

Exodus 23-25 Chapter Study

INTRO

Outline For Exodus

I. The Exodus • Chs. 1-13:16

II. The Journey to Sinai • Chs. 13:17-40:38

A.-F.

G. At Mt. Sinai • 20-40

Under "G." we've covered 1-8. and are up to 9. as we start Chapter 23 tonight.

At this point, God has spoken the Ten Commandments in the hearing of all the people.

Their response was to be terrified and pleaded that Moses go and speak to God by himself, then return to them and tell them what God said.

So Moses went back up Mt. Sinai, and received the contents of what we find in chapters 21-23, called "The Book of the Covenant."

This is a collection of Moral, Civil, and Ceremonial laws that will govern the nation.

Much of what we find in these 3 chapters is an elaboration on the basic principles given in the Ten Commandments.

It was given primarily to guide the judges as they rendered verdicts.

In fact, here in ch. 23, we see some commands which speak directly to the justice system of Israel.

CHAPTER 23

9. 23:1-9 • Justice for all!

1 "You shall not circulate a false report.

Gossip is out! Specially that brand of gossip which is aimed at creating *legal* trouble for someone.

Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

There are to be no conspiracies to pervert the courts.

2 You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice.

Since court cases usually hinge on the evidence of the testimony of witnesses, this is a prohibition of a group of people conspiring to manufacture a lie, coordinating their false testimony, and then secure a settlement in their favor.

3 You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute.

While God pays special attention to the needs of the poor and weak, He also does not want any special *favoritism* shown to them that would alter or pervert justice.

Justice in the courts of Israel was to be blind!

4 "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. 5 If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it.

This is a simple and straightforward command to show practical love for your enemy and to do good to him.

Two *other* principles are revealed here as well.

1) V. 4 – Respect your enemy's property.

This is an extension of the 10th Commandment not to covet.

There's a tendency when we see our enemy's fortunes decline or when we see Him suffering, to gloat.

But this command is one more proof of the sanctity placed on private property.

Over and over again in the Law of Moses we see this principle, of how we are to honor and respect, not only others persons, but their possessions as well; their lands, houses, animals, and property.

This respect for property extends even to the point that if you see your enemy's animal

wandering off, instead of gloating about it – you are to secure it and return it to its owner.

2) V. 5 – Respect animals.

An animal that is struggling with a load is to be assisted.

We find several of these kinds of practical commands to help animals that are suffering or struggling in the Law.

Altogether they command a respect for animals as living creatures who deserve a level of honor and care from man.

God wants man to honor and respect the sanctity of life; all life, even that of animals.

6 “You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. 7 Keep yourself far from a false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked. 8 And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous. 9 “Also you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

These guidelines were meant specifically for the judges of Israel as they doled out verdicts and rendered judgments in the cases that came before them.

10. 23:10-13 • The Sabbath

10 “Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, 11 but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard and your olive grove.

This rule established the Sabbath *year*.

Every 7th year, they were to let their fields lie fallow and only harvest what came up of its own accord.

The poor were also allowed to go in to the fields and glean.

We’ll take a closer look at the Sabbatical year later when it’s covered in greater depth.

12 Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed.

The weekly Sabbath was the main reminder and memorial to their national covenant with God, so He repeatedly reminded them in the Law about the importance of keeping the Sabbath day.

13 “And in all that I have said to you, be circumspect and make no mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your mouth.

As God has laid down these commands, He instructs them to be wise in their application – meaning that not only are they to be obeyed in their letter, but they reveal deeper principles of justice and righteousness that will apply to every area of life.

Then He tells them to make sure they identify themselves as a people by no name but His Name.

11. 23:14-19 • The annual feasts

14 “Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: 15 You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); 16 and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field.

Details regarding these feasts will be given us in Leviticus so we’ll save further comment till then.

17 “Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD. 18 “You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until morning. 19 The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God.

These three feasts were special in that they were to be observed by all of the people coming together to one place to celebrate them.

