

GOD WITH US
Part 1: The Great Blessing
Genesis – Deuteronomy

**Message 7 – The Law: God enters into a
Covenant Relationship with Israel**
Exodus 19-40

Introduction

The first half of Exodus detailed how God brought Israel out of Egypt with His mighty hand. The second half tells how God entered into a formal covenant relationship with Israel as a nation and made His presence dwell among them. God's plan was to make Israel a *nation of priests* that would represent Him to the rest of the world. This was a specific outworking of the promise made to Abraham, that God would make his descendants *a great blessing* to the whole world (Genesis 12:1-3). By the end of Exodus, God will actually come to dwell within the camp of Israel, demonstrating the overall theme of the Bible: *God With Us*.

The Law: 19:1-24:18

Preparations for receiving God's Laws: 19:1-25

In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. When they set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness; and there Israel camped in front of the mountain. Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel" (19:1-6).

In the preamble to the Law, God stated His intention to make of Israel a *kingdom of priests* that would represent Him to the entire world . . . *for all the earth* belongs to Yahweh. He cares for all

people, everywhere; but He chose one group of people to reflect His concern for the world. The people agreed to God's plan:

All the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (19:8).

Moses then prepared the people for God's descent upon Mt. Sinai.

"So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain" (19:16,17).

God's glory, in the form of a thick cloud, visibly descended upon Mt. Sinai. Only Moses was allowed to approach God's presence on the mountain. The people of Israel were not allowed to even go near the base of the mountain. They have not yet been given the necessary sacrificial system that will allow them to approach a holy God properly. Moses returned and warned the people to keep the prescribed distance from the base of Mt. Sinai.

The Ten Commandments: 20:1-17

While the complete Law code that God gave to Israel was more extensive, the Ten Commandments formed the foundation. God thundered these from the mountaintop to the Israelites, including Moses, as they were gathered at the base. Moses explained that Israel needed a healthy fear of God's majesty and power (20:20).

The first 4 commandments governed Israel's relationship with Yahweh. Notice the explanatory clauses in the first four commandments: "Do this *for* . . ." (vv.5,7,11). These commandments grow specifically out of the *character of Yahweh* as Israel's God. Central to these commandments is the idea that Yahweh will not tolerate rivals to His rule over the hearts and minds of His people. He is jealous for their complete, unadulterated devotion. Abandoning idols, revering God's sacred name, and keeping the Sabbath Day holy were the key ways their devotion to Yahweh was to be maintained and displayed before the world.

The last 6 commandments governed relationships with one another. It has been observed that these rules were fairly commonplace in the ancient world, as found in other similar law codes of the ancient Near East (eg. the Code of Hammurabi).

These sorts of laws governing human relations are fundamental to the preservation of any society in any time period.

The Sabbath commandment is connected back to the creation account. Thus, we learn that having 24 hours of “Sabbath” (“rest”) per week is a divinely ordained rhythm for all of humanity since day 1, not just a Jewish-specific observance. God gave us this day of rest so that we can refill our tanks physically, spiritually, emotionally and relationally. It is also worth noting that the Sabbath commandment is the longest of all 10. This is probably due to the fact that God knew humanity would tend to ignore the need for rest, thinking that productivity comes through endless work. Rather, our best productivity comes when we observe the rhythm of work – rest, and when we reflect upon our dependence upon God during our day of rest. When do you take your Sabbath?

Laws governing servitude: 21:1-11

Due protection was given both to the servant and the master. Note the procedure for making one a permanent, willing servant of the master (a “bond-slave”, 21:5,6). In the N.T., Paul used the term “bond-slave” to describe his willing, lifelong devotion to serve his Master, Jesus.

Laws governing personal injuries: 21:12-36

Issues such as premeditation (or not) of a crime are introduced here. The principle of *lex talionis* is set forth (21:23,24). The punishment should correspond to the damage inflicted. Examples of situations involving personal liability are given (21:28-36).

Laws governing property rights: 22:1-15

It was understood that all property was a gift from God to the people, in order to be managed for the benefit of man *and* for the glory of God. At the same time, ownership of private property was a fundamental aspect of God’s plan for Israel, and this came with the right to preserve and protect property from abuse by other members of the community. Laws were given concerning just recompense in cases of property theft, loss or damage.

Various other laws: 22:16-23:9

The laws given to Israel were intended to set them apart from their pagan neighbors and to reflect, in some manner, the holiness of God and the dignity of humanity. There are warnings against taking advantage of the oppressed (22:21-27). God’s desire is to protect such persons. Much attention is given to the preservation of justice. Bribery, partiality and false testimony are all forbidden.

