

Chapter Three **God's Answer To Man's Need: Exodus**

As we have already abundantly seen, Genesis is the book that reveals the need of mankind. It is all about man--the creation of man, the sin of man, the world in which he is placed, and his slow journey through time groping after God. Its very last phrase, "a coffin in Egypt," is a revelation that the most you can say about man when you have said all there is to say is that he lives in the realm of death.

But Exodus is all about God. Exodus is God's answer to man's need. God's supply for man's sin. It commences immediately with God's activity in the preservation and call of Moses, and throughout the whole of the book we will see God mightily at work. The theme of the book is redemption, God's activity to restore man from his sin his degradation and misery. It contains many instructive lessons for us, especially what constitutes redemption in our own lives. We shall understand what God is doing with us when we see what He did with Israel in the book of Exodus.

The book centers around four great events which are easy to keep in mind for they focus on four experiences in the lives of the people of God in any age.

The first event is *the Passover*, chapters 1-14, which climaxes in that great event. The second significant event is *the crossing of the Red Sea*, described for us in chapter 14. The third great event is *the giving of the Law* at Sinai, chapters 19 and 20. The fourth event is *the construction of the Tabernacle* and its accompanying regulations for the camp of Israel.

The first two events relate closely to each other. The Passover and Red Sea are but two aspects of one great truth: the deliverance of God's people from the bondage of Egypt. They portray in Christian experience one great truth which we call conversion or regeneration--the deliverance of an individual from the bondage of the world. If you want to understand what God did with you when you became a Christian, study the Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea.

The other two events likewise tie together. The giving of the Law and the construction of the Tabernacle are absolutely inseparable. The pattern of the Tabernacle was given by God to Moses on the mountain at the same time that the Law was given, and we must understand from this book why these two are inextricably linked together. We shall do so as we move into this study. The Law requires the Tabernacle and the Tabernacle exists because of the Law.

OBSERVING THE PASSOVER

When man wants to change history he usually uses a battle or a ballot, but when God wants to change history He begins with sending a baby.

The opening chapter informs us that a new king had arisen over Egypt who did not know Joseph--Exodus opens some 300 years after the close of Genesis. The original 70 Israelites had multiplied to a great multitude of nearly two million. The new Pharaoh greatly feared the power of this developing nation in Egypt, and gave orders that all male Hebrew children should be cast into the river at birth. Against this dark background, Moses was born.

The story of his first 80 years is given to us in one brief chapter (chap. 2). In a delicate twist of irony that is wonderful to observe, God moved in such a way that despite the decree of Pharaoh to put all Hebrew male

babies to death, Moses was not only saved but Pharaoh hired Moses' own mother to care for her baby. This is surely one of many delightful manifestations of the humor of God.

Moses was reared in the court of Pharaoh and had access to all the learning of the Egyptians. As Stephen will tell us many centuries later (see Acts 7:17-22), Moses was trained in the best university of the biggest empire of the world in that day. He was the foster son of the Pharaoh and every privilege and every advantage were his.

But when Moses came of age, he realized, evidently from his mother's instruction, that he was destined to be the one who would deliver Israel from the bondage of the Egyptians. He attempted this in his own wisdom and tended up murdering a man and having to flee into the wilderness to escape the justice of Pharaoh. There in the wilderness of Midian he spent the next 40 years herding sheep for his father-in-law, Jethro. What a sense of failure and humiliation Moses must have had! All his dreams of glory fading away, he saw nothing in the future but the life of a shepherd in a barren desert. But all this was necessary in God's disciplinary training of his faithful servant. What Moses could not learn in Egypt, he must learn in the quietude of the desert. In Egypt he had learned the wisdom of man; in the desert he was to learn the wisdom of God.

It was here that God appeared to Moses in the remarkable confrontation of the burning bush. That bush was to become a symbol of Moses' own life. As the bush burned with great brilliance and power yet was not consumed, so Moses would become a man of tremendous power so that when he died at the age of 130 years "his eye was not dim nor his vigor abated" (Deut. 34:7). The power was not from Moses but from God.

Moses' response to God's call was to doubt himself. "Who am I?" he cried out (Exod. 3: 11).

To this God replied, "I will be with you."

Again Moses doubted, based on his awareness of his ignorance of God. "What do I know about you?" is the essence of his query.