The feasts were: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

And then we have this rather strange command at the end of v. 19 which is meant to stand alone -

You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

The pagan Canaanites had a fertility rite that did just this during their spring celebration, but God calls for His people to not only *not* imitate them, but to show *respect for life*, even the life of animals.

The Jewish rabbis understood God to be saying this.

They ruled that when an animal from the herd or flock was killed, it was *not* to be witnessed by its mother.

But the rabbis didn't stop there – as is typical for the growth of *legalism*, they turned this simple command to not imitate pagan fertility rights and honor life into an elaborate set of rules that govern diet and cooking.

To this day, observant Jews cannot eat a *kosher cheeseburger*, because they cannot mix meat and dairy.

To do so, they say, might violate this command to not boil, or “*stew*” a young goat in its mother's milk.

The rabbis insist that the meat in the hamburger may have come from the calf of the cow that gave the milk for the cheese, and the cheese and the meat would “boil” together in one's stomach, and be a violation of this command.

So, kosher kitchens have separate refrigerators; one for dairy, one for meat.

They have separate cooking pots and utensils; separate plates and flatware, all to keep meat and dairy separate.

12. 23:20-33 • The plan to take Canaan

²⁰ “Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. ²¹ Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name *is* in Him. ²² But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. ²³ For My Angel will go before you and bring you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off.

This angel is none other than Jesus Christ.

The word *angel* means “messenger” and that's what we see *this* angel doing – speaking to them the message of God and leading them in the way the Lord wants them to go.

It's clear this angel is of *higher station* than your normal, run-of-the-mill angels because *God's name is in Him*, and He sits in *judgment* on Israel.

The Lord also directs the people to *obey* Him and to treat Him with the same kind of deference they treat Him as God.

There's another clear sign this refers to Jesus in that v. 21 refers to the angel forgiving sins – which only God can do.

This angel will bring them into the place God has prepared, just as the Lord Jesus is our *forerunner*, who's gone before us to open the way to eternal life and prepare a place for us in glory.

²⁴ You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars.

God warned the Jews that when they finally arrived in Canaan, they were not to settle down *with* the Canaanites but were to *supplant* them.

These sacred pillars were in fact massive wooden *phallic symbols*; abominable images dedicated to their worship of the fertility gods and goddesses; which practice was corrupt and unspeakably immoral.

²⁵ “So you shall serve the LORD your God,

Meaning in the ways described here in chs. 21-23

and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you. ²⁶ No one shall suffer miscarriage or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.

God promised general physical health and prosperity to the people as they obeyed and served Him.

²⁷ “I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn *their* backs to you.

They will run away in battle.

²⁸ And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you.

God would even use nature as their allies in defeating the Canaanites and driving them out of the land. But . . .

²⁹ I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. ³⁰ Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.

It would take a while for the Jews to grow to a population that would be sufficient to fully occupy all the territory God intended them to have.

So their occupation wouldn't be something they would complete in just a year's time – it would take longer.

As they grew in numbers, they would also grow in territory.

And since the fields and vineyards and cities would fall into ruin if the native Canaanites weren't there to tend to them, the Lord says they will only be supplanted as Israel grows in both number and faith in Him.

³¹ And I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea, [the region of] Philistia, and from the desert [of Arabia] to the [Euphrates] River. For I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you. ³² You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. ³³ They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me. For *if* you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.”

God's plan was to turn all of Canaan over to the descendants of Jacob, but as we see here, only as they moved forward by faith and by the blessing of the Lord did they lay claim to it.

As Paul says in 1 Cor. 10 – the story of the Exodus is an enduring lesson for us as we follow Christ. Canaan represents the spirit-filled life.

And just as the Angel of the Lord led them into the Promised Land, so Jesus leads us into the life of the Spirit, walking in the blessings of God's grace.

But the spirit-filled life is not without challenges.

