

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 8.3%

Weekly Readings will cover: Exodus 15 – Exodus 21

Sunday: Exodus 15

Monday: Exodus 16

Tuesday: Exodus 17

Wednesday: Exodus 18

Thursday: Exodus 19

Friday: Exodus 20

Saturday: Exodus 21

Current # of email addresses in group: 573

I usually try to get this study out on Friday nights, but I hit a point late last night of diminishing returns and I decided to get it out this morning. I hope you each enjoyed week two of Exodus. This week we will see Israel struggle with traveling in a hostile environment, we will see Israel fight their first battle, and we will see them reach their initial goal of Mount Sinai.

Website archive location for audio files & PDFs:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/posts/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep-dive-reading-program-circa-2022-2025-903711>

### **3 YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 16**

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 92 - SUNDAY: February 5<sup>th</sup>

Exodus 15

Daily Deep Dive:

Imagine this moment. The people of Israel and everyone they loved had been enslaved and treated oppressively for their entire lives. Not only had their lives been hard and full of difficult labor, day after day, there had also been atrocities (killing of their children). After witnessing the plagues and coming out of Egypt, again fear gripped them as they saw the mighty force of the Egyptian army bearing down on them. At last, after miraculously passing through the Red Sea, the

Egyptian army was destroyed. There was nothing to fear now and the great Almighty, Eternal, All Powerful God had saved them. What would you do? Imagine the celebration!

It's no surprise that this is where we find the first song of the Bible recorded. Interestingly, it's also one of the last songs of the bible (Revelation 15:3).

Verse 11 – NKJV states “Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods?” The word translated “god” here is the Hebrew word “El”. It's often used to refer to the True God (213 times) but can also apply to any false god (see Exodus 34:14 where it's used both ways (“no other god” and “jealous God”). It also is translated “mighty or mighty one(s)” or “strong or strong one(s)” (compare Psalm 89:6 “mighty”, Ezekiel 31:11 “mighty one” and Ezekiel 32:21 “strong”).

Verse 15 – Regarding the “chiefs of Edom”, I'll remind you that we covered the sons of Edom in Genesis 36:15.

Verse 20 & 21 – Why is Miriam regarded as a “prophetess”? This is the feminine form of the word “prophet”. It means “an inspired woman”. The Brown-Driver-Briggs dictionary adds “ancient type endowed with gift of song.” It appears that Miriam in this moment is “inspired” by God to lead the women in song, music and dancing to worship God.

Verse 23 – As we move through the Pentateuch you will notice that the Israelites are not particularly creative when naming things. The name typically means exactly what is happening. Here they name the place “bitter = marah” because the water was “bitter/marah”. We'll see this over and over.

Here's what the UCG reading plan states about this section: “In the arid climate of the region, people and animals alike needed much water every day. Water could be stored in animal skins, which would “sweat.”

When the dry wind passed over the skin, it would have a cooling or chilling effect on the stored water. But with millions of people and animals, a large supply of water was essential. Do we find the people crying out to God for their needs—the One who had saved them and had met all their needs thus far?

Sadly, only a few days have passed since the wondrous event at the Red Sea and we find the Israelites once again complaining before Moses. On their arrival at an oasis called "Marah," named so because of the bitter water, God again used a miracle to teach the Israelites a lesson. As God in His mercy miraculously purified the bitter waters despite their complaining, He also made a covenant with the Israelites. As long as they trusted in and obeyed Him, He would also be their Healer. The sicknesses and diseases that they had seen befall the Egyptians as a result of ignorance, disregard and disobedience to God's righteous laws would not afflict the Israelites." [END]

Verse 25 & 26: It is here that God begins to set standards by which they will either receive blessings for obedience or cursings & consequences for disobedience. God tells them "IF" you are diligent to "shama" the voice of the Lord. This is an important word in the Hebrew language. It has commonly been associated with Deuteronomy 6:4, but it's a very common word used 1,159 times in the Old Testament. This word means to hear, to understand, to discern and to obey. It often means all of this at the same time. When God tells us to "hear" something (shema) it means that we also process what we hear and put it into action in our lives. So here in Exodus 15:26, God actually uses the word twice in a row (shema shema). Only 18 times in the Bible is the word used in this repeated fashion (shema shema). When this is done it is meant to give even greater emphasis (heed becomes diligently heed, obey become indeed obey or carefully obey, hear becomes hear attentively, etc...). "IF" they would be diligent to heed (shema shema),

to be careful to obey, follow, and keep all that God commands and instructs them, then God would make a promise that He would not put any of the diseases that He had placed on the Egyptians because God is our Healer.

