Jethro Meets Moses 18: 1 – 27*

a. *The Sacrificial Meal 18:1 - 12*

<sup>1</sup> Jethro, <sup>234</sup> the priest of Midian, <sup>235</sup> Moses' father-in-law, learned of all that the Lord had done for (*and through*) Moses, and for his people, Israel, (how the Lord had brought the people of Israel out of Egypt). <sup>2</sup> After Moses had been sent away [*to Egypt*] Jethro, Moses' father-in-law took back his daughter, Zipporah, the wife of Moses, <sup>236</sup> <sup>3</sup> along with their two sons. The name of one was Gershon, (that is to say, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land"). <sup>4</sup> The name of the other son was Eliezer, (that is to say, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"). <sup>5</sup> Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came into the wilderness where Moses was camped at the mountain of God, bringing Moses' sons and his wife to him. <sup>6</sup> He sent word to Moses, <sup>237</sup> "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you, along with your wife and her two sons." <sup>7</sup> Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and kissed him. Each one inquired about the other's welfare, <sup>238</sup> and they then went into the tent. <sup>8</sup> Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians on behalf of Israel, telling of all the hardship that had beset them along the way, and how the Lord had delivered them. <sup>9</sup> Jethro rejoiced <sup>239</sup> because of all the kindness the Lord had bestowed on Israel, in that he delivered them out of the power of the Egyptians.

<sup>10</sup> Jethro said, "Blessed be the Lord, who has delivered you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh. <sup>240</sup> <sup>11</sup> Now I know that the Lord is greater than all other gods, because he has delivered the people from the Egyptians, when they dealt arrogantly with them." <sup>241</sup> <sup>12</sup> Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought <sup>242</sup> a burnt offering and sacrifices to God, and Aaron came along with all the elders (*or, leaders*) of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God. <sup>243</sup>

b. *Appointment of Judges 18:13 - 20*

<sup>13</sup> The following day Moses sat as judge (*or, magistrate*) for the people, while the people stood around him from morning until evening. <sup>244</sup> <sup>14</sup> When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why are you the sole judge, <sup>245</sup> while all the people are standing around you from morning until evening?" <sup>15</sup> Moses replied to his father-in-law, saying, "It is because the people come to me to inquire of God. <sup>16</sup> When they have a dispute the all come to me,

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<sup>234</sup> Jethro also goes by the name Reuel. Cf.: Exodus 2: 18.

<sup>235</sup> The Talmud calls him a "priest of idolatry." We do not know where Jethro's loyalties were. He gave good advice to Moses, and seems to have been influential in establishing the celebration of the Sabbath.

<sup>236</sup> In later Hebrew history this would have been considered to be a divorce. Moses perhaps sent his wife back to her parents in order to protect her, for her own safety. In Exodus 4:20 Moses had already taken her back to Egypt.

<sup>237</sup> The LXX & Syriac say: "Look, your father-in-law."

<sup>238</sup> The Hebrew word is often taken to mean "peace."

<sup>239</sup> LXX: "was astonished."

<sup>240</sup> The last portion of this verse is missing in the LXX.

<sup>241</sup> The last half of this sentence, in Hebrew, is uncertain.

<sup>242</sup> Targums and Vulgate say: "offered."

<sup>243</sup> Some scholars feel that Moses learned the ways of worship from Jethro. Others feel Jethro was a new convert.

<sup>244</sup> A Bedouin tribal Sheik would sit briefly each morning as a judge.

<sup>245</sup> Literally: "why do you sit."

and I decide between one person and the other, and I let them know about the laws and teachings of God.”<sup>17</sup> Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not wise.<sup>18</sup> You will exhaust yourself for what you are doing is too much<sup>246</sup> for you; you are not able to do this alone.<sup>19</sup> Now listen to me. I will give you recommendations, and God will be with you.<sup>247</sup> You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God.<sup>20</sup> Teach them the laws and teachings and make certain that they know the way in which they are to go (*or, how they should live*) and the things they are to do.<sup>248</sup> <sup>21</sup> Additionally, you must select able men who are in awe of God, who are men of integrity and who will always be trustworthy, [*not taking bribes*], and place these men as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.<sup>22</sup> Let them be in the position of judges for the people, full time. They are to bring every important (*or, difficult*) case to you, but they, themselves, are to decide all minor cases. In this way it will be much easier for you and they will bear the burden for you.<sup>23</sup> If you will do this, and this is what God commands you to do, you will be able to endure and they will arrive at solutions and will be able to live in harmony.”

<sup>24</sup> Moses listened to his father-in-law and did exactly as he said.<sup>249</sup> <sup>25</sup> Moses selected able men from among all the people of Israel, and appointed them to be over the people, as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.<sup>250</sup> <sup>26</sup> They judged the people at all times. Difficult cases they referred to Moses, but any minor case they decided themselves.<sup>27</sup> Then Moses permitted his father-in-law to depart, and he returned to his own country.

#### <CHAPTER 19>

#### IV. Sinai: The Implementation of the Revelation 19:1 – 40:33

##### A. The Covenant 19:1 – 24:18

##### 1. The Theophany 19:1 - 15

##### a. The Institution 19:1- 8

<sup>1</sup> On the third new moon (*or, month*) after the Israelites had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day, they arrived in the wilderness of Sinai.<sup>251</sup> <sup>2</sup> When they moved from Rephidim they entered the wilderness of Sinai,<sup>252</sup> camping in the wilderness; Israel camped in front of the mountain. <sup>3</sup> Moses went up to God; the Lord called him from the mountain, saying, “This is what you are to say to the people of Israel: <sup>253</sup> tell the people of Israel, <sup>4</sup> You have witnessed what I did<sup>254</sup> to the Egyptians, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to myself. <sup>5</sup> Now therefore: if you are willing to obey my voice, and keep my covenant, you will be my treasured possession among all the nations.

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<sup>246</sup> Literally: “heavy.”

<sup>247</sup> This could be translated as: “that God may be with you.”

<sup>248</sup> The laws and teachings were to be as signposts along the way of life.

<sup>249</sup> This is evidence that Moses was both humble and wise.

<sup>250</sup> The Samaritan Pentateuch adds Deuteronomy 1:9 – 18 here.

<sup>251</sup> It might be a better read if verse 2 preceded verse 1.

<sup>252</sup> The Wilderness of Sinai was not barren desert but semi-arid grazing land. Sinai might be Gebel Musa, Gebel Serbai, or Gebel Katarina. The exact location is in question.

<sup>253</sup> Literally: “the house of Jacob.”

<sup>254</sup> God’s action is in terms of a permanent relationship.

Realize that the entire world is mine, <sup>255</sup> 6 but for me you will be a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. <sup>256</sup> These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

7 Moses, therefore came, summoning the leaders (*or, elders*) of the people, and presented to them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. 8 All the people answered in unison: “Everything that the Lord has said, we will do.” Moses then reported the words of the people to the Lord.

*b. The Preparation 19:9 - 15*

9 The Lord then said to Moses, “I will come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and thereby they are to trust you ever after. 10 The Lord said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. <sup>257</sup> Have them wash their clothing, 11 and prepare for the third day, for on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of the people. 12 You are to set boundaries for the people all around, saying, ‘Be careful not to go up to the mountain or touch the edge of it. Anyone who touches the mountain is to be put to death. 13 No person’s hand is to touch even the edge of the mountain, for that being will either be stoned to death or shot with arrows, <sup>258</sup> whether it is an animal or a human being: they will not live. <sup>259</sup> When the trumpet (*or, ram’s horn*) sounds a long blast, they may go up to the mountain.” 14 So Moses went down from the mountain and consecrated all the people, and they all washed their clothing. 15 The people said, “Prepare for the third day! Don’t go near a woman.”

*c. The Appearance 19:16 – 25*

16 At dawn on the morning of the third day there were peals of thunder, flashing lightning and a dense cloud on the mountain. There was the blast of a trumpet that was so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled with fright. 17 Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord had descended upon it in fire; the smoke rising like the smoke of a kiln, while the entire mountain <sup>260</sup> shook violently. 19 As the trumpet blast grew increasingly louder, Moses would speak and God would answer him in thunder. <sup>261</sup> 20 When the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain, the Lord summoned Moses to come to the top of the mountain, and Moses climbed up. 21 The Lord then said to Moses, “Go down and warn the people not to break through the boundaries to look at the Lord. 22 Even the priests who approach the Lord must remain ceremonially clean (*or, consecrate themselves*), or the Lord will break out against them;” 23 Moses said to the Lord, “The people are not permitted to come up to Mount Sinai, for you, yourself, warned us, saying, ‘Set boundaries around the mountain and keep it holy’”: 24 The Lord told him, “Go down, and return, bringing Aaron with you, but do not let either the priests or the people break through to come up to the Lord. If that is the case I

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<sup>255</sup> Obedience was the central role of Israel, to be expressed in faith and loyalty.

<sup>256</sup> Cf.: I Peter 2:5,9.

<sup>257</sup> Quite literally the message would be: “tell the people they are not to engage in sex today or tomorrow, or do anything that might be interpreted as being unclean.

<sup>258</sup> The MT does not have “with arrows” in its text.

<sup>259</sup> Transgressors will forfeit their lives to God. Some portions of verse 13 are uncertain.

<sup>260</sup> The LXX and several Hebrew manuscripts read “the people shook violently.”

<sup>261</sup> The LXX has “the voice of God.”

<sup>262</sup> will break out against them.” <sup>23</sup> So Moses went down to the people and informed them.

<CHAPTER 20> <sup>263</sup>

2. *The Decalogue 20:1 – 17*

<sup>1</sup> God spoke as follows: <sup>264</sup> <sup>2</sup> “I am the Lord your God, the one who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the situation in which you were enslaved, <sup>3</sup> You shall have no other god(s) before me. <sup>265</sup>

<sup>4</sup> “You shall not make any carved (*or, molten*) images <sup>266</sup> - whether these be of heaven, or earth, or of things under the earth. <sup>5</sup> You are not to revere such images or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a zealous God; <sup>267</sup> punishing the evil deeds of parents to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me, <sup>6</sup> but showing mercy <sup>268</sup> toward thousands <sup>269</sup> of generations of those who love me and are obedient to my commandments.

<sup>7</sup> “You shall not use my name wrongfully, for I, the Lord your God, will not acquit anyone who uses my name wrongfully. <sup>270</sup>

<sup>8</sup> “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> “You are to do all your labor in six days <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God and you are not to do any work, -- not you, your son, your daughter, your male or female (*slaves*) employees, your livestock, or the alien resident in your community, <sup>11</sup> for in six days the Lord made the universe and all that is therein, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord has blessed the Sabbath Day and consecrated it.

<sup>12</sup> “Honor your father and mother that you might have longevity in the land given you by the Lord your God.

<sup>13</sup> “You shall not murder (*or, kill*). <sup>271</sup>

<sup>14</sup> “You shall not commit adultery. <sup>272</sup>

<sup>15</sup> “You shall not steal. <sup>273</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Literally: “he.”

<sup>263</sup> If these commandments were given today there would certainly be a desire on the part of those who receive them to negotiate, compromise, or to lessen the urgency of the commands of God that, after all is a part of the nature of us as persons.

<sup>264</sup> God gives commands and has categorized these commands. God expects his people to respond properly.

<sup>265</sup> Literally: “before my face.”

<sup>266</sup> The Hebrew word signifies “something shaped, chiseled, or of cast metal” made as an image.

<sup>267</sup> Zealous seems to be a better translation since “jealous” is an acquired attitude.

<sup>268</sup> The Hebrew word “*hesed*” is a positive concept of mercy which would be used in the making of a covenant.

<sup>269</sup> The earliest translations use the word “myriads.”

<sup>270</sup> The name of God was pronounced only once each year. This was done by the High Priest in the most holy portion of the temple on the Day of Atonement. To use God’s name in vain questioned the existence of God.

<sup>271</sup> The Hebrew word is a rather rare word which is used to distinguish between pre-meditated and murder which takes place without having been planned. Jesus adds the concept of “hate.” Cf.: ANET p.34c.

<sup>272</sup> In the Old Testament time polygamy was tolerated, perhaps as a social institution to provide for unattached women. Adultery was often tolerated because of demand for rights, desires, lust, and injustice. Jesus adds “thoughts,” thereby going much farther in the concept than merely “acts” as adulterous. Cf. ANET p. 35a, b., 166d.

16 “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”<sup>274</sup>

17 “You shall not covet<sup>275</sup> your neighbor’s house, his wife, his male and female slaves (*or, employees*), his ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

3. *The People’s Fear of God 20:18 – 20*

18 When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking they were fearful,<sup>276</sup> and trembled, standing at a distance, 19 and said to Moses, “You speak to us! We will listen! Do not let God speak to us, or we will die.”<sup>277</sup> 20 Moses spoke to the people, “Fear not! God has only come to test you, and to place fear (*or, awe*) of him upon you, do that you will not sin.” V. *The Laws of the Covenant 20:21 – 23:33*

a. *Two Cult Laws 20:21 – 26*

1. *The Unity of God 20:21 - 23*

21 The people then stood at a distance, while Moses approached the deep darkness where God was.

22 The Lord said to Moses, “This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘You, yourselves have seen that I spoke with you from heaven. 23 You are not to fashion any gods made of silver who are to be along side to me. You are also not to make any gods of gold.’”<sup>278</sup>

2. *The Altar 20:24 – 26*

24 “You only need to make an altar of earth for me, on which you are to sacrifice your burnt offerings, your well being (*or, peace*) offerings, your sheep, and oxen, in every place where my name needs to be remembered, and I will come to bless you.<sup>279</sup> 25 If you make an altar of stone for me it must be made of stone that is not hewn, for if you use tools (*or, a chisel*) on the stone you have profaned the altar. 26 You are not to approach the altar by using steps, for if that is done it is possible that your nakedness is exposed.”<sup>280</sup>

<CHAPTER 21>

b. *The Social Code 21:1 – 23:19*

1. *Title 21:1*

1 “These are the regulations you are to set before them.”

2. *Civil and Criminal Law 21:2 – 22:17*

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<sup>273</sup> This possibly originally was a word for “kidnapping” based on earlier usages, but came to mean “to steal” as we think of it today. In a pastoral society to have something stolen could result in serious consequences because of the loss. Cf.: ANET p.. 35a, 388c,

<sup>274</sup> Already in that day tattling, tale-bearing or unkind talk, were included.

<sup>275</sup> The Hebrew word “*hamat*” is “desire.” To covet is to desire to get and keep someone else’s possessions.

<sup>276</sup> So: Samaritan, LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate. MT: “they saw.”

<sup>277</sup> No doubt because the people were aware of their own sinfulness, they were reluctant to enter into the presence of God or even to hear the voice of God.

<sup>278</sup> The LXX also speaks of images made of cast metal. 20:22 – 23:33 is often called “The Book of the Covenant.”

<sup>279</sup> Only two kinds of offering are mentioned: burnt, and well being (*or peace*) offerings. There is no preference, whether it be an earthen altar or one made of uncut stone.

<sup>280</sup> A ramp was to be used by the priests. With steps their robe might open, revealing their nakedness. Ritual nakedness was common in cults. God, after all, even made clothes for Adam and Eve. Genesis 3:21. Bad theology and bad morals seem to go together.