Just as the children of Israel had to move in and do battle with the native inhabitants, there are obstacles to *our* pressing forward and taking possession of all God intends for *us* – namely, the old inhabitants of our lives – old habits of thinking and living in the world.

God has so much for us – but we don't get it all at once.

The Israelites had to grow and take progressive possession of what was theirs, and so do we.

Each battle they fought and every new region they took made them stronger and more confident in the Lord's strength and ability.

God wasn't just giving them more land, He was *growing them* as a people who could possess, enjoy, and *use* that land.

The same is true of our growth in the Spirit-filled life.

Every battle we face molds and shapes us into the image of Christ.

As Paul says in 2 Cor. 3:18 – we are being changed from glory *to* glory by the Spirit of the Lord.

Friend, don't despair or grow faint in the struggles you face.

Don't think walking in the Spirit is a life of smooth-sailing and that there's some place you come to in the Christian life where you rise above all trouble and are never bothered by anything ever again.

No matter how far you've come with Christ, while we walk in these bodies, on this earth, there is more room to grow, more spiritual territory to take, more giants to slay, more Jericho's to smash.

Learn to be a happy warrior! A soldier who delights to wield the sword and take the battle TO the enemy.

CHAPTER 24

13. 24:1-8 • The covenant affirmed

¹ Now He said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. ² And Moses alone shall come near the LORD, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him." ³ So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has said we will do."

Moses returned to the people with the contents of chapters 21-23 and read them to the people; v. 4 tells us that he wrote down all that the Lord had told him.

The people responded in the affirmative that they would do all that the Lord had said.

Moses knew this was a solemn and momentous occasion for it was the formal deliverance of the Covenant Law from God to the people and their acceptance *of* and commitment *to* it.

Such a solemn event demanded the offering of a sacrifice, so he built an altar.

⁴ And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

You remember our study in Genesis how when God made the covenant and promise to Abraham how He had Abraham gather some animals and cut them in two, making an aisle between the halves. Abraham then sat down to wait for God to appear so they could walk through the pieces together. This was the ritual for sealing solemn covenants, and it's what is pictured here in Moses' altar. The shedding of blood and the burning of sacrifices will memorialize the covenant God & Israel are making.

The altar represents God while the 12 pillars represent the 12 tribes of Israel.

⁵ Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. ⁶ And Moses took half the blood and put *it* in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. ⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient." ⁸ And Moses took the blood, sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words."

The blood was applied both to the altar and to the people, thus uniting both to one another.

This may appear rather bloody and gruesome to us but we need to understand the *union* that's being established by this ritual.

Maybe the best way to do that is to consider the rite men will occasionally do when they want to forge a bond as strong as that of family, of brothers.

They will each take a knife and slice open the flesh of their palms, then clasp their hands together – thus mingling their blood.

The idea is that they are *exchanging their lives* – the life of one if flowing into the other – and so they become "blood-brothers."

When Moses sprinkles blood on the altar, which represents God and then on the people, he's formalizing & memorializing *by ritual* the covenant that has just been made between Yahweh and the children of Israel; they have become, in a sense, *blood-relatives*.

But there's one more element to forging the covenant that has to be carried out – the eating of the *covenant meal*.

Once the parties to a covenant had offered sacrifices to memorialize their union, they would partake of the sacrifices in a special meal that inaugurated their new relationship. That's what happens next . . .

14. 24:9-11 • The leaders commune with God

⁹ Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel. And *there was* under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in *its* clarity. ¹¹ But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank.

As it says in v. 1, at the end of the previous session with God on the Mt., God had told Moses to come back after he'd read the Book of the Covenant to the people.

But this time he was to bring the main leaders of the nation with him; his brother Aaron and his two eldest sons, along with the 70 tribal and clan leaders.

When they ascended the Mount, they *saw* God.

The thick cloud that represented God's presence to the nation parted for them as they rose higher on the mount, and they encountered a *new* manifestation of the Lord.

Details aren't given, but it seems they saw a form that approximated a man's shape because it says they saw a clear floor *under His feet*.