The answer was the reminder of the meaning of the divine name, "I AM WHO I AM." In its full intent, this is the name, the Lord "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty," as found in Revelation 1:8.

Yet again Moses doubted, and this time his doubt is based upon the people of Israel. "What if they will not believe me, or listen to what I say? For they may say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you'" (Exod. 4:1). God understood this fear and granted him three signs: the rod which could become a serpent; the hand which could become leprous and cleansed; water which could become blood on the land.

All Moses' fear had been met by the revelation of the grace and power of God, but still Moses doubted and retreated to his first argument, asking that someone else be sent in his place. At this the Lord became angry, for Moses in effect was saying, "I can't do this and I don't think you can do it either." God answered Moses' faltering faith by giving him Aaron as a mouthpiece. Here, as in many other instances in the Bible, God accommodated Himself to man's unbelief and yet at a cost of sorrow to that man's own heart, for Aaron proved to be an unreliable companion in times of crisis.

A further flaw in Moses' obedience is dealt with when at a lodging place in route to Midian the Lord met Moses and sought to kill him. For some unrecorded reason (probably due to the opposition of his Gentile wife) Moses had failed to carry out the divine instructions concerning circumcision. The circumcision rite being taken care of, Moses and Aaron met the people of Israel, performed the signs God had given them, and were encouraged by the reception and obedience of the people.

In chapters 5-11 is found the record of Moses and Aaron's confrontation with a repeatedly obdurate and stubborn Pharaoh, and God's breaking of his power by the presentation of nine miraculous plagues. This is a most dramatic encounter, and the drama is clearly designed to reveal the redemptive power of God against the satanic power personified in Pharaoh.

Moses and Aaron appeared before Pharaoh and demanded in the name of the God of Israel that Pharaoh let

God's people go. As predicted, Pharaoh defiantly refused, and actually increased the burden of the people by requiring that bricks be made of straw which the people must themselves supply. Jehovah encouraged Moses by reminding him of His promises of judgment until the Egyptians should know that He is the Lord. Subsequently, in the king's presence, the sign of the rod was employed; but when Aaron's rod became a serpent and swallowed up the rods of the Egyptian magicians who performed the same feat, Pharaoh's heart was still unmoved. These miracles by Egyptian magicians were undoubtedly manifestations of evil powers such as those manifest today in occultism.

Then began the series of nine plagues, to be culminated in a tenth, the death of the firstborn of the land and the celebration of the first Passover. The plagues came in series of three and were all directed against the gods of the Egyptians. The first plague was that of fuming the water of the Nile River into blood so that the fish died and the Egyptians found little water to drink. Before the second plague Pharaoh was given opportunity to repent, but hardened his heart instead, and the land was filled with the frogs of the second plague. The Egyptian magicians had imitated both the first and second plagues, but when the third plague struck, with gnats covering the land on both man and beast, the magicians confessed their inability to imitate and declared it to be the finger of God.

Again Pharaoh hardened his heart, and so the judgment of God continued and we have the first of the second cycle of plagues. Swarms of flies filled all the houses excepting in the land of Goshen where the people of Israel dwelt. Thus Pharaoh was to be impressed by the immunity of Israel, that they are truly the people of God.

Pharaoh attempted to compromise by suggesting the people sacrifice in the land of Egypt, but Moses would have none of this. Pharaoh then seemed to give way, declaring his willingness to let them go, but not far away. At this sign of fuming on Pharaoh's part, divine mercy fumed toward him and the flies were removed from the land. But Pharaoh broke faith and again God warned him, and the next day sent the second plague of the second cycle. All the cattle of the Egyptians died, but none of the cattle of the people of Israel died. Still Pharaoh was unrelenting; so without warning, the sixth plague struck. Ashes which Moses and Aaron tossed into the air became boils on the Egyptians, both man and beast throughout the kingdom.

The third cycle of three plagues began with hail. In the midst of a terrible thunder and lightning storm, heavy globes of hail struck down everything in the land of Egypt, sparing the land of Goshen. When Pharaoh seemed to repent the hail ceased, but again we are told Pharaoh callused his own heart and God responded by hardening His own. Pharaoh attempted another compromise but Moses rejected it and called for the plague of locusts to cover the land. Pharaoh was now beyond reason and God did not reason with him. Instead He sent a ninth plague, a terrible darkness to be felt throughout the land of Egypt for three days. In the midst of the darkness Pharaoh made his fourth and last attempt at compromise by suggesting the cattle be left behind. When Moses refused, Pharaoh said he did not want to see his face again.