*a. The Israelite Slave 21:2 - 11*

<sup>2</sup> “When you buy a Hebrew slave he must serve you for six years and on the seventh year he will go free, without debt. <sup>281</sup> <sup>3</sup> If he comes in as a single <sup>282</sup> person, he will leave as a single person. If he comes in as a married person then his wife will go out with him. <sup>4</sup> If his master gives him a wife and she gives birth to sons and daughters, the wife and her children will belong to her master, and he is to go alone. <sup>5</sup> However, if the slave declares, ‘I loved my master and my wife and children, I will not leave as a free person.’ <sup>6</sup> Then his master must take him to the door or the doorpost; and his master will then pierce his ear completely, with an awl, and he will serve his master for the rest of his life.” <sup>283</sup>

<sup>7</sup> “When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she is not to go out as a male would. <sup>284</sup> <sup>8</sup> If she does not please her master, so that he does not designate her as being for himself, he is then to let her be redeemed: he will have no right to sell her to a foreigner, since he has dealt unfaithfully with her. <sup>9</sup> If he designates her to be for his son he must treat her like his daughter. <sup>10</sup> If he takes another wife (*or, concubine*) for himself, he is not permitted to diminish the amount of food or clothing, along with the conjugal rights as those of his first wife. <sup>11</sup> If he defaults and does not do these three things for her, she is to leave without paying any ransom money.”

*b. Capital Offenses 21:12 -17*

<sup>12</sup> “Whoever strikes a man mortally, is to be put to death. <sup>13</sup> But if this was not premeditated, but happened though an act of God, then I will appoint a place to which the killer may flee. <sup>285</sup> <sup>14</sup> However, if someone kills another because of treachery, you are to take the killer from before my altar, for execution.

<sup>15</sup> ”Whoever strikes his father or mother, killing them is to be put to death. <sup>286</sup>

<sup>16</sup> “Whoever kidnaps a person, and whether that person has been sold, or is still in the kidnapper’s possession, he is to be put to death. <sup>287</sup>

<sup>17</sup> “Whoever curses his father or mother is to be put to death.”

*c. Non-Capital Crimes 21:18 - 32*

<sup>18</sup> “When individuals quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or his fist, <sup>288</sup> so that the one who is struck is not killed, and is laid up in bed, <sup>19</sup> but recovers and is able to walk around outside with a cane, the person who struck him will be free of liability, except that he must pay for the loss of time, and to arrange for a full recovery.

<sup>20</sup> ”When a slave owner strikes a male or female slave with a rod, so that the person dies immediately, the owner is to be punished. <sup>21</sup> If that slave survives for a day or two, there is to be no punishment, for the slave is the owner’s property.

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<sup>281</sup> In this case, in order to survive, the person sold himself as a slave. (*or, indentured servant*). He could elect to continue to be under the ownership of his master for a longer period of time, should he choose to do so. Cf.: ANET p. 171b.

<sup>282</sup> Literally: “with his back,” i.e. bare back and nothing else.

<sup>283</sup> The ear was a symbol of obedience. In ancient Babylon slaves had their hair cut in a prescribed manner. If they were disobedient their ear was cut off. Hammurabi code 226, 282. Cf. ANET p. 137b.

<sup>284</sup> She would become a concubine and have the protection due a concubine. Deuteronomy 15:12, 17.

<sup>285</sup> Upon entering Israel six cities were designated as cities of refuge. The killer would be safe and could then stand trial. The “lex talionis” was not to be carried out in the cities of refuge. Cf.: ANET p.175b.

<sup>286</sup> Cf. ANET p. 175d.

<sup>287</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 166d.

<sup>288</sup> The Hebrew word could also be translated as “a hoe.”

22 “When people who are fighting injure a woman who is pregnant, so that there is a miscarriage, but no further harm, the one who is responsible must pay a fine, based on the what the woman’s husband demands, paying as much as the judge determines. 23 If any additional harm results, you are to give life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”<sup>289</sup>

26 ”When a slave owner strikes the eye of a male or female slave, destroying it, the owner must free the slave, as compensation for the eye. 27 If the owner knocks out the tooth of a male or female slave, the owner must free the slave, in compensation for the tooth.

28 “When an ox gores a man or woman to death, the ox is to be stoned, and its flesh is not to be eaten; but the owner of the ox will not be held liable. 29 If the ox had a record of goring in the past, and its owner had been warned but had not restrained it, and it kills a man or woman, the ox is to be stoned, and the owner is also to be put to death. 30 If a ransom<sup>290</sup> is imposed on an owner, the owner must pay whatever is imposed for the redemption of the victim’s life. 31 If an ox gores a boy or girl, the owner must deal with this according to this same rule. 32 If an ox gores a male or female slave, the owner must pay the slave owner thirty shekels of silver and the ox is to be stoned.”<sup>291</sup>

*a. Law Securing Property Rights 21:33 – 22:17 [H. 22:16 ??]*

33 “When someone leaves a pit<sup>292</sup> open, or digs a pit but, fails to cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls into it, 34 the owner of the pit must make restitution, paying money to the owner, but he is to keep the dead animal.

35 “If someone’s ox harms the ox of someone else, so that it dies, the live ox is to be sold and the price divided, and the dead animal is also to be divided. 36 However, if it was common knowledge that the ox was accustomed to gore in the past, and the ox was not restrained by the owner, the owner must restore ox for ox, but keep the dead animal.”

<CHAPTER 22>

1 [H. 21:37] “If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it, or sells it, the one who stole must pay five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep.<sup>293</sup> The one who stole must make restitution, but in the event that he is unable to do so he is to be sold because of the theft. 4 [H.3] [If the animal, be it an ox, or donkey, or sheep, is found alive, in the thief’s possession, the thief must pay double the value in restitution.]<sup>294</sup>

2 [H. 22:1] “If a thief is found breaking<sup>295</sup> through a wall, and is beaten to death, no one will be found blood-guilty, 3 [H. 2] but if this takes place after sunrise, blood-guilt is incurred.

5 [H. 4] “When someone lets his livestock roam freely and graze in someone else’s field or vineyard as if it were a public pasture, restitution must be made from the best of the fields of the owner of the livestock.

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<sup>289</sup> Cf. ANET pp. 175b 175d, 181d.

<sup>290</sup> The word “ransom” here is equal to “the price of life.” Cf. ANET p. 176d.

<sup>291</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 490a.

<sup>292</sup> This would very likely be done for grain storage.

<sup>293</sup> LXX: “restitution seven fold.”

<sup>294</sup> Verse four is out of place and has been returned to what presumably is its proper location. Verse three is included in the paragraph, but divided to make for a better read.

<sup>295</sup> Literally: “digging.”

6 [H. 5] “When a fire breaks out and catches in the thorns,<sup>296</sup> so that the stacked grain or the grain that was not yet cut, that was standing in the field, was burned, the one who started the fire must make full restitution.

7 [H. 6] “When someone turns over money or goods to a neighbor for safe keeping, and it is stolen from the neighbor’s house, the thief, if caught, must pay double. 8 [H. 7] If the thief is not caught, the owner of the house must be brought before the judges<sup>297</sup> to determine whether or not the owner has taken the neighbor’s property.

9 [H. 8] “In any breach of trust (*or, disputed ownership*), involving a donkey, sheep, clothing or any other loss, in which one person says, ‘This is mine.’ the case is to come before the judges<sup>298</sup> and the one who is condemned by the judges<sup>299</sup> must pay double to the other.

10 [H. 9] “When anyone turns over a donkey, ox, or sheep, or any other animal for safekeeping, and it dies or is injured, or is stolen, without anyone being a witness, 11 [H. 10] an oath made in the presence of God<sup>300</sup> must decide between the two of them, that the one has not laid his hands on the property of the other; the owner is to accept the oath,<sup>301</sup> and it will not be necessary to make any restitution. 12 [H. 11] If it has been stolen, however, restitution must be made to the owner. 13 [H. 12] If it was severely mangled by beasts, it is to be brought as evidence; and restitution must not be made for the mangled remains.

14 [H. 13] “Full restitution must be made when someone borrows an animal from his neighbor, and it is injured or dies, the owner not being present. 15 [H. 14] If the owner was present, there is not to be any restitution. If it was hired, only the fee for hiring must be paid.

16 [H. 15] “When a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged to be married, and engages in sexual relations, he must give the bride-price for her and make her his wife. 17 [H. 16] However, if her father refuses to give her to him, he must pay an amount that is equal to the bride-price for virgins.”<sup>302</sup>

### 3. Moral and Religious Laws 22:18 – 25:9 [H. 22:17 - 25:9]

#### a. Capital Offenses 22:18 – 20

18 [H. 17] “You are not to permit<sup>303</sup> a female sorceress to live.”<sup>304</sup>

19 [H. 18] “Whoever has sexual relations with an animal is to be put to death.”<sup>305</sup>

20 [H. 19] “Whoever makes sacrifices to any god, other than the Lord alone, is to be executed.”

#### b. Humane and Pious Duties 22:21 – 31

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<sup>296</sup> The thorn bushes between fields is the fence.

<sup>297</sup> Literally: “before God.”

<sup>298</sup> Cf.: the previous foot note. Cf.: ANET p. 35a,b.

<sup>299</sup> Literally: “condemned by God.”

<sup>300</sup> Hebrew: “an oath before the Lord.” LXX: “oath to God.” Cf.: ANET pp.171b; 177b.

<sup>301</sup> An alternate translation might be: “settle the issue.”

<sup>302</sup> The girl, not being engaged, is still her father’s property, and thus a bride-price for virgins can be demanded by the father. Since there were no coins in circulation at that time the law says, “an amount equal to.”

<sup>303</sup> “Not to permit” is a technical term for the ban. Numbers 31:15; Deuteronomy 20:16; I Samuel 27:9 – 11.

<sup>304</sup> C.: ANET p.184d.

<sup>305</sup> This was banned in the Hittite law. The Babylonian law does not deal with it. It apparently was done in the Canaanite religion, based on an ancient record called “The Tales of Ba’al.”



21 [H. 20] “You are not to wrong a stranger or oppress him: for you once were strangers in the land of Egypt. 22 [H. 21] You are not to molest any widow or orphan. 23 [H. 22] If you abuse them in any way they will cry out to me, and I will certainly hear their cry, 24 [H. 23] My anger will be aroused and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives will become widows and your own children will become orphans.<sup>306</sup>

25 [H. 24] “If you lend money to any of my people in your midst who are poor, you are not to deal with them as would a creditor, exacting interest from them. 26 [H. 25] If you take your neighbor’s outer garment (*or, cloak*) as security,<sup>307</sup> you must restore it before the sun sets, 27 [H. 26] for this might be the only item of clothing for him to cover himself. In what else could he sleep? In the event that you neighbor cries out to me, I will be attentive, for I am compassionate.

28 [H. 27] “You are not to revile, or curse God, nor are you to curse the ruler of your people.<sup>308</sup>

29 [H. 28] “You are not to delay in making offerings of the fruits of your harvest and of the outflow of your presses.<sup>309</sup>

“The firstborn of your sons is to be given to me. 30 [H. 29] You are to do the same with your oxen and with your sheep. These are to remain with their mother for seven days, and on the eighth day you are to give them (*i.e. the first born males*) to me.

31 [H. 30] “You will be people who are consecrated to me; therefore you are not to eat any meat that is mangled by beasts in the field; you are to throw it to the dogs.”

### <CHAPTER 23>

#### *c. The Spirit of Justice 23:1 - 9*

1 “You are not to spread false rumors! You are never to join in a common cause, as a malicious witness in a charge of violence. 2 You are not to side with a majority to do evil, nor are you to give perverse testimony in a dispute, so as to pervert justice, 3 nor are you to be partial to an influential person.<sup>310</sup>

4 “If you meet your legal adversary’s ox or donkey going astray, you are to bring it back.

5 “When you see the donkey of someone who hates you lying under its heavy load, and you feel you would like to ignore that, you must come to the aid of the donkey that it can again stand.<sup>311</sup>

6 “You are not to pervert justice for someone who deserves justice, but is poor. 7 Stay away from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and those who are in the right, for I will not acquit the guilty.<sup>312</sup> 8 You are never to take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the decision of the one who must deliver justice, and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.

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<sup>306</sup> The ‘lex talionis’ is embodied in this law as a warning.

<sup>307</sup> This was a necessity, not a luxury.

<sup>308</sup> Some scholars feel that verses 28 – 31 are a part of the Holiness Code found in Leviticus 17 ff. Cf.: ANET pp. 35c,d; 327a.

<sup>309</sup> The Hebrew of the last phrase is uncertain. The LXX considers the “fruits of your harvest” to be the “First Fruits.”

<sup>310</sup> Verses 1 – 3 relate to the role of a witness. Verses 6 – 7 relate to the justice. Cf.: ANET p. 166b.

<sup>311</sup> The translation is based on the LXX. The Hebrew is uncertain. Cf.: ANET p. 426d.

<sup>312</sup> LXX: “You must not justify the wicked for a bribe.”

9 “You are not to oppress a resident alien, for you should know how that feels, for you were resident aliens in the land of Egypt.”

4 A. *Church Calendar 23:10 – 19*

a. *The Sabbath 23:10 - 13*

10 “For six years you are to sow your fields and gather the crops, 11 but in the seventh year you are to let the land rest, lying fallow, so that the poor might eat, and what they do not gather to eat the animals can eat. The same is to be done with your vineyard, and with your orchard.

12 “Your work is to be done in six days but on the seventh day you are to rest, and your ox and your donkey are to be relieved of their labors, along with the children of your female slaves and the resident alien. All are to have a day of rest. 13 Take to heart all that I have said to you. Do not revere the names of any other gods. They are not to be heard on your lips.”

b. *The Great Festivals 23:14 – 19*

14 “Three times each year you are to hold a festival for me. 15 You are to observe the festival of unleavened bread, as I commanded you. You are to eat unleavened bread for seven days at the designated time in the month of Abib, for this was the time in which you came out of Egypt.

“No one is to appear before me empty-handed.

16 “You are to observe the festival of harvest of the first fruits of your labor: that is, what has been sown in your fields. You are to observe the festival of ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather the results of your labor from your fields. 313 17 Three times a year the males of the people of Israel are to appear before the Lord God.

18 “The blood of my sacrifices is not to be offered with anything that is leavened, nor is the fat of my festival remain until morning.

19 “The choicest of the first fruits of your ground are to be brought into the house of the Lord your God.

“You are not to boil a kid in its mother’s milk.” 314

c. *Farewell Exhortations 23:20 - 33*

20 “I am going to send an angel [*as God’s Presence*], to lead you (*or, in front of you*) to bring you to the place that I have prepared. 21 Be attentive to him, and listen to his voice. Do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him. 315

22 “If you listen to him and are attentive to his voice, and do all that I say, I will be an enemy to your enemies, and a foe to your foes.