We'll finish today by again reading from the UCG reading plan: "A part of God's promise to Israel that they would escape disease and illness involved their obeying the many statutes He gave them that pertained to physical health. Numerous health principles that God gave through Moses are scattered throughout the Pentateuch. They involved public hygiene, water supply, sewage disposal, proper diet and control of infectious disease. Since God gave so much detailed instruction in these areas, it may imply that Israel was not living according to God's health code in Egypt. Medical doctors S.I. McMillen and David E. Stern wrote in their book, *None Of These Diseases: The Bible's Health Secrets for the 21st Century* (2000, pp. 9-11), that Egyptian medical and sanitation practices were abominable. There is a lesson for us in this. God wants us to be healthy and He is also our healer. However, if we do not live in accordance with what we know to be sound health principles today, we are not doing what we can to maintain good health, and we may suffer disease as a result. God expects us to live wisely and do what we can to sustain good health.

When the Israelites arrived at another oasis, called Elim, we find that each tribe had a well provided for it. We also read that there were 70 palm trees there, which, interestingly, was later the number of the elders of Israel (Numbers 11:24-25)." [END]

Day 93 - MONDAY: February 6<sup>th</sup>

Exodus 16

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 1 – States that they came to the Wilderness of “Sin”. This should not be confused with “sin” as in the mistakes and errors we make in obeying God. This Wilderness of “Sin” is a completely different word (Siyn). Brown-Driver-Briggs dictionary states this word means “thorn or clay” and is the tract of wilderness between Elim and Sinai.

Also notice, that they left Egypt on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the first month and it’s now, the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month.

Verse 2 - Again, I want you to try to put yourself in the sandals of the Israelites. Imagine that it isn’t just about your physical needs, but also that of your loved ones (children that are dependent on you, or family members young and old that are struggling with thirst and hunger). It’s natural that this would be difficult and even scary as days stack together and needs seem to go unmet. With God’s Holy Spirit working with each of us, we hope we would turn to God and call out to Him to intervene on our behalf. The children of Israel did not have God’s Spirit and they began to complain.

Verse 4 – I don’t see any criticism of God for their words of verse 3. It seems to me that God is compassionate understanding how difficult this is on them. He responds to their needs.

Again, we see God say that He will test (or prove) these people by seeing if they will obey Him.

Verse 7 – Sometimes people complain against man, but their complaints are really against God. What do we complain about that God has the power to change and so far hasn’t? We should instead pray to God about our concerns, etc...and remember it is He who has all power to change any situation.

Verse 12 – In verse 3 they complained that they used to have meat and bread. God now shows His tremendous miraculous power by pouring

out both meat and bread on the people. How can we limit God? God has no limits.

Verse 14 – Tells us that this bread was “small round substance, *as* fine as frost on the ground”. The Hebrew word translated “round substance” is only used here in the Bible and it simply means “to peel, flake off”.

Verse 15 – The children of Israel call this substance that peels/flakes off “manna” (KJV) which in Hebrew means “what is it?” (BDB).

Verse 16 – We should pause and understand another principle demonstrated here in this miracle. In 2 Thessalonians 3:10 it tells us: “If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.” We see this principle contained in various Proverbs as well (compare Proverbs 13:4, 12:11). God could have made it so that the manna piled up at the door of each person in the exact amount each person needed. However, God made it that they had to work to get food. If they didn’t work, they had no food.

Verse 18 – This verse is quoted by Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:13-15 to show that we should all look out for and care for each other’s needs. If we have more than enough we should share with those who have less than they need. Josephus records the following: “And very earnest they were in gathering it; but they were enjoined to gather it equally - the measure of an omer for each one every day, because this food should not come in too small a quantity, lest the weaker might not be able to get their share, by reason of the overbearing of the strong in collecting it. However, these strong men, when they had gathered more than the measure appointed for them, had no more than others, but only tired themselves more in gathering it, for they found no more than an omer apiece; and the advantage they got by what was superfluous was none at all, it corrupting, both by the worms breeding in it, and by

its bitterness. So divine and wonderful a food was this!" [END] So we find another important principle of God here: If we do our part, work hard & obey God, then God can make all grace abound toward us where the little we have is enough for our needs, and on the flipside, if we are greedy for more than our share in life and don't follow God's principles (tithing, etc..) while we may think we have more, we will end up having no financial advantage.

Verse 20 – Shows the importance of following God's instructions and that God builds in consequences for not following what He instructs.

Verse 21 – It's interesting to me that it was required to get up early in the day and begin working to gather the manna. If someone put it off, or was lazy, it melted and they had nothing. I think there is an important principle for us there too.

Verse 22 – This chapter is just loaded with principles. Here we are shown by God that there is preparation for the Sabbath that we are suppose to plan for and think about and that failing to plan and prepare is contrary to His intent for this special day.

23 – Shabbathon...H7677 (noun). Holy Shabbath (H7676)

Shabbath – H7673 Verb Gen 2:2,3 –

You'll remember from our study of Genesis 2 that right away in the first week, on the seventh day, God rested (Hebrew verb Shâbbath (שבת)). God went on in verse 3 of Genesis 2 to bless and sanctify that seventh day. The Holy Sabbath was created in week 1 and remained blessed and sanctified from that point forward. Here in Exodus 16:23, we see a special sentence where God says: "Tomorrow (the seventh day of the week) is a Shabbâthôn (Sabbath observance - noun (BDB) – שבתון) of the Holy Shabbâth (Sabbath - noun (BDB) – (שבת)).