This corresponds to the crystal sea John saw under the throne of God in Rev. 4:6.

Just Who it was the leaders of Israel saw is made clear for us in 1 Cor. 10:3-4 –

³ all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

God invited the leaders of the nation up on to the Mount to feast with Him at the covenant meal.

They passed through the lower levels of the cloud and ascended into a place of closer fellowship in which the Lord came to them in the Person of the Son.

They then shared the covenant meal.

V. 11 says that the Lord did not lay his hand on them, meaning He didn't slay them with the brightness of His glory.

This is another evidence it was Jesus they saw and not the Father, for no one can see God the Father and live.

But the Son, who is the express image of the Father, manifests God to man.

Once the covenant meal is complete, God calls Moses to come up higher for more directions.

15. 24:12-18 • Moses with God for 40 days

¹² Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

Moses had written the Book of the Covenant which we find in chapters 21-23 on papyrus.

But God had also written the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone and these would be given to Moses to take back to the nation as an enduring memorial of God's revelation.

Along with the Ten Commandments, the Lord had further instructions, most of which had to do with the ritual and ceremonial aspects of religious life in Israel.

¹³ So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. ¹⁴ And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed, Aaron and Hur *are* with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them." ¹⁵ Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain.

Moses sent the elders back to the camp of Israel with instructions that if anyone had a problem, they could deal with it, as they had been previously commissioned to do.

In Moses' absence, if anyone had an issue that was too complex for the judges to unravel, then

they were to go to Aaron and Hur who would sub for him till he returned.

16 Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17 The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. 18 So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

The elders departed, and Moses and Joshua waited for the call of God.

For 6 days they waited while the glory of the Lord swirled over their heads in the form of a cloud. Don't picture this cloud as a *dark storm* cloud; this cloud was like a consuming fire, meaning it was a radiant cloud of light.

For 6 days this brilliant cloud rested on the Mount and Moses waited. Then on the 7th day, the Lord spoke to him and invited Him into His immediate presence.

He spent the next 40 days there and during that time he received revelations from the Lord unlike any others in the entire history of the human race.

In Deut 9:9, we learn that Moses neither ate nor drank for the 40 days he was on the Mount.

A man can go just about 40 days without food before he dies, but he can't go for more than 4 days without water! So how did Moses survive?

We read here that he ascended into the Lord's presence which manifested itself as a cloud of light.

1 John 1:5 says that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

Einstein's Theory of General Relativity says that at the speed of light, time stops!

If God is light, in the purest and truest sense, then where God is, there is no time.

As Moses approached the presence of the Lord, he drew closer and closer to the source, the origin of light until eventually he arrived in another dimension where time slowed, and possibly even halted.

It was 40 days and nights at the foot of Sinai in the camp of Israel, but in the Lord's presence, it was just NOW and Moses was unaffected by the passage of the days.

You know what this means don't you? This means we've discovered the greatest anti-aging method every devised – spend time with the Lord!

Forget *Oil of Olay* – use the Oil of the Spirit.

Forget *Ponds* – try Praise!

Who needs Neutrogena – we've got a New Way to God through the Cross of Christ.

CHAPTER 25

16. 25-27 • The pattern for the Tabernacle

Now we enter on a long section that spells out the ceremonial parts of the Law of Moses.

It begins with the plans for the tabernacle and moves to the priesthood.

As we read through this section, let me say that we could dig really deep into what we find here and examine every little detail as to how it's a symbol & type of Christ.

The tabernacle with all its furnishing is an elaborate picture of the person and work of Jesus.

The priesthood with its garments and service is just one long prophecy of the Lord.

And while we *could* look at the text from that perspective and learn a lot, it would also mean we'd be in Exodus and Leviticus for many, many more weeks.

We're not going to do that.

Instead, we're going to take a more *summary* review of these things on this trip through the Bible.

If you're interested in a more detailed study on the tabernacle and priesthood and how they're types of Christ, then I'd encourage you to take a look at Chuck Missler's studies on Exodus.