Chapter 11 describes the conversation between Jehovah and Moses in which the final plague, the death of the firstborn throughout Egypt, is predicted and Israel is commanded to ask of the Egyptians gold and silver and jewels that they might leave with abundance when the hour strikes. This brings us to the central act in the redemptive program of Gad, the feast of the Passover. Jehovah now made this the beginning of the year and gave detailed instructions how the Passover lamb should be taken and killed and the blood placed on the doorposts of the houses, followed by the eating of the unleavened bread.

At midnight, in a most solemn account, the Lord smote the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from Pharaoh on his throne to the captive in his dungeon, as well as the firstborn of all the cattle. In that very night the Egyptians urged the Israelites to leave, thrusting their gold and silver upon them, six hundred thousand men...aside from children. And a mixed multitude also went up with them" (Exod. 12:37,38) of those who had married Egyptians. Every Israelite was commanded to teach the meaning of this Passover to his children.

Centuries later when John the Baptist would meet Jesus of Nazareth at the River Jordan, his announcement, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29), would be understood by every Hebrew present. The Passover feast is clearly the anticipation of the cross of Christ where the judgment of God was vented against all that is of the flesh within man and only those are saved who rest under the

protecting blood of the Lamb.

Following the Passover is the feast of unleavened bread described in chapter 13. This was to be a perpetual memorial to the necessity to abstain from anything and everything which causes defilement in the individual life.

As the Israelites began their journey God went before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, to guard them on the way.

CROSSING THE RED SEA

Immediately after the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread, the people of Israel left the safety of their homes in Egypt and went out into the wilderness, coming at last to the shores of the Red Sea. Looking back they saw 600 Egyptian chariots hot upon their trail; looking ahead they saw only the waters of the Red Sea. The case looked hopeless to them, and they began to cry out to Moses and ask him why he had brought them here to die in the wilderness.

Moses' answer is wonderful. He said, "Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord" (Exod. 14:13). It was a great cry of faith, and God's word came immediately, saying, "Lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land" (14:16). The pillar of cloud moved between Israel and the Egyptians and throughout the night a great east wind drove back the waters of the sea. The next day the people marched through the sea safely, the waters standing as a wall on either side. When the Egyptians attempted to do the same, the waters of the sea resumed upon them and they all perished. "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians" (Exod. 14:30).

In I Corinthians 10:2 we are told that all the people "were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The meaning of that is they were made one, they became a nation when they passed through the Red Sea. When Moses went down to Egypt the people of Israel were not a nation. They were a disorganized mob. But when they came out of the sea they were a unit. This is a beautiful reflection of the truth that every Christian must discover.

Before he became a Christian he was simply an individual struggling to make his way through life. But when he has gone through the experience of the Passover, when he has seen the blood of the Lamb nailed to the cross for him and has rested in the security of that fact, and when he has passed through the Red Sea experience, moving forward into an openly Christian stand, he will understand fully that he has now become part of a Body, the Body of Christ, and is joined together in a living unit with all other Christians.

The Red Sea typifies a break with the world. Egypt is now on the other side. Once Israel passed through the Red Sea they were then in the wilderness, but they were out of Egypt. The river of death now rolled between them and the place of bondage; and exactly that same river of death rolls between the Christian and the world when he claims Jesus Christ as Lord. Here is perhaps the reason why many professions of Christian faith never seem to go anywhere. There are people who are willing to sit under the Passover blood, willing to receive Jesus Christ as Savior, but they are not willing to walk through the waters of the Red Sea. They never take that step which brings them to the other side and cuts them off from the world. In their mind and thinking they are still back in Egypt. They will not move forward through the waters of death, and until that happens they are still under the bondage and control of the world.

The first thing Israel did as they walked through to the other side of the sea was to break into song. There had been no song in Egypt. That was a place of unrelenting bondage and heartache, misery, toil and danger. But when they came onto the far shore of the Red Sea they began to sing. Real deliverance always brings a song, reflecting joy in the greatness of God. The song they sang acknowledged the sense of dread that falls on the men of other nations who hear the story of the triumphal crossing.

Annie Johnson Flint has written a beautiful poem reflecting the truth of the Christian crossing of the Red Sea.