Each of these words are closely connected in the Hebrew. Sabbath observance comes from Sabbath noun which comes from the Sabbath

verb of Genesis 2:2 (Shabbâthôn → Shabbâth → Shâbbath). If you look at the actual Hebrew of the noun and verb forms you will see the only difference is the speck in the middle of the second character. When we fast forward to Hebrews 4:9 in the New Testament, the author of Hebrews boldly sets forth “there remains therefore a **Sabbatismos** for the people of God.” This word Sabbatismos is translated by the NKJV “rest”, but the author of Hebrews uses a different word for rest throughout Hebrews and only here, to make a very strong conclusive point, changes the Greek word to “Sabbatismos”. Sabbatismos in the Greek means “A keeping Sabbath” (Thayer’s dictionary). Additionally, Thayer’s will tell us that it is derived from the Greek word **Sabaton**, which means “the seventh day Sabbath” (Thayer). Thayer’s also states that this Greek word Sabaton is of Hebrew origin from the word Shabbâth.

I take a lot of time to go through this because any argument that states the Sabbath was for the nation of Israel only is false. The Sabbath was created in week 1, was taught to the nation of Israel after being lost and continues in place for God’s people today and eventually will be kept by all flesh in worshiping God (see Isaiah 66:23).

Verse 24 – Notice that for those who obediently followed God’s instructions to prepare for the Sabbath, God performed a miracle and the Manna did not breed worms and stink. When we obey God, God performs miracles still in the lives of His people.

Verse 27 – Some immediately disobeyed God and didn’t prepare and properly observe the Sabbath.

Verse 28 – The Lord says, “How long will you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?” Many people will tell you that God’s law and commandments were given at Mt. Sinai, but this is before that time and God already says they are breaking His commandments and His laws.



Verse 29 – They are reminded that God has set apart the Sabbath, that they have 6 days to gather food, but on the seventh day, they are to not go out to gather food.

Verse 30 – So the people Shâbbath (verb form) on the seventh day.

Verse 31 – People named the bread “What is it?” (aka manna).

Here’s a section from the UCG reading plan: “God provided His people with the nourishment that they needed. For their part, the Israelites were expected to be obedient to God's laws, which He was beginning to reveal to them. Indeed, take note here that this episode preceded the events at Mount Sinai, wherein the Israelites were presented with the Ten Commandments and entered into what is now called the Old Covenant. The evidence from scriptures such as Exodus 15:26 and Exodus 16:28 as well as others (e.g., Genesis 2:3; Genesis 7:2; Genesis 26:5) prove that God's laws and statutes were in effect well *before* the Israelites even arrived at Mount Sinai. Thus, the Old Covenant is not what brought those laws into force—the fallacy argued by those who attempt to say that God's law was done away when the Old Covenant ended at Christ's death.

Again, God provided the miracle of the manna not just to feed the people but to teach them to *keep the Sabbath* (see verse 29)—to obey His *law* (verse 28)—*before* the covenant at Mount Sinai. And He gave it as a *test* (verse 4). Even today, the Sabbath remains a real *test* commandment, one that really shows in a public manner who is fully committed to the way of God. Indeed, in today's society, others will readily accept us if we live according to a code of not stealing, not murdering, not committing adultery, not cursing God, etc. But keeping the Sabbath? That's another matter. That's just plain "weird," some would say.

Sabbath-keepers have lost jobs and gone through all manner of other problems to observe the seventh day as God has commanded. In the end, though, their lives are always better for it—because keeping the Sabbath results in real blessing. Nevertheless, it sometimes takes real faith and courage to live by this conviction. No wonder the Sabbath is a true identifying *sign* of God's people (see Exodus 31:13)—a visible *badge* that shows who is willing to walk in God's way no matter what the obstacles are. Of course, this is not to say that everyone who observes the Sabbath is truly committed to God—it could be a pretense, as it was for most of the Pharisees in Jesus' day. Still, the Sabbath is an important outward sign that God has given to His people. And in today's society, it is a real test commandment.

Are *you* passing God's test? Even those of us who already know to observe God's Sabbath should regularly examine whether we are properly keeping it (see Isaiah 58:13-14).” [END]

Verse 35 – We don't always think about how long they ate manna (40 years!). Day after day God poured out a miracle to care for their daily needs. God promises that if we seek first His kingdom, He will see to our daily needs too (Matt 6:33)!