I will occasionally mention some of the more obvious links to Christ as we work through the text.

a. the offering for the tabernacle materials - 25:1-9

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, that they

bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering.

This offering will be used for the building of the tabernacle – a special structure which will become the heart, the center of the nation, both religiously and literally!

The tabernacle was a portable worship center – a tent like structure that was massive in scope and size.

It's frequently referred to as the "tent of meeting" because this is where the Lord localized His presence in the form of the Shekinah cloud.

This is where the people would focus their worship, bring their offerings, and seek the Lord's direction.

The ministry of the priests was centered at the tabernacle.

And though it was a tent, its furnishing were of the richest & best materials, as is fitting for that structure which was to house God's glory.

So God told Moses to tell the people to bring an offering.

But the offering was to be given ONLY if it was brought *voluntarily*, and even more than that – only if it was brought with a cheerful and willing heart!

Notice the seeming paradox there – God tells Moses to tell the people to bring an offering – but only if they really want to.

The point is this – The Lord wants us to give, but our giving must be cheerful and willingly given.

Why? Well – our giving is not for God so much as it's for us!

Did God need a tabernacle? No! How did need it? The children of Israel!

Does God NEED anything from us? No!

Do we NEED Him? You betcha!

The discipline of giving is not because God needs what we give – God calls us to give because *we need to give it* – and not just give it, but give it readily, willingly, even cheerfully as Paul says in 2 Cor. 9:7.

The habit and discipline of giving to the Lord renews our trust in Him as our Source & Supply.

It keeps our touch with the things of this world light.

It frees us from covetousness and the all too present sin of greed.

If the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, then giving is spiritual Round-up that kills that root!

And that's why our giving has to be willing and cheerful – because it's far more a heart issue than an act.

Reluctant, cheerless giving isn't really giving at all; it's ransom!

Those who give reluctantly see God as a terrorist, a bully Who they're trying to buy off with a bribe, ransom, or protection money.

They give because they're afraid if they don't calamity will strike.

Listen, let me say it again – God commands giving, not because He needs it – but because we need it.

WE NEED TO GIVE! And, as the Lord makes clear here, our giving needs to be marked by a willing cheerfulness.

³ And this *is* the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; ⁴ blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, fine linen, and goats' *hair*; ⁵ ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; ⁶ oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; ⁷ onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. ⁸ And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. ⁹ According to all that I show you, *that is*, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.

When Moses told them to bring an offering, he gave them a specific list of what was needed.

All of what was given was going to be used in the construction and service of the tabernacle.

The color **blue** was derived from a shellfish and since there are so many different shades of blue, different hues were probably meant here.

Purple was derived from a certain snail that makes a rich purple-red color (the murex snail).

Scarlet is another word for red. This red was produced from the dried and powdered eggs and

bodies of the *coccus ilicis* worm.

The Egyptians were the world's premier manufacturers & weavers of **fine linen**.

No doubt the Jews had learned the trade when they were there.

In the finest *modern* linens, there are 86 threads per inch; in Egyptian tombs they have found

linen with 152 threads per inch. ^[1]

Goat hair was black and coarse and had the consistency of felt.

Rams' skins had the wool removed and would be like fine leather.

The word "**badger**" comes from an archaic and obscure word which has long troubled translators. More recent discoveries indicate instead of badgers, it may be best to understand this as seal skins.

This makes better sense when we consider it's function – it was the outer covering which protect the tabernacle from wind and rain.

Acacia wood is harder and darker than oak and it's virtually insect-proof.

The present day value of the materials used in the tabernacle would total about \$15 million with their combined weight being some 19,000 pounds. ^[2]

We are just now embarking on a new building project.

God has given us clear direction on the growth of our church and it's ministries and we need a new home.

The Lord has some wonderful and incredible things in store for us and He's directing us to build a new home where we can meet with Him and He can impart His Word and blessing to this County.