23 “When my angel goes in front of you, and brings you to the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites, and the Jebusites, and I make them disappear (*or, blot them out*), 24 you are not to bow down to their gods, or worship them, or follow their practices, but you are to utterly demolish them and break their pillars 316 into pieces. 25 You are to worship the Lord your God, and I 317 will bless your bread and your water, and

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313 Cf.: ANET p. 320

314 This was a Canaanite magic spell. Maimonides, the great medieval scholar connected it with fertility rites.

315 Whether the messenger is divine or human, rebellion against God’s messenger is the same as rebellion against God.

316 These were Canaanite places of worship, marked by small obelisks. Literally: “standing stones.”

317 So: LXX and Vulgate. Hebrew: “He.”

I will remove sickness from among you. <sup>26</sup> No one will miscarry or be barren in your land; I will complete the number of your days, granting you old age. <sup>27</sup> I will send my terror ahead of you, and will throw all the opponents you will encounter into confusion and I will cause all your enemies to turn their backs toward you. <sup>28</sup> I will send hornets <sup>318</sup> in front of you, which will drive out the Hivites, Canaanites, and Hittites from before you. <sup>29</sup> I will not drive them all out in one year for otherwise the land would become desolate and the wild animals would increase against you. <sup>30</sup> I will drive them out from before you little by little, until you will have increased and possess the land. <sup>31</sup> I will set your borders to extend from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, <sup>319</sup> and from the wilderness to the Euphrates, for I will hand over the inhabitants of the land to you, and you will drive them out before you. <sup>320</sup> <sup>32</sup> You are not to make a covenant with them or their gods. <sup>33</sup> They will not live in your land. If that were to happen they would make you sin against me; for if you worship their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.”

<CHAPTER 24>

5. *The Ratification of the Covenant 24:1 – 18*

<sup>1</sup> The Lord said to Moses, “Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu <sup>321</sup> plus seventy of the leaders (*or, elders*). <sup>2</sup> Moses <sup>322</sup> is to come near the Lord <sup>323</sup> alone, but the others are not to come near, nor are the people permitted to come with him.” <sup>3</sup> Moses came and informed the people all the words of the Lord and all the regulations; and the people replied “We will do all that the Lord has said.” <sup>4</sup> Moses recorded (*or, wrote down*) all the words of the Lord. Early the next morning he built an altar at the foot of the mountain and erected twelve pillars, corresponding with the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>324</sup> <sup>5</sup> From among the people of Israel Moses designated young men, <sup>325</sup> who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed oxen as offerings of well-being (*or, peace offerings*) to the Lord. <sup>6</sup> Moses took one half of the blood and dashed it against the altar. <sup>7</sup> He then took the Book of the Covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, “We will do all that the Lord has said. We will obey.” <sup>8</sup> Moses then took the remainder of the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying, “See! The blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

<sup>9</sup> Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, plus seventy of the leaders (*or, elders*) of Israel went up, <sup>10</sup> and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire stone, <sup>326</sup> as clear (*or, pure*) as the very heaven itself. <sup>11</sup> He <sup>327</sup> did not lay his hands on the leaders of the people of Israel, <sup>328</sup> and they ate and drank.

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<sup>318</sup> This reference is either to a plague or some attacker, whether human or divine.

<sup>319</sup> Literally: “the sea of the Philistine.”

<sup>320</sup> In actuality, not even in Solomon’s time, did the kingdom extend as far as is noted here.

<sup>321</sup> These were the two older sons of Aaron. Their lives were cut short because of disobedience toward God.

<sup>322</sup> The LXX uses the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular.

<sup>323</sup> LXX: “God.”

<sup>324</sup> The twelve pillars represented the tribes of Israel. Usually, in other religious sites pillars represented gods. The LXX has the word “stones.”

<sup>325</sup> The Targums describe the men as “first born.”

<sup>326</sup> Some scholars feel the Hebrew word should be translated as “lapis lazuli.”

<sup>327</sup> LXX: “God.”

<sup>328</sup> This might be translated as “did not put aside the leaders.”

12 The Lord said to Moses: “Come up to me on the mountain and wait there; <sup>329</sup> for I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandments, which I have written for their instruction.” <sup>13</sup> So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain. <sup>14</sup> He said to the elders: “Wait for us here, until we come down again; for Aaron and Hur are with you. If anyone has a dispute they are to go to them.”

<sup>15</sup> Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. <sup>16</sup> The glory of the Lord (*or, the Presence of the Lord*) settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud remained, covering the mountain for six days. On the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. <sup>17</sup> (The appearance of the Lord (*or, the Presence of the Lord*) was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain, in the sight of the people of Israel.) <sup>18</sup> Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain for forty days and forty nights. <sup>330</sup>

## <CHAPTER 25>

### *B. The Ordinances for the Cults 25:1 – 31:18*

#### *1. The Offering 25:1 – 9*

<sup>1</sup> The Lord said to Moses: <sup>2</sup> “Speak to the people of Israel, that they take an offering for me; from all those whose heart is moved to give, you are to receive an offering for me. <sup>3</sup> The offering you are to receive from them is an offering of gold, <sup>331</sup> silver, bronze (*or, copper*), <sup>332</sup> <sup>4</sup> blue, purple and crimson yarns, <sup>333</sup> fine linen, goats’ hair, <sup>334</sup> <sup>5</sup> tanned ram’s skins, fine leather, <sup>335</sup> acacia wood, <sup>6</sup> oil for the lamps, spices to be used for anointing oil and to be used in making fragrant incense, <sup>7</sup> onyx <sup>336</sup> stones, and gems to be placed in the ephod and the breastplate. <sup>8</sup> In addition, have them make me a sanctuary, <sup>337</sup> so that I may dwell there, among the people. <sup>9</sup> This is all to be done in accordance with all that I show you as to the pattern of the tabernacle and all its furniture, for you are to make it.” <sup>338</sup>

#### *2. The Ark 25:10 - 22*

<sup>10</sup> “They <sup>339</sup> are to make an ark (*or, chest*) of acacia wood. It is to be two and a half cubits (*four feet*) long, a cubit and a half (*two and a half feet*) wide, and a cubit and a

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<sup>329</sup> The LXX inserts, “they also went up into the mountain.”

<sup>330</sup> Forty is a symbolic number. Noah: rain forty days and forty nights, Jesus in the wilderness, etc.

<sup>331</sup> There is evidence that gold was mined in the Sinai Peninsula. Possibly the Midianites did mining. It is also to be remembered that the Egyptians gave gold, silver and clothing to the people of Israel as they were leaving Egypt.

<sup>332</sup> Copper was available south of the Dead Sea. Solomon in a later time had mines there.

<sup>333</sup> The Hebrew word for “blue” was originally an Akkadian word. The word for “purple” was of Sanskrit origin, and “crimson” was an Arabic word. The Hebrew people learned many arts and crafts from the Egyptians.

<sup>334</sup> This was used for water-proof cloth for tents.

<sup>335</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain.

<sup>336</sup> This translation is based on the LXX. The Hebrew word, which is unclear, is thought by some scholars to be “lapis lazuli.”

<sup>337</sup> Literally: “holy place.”

<sup>338</sup> Three principals are found in these ordinances. 1. Giving to God must be voluntary. V. 2. 2. It is God’s aim and purpose to live in the midst of his people. V. 8. 3. Obedience in carrying out God’s master plan is essential. V. 9.

<sup>339</sup> So: Hebrew. LXX & Samaritan Pentateuch have “You are to make.”

half (*ca. two and a half feet*) high. 11 You are to overlay it with pure gold, inside an outside, and you are to make a molding of gold that surrounds it.<sup>340</sup> 12 You are to cast four rings of gold for it, and place them on its four feet, two rings on one side of it and two rings on the other side. 13 You are to make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. 14 You are to place the poles in the rings on the sides of the ark, to be carried in that fashion. 15 The poles are to remain in the rings of the ark; they are not to be removed. 16 You are to place the covenant (*or, witness*) which I will prepare for you into the ark.

17 You are then to make a mercy seat<sup>341</sup> of pure gold, which is to be two and a half cubits (*four feet*) in length, and a cubit and a half (*or, two and a half feet*) in width. 18 You are to make two cherubim of gold; you are to make them out of hammered gold, and the two ends of the mercy seat (*or, the cover*). 19 Make one of the cherubim at the one end and the other at the opposite end of the mercy seat, but the cherubim are to be made of one piece [*of hammered gold*]. 20 The cherubim are to have their wings spread out, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings. They are to face each other, their faces turned toward the mercy seat. 21 You are to place the mercy seat on top of the ark in which you will place the covenant (*or witness*) that I will give you. 22 There I will meet with you, from the mercy seat between the two cherubim, that are on the ark of the covenant. I will give you all of my commands for the Israelites.”

### 3. The Table 25:23 - 30

23 “You are to make a table<sup>342</sup> of acacia wood two cubits (*three feet*) long, and one cubit (*eighteen inches*) wide, and a cubit and a half (*27 inches*) high. 24 You are to overlay it with pure gold, and make a golden molding around it. 25 You are to make a rim, the width of a hand around it and a molding of gold around the frame. 26 You are to make four rings and attach them to the four corners, at the legs. 27 These rings are to hold the poles so that the table can be carried, the rings being near the rim of the table. 28 You are to make the poles out of acacia wood and overlay them with gold, for these will be used to carry the table. 29 You are to make plates and dishes for incense, pitchers (*or, flagons*) and bowls with which drink offerings can be poured; and you must make them of pure gold. 30 You must see to it that the bread of the Presence<sup>343</sup> is on the table before me at all times.”

### 4. The Lamp Stand 2:31 – 40<sup>344</sup>

31 “You must make a lamp stand of pure gold. The base and the shaft are to be of hand hammered gold. The cups (*or, flowers, calyxes*) and the petals are to be made out of the same piece of gold. 32 There are to be six branches going out of its sides, three branches extending from one side of the lamp stand and three branches on the opposite side. 33 Each of the cups is to be shaped like almond blossoms, each having a calyx and

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<sup>340</sup> Scholars seem to feel that this molding was not at the top or bottom edge of the ark, but perhaps at about the middle of the sides. They give no reason for this thought.

<sup>341</sup> The Hebrew word translated as “mercy seat” was first used by William Tyndale. Literally in Hebrew the word means the “lid.” Tyndale, quite properly, interpreted it, based on the instructions Moses received.

<sup>342</sup> The LXX adds: “of pure gold.”

<sup>343</sup> The bread of the Presence consisted of twelve cakes (*or, loaves*) of bread. Fresh loaves were to be placed on the table each day. Priests alone were allowed to eat the bread from the previous day, that was removed. Tyndale translated it as “shewbread.” Luther called it “Shaubrodt.” It might be called “holy bread.”

<sup>344</sup> The lamp stand needed to light the Holy Place. Light would only come into the tabernacle when someone entered. The lamp stand was to burn perpetually. At the time of Eli and Samuel it apparently went out at about dawn, and then the supply of oil was poured in and the lamp stand was re-lit.

leaves. <sup>34</sup> There is to be one calyx under each of the first pair of branches, made of one piece of gold. All six of the branches are to be identical in shape. <sup>35</sup> On the lamp stand itself there are to be four cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with a calyx and leaves. An additional calyx, made of one piece [*of gold*] is to be located on the last pair of branches – this is how all six branches of the lamp stand are to be made. <sup>36</sup> The calyxes and their branches are to be one piece with the lamp stand which, in its entirety is to be made of hammered gold. <sup>37</sup> Seven lamps are to be made for the lamp stand, the lamps being set so as to provide light toward the front of the lamp stand. <sup>38</sup> Snuffers <sup>345</sup> and trays for the lamp stand are also to be made of pure gold. <sup>39</sup> The lamp stand and all its utensils are to be made from one talent of gold. <sup>40</sup> Be careful that you make them in accordance with the pattern for them, the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.”

<CHAPTER 26>

5. *The Tabernacle 26:1 – 37* <sup>346</sup>

a. *The Tent 26:1 – 14*

<sup>1</sup> “Moreover you are to make the tabernacle, made with ten curtains of fine twisted linen, blue, purple and crimson yarns. These curtains must be skillfully interwoven with the colorful yarns as cherubim. <sup>2</sup> The length of each curtain is to be twenty eight cubits (*or, 42 feet*) long and four cubits (*or, six feet*) wide. All curtains are to be the same size.<sup>347</sup> <sup>3</sup> Groups of five curtains are to be joined together. <sup>4</sup> You must fashion loops at the edge of the outermost curtains in each set of five curtains, <sup>5</sup> fifty loops are to be made on the edges of the outermost curtains in such a manner that the sets of curtains will have loops on the curtains that are opposite one another. <sup>6</sup> Fifty clasps, made of gold, are to be fashioned to join the curtains to one another with these clasps, so that the tabernacle can be joined together as a whole. <sup>348</sup>

<sup>7</sup> “You are to make eleven curtains of goats’ hair to serve as a tent over the tabernacle. <sup>349</sup> <sup>8</sup> The length of these curtains is to be thirty cubits (*or forty five feet*) and the width is to be four cubits (*or, six feet*). All curtains are to have the same measurements. <sup>9</sup> You are to join five curtains by themselves, and the sixth curtain is by

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<sup>345</sup> These very likely looked like a pair of tongs, or tweezers.

<sup>346</sup> The tabernacle, in Latin: “tabernaculum,” is a dwelling in the form of a tent which is supported by wooden framing instead of tent poles. Verses one to fourteen describe the cloth materials of the tabernacle. Verses 15 – 30 describe the wooden frames. These frames, made of acacia wood, which is very strong, but not large logs, but rather slender would not be heavy to move, which would be an important consideration. Some translators of verses 15 ff. translate this as “planks.” No amount of wood to make planks was available in the Sinai Peninsula. The acacia wood was ideal for strong, but light weight frames.

<sup>347</sup> The tabernacle was not huge. In Solomon’s time the temple, which, to degree was an enlarged copy of the tabernacle was much larger.

<sup>348</sup> The first six verses describe the material of which the tabernacle walls are to be made, the verses 7 – 13 describe the outer covering for the tabernacle. Verse 14 describes the covers for the tabernacle that protected the materials when the tabernacle was being transported.

<sup>349</sup> Material made of goat hair was the standard material to make tents. Goat hair has been used by the Bedouin for centuries.

itself, for the sixth curtain will double over at the front of the tent. <sup>10</sup> Fifty loops are to be attached to the edge of each set of outermost curtains.

<sup>11</sup> “You must make fifty clasps of bronze (*or, copper*) and place these clasps in the loops, thus joining the tent together, so that it becomes a complete tent. <sup>12</sup> The portion of the curtains that remains, the half curtain, is to hang over the back of the tabernacle. <sup>350</sup> <sup>13</sup> The cubit on the one side, and the cubit on the other side, of what remains in the length of the curtains of the tent, is to hang over both sides of the tabernacle to cover it.

<sup>14</sup> “You are also to make a tent covering (*or, a wrapper*) [*to be used when the tent is being transported*] made of tanned ram’s skins (*or, dugong skin, porpoise skin*) <sup>351</sup> as a covering.”