Day 94 - TUESDAY: February 7<sup>th</sup>

Exodus 17

Daily Deep Dive:

Let's begin today with an excerpt from the UCG reading plan: “By now we see a common thread running throughout the book of Exodus. It is not only Pharaoh who was "stiff-necked," but the Israelites also. What was the difference? God was setting the Israelites apart as a special people due to the covenant that He made with Abraham (Deuteronomy 7:7-8). They had a very special opportunity because of God dealing directly with them. Yet they constantly set their hearts against God's

love for them. Once again, they complain and murmur against Moses, this time almost to violence. The event at Massah, meaning "Tempted," also called Meribah, meaning "Contention," even saw the Israelites asking the question, "Is the Lord among us or not?" (Exodus 17:7). Their attitude was outrageous. They had seen God destroy Egypt through the plagues, had been freed from Egypt by Him, had walked through the Red Sea on dry ground, had seen the Egyptians swallowed up and had bitter water made drinkable. Every day they had the daily miracle of His provision of manna. And every moment the pillar of God's presence blazed above them! Yet, like those stiff-necked Israelites, even *we* sometimes forget God's miraculous intervention in *our* lives—or, worse still, *choose* to forget.

Amazingly, God remains incredibly merciful with the Israelites in this situation. He does not even send a rebuke against the people. Instead, He provides for them. He has Moses strike a rock, causing water to come out of it—evidently becoming a steady source to supply all the needs of the people and their flocks.” [END]

Verse 1 – Here we are told that they journeyed from “Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim”. We are given a few more details of the journey in Numbers 33:12-14 where we are told they also stopped at Dophkah and Alush before arriving at Rephidim.

Jamieson-Faucet-Brown commentary says this was about a 4-day journey and also states that it was hot, mountainous country.

I think all of us after four days of traveling with our families and livestock in a hot, mountainous area would likely be complaining if we didn't have any water. I think it's interesting that we get no words of criticism by God against the people at this moment.

Verse 5 – Moses is told to take some of the elders of Israel with him. When God poured out the plagues on Egypt, all the Israelites saw it, when God split the Red Sea in two, all the Israelites walked between

the high walls of water, they all saw the manna and quail. It's my speculation, that this large body of people, could not all witness Moses strike the rock and the water being produced. Maybe they would be inclined to think they simply found water. By having the elders of Israel stand as witness, they would spread the word of God's miraculous intervention on their behalf. Again, this is my speculation.

Verse 6 – As we have already seen, the Word, who would later become Jesus Christ, has been traveling with them day and night in the Pillar of Cloud and Fire. Here in verse 6, the Lord says He will stand before Moses there on the rock and Moses should strike the rock and water would flow out. In 1 Corinthians 10:4, Paul clearly provides the identity of this God Being working and interacting with the people of Israel. 1 Corinthians 10:4 - and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. The Word, the pre-incarnate Christ, provided for their physical thirst. Each of us were in a similar spiritual state. We were in a bone dry, hot spiritual climate, desperate and needy, and Jesus Christ performed a miracle in our lives and saved us and provided spiritual water for us to drink. We see this clearly demonstrated (and compared with Exodus 17) in multiple places in the New Testament. In John 7:37-38 - On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

Christ is the source of water for our spiritual thirst. Through the indwelling of God's Spirit in our lives, out of our stony hearts, water of life springs forth. Like in Exodus 17, this is a great miracle of God! Jesus Christ basically explains the same thing to the Samaritan woman by the well in John 4:10 – 14. We look forward to the future time when this living water will be made available for the first time to all of mankind.

Verse 8 – Here the story shifts to Israel’s first battle and a people identified as Amalek. Who were the Amalekites: There are two possibilities: First, possibility is that these are the descendants of Esau, through Eliphaz (Genesis 36:12 – “Now Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz”.) Second, before Esau existed, in Genesis 14, in the chapter where Lot was taken captive, it states in Genesis 14:7 – “Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that *is*, Kadesh), and attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazezon Tamar.”

John Gill’s commentary believes that these Amalekites were this second group of ancient people: “which, according to Josephus, reached from Pelusium in Egypt to the Red sea; they inhabited Arabia Petraea, for he says, the inhabitants of Gobolitis and Petra are called Amalekites; which name is generally supposed to have been given them here by way of anticipation, since the commonly received opinion is, that they were the descendants of Amalek, a grandson of Esau, who was not born when this war was waged, see [Gen 36:12](#); but the Mahometan writers derive the pedigree of Amalek, from whom these people had their name, from Noah in the line of Ham, and make him to be some generations older than Abram, which with them stands thus, Noah, Ham, Aram, Uz, Ad, Amalek; and they speak of the Amalekites as dwelling in the country about Mecca, from whence they were driven by the Jorhamites: and indeed it seems more probable that the Amalekites were of the posterity of Ham, since Chedorlaomer, a descendant of Shem, falls upon them, and smites them; and they being confederates with the Canaanites, and are with the Amorites, Philistines, and other Canaanitish nations, always mentioned, seem to be a more ancient nation than what could proceed from Amalek the son of Eliphaz, since Amalek is said to be the first of the nations, [Num 24:20](#); nor does there ever appear to be any harmony and friendship between them and the Edomites, as it might be thought there would, if they were a branch of Esau's family; nor did they give them any assistance, when destroyed by

Saul, so that they seem rather to be a tribe of the Canaanitish nations.”  
[END]

Regardless of which group it is, what they do angers God.