We'll be giving more details soon, but for right now, let me just say that as God in v. 4 told Moses to tell the people to bring blue, purple, and red, He's calling us to bring the green so we can get busy with what He's set before us.

Notice in v. 9 that God was adamant Moses be *precise* in his execution of the plans for the tabernacle.

The reason for this was because the tabernacle was a living prophecy of the Person and Work of the coming Messiah and He didn't want anyone to get confused.

b. the ark of the covenant - 25:10-22

10 "And they shall make an ark [box] of acacia wood; two and a half cubits shall be its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height.

There's still debate among scholars about the exact length of a cubit. It seems that over time, it changed.

The cubit was probably derived from measuring the distance from elbow to tip of the little finger.

The question was; "Whose elbow?" And the answer would always be – "The king's."

But kings varied in size, so so did the cubit.

Most scholars settle for an 18 inch cubit – a foot and a half.

This means the ark was 3 ¾ feet long, 2 ¼ feet wide and high.

It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold.

11 And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a molding of gold all around. 12 You shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in its four corners; two rings shall be on one side, and two rings on the other side. 13 And you shall make poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. 14 You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them. 15 The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. 16 And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you. --

The stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments, written with the finger of God.

The poles through the rings were to carry the ark by.

No one was ever to touch the ark itself, it was far too holy - it was to be carried only by the poles.

17 “You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits *shall be* its length and a cubit and a half its width.

This is the lid or covering for the ark.

18 And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat.

Cherubim is the plural form of cherub – but when I say the word, don’t think of chubby, pink, babies floating around with white wings shooting toy arrows.

The cherubim are described in Revelation and Ezekiel as the most august and unusual creatures imaginable!

Today, when we see someone with a “baby face” we say they’re cherubic.

Really, that ought to mean they have four faces; an ox, an eagle, a lion, and a mature man.

It means ANYTHING BUT baby-like!

The reason God told Moses to fashion two cherubim on the cover for the ark is because it was right above that cover His presence would hover in the form of the Shekinah.

And since in heaven God’s throne is surrounded by the cherubim, the mercy seat and ark were to be like his throne.

The tabernacle, as the tent of meeting was a model of the throne room of heaven.

19 Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat. ²⁰ And the cherubim shall stretch out *their* wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim *shall be* toward the mercy seat. ²¹ You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. ²² And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

It’s interesting as we read the plans here for the tabernacle that they work from the center, from the holiest place *outward*.

If this were being described to Moses from a purely human perspective, it would start with the outside and work in, up to the climax, the center of the whole shebang.

But God starts at the point of *His* reference – where He will manifest himself among the people – then He works out.

Every part of the tabernacle and all of the service the priests will offer find their meaning and purpose in the reality of the presence of God in the Holy of holies.

Without His presence, without His life in the center, the rest is just empty and vain.

And so it is in our lives.

Unless the Lord dwells in our hearts, then all that we do is pointless.

He must be the animating presence and force of our lives.

c. the table of showbread - 25:23-30

23 “You shall also make a table of acacia wood; two cubits *shall be* its length, a cubit its width, and a cubit and a half its height. ²⁴ And you shall overlay it with pure gold, and make a molding of gold all around.

This table was to measure 3 ft. long by 1 ½ ft. wide and 2 ¼ ft. tall.

Like the ark it was to be made of wood, covered with gold.

25 You shall make for it a frame of a handbreadth all around, and you shall make a gold molding for the frame all around.

This frame of about 3” was an edge to the table which rose from the top to keep things on top of the table from falling off – like a rim.

26 And you shall make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings on the four corners that are at its four legs. ²⁷ The rings shall be close to the frame, as holders for the

poles to bear the table. ²⁸ And you shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be carried with them. ²⁹ You shall make its dishes, its pans, its pitchers, and its bowls for pouring. You shall make them of pure gold. ³⁰ And you shall set the showbread on the table before Me always.

In Lev. 24 we learn that on this table were placed 12 loaves of bread in two stacks of 6 each.