Showing kindness to one's enemy, not just one's friend (23:4,5), brings to mind Jesus' words to the same effect in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:43-48). Showing kindness toward strangers and foreigners (22:21; 23:9) reflects a keen self-awareness of Israel's own history as aliens in the land of Egypt.

Laws concerning Sabbath: 23:10-13

Not only is *mankind* to observe one day of Sabbath rest each week; but also the Israel's *land* was to enjoy a Sabbath *year* once every seven years.

“You shall sow your land for six years and gather in its yield, but on the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the needy of your people may eat; and whatever they leave the beast of the field may eat. You are to do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove” (23:10,11).

When Israel later (586 B.C.) went into Babylonian captivity for 70 years, God declared that the reason for the *duration* of the captivity was that Israel failed to observe the 7th year Sabbath-rest law for the land over a 490 year period. Thus, 70 years of Sabbath-rest for the land to make up for Israel's prolonged disobedience (see Jeremiah 29:10, 2Chronicles 36:21 and Leviticus 26:34,35,43).

Laws concerning 3 national religious feasts: 23:14-19

More extensive details governing the national feasts are given in the book of Leviticus. Here, brief mention is made of 1) the Feast of Unleavened Bread (which includes the Passover), 2) the Feast of Pentecost (since it occurred 50 days after Passover; also called the Feast of Weeks, or Harvest, and 3) the Feast of Tabernacles (also called the Feast of Booths, or Ingathering. The national feasts were intended to call then entire nation together to celebrate their devotion to, and dependence upon Yahweh. These gatherings would also serve to renew the people's commitment to the Covenant Yahweh made with them at Mt. Sinai.

God's promise to lead Israel into the land of promise: 23:20-33

The Law portion ends with God's promise to lead Israel victoriously into the promised land, going before them to 'drive out' the Canaanites. Yet, the promise that God will fight *for Israel*, is dependent upon Covenant obedience on their part. They must not allow their hearts to be pulled toward other "gods."

“You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods. They shall not live in your land, because they will make you sin

against Me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you” (23:32,33).

Covenant ratification ceremony: 24:1-18

Moses, along with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu (Aaron’s two sons) and seventy elders were called to go up the mountain. They had a Covenant ratification meal in the presence of God, and they saw the glory of God revealed (24:9-11). Before this, however, an important blood-sacrifice ratification ceremony took place. Moses read the words of the Law to the people, after which they promised to obey the terms of the Covenant. Moses then took the blood of a sacrificial animal and sprinkled it on the people, saying:

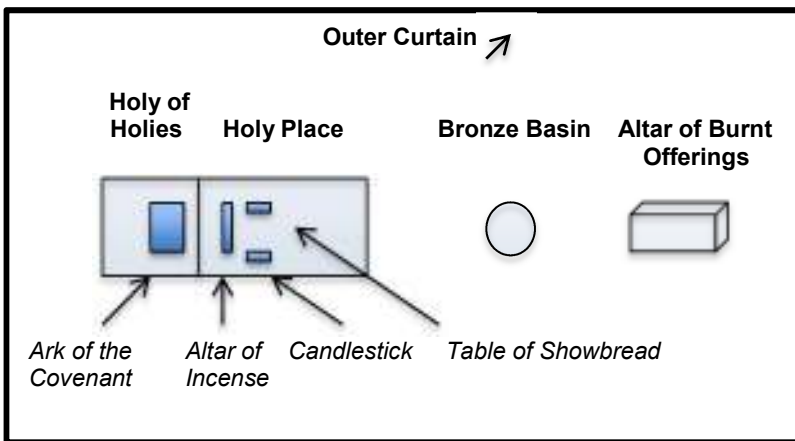
“Behold, the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words” (24:8).

This is like the signing moment in a modern contract. At this very point, Israel has formally entered into a covenant relationship with Yahweh. They are now His people, and He their God. (See Hebrews 9:19,20 for the importance of this moment.)

*When Jesus had His last supper with the disciples, He used words very similar to those found in Exodus 24:8 to institute “the New Covenant” between God and man: **“And He took a cup and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is to be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins’” (Matthew 26:27,28).** As believers, today, we live not under the terms of the Old Covenant; but the New Covenant. Like ancient Israel, we have been sprinkled with blood; but not the blood of bulls and goats, rather, the precious blood of the perfect Lamb of God.*

The Tabernacle Plans: 25:1-31:18

The remaining chapters of Exodus center upon the construction of Yahweh’s Tabernacle. Chapters 25-31 detail the instructions for the Tabernacle and priestly attire, while chapters 35-40 detail the construction process itself. Chapters 32-34 include a parenthetical account of Israel’s disobedience in the incident of the golden calf, and Moses’ intercession on behalf of the nation.