Later in Deuteronomy 25:17-19 God reminds and commands the children of Israel “Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you *were* tired and weary; and he did not fear God. Therefore it shall be, when the LORD your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess *as* an inheritance, *that* you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget.”

When the children of Israel were journeying through this difficult land, worn out and tired, the Amalekites attacked from the rear where the weakest were (elderly, children, etc...). Later, we see that King Saul was commanded by God in 1 Samuel 15:2-3 “Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek *for* what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.' ”

Saul doesn't completely obey God, sparing King Agag and the best of the animals, and is rejected as King of Israel. Later, those Amalekites who had escaped this battle with Saul, would fight with David (1 Samuel 30:17-18) and eventually would be completely wiped out (1 Chronicles 4:43). God has a long memory when it comes to wrongs being done to the less fortunate and those who can not defend themselves. We must remember as Christians to care for and look out for these individuals because it's the right thing to do and because they are precious to God.

Verse 10 – This is the first time we hear of this man Hur. Adam Clarke’s commentary states this about Hur: “It is likely that the Hur mentioned here is the same with that Hur mentioned [1Ch 2:19](#), who appears from the chronology in that chapter to have been the son of Caleb, the son of Ezron, the son of Pharez, the son of Judah. The rabbins and Josephus say he was the brother-in-law of Moses, having married his sister Miriam. He was a person in whom Moses put much confidence; for he left him conjoint governor of the people with Aaron, when he went to confer with God on the mount, [Exo 24:14](#). His grandson Bezaleel was the chief director in the work of the tabernacle; see [Exo 31:2-5](#).” [END]

We will continue to see him as the assistant to Moses and Aaron in the book of Exodus.

Verse 11 & 12 – The UCG reading plan has this to share: “In the confrontation with the Amalekites in Exodus 17, God chose to show His dealings with Israel through His chosen servant Moses—as long as he held aloft the "rod of God" (see verse 9). In this way, though Moses was God's chief human instrument at this time, the miraculous power of God was still the focus. As long as the rod of God was held up, Israel prevailed in their battle. Indeed, it is interesting that Moses was not able to serve God and the people on his own. Rather, he needed help—people to hold up his arms—a point made even more apparent in the next chapter.’ [END]

Verse 13 – When did the Israelites get swords? They had been slaves and we don’t see this recorded anywhere in God’s Word. After the Egyptian army is destroyed in the Red Sea, Josephus records the following: “On the next day Moses gathered together the weapons of the Egyptians, which were brought to the camp of the Hebrews by the current of the sea, and the force of the winds resisting it; and he conjectured that this also happened by Divine Providence, that so they might not be destitute of weapons. So when he had ordered the

Hebrews to arm themselves with them, he led them to Mount Sinai, in order to offer sacrifice to God, and to render oblations for the salvation of the multitude, as he was charged to do beforehand.” [END]

While not definitive, this seems probable.

Versus 14 – Notice God’s specific instructions that Moses was to record events as a memorial for the people of Israel, and recounted to Joshua, the next leader of the people of Israel.

As we conclude this day, here are a few more notes from Josephus that you may find interesting: “Moreover, they acquired a vast quantity of riches; for a great deal of silver and gold was left in the enemy's camp; as also brazen vessels, which they made common use of in their families; many utensils also that were embroidered there were of both sorts, that is, of what were weaved, and what were the ornaments of their armor, and other things that served for use in the family... On the next day, Moses stripped the dead bodies of their enemies, and gathered together the armor of those that were fled, and gave rewards to such as had signaled themselves in the action; and highly commended Joshua, their general, who was attested to by all the army, on account of the great actions he had done. Nor was any one of the Hebrews slain; but the slain of the enemy's army were too many to be enumerated... But when Moses had celebrated this festival for the victory, he permitted the Hebrews to rest for a few days, and then he brought them out after the fight, in order of battle; for they had now many soldiers in light armor. And going gradually on, he came to Mount Sinai, in three months' time after they were removed out of Egypt.” [END]

Day 95 - WEDNESDAY: February 8<sup>th</sup>

Exodus 18

Daily Deep Dive:



Verse 1 – By way of reminder, the Hebrew word translated “father-in-law” simply means “in-law” and can apply to a number of relationships. We discussed this in more depth earlier in our study of Exodus.

Let’s now go to the UCG reading plan: “It's possible that Zipporah returned to her father in Midian after the confrontation with Moses over the matter of circumcising the son she bore Moses. It is recorded that Moses sent them back, but the timing of that event is not clear. There is no account of the entire family coming out of Egypt. We do find here that Jethro now brings Moses' wife and children back to him.