*b. The Wooden Structure 26:15 – 30*

<sup>15</sup> “You are to make upright frames <sup>352</sup> for the tabernacle of acacia wood. <sup>353</sup> <sup>16</sup> These wooden frames are to be ten cubits (*or fifteen feet*) high, and one and a half cubits (*or, two and a quarter feet*) wide. Each frame is to be identical in size. <sup>17</sup> There are to be two tenons (*or pegs*) on each frame that they might fit together. <sup>18</sup> These frames are to be made for the tabernacle. There are to be twenty frames on the south side. <sup>19</sup> You are to make forty bases of silver to fit under the twenty frames, two bases under the first frame for its two tenons, and two bases under the next frame for its two tenons; <sup>20</sup> On the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side — twenty frames. <sup>21</sup> You are to make forty bases of silver, two bases under the first frame, and two bases under the next frame: <sup>22</sup> In the rear of the tabernacle, toward the westward, you are to make six frames. <sup>23</sup> Two frames for corners are to be made for the rear of the tabernacle. <sup>24</sup> These are to be separate at the bottom but joined at the top, at the first ring, both are to be identical, and are intended to form the two corners. <sup>25</sup> In this way there will be eight frames with their bases of silver, sixteen bases, two bases under each frame.” <sup>354</sup>

<sup>26</sup> “You are to make cross-bars of acacia wood, five for the frames on one side of the tabernacle, <sup>27</sup> and five cross-bars for the other side of the tabernacle, and five cross bars for the rear of the tabernacle, on the west side. <sup>28</sup> The middle bar, half way up the frames, is to pass through from end to end. <sup>29</sup> These frames are to be overlaid with gold, and you are to make rings of gold to hold the bars. The bars are to be overlaid with gold. <sup>30</sup> You are to erect the tabernacle exactly in accordance with the plans that had been shown you on the mountain.”

*c. The Curtain and the Screen 26:31 – 37* <sup>355</sup>

<sup>31</sup> “You are to make a curtain (*or, veil*) of blue, purple and crimson yarn, and fine twisted linen which has cherubim woven into the curtain, <sup>32</sup> and you are to hang it on the four pillars that are overlaid with gold, which have hooks of gold and rest on four silver bases. <sup>33</sup> The curtain is to be hung under the clasps and the ark of the covenant is to be placed there, within the curtain, for the curtain will be the separation, for you, of the holy place from that portion that is most holy. <sup>34</sup> You are to place the mercy seat upon the ark of the covenant in the most holy place. <sup>356</sup> <sup>35</sup> You are to place the table outside the

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<sup>350</sup> This is a probable translation. The Hebrew adds: “half the hanging which remains over.”

<sup>351</sup> Scholars question the meaning of the Hebrew word.

<sup>352</sup> The exact meaning of the Hebrew word “meshullaboth” is uncertain.

<sup>353</sup> Cf. footnote 346.

<sup>354</sup> The description of the corners is very obscure.

<sup>355</sup> Cf.: ANET p. 325d.

<sup>356</sup> Cf.: footnote 341.

curtain, and the lamp stand on the south side of the tabernacle, opposite the table which is to be placed on the north side.

<sup>36</sup> “You are also to make a screen for the entrance of the tent, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen, embroidered with needlework. <sup>37</sup> You are to make five pillars of acacia for the screen, and overlay them with gold. The hooks are to be of gold and you are to cast five bases of bronze (*or, copper*) for them.”

<CHAPTER 27>

*e. The Bronze Altar 27:1 – 8*

<sup>1</sup> “You are to make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits (*7 ½ feet*) long and five cubits wide. The altar is to be square, and its height is to be 3 cubits (*4 ½ feet*). <sup>357</sup> <sup>2</sup> You are to make horns for it on the four corners, these horns being of one piece with the top of the altar, and it is to be overlaid with bronze (*or, copper*). <sup>358</sup> <sup>3</sup> You must make pots for it to receive the ashes, and shovels and basins, and flesh hooks and fire-pans. <sup>4</sup> You are to make a grate, a netting of bronze, and you are to put four bronze rings on the grate at the four corners. <sup>5</sup> This is to be placed under the ledge, half way down the altar. <sup>6</sup> Poles are to be made by you of acacia wood that is overlaid with bronze, <sup>7</sup> and these poles are to be put through the rings so that the poles will be on two sides of the altar when it is being carried. <sup>8</sup> It is to be made hollow, with boards. They are to be made exactly as you were shown on the mountain.”

*f. The Tabernacle Court 27:9 – 19*

<sup>9</sup> “You must make the court of the tabernacle. On the south side the court will have hangings (*or, curtains*) of fine twisted linen one hundred cubits (*one hundred fifty feet*) long, for that side. <sup>10</sup> It is to have twenty pillars and twenty bases, which are to be made of bronze (*or, copper*), but the hooks of the pillars and their bands are to be made of silver. <sup>11</sup> The length of the hangings (*or, curtains*) on the north side will be identical: one hundred feet long and their pillars are to number twenty and the twenty bases are to be made of bronze, but the hooks and bands are to be made of silver. <sup>12</sup> The width of the court on the west side is to be fifty cubits (*seventy five feet*) of hangings (*or, curtains*) with ten pillars and ten bases. <sup>13</sup> The width of the court on the front (the east) is to be fifty cubits (*seventy five feet*) <sup>14</sup> There are to be fifteen cubits (*twenty two and a half feet*) on the one side, with three pillars and three bases. <sup>16</sup> For the gate of the court there is to be a screen, twenty cubits (*thirty feet*) long, made of blue, purple and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen, embroidered with needle-work. It will have four pillars and four bases. <sup>17</sup> All the pillars around the court are to have bands of silver, their hooks also being of silver, and their bases of bronze (*or, copper*). <sup>18</sup> The length of the court is to be one hundred cubits (*or, one hundred fifty feet*), and the width fifty cubits (*or, seventy five feet*), and the height five cubits (*or, seven and a half feet*) high, with hangings (*or, curtains*) of fine twisted linen and bases of bronze. <sup>19</sup> All the utensils of the tabernacle, regardless of their use, and all its pegs and the pegs of the court, are to be made of bronze (*or, copper*).” <sup>359</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> At this point in Exodus only one altar is considered, no other altar has been mentioned thus far.

<sup>358</sup> Horns on an altar seem to have been Canaanite in origin. Blood was to be sprinkled on the horns in special times of worship. People seeking refuge were permitted to hold on to the horns and they were guaranteed safety. In the event that a horn was broken off the altar was to be destroyed.

<sup>359</sup> All the furnishings in the tabernacle were to be of gold.



*g. Oil for the Lamp 27:20 – 21*

20 “Additionally, you are to command the Israelites to bring you pure oil (*or, extra virgin olive oil*) of beaten olives,<sup>360</sup> for the light, so that the lamp may be able to burn regularly, 21 in the tent of meeting, outside the curtain that is before the ark of the covenant, Aaron and his sons are to tend the lamp before the Lord from evening to morning. It is to be a perpetual ordinance to be observed throughout all the generations of Israel.”

<CHAPTER 28>

*A. The Priesthood and its Duties 28:1 – 43*

*a. Introduction 28:1 – 5*

1 “Bring your brother Aaron near,<sup>361</sup> along with his sons, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests: Aaron and Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 2 You are to make sacred vestments<sup>362</sup> that will gloriously adorn your brother Aaron with dignity. 3 You will speak to those people who are skillful, whom I have endowed with talent,<sup>363</sup> that they make Aaron’s vestments to consecrate him in my priesthood. 4 These are the vestments they are to make: a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a checkered (*or, fringed*) tunic, a turban, and a sash. When they make these vestments for your brother Aaron, and his sons, to serve me as priests, 5 they are to be made of blue, purple and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen.”

*a/ The Ephod 28:6 – 14*<sup>364</sup>

6 “They are to make an ephod of gold, blue, purple, and crimson yarn and fine twisted linen which is skillfully worked. 7 It is to be made with two shoulder pieces that are joined together at their two edges. 8 A decorated band with the same workmanship and materials: gold, blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen. 9 You are to take two onyx (*or, lapis lazuli*) stones and engrave the names of the sons of Israel on them, 10 six names on one stone and six on the other stone, in the order of their birth. 11 Just as a gem-cutter would work to engrave signets,<sup>365</sup> so you are to engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel, and they are then to be mounted in settings of gold filigree. 12 The two stones are to be set on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, as stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel; and Aaron will bear their names before the Lord on his two shoulders for remembrance. 13 You are to make settings of gold filigree, 14 and two chains of pure gold, twisted like cords, and you are to attach these corded chains to the setting.

*b. The Breas-tpiece 28:15 – 30*

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<sup>360</sup> The choice oil came from lightly beating the olives which produced the finest oil. Then the olives would be pressed, gaining much more oil, which was not “choice, or extra virgin” oil. On occasion, even in those days, there was a second pressing to get the last drops of oil from the olives.

<sup>361</sup> The Hebrew word translated as “bring near” is a rather technical term denoting connection.

<sup>362</sup> These sacred vestments, with adornments, were only used within the tabernacle. Other clothing was provided for the priests to wear when not working in the tabernacle and its surroundings.

<sup>363</sup> Literally: “who of heart, whom I filled with the spirit of wisdom.”

<sup>364</sup> Scholars do not know the nature of the ephod : a vest, or a kilt. The description here is not clear for the people of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

<sup>365</sup> A signet was a symbol of commitment.

15 “You are to make a breast-piece <sup>366</sup> of judgment, in skilled work, that is to be made in the style of an ephod: of blue, purple, and crimson yarn, and of fine twisted linen. 16 It is to be a square, doubled over, a span (*or, 9 inches*) in length, and a span in width. 17 You are to set four rows of stones. <sup>367</sup> Carnelian, chrysolite and emerald are to be in the first row. 18 The second row is to be turquoise, sapphire, and amethyst. 19 Jacinth, agate and crystal are to comprise the third row. 20 Beryl, onyx and jasper are to be in the fourth row. These are all to be set in gold filigree (*or, gold rosettes*). 21 There are to be twelve stones with names that correspond with the names of the sons of Israel; they will be like signets, each engraved with its name for the twelve tribes. 22 For the breastplate you are to make two chains of pure gold that is twisted like cords; 23 and for the breastplate you are to make two gold rings and put these two gold rings on the two edges of the breastplate. 25 The two ends of the two cords are to be attached to the two settings, and thus attach them in such a way that that it is attached in front of the shoulder pieces of the ephod. 26 You are to make two gold rings and attach them to the two ends of the breastplate, on the inside edge next to the ephod [*thus forming a pouch*]. 27 You are also to make two gold rings, and attached them to the lower part of the two shoulder pieces of the ephod, where these join above the decorative band of the ephod. 28 The breastplate is to be bound by its rings to the rings of the ephod, with a blue cord, so that it will lie on the decorative band of the ephod, in such a fashion that the breastplate will not come loose from the ephod. 29 In this way Aaron will be carrying the names of the sons of Israel in the breastplate of judgment near his heart when he goes into the holy place, for a continual remembrance before the Lord. 30 In [*the pouch of*] the breastplate you are to place the Urim and Thummim, <sup>368</sup> and these will be near to Aaron’s heart when he goes in before the Lord; for in this way Aaron will bear the judgment of the Israelites on his heart before the Lord continually.”

*d. The Robe of the Ephod 28:31 – 35*

31 “You are to make a robe for <sup>369</sup> the ephod that is made entirely of blue. 32 It is to have an opening in the middle of it, with a woven binding, [*like the opening of a coat of mail*] <sup>370</sup> so that it will not be torn. 33 On its lower hem you are to make pomegranates <sup>371</sup> of blue, purple, and crimson yarn, all around the bottom hem, 34 with golden bells and pomegranates alternating around the lower hem of the robe. 35 Aaron is to wear it when he ministers [*in the tabernacle*] and its sound will be heard when he goes into the holy place before the Lord, and when he comes out, so that he may not die.” <sup>372</sup>

*e. The Diadem, Turban and Coat 28:36 – 39*

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<sup>366</sup> The Hebrew word “*noshhen*” could also be translated as “beautiful object” or “a pouch to hold Urim and Thummim..”

<sup>367</sup> The identity of some of several of the twelve stones is uncertain. Other stones that are suggested by translators include: moonstone, feldspar, jade, diamond, carbuncle, carnelian,, lapis lazuli, etc.

<sup>368</sup> In Hebrew the word is spelled “*tummim*.” This is not the usual spelling. The name ‘Urim’ is thought to mean ‘lights,’ and the name Thummim is thought to mean ‘perfection.’ Cf.: Numbers 27:21. Cf.: ANET pp. 63a, 111a.

<sup>369</sup> Literally: “of.”

<sup>370</sup> While this phrase is in the MT its meaning is uncertain.

<sup>371</sup> Pomegranates were a symbol of fruitfulness.

<sup>372</sup> The Hebrew grammar is unclear. Possibly the thought is: “that you know that he has not died.”

<sup>36</sup> “You are to make a rosette (*or, medallion*) <sup>373</sup> of pure gold and engrave on it, as would an engraver of a signet: “HOLY TO THE LORD.” <sup>37</sup> You are to fasten this on the turban <sup>374</sup> with a lace of blue. It is to be at the front of the turban. <sup>38</sup> It will be on Aaron’s forehead, and Aaron will take on himself any guilt that is incurred in the offering that the Israelites consecrate as their sacred donations. It must always be on his forehead, in order that they may find favor before the Lord.

<sup>39</sup> “You are to weave a checkered (*or, fringed*) tunic of fine linen; you are to make a turban of fine linen, and you are to make a sash of embroidered needlework.”

*f. The Garments for Aaron and His Sons 28:40 – 43*

<sup>40</sup> “For Aaron’s sons you are to make tunics, sashes and headdresses, making them for their glorious adornment. <sup>41</sup> You are to place them on your brother Aaron, and on his sons along with him, and you are to anoint them and ordain them, and consecrate them, so that they may serve me as priests. <sup>42</sup> You are to make underwear <sup>375</sup> to cover themselves. <sup>376</sup> They are to be covered from their hips to their thighs. <sup>43</sup> Aaron and his sons are to wear them when they enter the tent of meeting or when they approach the altar to minister in the holy place. If they do not do this they will bring guilt upon themselves, and die. This is a perpetual ordinance for him and for all his descendants that follow after him.”

#### <CHAPTER 29>

#### 10. The Consecration of Priests 29:1 – 42:9

##### *a. The Presentation 29:1 – 9* <sup>377</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Now this is what you are to do to them to consecrate them, those who are to serve as priests: take a young bull from the herd and two rams in perfect condition, <sup>2</sup> along with unleavened bread (*or, cakes*) that are mixed with oil, unleavened wafers that are spread with oil, which are to be made with fine wheat flour. <sup>3</sup> You are to place them in a basket and bring them to the Lord. In addition the bull and the two rams are also to be brought to the Lord. <sup>4</sup> These are to be brought to Aaron and his sons at the door of the tent of meeting where they <sup>378</sup> are to be washed with water. <sup>5</sup> Then you are to take the vestments and place them on Aaron: the tunic, the robe of the ephod, the ephod and the breastplate. He is to be girded with the skillfully decorated sash of the ephod, <sup>6</sup> and the turban is to be placed on his head and the sacred diadem is to be fastened on the turban. <sup>7</sup> Then you are to take the anointing oil and pour it on his head, anointing him. <sup>8</sup> After this you are to bring his sons and dress them in their tunics, <sup>9</sup> and you are to fasten the sashes

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<sup>373</sup> The root word means “to shine.” Some translate it as “diadem, or crown.” Cf.: ANET p. 137b.

<sup>374</sup> The Hebrew word means “that which is wrapped.” The Talmud says it was to be eight yards long.

<sup>375</sup> What exactly the word translated as “underwear” might involve is not clear. Linen breeches, or loin cloths are possibilities. The root word in Hebrew means “to gather.”

<sup>376</sup> Literally: “their naked flesh.”