It will be King David who, some 400 years later, determines to build a “house” (Temple) for Yahweh, to replace this Tabernacle (moveable tent), and it will be David’s son, Solomon, who actually oversees the construction of that Temple. Sadly, Solomon will also fill the Temple of Yahweh with the idols that his many foreign wives were accustomed to worship, bringing tragic judgment upon Israel as a nation.

The furnishings of the Tabernacle give us insight into the way that God desired to be approached by His people. Imagine that you are coming to God to worship. You would enter the Tabernacle from the East and arrive immediately at the Altar of Burnt Offerings.

Altar of Burnt Offerings: This bronze altar was used to offer sacrifices to Yahweh (more detail on the specific kinds of offerings in Leviticus 1-6). This is also where the daily offerings for the nation were made, as well as the major offerings such as on the annual Day of Atonement. The placement of this Altar makes it clear that the way to God must be mediated by sacrifice in order to cover the sins of the worshipper. No one can have access to the holy God without a sacrifice for his/her sins.

The Bronze Basin: This large basin was used only by the priests for ceremonial washings, to prepare them to enter the Holy Place. While their sins were atoned for at the Altar of Burnt Offerings, they still needed special cleansing in order to serve a holy and righteous God within the Holy Place.

Holy Place: Having washed, the priest was allowed to enter into the Holy Place. The layperson could only observe the outer curtains of the Holy Place, while the priest went in to represent him/her before God. Inside the Holy Place were 3 pieces of

furniture: 1) The Golden Lampstand, with a fire that was never to go out, represented the fact that the people of Israel were to be an ongoing light to their world, a “kingdom of priests.” 2) The Table of Showbread had 12 loaves of bread on it, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. This bread was eaten by the priests on the Sabbath day. 3) The Altar of Incense, where sweet incense was sprinkled by the priest, causing fragrant smoke to fill the Holy Place.

Veil: A thick curtain separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. When Jesus died, the veil of the Temple was torn from top to bottom, signifying that the way into God’s presence was now open and fully available to any and all worshippers who would come through Christ.

Holy of Holies: This “Most Holy Place” was where the Ark of the covenant was kept, and where the presence of God dwelt. Only the High Priest was allowed to pass through the Veil, once a year on the Day of Atonement, to offer a sacrifice of atonement for the whole nation. The sense of God’s ‘separateness’ was reinforced by this special room.

Ark of the Covenant: This chest-like box contained three things: a jar of manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets containing the commandments. On the lid of the Ark was the golden “mercy seat” with two angelic figures hovering over each end. On the mercy seat, the blood was sprinkled from the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement.

Priestly Garments: Much attention is given to the garments worn by Aaron, the High Priest, and his sons; as well as the rites of consecration for these sacred garments (chs. 28-29). While there was an entire tribe of priests that served at the Tabernacle (the Levites), it was the High Priest who held the honor and duty of being the single most important representative of the people to God (and, vice versa, of God to the people). This office was hereditary, being assigned to the descendants of Aaron permanently. However, disobedience along the way caused the office of High Priest to eventually fall into disrepute. By the time of Jesus, the office had become entirely political, conferred by Rome to the highest bidder, rather than by God to a true heir.

As for the High Priest’s garments: It is significant to note that the two shoulder pieces each had six names of the tribes of Israel inscribed on them, reminding the Priest that he ‘carried’ the people before the Lord. Similarly, the chest piece had twelve stones to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. These were “*carried over*

Aaron's heart," reminding the priest that he was to seek God's mediation and direction for the people.

Interlude: The golden calf incident: 32:1-34:35

This section is a historical interlude in the midst of God giving the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai. The people rebelled and it was only Moses' faithful intercession on their behalf that kept God from destroying them. The intimacy of Moses' personal relationship with God stands out here more than anywhere else in the narrative.

The golden calf: While Moses was on the mountain for 40 days, the people in the camp below became agitated. It is shocking to see how quickly Aaron yielded to the voice of the people in demanding that he *"make a god"* to lead them forward. Aaron asked for their gold jewelry and from it fashioned a golden calf.

" . . . and they said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.' Now when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, 'Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord.' So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play" (32:4-6).