Jethro also gives Moses some advice in carrying out the responsibilities of a leader among a civil nation. Just as Moses had grown tired in holding God's staff up on his own in the previous chapter, so was he wearing himself out by single-handedly dealing with all the problems of the people himself. Jethro, witnessing this, recommends that an organized leadership be put into place to handle the day-to-day issues of millions of people and animals. Remember that Jethro, a leader among the Midianites, had years of experience in leading people.

Some people have argued that such a hierarchy was against God's will. However, notice that Jethro said to institute such a captain system only if God so commanded Moses (verse 23). And it is inconceivable that Moses, who talked with God every day, would have taken such far-reaching steps without consulting with Him. Furthermore, that God sanctioned this system is clear, for He *later* commands that 70 elders be chosen from among those who are already "officers" over the people (Numbers 11:16)—i.e., having been declared so through the captain system.

Like chapters 15 and 16, chapter 18 also reveals that God's laws and statutes were being taught and expounded even before their formal declaration at Mount Sinai (verse 16).” [END]

Verse 11 – Adam Clarke’s commentary speculates: “Some think that Jethro was now converted to the true God; but it is very probable that he enjoyed this blessing before he knew anything of Moses, for it is not likely that Moses would have entered into an alliance with this family had they been heathens. Jethro no doubt had the true patriarchal religion.” [END]

Verse 23 – This was brought out in the commentary above but is worth repeating, notice here Jethro states “and God *so* commands you”. We all have ideas that we propose and think about, but then we take those things to God and pray about them to see if God is directing and leading us in that direction. Additionally, this teaches us the importance of learning from others with experience and being willing to receive help from others.

Day 96 - THURSDAY: February 9<sup>th</sup>

Exodus 19

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 4 – It struck me the parallel between how God saved Israel from Egypt through miraculous means and how God will again save His people the church from the dragon’s wrath (Satan) in Revelation 12:14.

Verse 5 – Here is another conditional promise: “IF” you will obey, then “you will be a special treasure to Me above all people!” Another principle that is vitally important found in this verse is that “all the earth” belongs to God. This is vitally important when we explore topics such as tithing, thankfulness, giving to others, etc...

Verse 16 – This is the first time the Hebrew word Shofar (Shophar) is used in the Bible. The shofar was a horn made from a clean animal, typically a ram. A shofar is found 72 times in the Old Testament. A

Vertical Thought article by Randy Stiver states: ““(shofar)... yielded a rich, haunting resonance or blast that could be heard over great distances. A signal horn to alert the locals in time of war, it was also a trumpet of celebration and praise toward God.” Additionally, Gary Petty in a Good News article states: “In ancient Israel the *shofar* was blown for various reasons, including a call to war. Jewish leaders in the first century had to take care when they blew the *shofar* on the Feast of Trumpets so that the occupying Roman soldiers didn't think a rebellion was being launched.” The word “shofar” is also found in verse 19.

The UCG reading plan has the following to say about this chapter: “God reiterated His covenant with Israel to His servant Moses. Moses called for the elders of Israel and repeated God's words to them. The elders then repeated the words to the people of Israel. This gives a clearer explanation of how Moses communicated with nearly three million people. Now we come to the point where God was planning to speak with Moses and all the people would be able to hear God's voice. But there were special instructions for the people to follow before they could approach the vicinity of God's holy presence. Boundaries were set about the mountain so the people would be restricted from touching it. The prohibition against touching the mountain was to teach them a sense of awe and respect toward the living God—and to demonstrate their need for a mediator. The people were to be clean, having their clothes washed. And on the day that God appeared to Moses on the mountain, married couples were to forego sexual relations. Wearing clean clothes and abstaining from marital relations were outward acts signifying that they had sanctified themselves before God spoke to them. This does not imply that lawful sexual relations are spiritually unclean. In the New Testament, Paul suggested that it is occasionally appropriate to refrain from marital relations *for a brief time*, when specially devoting that time to God through prayer and fasting (1 Corinthians 7:5). After Moses ascended the mountain, God had to send him back down because curiosity was getting the better of

the people. After once again warning the people, Moses again ascended the mountain with Aaron.

The timing of all of this is very interesting. Jewish tradition asserts that the giving of the law occurred on the Feast of Firstfruits or Pentecost, which can occur no later than the 10th or 11th day of the third month of the Hebrew calendar, Sivan. Verse 1 does say that it was in the third month after leaving Egypt—but some interpret the phrase "on the same day" here to mean the same day of the month that the Israelites left Egypt. This, however, would mean that they arrived at Mount Sinai on the 15th of Sivan, with the law being given on the 17th (compare verses 10-11)—too late for Pentecost. However, if the phrase "on the same day" is understood to mean the same day that Jethro departed, as stated in the previous verse (18:27), then Pentecost can fit quite well. It could also be that the "same day" meant the same day of the *week* the Israelites had left Egypt—which, again, would allow for the Ten Commandments to have been delivered on Pentecost.