<sup>377</sup> These items are to be presented to the Lord in ritual fashion.

<sup>378</sup> The Hebrew is not clear as to what or who “they” is. Is it the animals or Aaron and his sons, or is it the vestments that are to be washed. Presumably the order is as follows: 1. The items are to be brought near. 2. They are to be washed. 3. The priests are to be dressed in their vestments. 4. Aaron and his sons are ordained.

<sup>379</sup> on them and the headdresses and then they will be priests by perpetual ordinance. You are then to ordain <sup>380</sup> Aaron and his sons.”

*b. The Sin Offering and the Burnt Offering 29:10 – 18*

<sup>10</sup> “Then you are to bring the bull before the tent of meeting, and Aaron and his sons are to lay their hands on the head of the bull, <sup>381</sup> <sup>11</sup> and you are to slaughter the bull before the Lord, at the door of the tent of meeting, <sup>12</sup> and take a portion of the blood of the bull and smear it on the horns of the altar with your finger, while the remainder <sup>382</sup> of the blood is to be poured on the base of the altar. <sup>13</sup> You must take all the fat that covers the entrails and the appendage to the liver, the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, and burn these on the altar. <sup>14</sup> The flesh of the bull, however, and its skin and offal are to be burned with fire by you, outside the camp as a sin offering.

<sup>15</sup> “Then you will take one of the rams and Aaron and his sons are to place their hands on the head of the ram, <sup>16</sup> and you are to slaughter the ram, and taking its blood, you are to throw it all around against the altar. <sup>17</sup> The ram is then to be cut into pieces and washed along with its entrails, and its legs, putting them in with the pieces and the head, <sup>16</sup> and the entire offering to the Lord is to be burned as a pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the Lord.”

*c. The Sacrifice of Installation 29:19 – 36a*

<sup>19</sup> “You must take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons will lay their hands upon the head of the ram, <sup>20</sup> and you are to slaughter the ram and place some of its blood on the lobe of the right ear <sup>383</sup> of Aaron and on the lobe of the right ears of his sons and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the great toe of their right feet, <sup>384</sup> and throw the remainder of the blood all around against the altar. <sup>21</sup> You are then to take the part of the blood that is on the altar, and the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron, and on his vestments, and on his sons and on their vestments, as had been done to Aaron. Then Aaron <sup>385</sup> and his sons, and their vestments are holy.

<sup>22</sup> “You must also take the fat of the ram, and the fat covering the entrails, the appendage of the liver, the two kidneys along with all the fat that is on them, and the right thigh (for it is a ram of ordination), <sup>23</sup> and one loaf of bread, one cake of bread made with oil, and one wafer, out of the basket of unleavened bread that is before the Lord; <sup>24</sup> and all these are to be placed on the palms of Aaron and on the palms of his sons, and they are to raise (*or, elevate*) them as an elevation (*or, wave*) offering before the Lord. <sup>25</sup> Then you are to take the bread from their hands, and turn it into smoke on the top of the altar of burnt offering as a pleasing odor before the Lord: it is an offering by fire to the Lord.

<sup>26</sup> “You must then take the breast of the ram of Aaron’s ordination, and raise it as an elevation (*or, wave*) offering before the Lord, and it will be your portion. <sup>27</sup> (You are to consecrate the breast that was raised as an elevation (*or, wave*) offering from the ram of

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<sup>379</sup> So: LXX. Hebrew: “Aaron and his sons.”

<sup>380</sup> Literally: “fill the hand” – with the rites and procedures.

<sup>381</sup> A symbolic identification with the death of the bull which is accepted as the equivalent to the death of the miscreant.

<sup>382</sup> Hebrew: “all.”

<sup>383</sup> The reference is possibly the ridge of the ear.

<sup>384</sup> Ear, thumb and toe: hear, do and obey are thus symbolized in one’s relationship with God.

<sup>385</sup> Literally: “he.”

ordination, from the one that belonged to Aaron and his sons. <sup>28</sup> These are to be perpetual ordinances for Aaron and his sons from the Israelites, for this is an offering; and it will be an offering by the Israelites from the sacrifice of offerings of wellbeing (*or, peace offerings*), as their offering to the Lord.

<sup>29</sup> (“These sacred vestments of Aaron are to pass to his sons after him, that they may be anointed and ordained in them. <sup>30</sup> The son who becomes a priest in his place is to wear them seven days, when he comes to the tent of meeting to minister in the holy place.)

<sup>31</sup> “You are to take the ram of ordination, and boil its flesh in a holy place, <sup>32</sup> and Aaron and his sons will eat the flesh of the ram and the bread that is in the basket at the entrance of the tent of meeting. <sup>33</sup> They, themselves, are to eat the food by which atonement was made, to consecrate and ordain them, because they are holy. <sup>386</sup> <sup>34</sup> Should any of the flesh of the ordination, or the bread, remains until morning, you are then to burn all that remains with fire: it is not to be eaten because it is holy.

<sup>35</sup> “It is in this way that you are to deal with Aaron and his sons, just as I have commanded you; they are to be ordained over a seven day period. <sup>36</sup> Also every day you are to offer a bull as a sin offering for atonement.”

*d. The Great Altar 29:36b – 42a*

“You are also to offer a sin offering for the altar, when you make atonement for it, and you are to anoint it, to consecrate it. <sup>37</sup> You are to make atonement for seven days for the altar, and consecrate it, and it will be most holy: whatever touches the altar will become holy.

<sup>38</sup> [“Now this is what you are to offer on the altar: two yearling lambs in perfect condition, each day, with regularity. <sup>387</sup> <sup>39</sup> One lamb is to be offered in the morning, and the other lamb is to be offered in the evening. <sup>40</sup> With the first lamb one-tenth of a measure <sup>388</sup> of choice flour mixed with one-fourth hin <sup>389</sup> of beaten oil, and one-fourth hin of wine for a drink offering. <sup>390</sup> <sup>41</sup> The other lamb is to be offered in the evening, and is to be offered with a grain offering and a drink offering as is done in the morning, for a pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the Lord. <sup>42</sup> This is to be a regular burnt offering throughout your generations at the entrance of the tent of meeting before the Lord, where

*11. Conclusion 29:42b - 46*

I will meet with you, to speak to you there] <sup>43</sup> I will meet with the Israelites there and it will be sanctified by my glory. <sup>44</sup> I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar. I will also consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests. <sup>45</sup> I will dwell in the midst of the Israelites, and I will be their God. <sup>46</sup> They will know that I am the Lord their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them: I am the Lord their God.”

<CHAPTER 30>

*12. Last Additions 30:1 – 38*

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<sup>386</sup> No lay persons are to partake of this food.

<sup>387</sup> Some scholars feel that verses 38 – 42 are a later interpolation.

<sup>388</sup> About two quarts.

<sup>389</sup> About one quart.

<sup>390</sup> Tradition says that the Bethlehem shepherds raised 700 lambs annually to provide the lambs needed for the temple sacrifices.

*a. The Altar of Incense 30:1 – 10*

1 “You will make an altar of acacia wood on which to burn incense. 2 It is to be one cubit (*or, 1 ½ feet*) in length, and one cubit in width, that is: square, and it is to be two cubits (*or, three feet*) high, having horns that are so made that it is all made in one piece. 3 You are to overlay it with pure gold, the top, sides, horns, and a golden molding that surrounds it. 4 Two gold rings are to be made, to be located just below the golden molding, and on the opposite side rings are to be made and placed on the opposite side in an identical position. These rings are to hold the poles which will be used to carry it. 5 You are to make two poles of acacia wood which are to be overlaid with pure gold. 6 The altar is to be placed in front of the veil (*or, curtain*) that is before the ark of testimony (*or, the ark of the covenant*), where I will meet [*Moses*].<sup>391</sup> 7 Aaron is to burn fragrant incense on it every morning when he tends the lamps (*or, trims the wicks and provides more oil*), 8 and also when Aaron tends the lamps in the evening, for this is to be a perpetual incense to be burned before the Lord, to be permanent, across all generations. 9 No other incense, other than this is holy, and is to be burned. Other incense would be unholy. In addition no burnt offering, or grain offering is to be burned on it, nor is any drink offering to be poured on it. 10 Once each year Aaron is to perform the rite of atonement on its horns. Throughout your generations he is to perform the atonement for it once each year, with the blood of the atoning sacrifice: it is most holy to the Lord.”

*b. The Poll Tax 30:11 – 16*

11 The Lord said to Moses: 12 “When you take a census of the Israelites to register them, at the time of registration they are to give a ransom<sup>392</sup> for their lives to the Lord, so that no plague may come upon them, for being registered.<sup>393</sup> 13 Every person who was registered is expected to give: a half shekel (according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which amounts to twenty geras)<sup>394</sup> which is an offering to the Lord. 14 Each person who is listed on the record, from age twenty and upward, is to give the Lord’s offering. 15 Those who are rich are not to give more, and the poor are not permitted to give less. A half shekel is to be brought as the offering to the Lord to make atonement for the person’s life. 16 You are to take the atonement money from the Israelites and distribute it for the service of the tent of meeting. This will be a reminder to the Israelites, before the Lord, of the ransom given for your lives.”

*c. The Bronze (or, Copper) Laver 30:17 – 21*

17 The Lord said to Moses: 18 “You are also to make a laver of bronze (*or, copper*), along with a stand for it, for washing, and you are to locate it between the tent of meeting and the altar. You are to fill it with water. 19 With this water Aaron and his sons are able to wash their hands and their feet.<sup>395</sup> 20 When they go into the tent of meeting, or

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<sup>391</sup> Literally: “you.”

<sup>392</sup> Literally: “provide a covering.”

<sup>393</sup> Every firstborn son belonged to God. Exodus 13:13. It was also accepted that all Israel, collectively was God’s, forever. Exodus 4:22. Thus a ‘ransom’ was to be paid in the form of the poll tax. In later years this money was used, instead, for the upkeep of the temple. Cf. v. 14.

<sup>394</sup> Since coinage had not yet been developed silver was weighed. For example, the Babylonian shekel would be divided in such a way that ¼ of a Babylonian shekel would amount to one shekel of the sanctuary.

<sup>395</sup> Ceremonial washing is already mentioned in Exodus 29:4.

when they approach the altar to minister, to make an offering by fire to the Lord, they are to wash with water, so that they will not die. <sup>21</sup> They are to wash their hands and their feet so that they will not die. This is to be done as a perpetual ordinance for them, for Aaron, and for his descendants across the generations.”

*d. The Holy Oil 30:22 – 33*

<sup>22</sup> The Lord said to Moses: <sup>23</sup> “Take the very finest spices: liquid myrrh, -- five-hundred shekels, (*or, about twelve and a half pounds*), sweet smelling cinnamon, half as much, that being two hundred fifty shekels (*or, six and a fourth pounds*), and two hundred-fifty of aromatic cane, <sup>24</sup> and five hundred of cassia – (measured by the sanctuary shekel), <sup>396</sup> -- and a hin <sup>397</sup> of olive oil; <sup>25</sup> and you are to make this into a sacred anointing oil, as would have been blended by a perfumer; it is to be holy anointing oil. <sup>26</sup> You are to anoint the tent of meeting and the ark of the covenant (*or, the ark of testimony*), <sup>27</sup> and the table and all its utensils, and the lamp-stand and all its utensils, and the altar of incense, <sup>28</sup> and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the basin with its stand. <sup>29</sup> All these are to be consecrated, so that they will be most holy; what ever touches them will be holy. <sup>398</sup> <sup>30</sup> You are to anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, so that they may serve as priests. <sup>31</sup> You are to say to the Israelites: ‘This will be my holy anointing oil during all your generations. <sup>32</sup> It is not to be used for any ordinary anointing of the body, and you are not to make any similar compound! It is holy, and it will be holy to you. <sup>33</sup> Anyone who uses the same formula in making any anointing oil similar to this, or whoever puts any of it on an unqualified person is to be cut off from the people.’”

*e. The Incense Recipe 30:34 – 38*

<sup>34</sup> The Lord said to Moses” <sup>35</sup> “Take sweet <sup>399</sup> spices: stacte, onycha, galbanum, sweet spices with pure frankincense (an equal part of each), <sup>35</sup> and make a blended incense <sup>400</sup> as it would be done by a perfumer, seasoned with salt, <sup>401</sup> pure and holy. <sup>36</sup> You are to beat some of it into powder, and put a portion of it before the [*ark of the*] covenant in the tent of meeting where I will meet with you: it will be most holy for you. <sup>37</sup> When you make incense for you in accordance with this formula you are not to make it for yourselves, for it is to be regarded by you as holy to the Lord. <sup>38</sup> Whoever makes any incense like it, to be used as perfume, will be cut off from the people.”

<CHAPTER 31>

*13. Appointment of Bezalel and Oholiab 31:1 – 4*

<sup>1</sup> The Lord said to Moses: <sup>2</sup> “See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, <sup>3</sup> and I have filled him with divine spirit, <sup>402</sup> with knowledge and with the ability of working in gold, silver, and bronze, <sup>5</sup> in cutting and setting stones,

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<sup>396</sup> Cf. foot note 394.

<sup>397</sup> A bit more than a gallon.

<sup>398</sup> Holiness is transmittable, by touch to those who handle this holy oil. Great care is to be taken with such holy items.

<sup>399</sup> The Hebrew root word means “to smell.” The LXX word means “to drip.” The sweet spices are not all identifiable.

<sup>400</sup> Incense came to be used, perhaps because of a practical need, to reduce the ‘pleasant odor’ and to make a dense smoke that would cover up the rank smoke of blood, dung, burning hides, burning meat and fat.

<sup>401</sup> The salt is thought to aid in rapid burning and also as a preservative.

<sup>402</sup> ‘Divine spirit’ would be virtually synonymous with divine wisdom.

in carving wood, working in skilled crafts, <sup>6</sup> and, be assured, I have assigned him, along with Oholiab son of Ahismach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have endowed them all as artists with ability to make whatever I have ordered you to prepare: <sup>7</sup> the tent of meeting, the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat that is located on the ark of the covenant, along with all the furnishings that are to be within the tent of meeting, <sup>8</sup> the table and its utensils, the lamp-stand of pure gold with its utensils, the altar of incense, <sup>9</sup> the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, the basin with its stand, <sup>10</sup> the finely stitched vestments, that are the sacred vestments <sup>403</sup> for the priest Aaron, and the vestments of his sons for their service as priests, <sup>11</sup> along with the anointing oil and the fragrant incense for the holy place. These two will do exactly as I have commanded you.”

*13. The Sabbath 31:12 - 17*

<sup>12</sup> The Lord said to Moses: <sup>13</sup> “You, yourself, are to speak to the Israelites: ‘You are to observe my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, given in order that you will know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. <sup>14</sup> You are to keep the Sabbath, for it sets you apart (*or, makes you holy*). Every one who profanes the Sabbath is to be put to death: and whoever works on the Sabbath is to be cut out from among the people (*or, is to be under the ban*). <sup>15</sup> You are to do your work in six days, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, and is holy to the Lord. Whoever does work on the Sabbath day is to be put to death. <sup>16</sup> Therefore the Israelites must keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout all generations, as a perpetual covenant. <sup>17</sup> It is an eternal sign between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.”