God, seeing the idolatry below, told Moses to go down to the people immediately. Moses strongly interceded on behalf of the people to prevent God from destroying them (32:11-14). He wisely invoked God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob:

"Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever'" (32:13).

Moses then returned to the camp and confronted the people and, in particular, Aaron their leader. Ironically, Moses shattered the Law tablets at the foot of the mountain (32:19). The Laws of God were 'broken' before they were even fully implemented!

To make the hard calls at the difficult crossroads; to stand against the swell of popular opinion running in the wrong direction; to say "No" when everyone is clamoring for a "Yes;" to urge people to use eyes of faith when anxious hearts are longing for things they can see and feel . . . these are the real tests of a leader. Spiritual leadership is not about giving people the golden calves they crave; rather, it is about standing in the gap and pointing them to the One true God, Who can satisfy the deepest longings of their hearts. Take your orders from God, and lead with courage.

Moses pleads for God's continued presence: God announced His intention to send the people into Canaan *without His personal presence*. He would send "an angel" before them; but He Himself would not accompany them, because of their obstinacy:

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, "Depart, go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up from the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.' I will send an angel before you and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, because you are an obstinate people, and I might destroy you on the way" (33:1-3).

This news caused great mourning among the people (33:4-6). It also caused Moses to intercede again on their behalf. He strongly argued that *the presence of Yahweh was the only thing that would set Israel apart from the other nations*.

Then he said to Him, "If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here. For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?" (33:15,16).

It is only the presence of Jesus in our lives that makes us any different than the world, allowing us to bear fruit for His glory and to live beyond our own limitations. Jesus Himself said: "Remain in Me and I in you . . . for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:4,5). This is why it is essential that we daily stay 'connected' to Jesus, the True Vine. Our very life is derived from our connection to the One Who dwells within us. Without Him, we are nothing.

God heard Moses' plea and answered Him because of the love that existed between the two of them.

The Lord said to Moses, "I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name" (33:17).

Moses, sensing God's love *for him*, asked that he might be given an even fuller revelation of the person of God Himself.

Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!" (33:18).

God immediately responded, giving to Moses a revelation of Himself that exceeded anything since Adam and Eve beheld God in the Garden of Eden prior to the fall.

And He said, “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.” But He said, “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!” Then the Lord said, “Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen” (33:19-23).

There is a great difference between the roles we occupy in life (our ‘doing’) and our relationship with God (our ‘being’). It is easy to mistake the one for the other, thinking that because we are busy fulfilling our roles, we are bringing pleasure to God. In reality, God wants a love relationship with each of us apart from what we do. More than anything else, Moses longed to see and experience God for himself . . . a longing that God gladly met for His beloved servant. How about you? Is your greatest desire in life to see and experience the living God personally; to know Him more intimately with each new day? As A.W. Tozer said: “God waits to be wanted.” James wrote: “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.”

God renews the covenant: The Lord called Moses back up the mountain, where the tablets were re-written and the covenant between God and Israel renewed (ch.34). This chapter is a condensed version of chapters 19-23 where the original Law was recorded. God likely repeated the entire Law code to Moses.

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments (34:27,28).

God’s glory shining from Moses’ face: The historical interlude ends with the account of how Moses’ face perpetually shone brightly from His time spent in the presence of God (34:29-35). The people were afraid to even look at him! Thus, Moses would put a veil over his face to shield the people from the glory; but

when he went in to the tent of meeting to be with God, he would remove the veil.

Construction of the Tabernacle: 35:1-39:43

The actual construction of the various parts of the Tabernacle occupies most of the remainder of Exodus. People brought their freewill offerings for the project, as their hearts moved them.

“Everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit moved him came and brought the Lord’s contribution for the work of the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments. Then all whose hearts moved them, both men and women, came and brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and bracelets, all articles of gold; so did every man who presented an offering of gold to the Lord . . . The Israelites, all the men and women, whose heart moved them to bring material for all the work, which the Lord had commanded through Moses to be done, brought a freewill offering to the Lord” (35:21,22,29).

As it turned out, the people *gave so freely* to this work that Moses had to issue a command to *stop giving!* (see 36:5-7).

Giving is always a matter of the heart. It is a central part of our love relationship with God. He does not want it to be any other way. In the New Testament it says: “Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2Corinthians 9:7). Giving to God is an indication that 1) we recognize that all we have is a gift from Him, 2) we are managers, not owners, of what He has entrusted to our care, 3) we admit our dependence on Him for our future needs, and 4) we are worshipping Him as our provider and sustainer.