Indeed, there are clear Pentecost themes to be found here: the consecration of Israel as the chosen people, i.e. "firstfruits"; the beginning of the Old Testament "church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38 KJV), as Pentecost would mark the beginning of the New Testament Church (see Acts 2); the giving of the law, as God's people would later be given the power to *keep* that law through the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (compare Luke 24:49; Romans 8:7); God descending on the mountain with great noise and trembling and "in fire" (Exodus 19:18), as His presence would later descend upon Christ's disciples with great noise and in tongues of fire (Acts 2); the initiation of the Old Covenant, as Pentecost would later mark the giving of the "better promises" of the New Covenant, particularly the gift of the Holy Spirit (compare Hebrews 8:6). Though typical of the new relationship God wants with His people, the Old Covenant still involved separation from

God, as the boundary markers so vividly picture. To see this even more, read Hebrews 12:18-28.

The contrast between the Old and New Covenants is vividly illustrated by comparing two scriptures. "You shall set bounds for the people all around" (Exodus 19:12) and "let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Hebrews 10:22). Through Jesus Christ's sacrifice and intercession as our High Priest today, God has granted us liberty to come right before His very throne of grace (Hebrews 4:14-16)." [END]

Day 97 - FRIDAY: February 10<sup>th</sup>

Exodus 20

Daily Deep Dive:

MEMORY CHAPTER: Exodus 20 - Ten Commandments. Typically our memory work will involve a verse or two, but here it's important to remember where the 10 Commandments are listed by God.

Let's start today's in-depth study with the UCG reading plan: "Though they were already known before this, here is the first written record we have of all of God's Ten Commandments together -- commandments that are founded on His most basic law of love (Mark 12:29-31). The first four show us how to have a loving relationship with God. The last six reveal how we can share a loving, respectful relationship with our fellow man. Though knowledge of God's laws was clearly available earlier (Genesis 26:5), it appears likely that most of the Israelites had forgotten His requirements during their generations of Egyptian bondage and had to have those laws revealed to them once again.

Many today believe that it was *Moses* who gave the Ten Commandments to ancient Israel. But the Bible clearly reveals otherwise. God Himself spoke them with His own voice from the thundercloud above Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:1). And later, God

also *wrote* them Himself--*with His own finger*--on two "tablets of stone" (Exodus 31:18; Exodus 24:12; Deuteronomy 5:22). Later still, He even *rewrote* them (Exodus 34:1). To further define who gave these commandments, we must realize that by Christ's day, centuries later, no one had ever heard God the Father's voice (John 5:37). The "Lord," who spoke the commandments, is referred to in the Old Testament as the "Rock" (Deuteronomy 32:4, 15, 31; Psalms 18:2, 31, 46). And according to the New Testament, "that Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4). Those who think that Jesus did away with His Father's commandments are sorely mistaken. In His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), He "filled" the commandments by explaining their spiritual intent, in essence making them *even more* applicable to us (Matthew 5:17-20). Indeed, *Christ* is the One who gave the commandments on the Father's behalf in the first place--both to Israel and the New Testament Church!

The giving of the law was such a tremendous event that the Israelites feared for their lives. They could not only hear but also feel the ground shaking due to the thunder and the sound of trumpets. There were brilliant flashes of lightning and the mountain smoked. God was exhibiting a fraction of His greatness and glory before His chosen people. This awesome display was not intended to terrorize the people, because God was not there to harm them. God's purpose was to teach them awe and respect for Him, so that they would not sin (verse 20). It should have been a very humbling experience for the Israelites. But as God said: "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" (Deuteronomy 5:29). As we will read, the respect and obedience did not last long." [END]

Verses 3 through 17: Often our brain kicks into auto pilot when we read familiar scriptures. Few scriptures are probably as well known to us as the Ten Commandments. Take time to read each verse. Maybe

read them in a couple translations. Try to notice all the aspects that God includes about each commandment. What promises or connections does God make? Do you notice anything you missed before?

Day 98 - SATURDAY: February 11<sup>th</sup>

Exodus 21

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 1 – John Gill’s commentary states: “The judicial laws respecting the civil state of the people of Israel, so called because they are founded on justice and equity, and are according to the judgment of God, whose judgment is according to truth; and because they are such by which the commonwealth of Israel was to be judged or governed, and were to be the rule of their conduct to one another, and a rule of judgment to their judges in the execution of judgment and justice among them”.

Verse 7 – Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “This the Jews allowed no man to do but in extreme distress - when he had no goods, either movable or immovable left, even to the clothes on his back; and he had this permission only while she was unmarried.” John Gill’s commentary adds a few additional details: “ne that is under age, that is not arrived to the age of twelve years and a day, and this through poverty; he not being able to support himself and his family, puts his daughter out to service, or rather sells her to be a servant”.