*15. Conclusion 31:18*

<sup>18</sup> When God <sup>404</sup> had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, he gave Moses two tablets that bore the words of the covenant, written on stone with the finger of God.

<CHAPTER 32>

*C. Moses and the Restoration of the Covenant 32:1 – 34:35*

*1. The Golden Calf 32:1 – 35 <sup>405</sup>*

*a. The People’s Apostasy 32:1 - 6*

<sup>1</sup> When the people saw that Moses delayed in coming down from the mountain, the people assembled before Aaron and said to him: “Come, make gods for us, who will go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” <sup>2</sup> Aaron said to them, “Break off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, sons and daughters, and bring them to me.” <sup>406</sup> <sup>3</sup> Then all the people took off the golden earrings they were wearing, and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup> He took the gold from them and cast an image of a golden calf <sup>407</sup> in a mold <sup>408</sup> and the

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<sup>403</sup> LXX: “the liturgical garments.”

<sup>404</sup> Literally: “he.”

<sup>405</sup> Some scholars feel this chapter is a later interpolation, perhaps from an independent oral tradition, that passed into literary form here. A reference of it appears in the Epistle of Barnabas.

<sup>406</sup> Aaron does not connect the request of the people to the Lord. He is ready to exchange charismatic leadership for more manageable forms of leadership.

<sup>407</sup> Literally: “a bull calf.”

<sup>408</sup> The Hebrew is unclear. Some translators follow the LXX. It might mean, ‘in a mold,’ ‘in a sack,’ or with an emendation, a tool used to improve the cast metal image (*a graving tool, which was a kind of stylus that is used after the image has been cast*). The LXX states that he made a mold.



people said, “These are your gods who brought you out of the land of Egypt.”<sup>5</sup> When Aaron saw this he built an altar before it, and Aaron issued a proclamation saying, “Tomorrow there is to be a festival to the Lord.”<sup>6</sup> The people rose early the next morning and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well being (*or, peace offerings*) and the people ate and drank and rose up to play.<sup>409</sup>

*b. Moses First Intercession 32:7 – 14*

<sup>7</sup> The Lord said to Moses: “Go down to your people at once! You brought them out of the land of Egypt and they have become corrupt. <sup>8</sup> They have quickly turned aside from the way I commanded them to follow. They have cast an image of a calf for themselves, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and have said, “These are our gods, O Israel, who brought us out of the land of Egypt.” <sup>9</sup> The Lord said to Moses, “I have seen this nation, how stiff necked <sup>410</sup> (*or, obstinate*) they are! <sup>10</sup> Let me alone so that I can consume them in my wrath; and I will establish your descendants as a great nation.”

<sup>11</sup> Moses sought to placate his God by saying, “O Lord, why does your wrath burn so hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with your great power and your mighty hand? <sup>12</sup> Why should the people of Egypt say, ‘It was with evil intentions that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth. Turn from your fierce wrath, change your mind, and do not bring disaster on your people. <sup>13</sup> Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, and how you vowed to them by your own self, saying, ‘I will multiply your descendants like the stars of the heaven and all this land I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they will inherit it forever.’” <sup>15</sup> The Lord then embarked on a different course<sup>411</sup> than he had stated as his plan to bring punishment on the people.

*c. Moses the Prophet 32:15 - 24*

<sup>15</sup> Moses turned and went down from the mountain, carrying the two tablets of the covenant (*or, testimony*) in his hands, inscribed on both sides; front and back, of the tablets by God. <sup>16</sup> These tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets. <sup>17</sup> When Joshua heard the uproar of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “There is a noise coming from the camp.” <sup>18</sup> But Moses <sup>412</sup> said,

“It is not the sound of shouts of victory,<sup>413</sup>  
nor is it the sound of the cry of defeat.

It is the sound of revelers that I hear.”

<sup>19</sup> As soon as he neared the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses became enraged and he hurled the tablets from his hands, breaking them at the foot of the mountain. <sup>20</sup> He took the calf they had made, burned it with fire, and ground it into powder, scattering it on the water, and making the Israelites drink it

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<sup>409</sup> “To play,” in Hebrew implies some form of “sexual play.” It might be translated as “they devoted themselves to revelry.” Defenders of Aaron say he made something that he felt was nonsense, thinking that would urge the people to think more realistically. Instead, the message the people saw was, for them, an example of truth.

<sup>410</sup> The expression “stiff necked” is based on the farmer’s nightmare, a horse or ox that would not respond to the rope when tugged.

<sup>411</sup> The writer describes this as if God’s manner and warnings are always conditioned by man’s response.

<sup>412</sup> Literally: “he.”

<sup>413</sup> At this point the LXX differs, possibly using a secondary source.

21 Moses said to Aaron, “What did these people do to you that you have brought this great sin on them?” 22 Aaron said, “Do not let the anger of my lord flare, you know these people, that they are prone (*or, bent*) to do evil. 23 They said to me: ‘Make us gods who will go before us: as for Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt. We have no knowledge of what has become of him.’ 24 I then said to them, ‘Whoever has gold, take it off: so they took off their gold and gave it to me. I threw it into the fire and out came this calf.’”<sup>414</sup>

*d. The Levites 32:25 - 29*

25 When Moses saw that the people were out of control<sup>415</sup> (for Aaron had let them get out of control, to the derision of their enemies). 26 Then Moses stood at the gate of the camp,<sup>416</sup> and said, “Who is on the Lord’s side? Come to me!” All the sons of Levi gathered around him. 27 Moses said to them, “Thus says the God of Israel: Each one of you, fasten your swords by your sides. Go back and forth within the camp, and each one of you kill your brother, your friend, and your neighbor.”<sup>417</sup> 28 The sons of Levi did exactly as they were commanded, and approximately three thousand of the people died on that day. 29 Moses said, “Today you have ordained yourselves<sup>417</sup> for the service of the Lord, each one at the cost of a son, or a brother, and you have brought a blessing upon yourselves today.”

*e. Moses’ Second Intercession 32:30 – 35*

30 The next day Moses said to the people: “You have committed a great sin, but I will go up to the Lord, for possibly I will be able to make atonement for your sins.”<sup>31</sup> So Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Alas, the nation has committed a great sin; they have made gods of gold for themselves. 32 But now, if you will only forgive them of their sin – but if not – blot me out of the book that you have written.”<sup>33</sup> But the Lord said to Moses: “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book. 34 Go now and lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; see, my angel will go in front of you. Nonetheless when the day comes for punishment, I will punish them for their sin.”

35 Then the Lord sent a plague upon the people because they had made the golden calf, the one Aaron had made.<sup>418</sup>

<CHAPTER 33>

*2. The Promise of God’s Presence 33:1 – 23; 34:5 - 9*

*a. Departure from Sinai 33:1 - 6*

1 The Lord said to Moses: “Go, leave this place, you and the people you brought from the land of Egypt, and go to the land of which I vowed to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’<sup>419</sup> I will send an<sup>420</sup> angel before you,

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<sup>414</sup> Aaron wanted to feel that this was a miracle.

<sup>415</sup> The exact meaning of the Hebrew words is unclear.

<sup>416</sup> This was where official business, and cases of law were normally dealt with.

<sup>417</sup> Hebrew: literally: “yourself.” The translation is based on the LXX and the Targums.

<sup>418</sup> Some scholars feel this verse should follow verse 20.

<sup>419</sup> From a literary standpoint it seems that several accounts are united to make this chapter. There is no agreement among scholars about assigning a date to the sources. We also do not know the time or place at which this message might have been delivered by Moses.

<sup>420</sup> LXX: “my angel” Is the angel a substitute messenger for God?

and I will drive the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites from the land. <sup>3</sup> Go up to a land that flows with milk and honey, but I will not travel with you, or I would consume you along the way (for you are a stiff-necked nation).”

<sup>4</sup> When the people heard these harsh words, they moved about like mourners, and no one adorned themselves with ornamental jewelry.

<sup>5</sup> The Lord said to Moses: “Say to these people of Israel, ‘You are a stiff-necked nation. If for a single moment I were to go among you, I would consume you. Take off your ornaments, and I will decide what to do to you.’” <sup>6</sup> The people of Israel then removed their ornaments, and no longer wore them beyond Mount Horeb. <sup>421</sup>

*b. The Tent 33:7 – 11* <sup>422</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the area of the camp; and he called it ‘the tent of meeting.’ Everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. <sup>8</sup> Whenever Moses went out of his <sup>423</sup> tent all the people rose up, every man stood at the entrance of their tents and watched Moses until he had gone into the tent [*or meeting*]. <sup>9</sup> When Moses entered the tent [*of meeting*], the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses. <sup>10</sup> When the people witnessed the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise and all would prostrate themselves, <sup>424</sup> at the entrance to their tents. <sup>11</sup> It was in this way that the Lord would speak with Moses, face to face, just as one might speak with a friend. Then he would return to the camp; but his young assistant, Joshua son of Nun would not leave the tent.

*c. God Reveals Himself to Moses 33:12 – 23; 34:5b – 9*

<sup>12</sup> Moses said to the Lord: “See, you have said to me, ‘Bring up these people;’ but you have not informed me whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, ‘I know you by name, you have found favor in my sight. <sup>13</sup> If I have found favor in your sight, show me your ways, so that I might know you and find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.’” <sup>425</sup> <sup>14</sup> He said, “My presence will accompany you (*or, I will go in the lead*), <sup>426</sup> and I will give you rest.” <sup>427</sup> <sup>15</sup> He replied, “If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here. <sup>16</sup> How is it ever to be known that I and my people have gained your favor, unless you accompany us? In this way we will be distinguished from every nation on the earth, as your people”

<sup>17</sup> The Lord said to Moses: “I will do exactly what you have been asking, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.” <sup>18</sup> Moses said, “I beg of you, let me behold your presence (*or, your glory*).” <sup>19</sup> He said, “I will let all my goodness <sup>428</sup> pass before you, and I will proclaim my name before you: ‘THE LORD,’ <sup>429</sup> and I will be gracious to whom I choose to be gracious, and I will show mercy to whom I choose to show mercy.” <sup>20</sup> “But,” he said, “You can not see my face; for no one will see it and

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<sup>421</sup> Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

<sup>422</sup> Verses 7 – 11 have a figurative sense.

<sup>423</sup> Literally: “the.” The sentence seems, however, to describe Moses moving from the tent in which he lived to the tent of meeting.

<sup>424</sup> Literally: “bow low each at their entrance.”

<sup>425</sup> The LXX seems to have a different source for its translation.

<sup>426</sup> Literally: “my face will go.”

<sup>427</sup> Some translators feel verse 14 is a question.

<sup>428</sup> LXX: “my glory.”

<sup>429</sup> In Hebrew: ‘YHWH.’

survive.”<sup>21</sup> The Lord continued by saying: “See, there is a place by me where you will station yourself on a rock; <sup>22</sup> and while my glory passes by I will place you in a crevice in the rock, and I will shield you with my hand until I have passed by. <sup>23</sup> Then I will remove my hand, and you will see my back,<sup>430</sup> but my face will not be seen.”

<CHAPTER 34>

3. *The Renewal of the Covenant 24:1 – 5; 10 – 28*

a. *Preparation 24:1 - 9*

<sup>1</sup> The Lord said to Moses, “Chisel out two tablets of stone like the previous ones, and I will write the words that I gave you on the first tablets, (the ones you shattered,) on these tablets. <sup>2</sup> Be ready in the morning, and come up to Mount Sinai and present yourself to me on the top of the mountain. <sup>3</sup> No one is to climb up with you, and let no person be seen anywhere on the mountain, nor are flocks or herds allowed to graze before the mountain. <sup>4</sup> So Moses chiseled out two tablets of stone [*like the first ones*] and rose early in the morning, going up Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, taking his two tablets of stone. <sup>5</sup> The Lord descended in a cloud and stood with Moses there, proclaiming the name of the Lord.

<sup>6</sup> As the Lord passed by Moses he proclaimed:

“THE LORD,  
the Lord is merciful, gracious,  
slow to anger,  
and abounding in steadfast love  
and faithfulness.

<sup>7</sup> He maintains his steadfast love  
for thousandth generation, forgiving  
wrongs, transgressions, and sins,  
but he will not avenge the guilt  
of the parents upon the children  
and the children’s children,  
to the third and fourth generation.”

<sup>8</sup> Moses hurried to bow himself to the ground, in homage (*or, in worship*). <sup>9</sup> He said, “If I have found favor in your sight now, O Lord, I pray, let the Lord go with us. [*I ask this in spite of the fact that*] these are a stiff-necked<sup>431</sup> nation: pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.”<sup>432</sup>

3. *The Renewal of the Covenant 34:10 – 28 (concluded)*

<sup>10</sup> He said, “Hereby I make a covenant before all people I will do marvels, the like of which have never taken place in all the earth or in any nation, and all the people in whose midst you will live will see the work of the Lord, for what I will do is awesome.

<sup>11</sup> “Be attentive to what I command you today. Watch! I will drive the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites out before you.”

b. *The Laws 34:12 - 28*

<sup>12</sup> “Be very careful not to make any covenants with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst. <sup>13</sup> You are to tear down their

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<sup>430</sup> The Hebrew word is descriptive of the back part of an animal.

<sup>431</sup> Cf.: footnote 410.

<sup>432</sup> Some scholars feel 33:15 – 16 should be inserted here for a better read.

altars, break their pillars, and cut down their sacred poles, <sup>433</sup> 14 (for you are not to worship any other god, because the Lord, whose name is Zealous, <sup>434</sup> is a zealous God.”  
15 You will not make any covenant with the inhabitants of the land, for when they prostitute themselves, by going after, and sacrificing to their gods, someone among them will invite you and you will eat of that sacrifice. 16 [*After this first step*] you will take wives from their daughters for your sons, and their daughters who prostitute themselves to their gods, and will make your sons prostitute themselves to their gods.

17 “You are not to make images of cast metal.

18 “You must keep the festival of unleavened bread, as I have commanded you. For seven days you must eat unleavened bread at the time I appointed, in the month of Abib, <sup>435</sup> for it was in this month in which you came out of Egypt.

19 The first [*male*] that is born <sup>436</sup> is mine, and all your male <sup>437</sup> livestock, the new born calf and lamb. 20 You are to redeem the firstborn donkey with a lamb, or, if you do not redeem it you are to break its neck. All the firstborn sons are to be redeemed.

“No one is to appear before me empty-handed.

21 “You are to work six days, but on the seventh day you are to rest. Even in plowing time or harvest time you are to rest on the seventh day.

22 “You are to observe three festivals: the festival of weeks; the first fruits of the wheat harvest; and the festival of ingathering at year’s end. 23 Three times during the year all males are to appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. 24 [For I will drive the nations out in advance of your arrival, and will enlarge your borders. No one will covet your land when you go up to appear before the Lord your God three times in the year.] <sup>438</sup>

25 “You are not to mix the blood of my sacrifice with leaven, and the sacrifice of the festival of Passover is not to be left until morning.

26 “You are to bring the very best of the first fruits of your ground to the Lord your God.

“You are not to boil a kid in its mother’s milk” . <sup>439</sup>

27 The Lord said to Moses: “Write these words: In accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.”

28 Moses was with the Lord for forty days and forty nights, during which time he did not eat bread nor drink water. He wrote the words of the covenant on the tablets: the Ten Commandments. <sup>440</sup>

### *c. The Transfiguration of Moses 34:29 - 35*

29 Moses came down from Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand Moses did not realize that the skin of his face had

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<sup>433</sup> Poles were symbols of the goddess Asherah, and thus, places of worship.