The actual work was carried out by all of the skilled workmen in Israel, whose hearts moved them to contribute *their skills*. They worked under the leadership of two specially Spirit-gifted construction managers.

“Now Bezalel and Oholiab, and every skillful person in whom the Lord has put skill and understanding to know how to perform all the work in the construction of the sanctuary, shall perform in accordance with all that the Lord has commanded. Then Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every skillful person in whom the Lord had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him, to come to the work to perform it” (36:1,2).

When the parts of the Tabernacle were all built, Moses inspected the work and gave the people his blessing.

“So the sons of Israel did all the work according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses. And Moses examined all the work and behold, they had done it; just as the Lord had commanded, this they had done. So Moses blessed them” (39:42,43).

God’s presence fills the Tabernacle: 40:1-38

Moses took all of the newly constructed parts and set up the Tabernacle according to the plan. Then, as Exodus concludes, the glory of Yahweh entered into the Tabernacle.

“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out - until the day it lifted. So the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the Israelites during all their travels” (40:34-38).

Summary of Exodus

The purpose of Exodus was to show how God called His chosen people, the seed of Abraham, out of bondage in Egypt and formed them into a nation to serve His purposes in the world. He entered into a formal covenant relationship with them, whereby they would be His *nation of priests* representing Him to the entire world. In turn, He would make His dwelling among them so that it would be clear to the world that Israel’s uniqueness was derived from their relationship with Yahweh, the God of all creation. The book of Exodus builds to the climax of chapter 40, where God’s presence finally settles into the portable Tabernacle that was constructed for Him. The theme *God With Us* has come to full expression. Now, the people of Israel, with God in their midst, are ready to move toward the Promised Land, and be a light to a world living in darkness.

Addendum: The role of the Law

Much confusion exists in people’s minds about the role of the Law in relationship to salvation. The primary misunderstanding is that God gave us His Laws *as a means of salvation*. From this misunderstanding, many religious systems have developed where people try very hard to earn points with God through their obedience. Several things must be said with regard to the role of the Law in the life of ancient Israel, and in our lives as Christ-

followers today.

1. It is clear that the original purpose of the Law given to Israel was to *set apart their behavior from the surrounding nations so that they would be a 'holy people,' a nation of priests reflecting God to their world (Exodus 19:5,6)*. Thus, the Law was something akin to a Training Manual for Israel's role as God's holy nation. It was meant to sanctify their behavior, not to save their souls.

2. Israel *broke God's Laws* even before they were formally introduced (the golden calf incident). They immediately broke the most fundamental Laws concerning the exclusive worship of Yahweh as their God. They also continued to break these Laws throughout their long history, as recorded in the Old Testament. In fact, idolatry was the primary, ongoing sin of ancient Israel.

3. The New Testament writers, working from Jesus' own teachings, argue that the Law could never "save" anyone from the penalty of sin; rather, the Law could only serve as a mirror to *show us our sin*. Paul's major message in the Epistle to the Galatians was that no-one (not even a self-righteous Pharisee like himself) could be saved by means of strict obedience to the Law. Instead, the Law has become a "tutor" (child-conductor) to point us to our need for a Savior, Christ. The Law *reveals sin*; but it cannot *remove sin*. It is when a guilty sinner turns to Jesus as Savior that sins are removed and the defiled heart is cleansed.

4. The teaching of the New Testament is that God has now inscribed the Law on the hearts of believers, through the Person of the Holy Spirit. Instead of the Law being written on tablets of stone, it is written on tablets of heart – the heart of the one who turns to Jesus as the all-sufficient substitute sacrifice . . . the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. True "Law-keeping" is now an inside-out work brought about by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, in the life of the redeemed child of God.

Life Lessons from Exodus 19-40

1. God desires our highest WORSHIP.

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments” (Ex. 20:2-6).

2. A lot of life is about learning to WAIT on God.

When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him” (Ex. 32:1).

Waiting = Active engagement with God during a trial.

“Out of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice! □ Let Your ears be attentive □ to the voice of my supplications . . . I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, □ and in His word do I hope. My soul waits for the Lord □ more than the watchmen for the morning; □ indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning” (Psalm 130:1,5,6).

3. It takes solid CONVICTIONS to resist people-pressure.

Aaron said to them, “Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. He took this from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, “This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt” (Ex. 32:2-4).

4. God has a longing to be WITH US.

“Then have them make a sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them” (Ex. 25:8).

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies” (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).