

# **Read the Bible in a Year**

Week 7 - July 18th, 2021

**Read on Your Own this Week:**

*Psalms 19-21*

Matthew 25-28

**Readings in Class:**

Exodus 24-40

## **A Brief Overview of Exodus 24-40**

Last week we got the actual Exodus and the giving of the Covenant (including the Ten Commandments). This week starts with confirming the covenant and goes on into the long (occasionally boring and repetitive) description of the Tabernacle and the priestly garments.

Chapter 24 starts off with the confirming of the covenant. Note how this is done, by sprinkling blood on the people. The agreement is quite literally signed with blood. The new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34) is also signed with blood, the blood of Jesus.

Also note what the people say “all that the LORD has spoken we will do and we will be obedient.” They break this oath rather quickly.

Chapters 25-31 then are instructions on how God is going to dwell with His people. There are very specific instructions that are given as to the size, color, and material of the Tabernacle, the priestly garments, the altar, and a bunch of other stuff. All the way down to the specific people that God will give the skills to make it all.

Chapter 32 is where we get the story of the Golden Calf. This event will haunt the Israelites for centuries to come. Not even two months have passed since they heard the voice of God tell them not to make cast idols and here they are making a cast idol. A few interesting things to note. One is that they make the idols out of their gold earrings. Later in Chapter 35 we’ll see them doing something similar to provide the gold for the tabernacle. Another point to note is that God does not call the Israelites His people (verse 7), but refers to them as Moses’ people. He has rejected them as they have already broken the covenant. But Moses reminds God of the promise God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In Chapters 33 and 34 we get the aftermath of the Golden Calf incident, and the covenant is renewed.

Chapter 35-40 in many ways repeats what was said in Chapters 25-31, this time with the instructions actually being carried out. Exodus ends with the Glory of God dwelling in the Tabernacle with His people.

**Tabernacle:** The word tabernacle is the same one used in John 1:14: The Word became flesh and tabernacled (dwelt) among us. In the Old Testament God tabernacled (dwelt) with his people in the Tent of Meeting or in the Temple. Now God tabernacles (dwells) among His people through the man Jesus Christ.

**Connections to Revelation:** There are several interesting connections to Revelation. One is the seven lampstands. The seven churches in Revelation are the seven lampstands (Revelation 1). There are also the 12 stones inscribed with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel that the priest wears. You will find a similar sort of description in Revelation 21 regarding the New Jerusalem. And of course, the tabernacle is the place where God dwelt with His people. This sees its ultimate fulfillment in Revelation 21:3 in the new creation: "The dwelling place of God is with man."

**Seeing God:** There are several references to seeing God. First in chapter 24 when the elders beheld God. (Side note – eating and drinking are often connected to the presence of God). Then we are told that Moses spoke to God face to face as a man speaks to his friend (33:11). But we also get the curious story of Moses asking to see God's glory and God responding that "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." How are we to reconcile these?

We've already seen that God speaks to Moses in strange ways, such as a burning bush and a cloud, so face to face could just mean directly and not be taken literally, but perhaps the best explanation of this discrepancy is that Moses was speaking to the pre-incarnate Christ.

"Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" - John 14:8-9

We see elsewhere that encountering God in His glory is terrifying (think of the Transfiguration or Paul's experience on the road to Damascus which literally blinded him). Jesus in the flesh contains the Glory of God just as the Tabernacle does.

**Art Matters:** It is fascinating to see how much detail God gives Moses on how place and items of worship are to be made. Modern thinking tells us that what we wear, how are churches look, none of that matters. But it matters to God. This is not to say that our worship spaces should look like the tabernacle or our Pastor should wear what the priests did, but our Churches should proclaim the Gospel just as much as our liturgy does if at all possible. The care we take in how worship looks also illustrates the importance of what we are doing.

**Idols:** We are tempted to think we don't have any idols because we aren't worshiping a Golden Calf. Martin Luther, however, describes idolatry as anything we fear, love, and trust more than God. The Israelites didn't trust God or God's servant Moses, so they made themselves a god. Our idols are health, wealth, jobs, reputation, phones, governments.... the list goes on.