<sup>434</sup> Since ‘jealousy:’ is an acquired attitude, the word Zealous describes God more clearly.

<sup>435</sup> March/April.

<sup>436</sup> Literally: “that opens the womb.”

<sup>437</sup> So: LXX & Theodotian, Vulgate and Targums. The word, in Hebrew is uncertain.

<sup>438</sup> Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

<sup>439</sup> Many scholars have tried to reconcile these commandments with the ten commandments of Exodus 20, but to no avail.

<sup>440</sup> Literally: “the ten words.”

become radiant <sup>441</sup> because he had been talking with God. <sup>30</sup> When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses with radiant skin on his face, they became fearful and shied away from him. <sup>31</sup> Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and the leaders of the congregation approached him and he spoke with them. <sup>32</sup> Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he gave them, in commandment, all that the Lord had said to him on Mount Sinai. <sup>33</sup> After Moses had finished speaking he covered his face with a veil; <sup>442</sup> <sup>34</sup> but whenever Moses went into [*the tabernacle*] to be before the Lord and to speak with him, he would take off the veil, until he came out; and when he came out he told the Israelites what the Lord had commanded. <sup>35</sup> The people of Israel would see that the face of Moses was shining; and Moses would put the veil on this face again, until he went to speak with the Lord.

<CHAPTER 35> <sup>443</sup>

*d. The Execution of the Cult Ordinances 35:1 – 40:38*

*1. The Sabbath 35:1 – 3*

<sup>1</sup> Moses assembled the entire congregation of the Israelites, and said, “These are the things which the Lord has commanded that you are to do: <sup>2</sup> Work is to be done for six days, but on the seventh day you are to abstain from working for it is a holy Sabbath of complete (*or, solemn*) rest to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it will be put to death. <sup>3</sup> You will not even light a fire in your habitation on the Sabbath Day.” <sup>444</sup>

*2. The Offering 35:4 – 24*

<sup>4</sup> Moses said to the entire assembly of the Israelites: “These are the things which the Lord has commanded: <sup>5</sup> you are to take an offering among you which is to go to the Lord. Whoever has a generous heart, let that person bring the Lord’s offering: gold, silver, bronze (*or, copper*), <sup>6</sup> blue, purple, and crimson yarn, fine twisted linen, goat’s hair, <sup>7</sup> tanned rams’ skins, fine leather, <sup>445</sup> acacia wood, <sup>8</sup> oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense, <sup>9</sup> onyx (*or, lapis lazuli*) stones, stones for setting for the ephod and the breast plate.

<sup>10</sup> “Let every able person among you come and join in making all that the Lord has commanded: the tabernacle, <sup>11</sup> its tent and its covering, clasps, frames, bars, pillars, and bases, <sup>12</sup> the ark with its poles, the mercy seat, and its cover for the screen, <sup>13</sup> the table with its poles and its utensils, the bread of the Presence; <sup>14</sup> the lamp-stand also for the light, with its utensils and its lamps, and the oil for the light; <sup>15</sup> the altar of incense, with its poles, and the anointing oil, the fragrant incense, the screen at the entrance, the entrance of the tabernacle; <sup>16</sup> the altar for burnt offerings, with its bronze grating, its

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<sup>441</sup> St. Jerome, in translating the Hebrew Scriptures into the Latin Vulgate, used a cognate word by mistake and translated that Moses had “horns.” This is seen in Medieval art: Moses with small horns. LXX: “glorified.”

<sup>442</sup> The Hebrew word is a hapax legomenon. The translation is based on Jewish tradition.

<sup>443</sup> Chapters 35 – 39 are a summary of information given to the people of Israel in previous chapters of Exodus. This chapter is, to some extent, a repeat of chapter 25. There is considerable variation between the Hebrew text and the LXX text. The latter might have used a different recension.

<sup>444</sup> The strict prohibition of verse 3 is only found here. In Exodus 16:23 the manna was to be cooked, but this was to be done the night before. This commandment is still observed by Orthodox Jews, who will not even turn on a gas burner.

<sup>445</sup> The Hebrew word is uncertain. It has been translated as “sea cow leather, dolphin hide, dugong hide, and goat skin.”

poles, and all its utensils, the basin with its stand, <sup>17</sup> the hangings for the court, its pillars and its bases, and the screen for the gate of the court; <sup>18</sup> the pegs for the tabernacle and the pegs for the court, and their cords; <sup>19</sup> the finely worked vestments for ministering in the holy place, the holy vestments for the priest Aaron, and the vestments for his sons, for their service as priests.”

<sup>20</sup> The entire assembly of the people then withdrew, leaving Moses’ presence. <sup>21</sup> They came – every one whose heart had been stirred, and every one whose spirit was willing, and they brought the Lord’s offering to be used for the tent of meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred vestments. <sup>22</sup> Men and women came. They all had a willing heart, bringing brooches, earrings, signet <sup>446</sup> rings, pendants, all sorts of gold objects, everyone bringing an offering of gold to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Everyone who possessed blue, purple, or crimson yarn or fine twisted linen, goats’ hair, tanned rams’ hides, or fine leather <sup>447</sup> brought them. <sup>24</sup> Everyone who could make an offering of silver or bronze (*or, copper*) brought it as the Lord’s offering; and everyone who possessed acacia wood of any use in the work brought it. <sup>25</sup> All the skilled women who had ability, spun the yarns and the fine twisted linen, bringing what they had spun in blue, purple or crimson yarn, and fine twisted linen. <sup>26</sup> All the skilled whose hearts were moved, used their skill to spin goats’ hair. <sup>27</sup> The leaders brought onyx (*or, lapis lazuli*) and gems to be set into the breastplate and ephod. <sup>28</sup> spices and oil for the light and for the anointing oil and the fragrant incense were also brought. <sup>29</sup> All the Israelites, male and female, whose heart urged them to be willing to bring anything for the work of the Lord, as Moses had commended that was to be done. All these things were brought as an offering to the Lord.

### 3. Bezalel and Oholiab 35:30 – 36:7

<sup>30</sup> Moses said to the people of the land, “Be assured, the Lord has called Bezalel the son of Uris, son of Hur of the tribe of Judah, by name. <sup>31</sup> He had filled him with divine spirit (*or, the spirit of God*), skill, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft. <sup>32</sup> He could devise all kinds of artistic designs, work in gold, silver, or bronze (*or, copper*), <sup>33</sup> in the cutting of stones that were to be set, carving wood, in every kind of craft. <sup>34</sup> He also had been inspired to learn, and to teach Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. <sup>35</sup> The Lord has filled them with skill to do every kind of work which would be done by an artisan or by a designer, or by an embroiderer in blue, purple and crimson yarns, and in fine twisted linen, or by a weaver -- by any sort of artisan or skilled designer.”

### <CHAPTE 36> <sup>448</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Moses said: “Bezalel and Oholiab and every skillful person to whom the Lord had given skill and understanding to know how to do any work in the construction of the sanctuary is to work in accordance with all that the Lord has commanded.”

<sup>2</sup> Moses then called Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the Lord endowed with skill, everyone whose heart was stirred to come to do work.

### 4. The Tabernacle 36:3 – 33

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<sup>446</sup> The Hebrew word is uncertain, leaving the meaning unclear.

<sup>447</sup> Cf.: footnote 445.

<sup>448</sup> To a large extent this chapter is a repetition of Exodus 26:1 – 37.

3 From Moses these skilled workers received all the freewill offerings that the Israelites had brought for doing the work in the sanctuary. They still kept on bringing freewill offerings every morning. 4 In this way all the able artisans who were doing every sort of task on the sanctuary came, 5 and said to Moses: “The people are bringing much more than is needed for doing the work the Lord has commanded us to do.” 6 Moses then gave a command, and his word was proclaimed through the entire camp: “No man or woman is to make an offering for the sanctuary.” So the people were restrained from bringing anything else as an offering for the sanctuary. 7 What had already been brought was more than sufficient to complete all the work.

8 All those who were skilled workers were engaged in the work, made the tabernacle with ten curtains. These were made of fine twisted linen and blue, purple, and crimson yarns, with cherubim carefully worked into them. 9 The length of each curtain was twenty-eight cubits (*or, forty two feet*) in length and each curtain was four cubits (*or, six feet*) wide, all the curtains were made to be identical.

10 He joined the curtains together in such a fashion that all the curtains were joined together. 11 He made loops of blue on the edge of the outermost curtains of the first set, and likewise made them so that the edges of the second set joined the edges of the first set. 12 Fifty loops were made for one curtain and fifty loops were made for the second curtain. These were placed so that they were opposite one another. 13 He made clasps of gold, fifty in number, and joined the curtains together with the golden clasps, which resulted in making the tabernacle as one unit.

14 In addition he made curtains of goat hair as a tent over the tabernacle, made of eleven curtains. 15 The length of each curtain was thirty cubits (*or, forty-five feet*) and the width of each curtain was four cubits (*or, six feet*): all curtains being identical in size. 16 He joined five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves. 17 He then made fifty loops on the edge of the outermost edge of one set of curtains and the same on the other connecting set of curtains. 18 He fashioned fifty clasps of bronze (*or, copper*) to join the tent together, so that it could become as one unit. 19 He also made a covering for the tent [*to be used as protection when traveling*] of tanned rams’ skins and an outer covering of fine leather. <sup>449</sup>

#### 5. The Wooden Structure 36:20 – 34

20 Then he made the upright frames for the tabernacle of acacia wood. 21 The length of each frame was to be ten cubits (*or, fifteen feet*) and its width was to be a cubit and a half (*or, twenty-seven inches*). 22 Each frame had two pegs (*or, tenons*) so they could be fit together; he did this for all the frames that were used in the tabernacle. 23 This is the way the frames were made: twenty frames for the south side; 24 forty bases of silver to fit under the twenty frames, two bases under the first frame for its two pegs (*or, tenons*), and two bases under the next frame for its two pegs (*or, tenons*). 25 For the second side of the tabernacle, (on the north side), he made twenty frames, 26 and their forty bases of silver, two bases under the first frame and two bases under the next frame. 27 For the rear of the tabernacle, on the west side, he made six frames. 28 He also made two frames for corners of the tabernacle at the rear. 29 These frames were to be made

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<sup>449</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain. Some scholars translate it as “sea cow, porpoise, or dugong.” Because the weight of this leather tent covering would be too heavy to have over the goat hair tent when it was erected, the words in italics were inserted to be a possible solution to the matter of the leather covering.



separate at the bottom, but joined at the top, at the first ring. Two such frames were fashioned in this way for the corners. <sup>30</sup> There were eight frames with their silver bases: sixteen bases, for two bases were used for each frame.

<sup>31</sup> He made bars of acacia wood, five for the frames of the one side of the tabernacle, <sup>32</sup> and five bars for the opposite side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames of the tabernacle at the rear, (the west side). <sup>33</sup> He made the middle bar to pass through from end to end, and located half way up the frames. <sup>34</sup> He overlaid the frames with gold, and made rings of gold for them to hold the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

*e. The Veil and the Screen 36:35 – 38*

<sup>35</sup> He made the curtain of blue, purple and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen, with cherubim skillfully worked (*or, woven*) into it. <sup>36</sup> He made four pillars of acacia for it, overlaying them with gold and their clasps were to be of gold. He also cast four bases of silver for them. <sup>37</sup> In addition he made a screen for the entrance of the tent, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen, embroidered with needlework; <sup>38</sup> and its five pillars and clasps. He overlaid their capitals and their braces with gold, but their five bases were of bronze (*or, copper*).

<CHAPTER 37>

*5. The Ark 37:1 – 9*

<sup>1</sup> Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood: two and a half cubits (*three feet and nine inches*) long and one and a half cubits (*two feet three inches*) wide and one and a half cubits high. <sup>2</sup> He overlaid it with pure gold inside and outside, and made a molding of gold on all sides. <sup>3</sup> He cast four rings of gold for its side walls, two rings on one side and two on the opposite side. <sup>4</sup> He fashioned poles of acacia wood which were overlaid with pure gold, <sup>5</sup> and placed the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that it might be carried. <sup>6</sup> He made a mercy seat of pure gold, two and one half cubits (*three feet, nine inches*) long and its width was one and a half cubits (*two feet three inches*). <sup>7</sup> He made two cherubim of hammered gold, at the two ends of the mercy seat (*or, the cover of the ark*), <sup>8</sup> one cherubim at one end, and the other at the opposite end. This was all made of one piece of gold with the mercy seat, and with the cherubim at its two ends. <sup>9</sup> The cherubim's wings were spread out above, and shielding the mercy seat with their wings. The cherubim faced one another; the faces of the cherubim being turned toward the mercy seat.

*6. The Table 37:10 – 16*

<sup>10</sup> He also made the table of acacia wood, two cubits (*three feet*) long, one cubit (*eighteen inches*) wide and a cubit and a half (*two feet three inches*) tall. <sup>11</sup> He overlaid it with pure gold, and made a molding of gold that surrounded it. <sup>12</sup> He made a molding around the rim which was one handbreadth (*four inches*) wide. <sup>13</sup> He prepared four golden rings, and fastened the rings to the four corners, at the location of the four legs. <sup>14</sup> The rings that held the poles, used for carrying the table, were located close to the rim. <sup>15</sup> The poles were made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. <sup>16</sup> He made the vessels of pure gold that were intended to be on the table, its plates, dishes for incense, bowls and jugs with which to pour drink offerings.

*7. The Lamp Stand 37:17 – 24*

<sup>17</sup> He also made the lamp-stand of pure gold, the bases and the shaft of the lamp-stand were made of hammered gold; its cups, calyxes, and petals were of one piece with

it. <sup>18</sup> There were six branches, extending from its sides, three branches of the lamp-stand out of one side and three branches of the lamp-stand on the other side of it. <sup>19</sup> Three cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with a calyx and leaf on one branch, and three cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with a calyx and leaf on the opposite side – six branches going out of the lamp-stand. <sup>21</sup> There was a calyx of one piece with it under the first pair of branches, a calyx of one piece with it under the next pair of branches and a calyx of one piece with it under the last pair of branches. <sup>22</sup> Their calyxes and branches were of one piece with it, being a single piece of hammered pure gold. <sup>23</sup> He made its seven lamps and its snuffers and its trays of pure gold. <sup>24</sup> He made it and all the needed utensils from a talent (*or, ninety six pounds*) of pure gold.

*8. The Altar of Incense 37:25 – 29*

<sup>25</sup> He made the altar of incense out of acacia wood, its length being one cubit (*eighteen inches*) and its width being one cubit – it was square, and its height was two cubits (*three feet*). The horns of the altar were made as a part of the altar as it was being built. <sup>26</sup> He overlaid it with pure gold: its top, its sides all around, and its horns; and he made a molding of gold that went all around the altar of incense. <sup>27</sup> He also made two golden rings for it, to be placed under its molding, on each of the two opposite sides of it to hold the poles that would be used to carry it. <sup>28</sup> He made the poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold.

*9. The Hallowed Incense and Oil 37:31*

<sup>31</sup> He made the holy anointing oil as well as the pure fragrant incense. These were blended as if it had been done by a perfumer.