Have you come to the Red Sea place in your life,
Where, in spite of all you can do,
There is no way out, there is no way back,
There is no other way but--through?

Then wait on the Lord with a trust serene,
Till the night of your fear is gone,
He will send the wind, He will heap the floods,
When He says to your soul, "Go on."

And His hand will lead you through-- clear through--
Ere the watery walls roll down,
No foe can reach you, no wave can touch,
No mightiest sea can drown;

The tossing billows may rear their crests,
Their foam at your feet may break,
But over their bed you shall walk dry shod
In the path that your Lord will make.

In the morning watch, 'neath the lifted cloud,
You shall see but the Lord alone,
When He leads you on from the place by the sea
To the land that you have not known;

And your fears shall pass as your foes have passed,
You shall be no more afraid;
You shall sing His praise in a better place,
A place that His hand has made.

We have also in chapter 15 the story of the waters of Marah, the place of bitterness. In order to cure these bitter waters, Moses cut down a tree which the Lord showed him and threw it into the water and the water became sweet. This is a clear symbol to us that the cross, that great tree on which the Lord Jesus hung, is God's answer to the bitterness of life. When we have experienced the security of the Passover and passed through the Red Sea, cutting ourselves off from the world, we discover that the cross is forever the answer to the bitterness that sin may have brought into our lives, both past and present. To accept that cross as the will of God is to find the waters of life sweetened.

In the record of chapters 16-18 we have the account of Israel's first experiences in the wilderness. They provide a continuing contrast between the murmuring, unbelieving people and the patient mercy of God. It becomes increasingly clear that Jehovah was attempting to wean them from their craving for the material and the immediate, to a realization of the value of the spiritual.

Their first supernatural provision was the gift of manna, the bread from heaven. They were given clear instructions to gather each day for five days and on the sixth enough for that day and the following Sabbath. The people had difficulty in obeying, even as today. We also find it difficult to trust God for His deliverance in the midst of impossible situations. Again their faith was tried when they came to a barren desert, wherein there was no water at all; but again Jehovah patiently met their murmuring unbelief by providing water out of the rock for them.

They encountered a third trial when they suddenly found themselves under attack from Amalek. This was their first experience with war after leaving Egypt. The principles of divine conflict were revealed in that Joshua led the men in actual fighting while Moses, assisted by Aaron and Hur, prayed on the mountainside. The Israelites, through this experience, taught that faith requires obedient action, combined with dependence on God. Here again the eternal conflict between Jacob and Esau reappears. Amalek was a tribe that descended from Esau and represents always the flesh in eternal battle against the spirit. Here a great victory was gained,

which Moses commemorated by raising an altar which he named The Lord is My Banner. It was to be a continuing encouragement to any who would have to battle Amalek, with whom Jehovah declared Himself to be at war from generation unto generation.

In chapter 18 an interesting interlude occurred when Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought Moses' wife and his two sons from their home in Midian. Even though Jethro was a priest of Midian, upon hearing Moses' recital of God's activity in delivering Israel from Egypt, Jethro acknowledged Jehovah as supreme and offered to Him a sacrifice. Purely as a matter of common sense, he offered advice to Moses on the delegation of authority within the camp of Israel. The fact that Moses acted on this advice is clear evidence that he recognized God speaking through Jethro. The advice probably saved Moses from an early death from sheer exhaustion, and is excellent counsel for those who have not learned to share their work load with others.

From chapter 19 through the remainder of the book, the record concerns itself with the last two great events of the book of Exodus.

GIVING OF THE LAW

The 10 words of God are introduced to us in a scene of fearful solemnity and majesty. God called Moses and announced to him the purpose for Israel: They shall be to Him. "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." When Moses repeated these words to the people their easy and superficial response was, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (Exod. 19:8). It is clear that the people have no true consciousness of what these words mean. Jehovah, therefore, directed Moses to separate the people from the mountain and to consecrate them for three days that they might be able to endure the sights they were soon to see.

On the third day there were thunderings and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a piercing trumpet blast which made the whole camp of Israel tremble. As the trumpet blew louder and louder and the mountain shook continually, Moses and Aaron were summoned to the mountain and Moses alone was called into the very presence of God. There the voice of God delivered to him the words which we call the Ten Commandments.