Verse 8 – John Gill’s commentary states: “she being at age, and fit for marriage, and her master not caring to marry her, her father shall redeem her”.

Verse 9 – Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “He shall give her the same dowry he would give to one of his own daughters. From these

laws we learn, that if a man's son married his servant, by his father's consent, the father was obliged to treat her in every respect as a daughter."

Verse 12 – Not to continue to belabor this point, but these laws had long been in existence. Genesis 9:6 states "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man."

Verse 13 – Adam Clarke's commentary states: "From the earliest times the nearest akin had a right to revenge the murder of his relation, and as this right was universally acknowledged, no law was ever made on the subject; but as this might be abused, and a person who had killed another accidentally, having had no previous malice against him, might be put to death by the avenger of blood, as the nearest kinsman was termed, therefore God provided the cities of refuge to which the accidental manslayer might flee till the affair was inquired into, and settled by the civil magistrate."

Verse 14 – Adam Clarke's commentary adds: "Before the cities of refuge were assigned, the altar of God was the common asylum."

Verse 20 – John Gill's commentary states: "or condemned to the punishment of being slain with the sword, as the said Targum and Jarchi explain it: this law was made to deter masters from using severity and cruelty towards their servants."

Verse 21 – This verse ends in the NKJV by saying, "for he is his property". This appears to be a bad translation. This Hebrew word for "property" is almost always translated "silver or money". The point is brought out by John Gill's commentary: "is good as money, and therefore it is a loss sufficient to him to lose him; and it may be



reasonably thought he did not smite his servant with an intention to kill him, since he himself is the loser by it.”

Verse 22 – John Gill’s commentary says: “the husband might propose what fine should be paid, and might ask it in court; and if the smiter agreed to it, well and good, but if he judged it an exorbitant demand, he might appeal to the judges; for the husband might not lay what fine he pleased: this, if disputed, was to be decided by the judges, and as they determined it, it was paid;”

Verse 32 – It’s worth noting here that the price of a slave was 30 shekels of silver and this was also the price given to Judas for betraying Jesus Christ (Matthew 26:15).

The UCG reading plan states: “When God gave the Ten Commandments, "He added no more" (Deuteronomy 5:22). It was a complete spiritual law. Still, God knew that for a physical nation, there would have to be a civil administration with much more detail about what constituted crime and what judgments to execute against specific violations. He had already given capital punishment in Noah's day. It is not known if He had related any other judgments at that time, although it seems likely that He would have. Frankly, judgments were needed because God knew people would not remain chaste and law abiding (see Exodus 22:16). He knew that they would take advantage of others wrongly (22:25) -- and He provided for these eventualities. The judgments exist because of human failings. Penalties would not be needed if people always obeyed. But they don't - and this could wreak havoc in a national setting. So besides the tablets of the Ten Commandments, God here gives Moses the judgments. These judgments were based on God's law of love and pertained to relationships between the people.

God allowed slavery, but in a much different way than one may perceive today. An Israelite may have become a slave due to poverty,

debt, or crime. After six years of servitude, God commanded that he be given freedom and help to reestablish himself so as to better avoid getting in the same situation again (Deuteronomy 15:12-15). Israelite slavery was similar to a state of indentured servitude. The purpose was not intended to be heavily punitive. The intention was to enable a person to make a new start and help him succeed in life. God also gave laws regulating the treatment of slaves. In fact, it was expected that some would be treated so well that they would want to stay with their masters even after the time came for them to be set free (verses 16-18).

It was a capital crime to curse or hit one's parents. This judgment was based on the Fifth Commandment, "Honor your father and mother." While the punishment may seem cruel and unusual to our 21st-century minds, its intent was that Israel not raise a nation of rebellious children, as we see so frequently today in our supposedly enlightened societies. This law, like many others, acted as a safeguard for society as a whole. If a rebellious child showed so little respect for authority that he would lash out and strike his own mother or father, there would be little to prevent him from striking out and injuring or killing others. Thus this law helped remove those who scorned authority and lacked the will or desire for self-control before they became too great a threat to innocent people around them. When this law was enforced, society as a whole was kept safe from young, out-of-control thugs who had chosen to live in a way that made them a danger to everyone else.

The words "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" were not intended to encourage vengeful feelings. Nor were they to be taken literally (although "life for life" and "stripe for stripe" *could* be literal). The principle was that the punishment should fit the crime and not go *beyond* it. On occasion, capital punishment had to be imposed. But in other cases, we read that there were various ways the guilty party could be redeemed.

God's laws are not given as a burden to His people. On the contrary, they are imposed to *prevent* problems from occurring. All people shared a responsibility in both preventing and solving problems. We will be reading much more about God's laws, comprising commandments, statutes, judgments and ordinances. God revealed them to define what He means by love. Love is the fulfilling of the law (Romans 13:10).”