<CHAPTER 38>

*10. The Bronze Altar 38:1 – 7*

<sup>1</sup> He also made the altar for burnt offerings out of acacia wood; which was five cubits (*seven and a half feet*) long, five cubits wide, thus being square, and three cubits (*four feet, six inches*) high. <sup>2</sup> He made horns for it, located at each of the four corners, the horns being made of one piece, as a part of the altar. This was all overlaid with bronze (*or, copper*). <sup>3</sup> He also made all the utensils that would be used at the altar, the pots, shovels, basins, flesh hooks, and fire pans. All these utensils were made of bronze. <sup>4</sup> He made a grating in the form of a network of bronze, located under its ledge, which extended about half way down. <sup>5</sup> He also formed four rings of bronze for the corners of the bronze grating which would be used to hold the poles, <sup>6</sup> which were made of acacia wood and overlaid with bronze. <sup>7</sup> These poles were put through the rings on the sides of the altar, that it might be carried. The altar was made hollow, with boards. <sup>450</sup>

*11. The Bronze Basin (or, Laver) 38:8*

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<sup>450</sup> The LXX reads: “He made a bronze altar out of the bronze censers which belonged to the men who were related to the Sons of Korah.” Cf. Numbers 27.

8 He made a basin (*or, laver*) of bronze (*or, copper*) along with its stand, from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting. <sup>451</sup>

12. *The Tabernacle Court* 38:9 – 20

9 He made the court for the south side, the hangings of this court were made of fine twisted linen, one hundred cubits (*one hundred fifty feet*) in length. 10 The twenty pillars and their twenty bases were made of bronze (*or, copper*) but the clasps of the pillars and their bands were made of silver. 11 For the north side there were hangings that were one hundred cubits long; its twenty pillars and their twenty bases were made of bronze, but their clasps and bands were made of silver. 12 For the west side there were hangings fifty cubits (*seventy five feet*) long, with ten pillars and ten bases; the clasps of the pillars and their bands were made of silver. 13 For the front to the east, fifty cubits. 14 The hangings for one side of the gate were fifteen cubits (*twenty-two and a half feet*), with three pillars and three bases. 15 On each side of the gate of the court the hangings were fifteen cubits, with three pillars and three bases. 16 All the hangings that surrounded the court were made of fine twisted linen. 17 The bases of the pillars were of bronze, but the clasps and bands were of silver. 18 The screen for the entrance to the court was embroidered with needlework in blue, purple and crimson yarn and fine twisted linen. It was twenty cubits (*fifteen feet*) long, and its width was five cubits (*seven and a half feet*) high, so as to correspond with the hangings of the court. 19 There were four pillars; their four bases were made of bronze but the clasps, and the overlaying of the capitals, and their bands were made of silver. 20 All the pegs (*or, tenons*) for the tabernacle and for the court all around were made of bronze.

13. *Record, (or, Summary)* 38:21 – 31

21 [This is a the record of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the covenant, which was drawn up by the command of Moses, the work of the Levites under the direction of Ithamar son of the priest Aaron. <sup>452</sup> 22 Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Juda, made all that the Lord commanded Moses, 23 and working with him was Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan who was an engraver, designer, and embroiderer of blue, purple and crimson yarn, and in fine linen.

24 The total amount of gold [*contributed by the Israelites*] was used for the work, in all the construction of the sanctuary. The gold from the offering was twenty-nine talents and seven hundred and thirty shekels (*or, kikkars*), (measured by the sanctuary shekel). 25 The silver from the congregation who were counted, was one hundred talents plus one thousand seven hundred seventy-five shekels, (measured by the sanctuary shekel). <sup>453</sup> 26 (A beka, (*1/5 ounce of silver or 5.5 grams*), also known as a half shekel, (measured by the sanctuary shekel), was the amount given as a head tax, for everyone who was counted in the census, from twenty years old and older, for six hundred three thousand, five hundred fifty men.) 27 The hundred talents of silver were used for casting the bases of the sanctuary, and the bases of the curtains; one hundred bases, for the hundred talents, a talent for a base. 28 Of the one thousand seven hundred seventy-five

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<sup>451</sup> In that day mirrors were made of burnished copper. The significance of the “women who worked at the entrance of the tent of meeting” possibly signifies organized sanctuary service: cleaning, sweeping, or possibly singing. The Hebrew word is used only one other time in Hebrew Scriptures: in I Samuel 2:22.

<sup>452</sup> Some scholars feel verses 21 – 31 are a later interpolation.

<sup>453</sup> Recent information, the work of R.B.Y Scott says the amounts, based on the sanctuary shekel, with today’s measurements would be: 900 pounds of gold, 6437 pounds of silver, 4522 pounds of bronze. Other scholars think of the amounts as: 1 ton of gold, 4 tons of silver, and 3 tons of copper.

shekels he made clasps for the pillars, overlaid their capitals, and made bands for them. <sup>29</sup> The contributions of bronze (*or, copper*) was seventy talents, and two thousand four hundred shekels; <sup>30</sup> with which he made the bases for the entrance to the tent of meeting, the bronze altar, the bronze grating for the altar, and all the utensils that would be used at the altar, <sup>31</sup> the bases all around the court, all the pegs (*or, tenons*) of the tabernacle, and all the pegs around the court.

<CHAPTER 39>

14. *The Priesthood and Their Vestments 39:1 – 31*

a. *Introduction 39:1*

<sup>1</sup> Of the blue, purple and crimson yarns they made finely worked vestments, for ministering in the holy place. These were to be used by Aaron, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

b. *The Ephod 39:2 – 7*

<sup>2</sup> He made the ephod <sup>454</sup> of gold, blue, purple and scarlet materials, along with fine twisted linen. <sup>3</sup> Gold leaf was hammered thin and cut into threads to work into the blue, purple, and crimson yarns and into the fine twisted linen, in a skilled design. <sup>455</sup> <sup>4</sup> Shoulder pieces were made for the ephod, joined to it at its two edges. <sup>5</sup> They decorated the band skillfully that was made of the same materials and workmanship, using gold, along with blue, purple and crimson yarns, and the fine twisted linen; as the Lord had commanded Moses.

<sup>6</sup> Onyx (*or, lapis lazuli*) stones were prepared and enclosed in settings of gold filigree (*or, gold rosettes*) and engraved, just as a signet might be engraved, according to the names of the sons of Israel. <sup>7</sup> These were placed on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, to be stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel; as the Lord had commanded Moses.

c. *The Breast Piece 39:8 – 21*

<sup>8</sup> He made the breast piece in work that was as skillful as that which had been done with the ephod, using gold along with blue, purple and crimson yarn and fine twisted linen. <sup>456</sup> <sup>9</sup> The breast piece was square, made to be a pouch, the overall size being a span (*about nine inches*) in width when doubled. <sup>10</sup> The gem stones were set in four rows. The stones in the first row were: carnelian, chrysolite, and emerald; <sup>11</sup> and in the second row: turquoise, sapphire, and crystal. <sup>12</sup> The third row: jacinth, agate and amethyst. <sup>13</sup> The fourth row: beryl, onyx and jasper, <sup>457</sup> these being set in the breast piece in gold filigree (*or, gold rosettes*). <sup>14</sup> There were twelve stones with each of them having the name of one of the sons of Israel, like signets, each being engraved with its name, the names of the twelve tribes. <sup>15</sup> These were attached to the breast piece by specially made gold chains made of pure gold which was twisted like cords. <sup>16</sup> In addition two settings of gold filigree and two gold rings, the two gold rings being set on the two edges of the

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<sup>454</sup> Some scholars feel this was a vest rather than a full garment.

<sup>455</sup> This is the only mention of using gold leaf cut into threads and used in decorative weaving or embroidery.

<sup>456</sup> Urim and Thummim are not mentioned with the breastplate, though they would be held in the pouch that was formed when the breastplate was made.

<sup>457</sup> The identification of the gem stones is uncertain. Translators have also used the following: ruby, emerald, green feldspar, lapis lazuli, jade, sardonyx, moon stone, diamond, and green jasper, to name a few.

breast piece. <sup>18</sup> Two ends of the two cords were attached to the two settings of filigree; in this way they attached it in front of the shoulder-pieces of the ephod. <sup>19</sup> Two rings of gold were made and were attached to the two ends of the breast plate, on the inside edge next to the ephod. <sup>20</sup> Two more gold rings were made which were attached in front of the lower part of the shoulder pieces of the ephod. <sup>21</sup> The breast piece was bound by its rings to the rings on the ephod, and so that the breast piece should not come loose from the ephod. This was done as the Lord had commanded Moses.

*d. The Robe of the Ephod 39:22 – 26*

<sup>22</sup> He also made the robe of the ephod, woven entirely of blue yarn. <sup>23</sup> The robe had an opening in the middle, like the opening of a coat of mail, <sup>458</sup> with a binding around the opening to reinforce it that it might not tear. <sup>24</sup> Along the lower hem of the robe they made pomegranates of blue, purple and crimson yarns and of fine twisted linen. <sup>25</sup> They also made bells of pure gold and placed them between the pomegranates all around on the lower hem of the robe, <sup>26</sup> a bell, a pomegranate, another bell, a pomegranate all around the robe that was to be used for ministering; as the Lord had commanded Moses.

*e. The Diadem, Turban, Coat and Garments for Aaron's Sons 39:27 – 31*

<sup>27</sup> They also made tunics, woven of fine twisted linen, for Aaron and his sons, <sup>28</sup> a turban of fine linen, <sup>459</sup> and head-dresses of fine linen, and the linen undergarments of fine twisted linen, and the sash of fine twisted linen, along with blue, purple and crimson yarns embroidered with needlework; as the Lord had commanded Moses.

<sup>30</sup> They made a rosette of pure gold for the sacred medallion, and incised an inscription on it, like the engraving on a signet: "HOLY TO THE LORD." <sup>31</sup> A blue cord was tied to it so it could be fastened on the turban above, as the Lord had commanded.

*15. The Presentation of the Tabernacle 39:32 – 43*

<sup>32</sup> This is the way the work in preparing the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was constructed: the Israelites had done everything exactly as the Lord had commanded Moses. <sup>33</sup> Then they brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent, and all its utensils, clasps, frames, bars, pillars, and bases; <sup>34</sup> the covering of tanned rams' skins, the covering of fine leather; <sup>460</sup> the curtain of the screen; <sup>35</sup> the ark of the covenant, together with its poles and the mercy seat (*or, cover*); <sup>36</sup> the table with all its utensils, the bread of the Presence; <sup>37</sup> the pure golden lamp-stand, with the lamps set in place, and all its utensils, and the oil for the light; <sup>38</sup> the golden altar, the anointing oil and the fragrant incense; and the screen for the entrance to the tent; <sup>39</sup> the bronze altar, and its bronze grating, its poles, and all its utensils; the basin and its stand; <sup>40</sup> the hangings for the court, its cords, and its pegs; and all the utensils for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; <sup>41</sup> the finely worked vestments for ministering in the holy place; the sacred vestments for Aaron, the priest; and the vestments for his sons to serve as priests. <sup>42</sup> The Israelites had done all of the work, exactly as the Lord had commanded Moses. <sup>43</sup> When Moses saw that they had done all the work exactly as the Lord had commanded, he blessed them.

<CHAPTER 40>

*16. The Assembly of the Tabernacle and Its Equipment 40:1 – 33*

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<sup>458</sup> The Hebrew is uncertain. It seems to be like the opening of a poncho.

<sup>459</sup> The Targums say the turban was made out of fine twisted linen cloth eight feet in length.

<sup>460</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew word is unclear.

1 The Lord spoke to Moses: 2 “On the first day of the first month <sup>461</sup> you are to set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. 3 You are to place the ark of the covenant into the tabernacle and you will screen the ark with the curtain. 4 You are to bring the table and arrange its setting; and you are to bring in the lamp-stand, and set up its lamps. 5 You are to place the golden altar for incense before the ark of the covenant, and set up the screen at the entrance to the tabernacle.

6 “You are to set up the altar of burnt offerings in front of the entrance to the tent of meeting, 7 and to place the basin (*or, laver*) between the tent of meeting and the altar, and fill the basin with water. 8 You are to set up the court all around, and hang the screen up for the gate to the court.

9 “You are then to take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and consecrate it along with all the furniture, so that it will become holy. 10 You are to anoint the altar of burnt offering, along with all its utensils, and to consecrate the altar, so that the altar will become most holy. 11 You are to anoint the basin with its stand and consecrate it.

12 “You are then to bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting, where they are to wash with water, 13 and Aaron is to be dressed in the sacred vestments, and you are to anoint him and consecrate him, so that he will be able to serve as its priest. 14 You are also to bring Aaron’s sons and dress them in tunics, 15 and they are to be anointed, exactly as their father had been anointed, so they might serve me as priests; and their anointing will enable them to serve as priests throughout the coming generations.”

16 Moses did everything exactly as the Lord had commanded him.

17 In the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was set up. 18 Moses set up the tabernacle, laying its bases, setting up its frames, placing its poles into the bases, and raising its pillars; 19 spreading the tent over the tabernacle, and putting the covering of the tent over it; as the Lord had commanded Moses.

20 He took the covenant (*or, treaty, testimony*) and placed it into the ark, and put the poles on the ark, and set the mercy seat (*or, cover*) above the ark; 21 and, having brought the ark into the tabernacle, he set up the curtain that screened the ark of the covenant; as the Lord had commanded Moses.

22 He put the table in the tent of meeting on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the curtain, 23 and set the bread in order on it before the Lord; as the Lord had commanded Moses. 24 He placed the lamp-stand on the south side of the tabernacle, 25 and set up the lamps before the Lord; as the Lord had commanded Moses. 26 He located the golden altar in the tent of meeting, before the curtain, 27 and offered fragrant incense on it; as the Lord had commanded Moses.

28 He also positioned the screen before the entrance to the tabernacle. 29 He set the altar of burnt offerings at the entrance to the tent of meeting, and offered a burnt offering on it, along with a grain offering; as the Lord had commanded Moses. 30 He set the basin (*or, laver*) between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water into it for washing, 31 with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. 32 When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed; as the Lord had commanded Moses. 33 He set up the court around the tabernacle and the altar, and put up the screen at the gate of the court.

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<sup>461</sup> March/April: Abib.

Thus Moses finished the work.

*17. Conclusion 40:34 – 38*

<sup>34</sup> Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. <sup>462</sup> <sup>35</sup> Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting because the cloud settled upon it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. <sup>463</sup> <sup>36</sup> Whenever the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, the Israelites would set out on each stage of their journey; <sup>37</sup> but if the cloud was not taken up, they did not set out until the day that it was taken up. <sup>38</sup> The cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud <sup>464</sup> by night, before the eyes of all the house of Israel at each stage of their journey. <sup>465</sup>

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<sup>462</sup> Some scholars feel verses 34 – 35 are the oldest portion of the conclusion.

<sup>463</sup> Cf.: I Kings 8:10 – 11.

<sup>464</sup> Literally: “it.”

<sup>465</sup> The conclusion was one year after the Passover and the beginning of the exodus: 12:2, plus the months after Israel’s arrival at Mount Sinai: 19:1. It hardly seems to give enough time to complete all the work in preparation and completion of the tabernacle, and tent of meeting and all its contents. The tabernacle became the model for the building, later, of Solomon’s Temple.