These 12 loaves represented the 12 tribes of Israel.

The bread was replaced once a week, on the Sabbath, and the replaced loaves were eaten only by the priests.

The loaves were called the “showbread” or literally, “The bread of the presence.”

They were given this because as they sat on the table they were in the immediate presence of God.

They stood as a symbol of the fact that God is in the midst of His people Israel.

Bread also speaks of the sustenance of life, and the people were to look to God as their Supply.

Besides the table itself being made of gold, all the dishes used in the preparation of the showbread were to be made of gold.

d. the golden lampstand - 25:31-40

³¹ “You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its *ornamental* knobs, and flowers shall be of one piece. ³² And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side.

Since the tabernacle, when fully constructed would be covered with several layers, the only light in it would come from the Shekinah and from this *lamp*, in Hebrew, “menorah.”

It was made of solid gold but no dimensions are given for it.

Like the showbread represented the tribes of Israel, the lampstand represented the nation in her missionary calling to be a light to the world as they followed the Lord.

It had a central shaft with 3 branches coming out of each side, to make a total of 7 lamps.

³³ Three bowls *shall be* made like almond blossoms on one branch, with an *ornamental* knob and a flower, and three bowls made like almond blossoms on the other branch, with an *ornamental* knob and a flower—and so for the six branches that come out of the lampstand. ³⁴ On the lampstand itself four bowls *shall be* made like almond blossoms, each with its *ornamental* knob and flower. ³⁵ And there shall be a knob under the *first* two branches of the same, a knob under the *second* two branches of the same, and a knob under the *third* two branches of the same, according to the six branches that extend from the lampstand. ³⁶ Their knobs and their branches *shall be of one piece*; all of it *shall be one* hammered piece of pure gold.

The description here is a bit difficult to sort out.

Picture the central shaft that rises straight up.

On it's length from top to bottom are 4 ornamental knobs in the shape of almond blossoms.

Out of the lowest spring two branches that rise up in an arc to the same height as the top of the central shaft.

Out of the next lowest ornamental knob comes two more branches.

And out of the 3rd come tow more branches.

There's one last knob above that.

On each of the 6 branches there are 3 ornamental knobs in the shape of more almond blossoms.

The almond flower motif for the artistry on the lampstand looks forward to something that will happen a bit later.

In Numbers 17 we read about a revolt by the leadership of Israel against Moses & Aaron's.

A test was given to see whose leadership the Lord endorsed.

The test was to take the rods of the revolvers, along with Aaron's rod, and place them in the tabernacle overnight.

In the morning when they went in to check the rods, Aaron's had blossomed and put forth almonds!

This was God's way of approving Aaron and affirming his calling.

The lampstand represented Israel's calling to lead the nations in the knowledge and worship of Yahweh as they were filled with the Spirit, symbolized by the oil in the lamps, and as they followed God's leading, symbolized by the almonds.

37 You shall make seven lamps for it, and they shall arrange its lamps so that they give light in front of it.

The oil lamps which would crown the top of each branch would be oval in shape – and God is saying they are to be arranged in such a way that the wicks face toward the front.

38 And its wick-trimmers and their trays shall be of pure gold. 39 It shall be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils. 40 And see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.

God once more reminds Moses that he must follow the plans he's seen for the tabernacle.

The word "pattern" in Hebrew is "tabnith" and refers to *written detailed plans*.

God wants Moses to make an exact replica of what he'd seen.

In fact, the detail with which we see the tabernacle and priesthood described in these chapters leads some scholars to conclude that Moses actually came down from Sinai with a detailed set of plans for the tabernacle.

If this is the kind of attention God called Moses to pay to the details of a structure that would one day be fulfilled and superceded by the Person and Work of the Messiah, how much more careful and attentive ought we be to the things *He* showed and taught?

[1] Guzik, David – *Online Commentary*

[2] *ibid.* (cost updated from \$13 million as of July, 2003)