The first five of the commandments deal with the relationship between God and man and especially guard against the violation of God's Person. The first warns against polytheism. The second against idolatry. The third proclaims the righteousness of God and warns against profanity. The fourth guards the worship of God against secularism, and the fifth requires the honoring of father and mother as representatives of God, guarding against irreverence to authority.

The second five concern the relationships between persons, guarding the sanctity of life, the sanctity of marriage, the sanctity of property, the sanctity of character and sanctity of the inner thought-life.

Immediately instructions were also given as to the nature of worship, and it is significant that the only altar which God will honor was to be made of simple, unadorned stones devoid of any human workmanship in which the heart of man might boast. Thus the people were instructed in two essential matters: the law which describes the character and holiness of God and the system of sacrifice by which a sinful and lawbreaking people may yet draw near to a holy and righteous God, and find Him merciful and gracious toward them.

As yet the words of the Law were not written upon the stones, but Moses had simply repeated them before the people. He proceeded to give them certain ordinances which apply the principles of the ten words to life. The first section deals with the rights of persons, regulating slavery, wrong done to one's fellow man, and injuries brought about through neglect or carelessness. The second section deals with the rights of property covering theft and dishonesty. The third section (22:1-19) touches upon matters which directly affect worship, including seduction, sorcery, bestiality and idolatry.

Great concern is shown for the rights of strangers, indicating that God hears the cry and avenges the sorrows of many who are oppressed. Warnings are given against reviling God and cursing rulers, and the rights of God concerning the firstborn are reiterated.

Finally, matters of justice are detailed, and the three great feasts which Israel was to keep each year are described. These are the feast of unleavened bread, associated with the Passover; the feast of firstfruits, later associated with Pentecost; the feast of harvest at the end of the year.

These divine admonitions conveyed by Moses to the people conclude with God's great promise to send His angel before them to guard them and to bring them to the place that God had prepared. This angel of the Presence is surely to be identified with Him who eventually became flesh and dwelt among us. He would insure God's blessing to the people and drive out all their enemies.

Following these ordinances, Moses and Aaron and 70 of the elders of Israel were called upon and Moses in their presence repeated all the words of the Lord, reading them as they were written in the Book of the Covenant. Taking blood from the altar he sprinkled the people as they responded, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient."

At this solemn point, the elders of Israel were invited to ascend the mountain funkier where they saw the glory of God described in words which recall the vision of the apostle John, recorded in the fourth and fifth chapters of the Revelation. Here they entered into some mystic communion in which "they beheld God, and they ate and drank" (Exod. 24:11).

Following this, Moses alone was called to the top of the mountain where he waited for six days, and on the seventh he disappeared into the cloud of glory which, in sight of the people of Israel, was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain. There he remained for 40 days and 40 nights.

CONSTRUCTING THE TABERNACLE

From chapter 25 through chapter 31 we have the account of the explicit directions given to Moses for the construction of the Tabernacle, the dwelling place of God among the people. It begins not with the building itself, but with the three articles of furniture which were to be at the heart of the worship of Israel. The first was the Ark of the Covenant with its covering cherubim over the mercy seat, symbolizing the place of the dwelling of God. The next instructions describe the table for the bread of the Presence. In Eastern imagery the table is the symbol of fellowship, and thus the people were reminded of their constant need for communion with God and with one another. The golden lampstand follows, symbolizing the revelation these people were to receive and the testimony they were subsequently to give to the outside world.

These three pieces of furniture were to be the center of all national life and worship: (1) The meeting place with God on the basis of propitiation; (2) the table for fellowship between God and His people; (3) the lampstand of testimony, symbolizing the work to which they were called.

Following this, the divine details of the curtains and coverings in the Tabernacle are specified. The 10 curtains of fine-twined linen contain white (the color of purity), blue (the color of heaven), purple (the color of royalty) and scarlet (the color of blood), as foregleams of the Person and work of Him who would fulfill the symbolism of the entire building. This is also true of the Tabernacle coverings, the boards, the veil and the door screen, which are next described. The veil which separates the holy place from the holy of holies is interpreted in Hebrews 10:20 as the flesh of our Lord. When Jesus died the curtain of the Temple was torn in two and a new and living way was opened up into the presence of God, by Jesus' death.

Exodus 27 brings before us the court surrounding the Tabernacle, and once again the description begins from the inside. We are given first the brass altar on which the animal sacrifices were to be burned. It was to be set within the outer court of the Tabernacle in front of the entrance to the holy place. The outer court was to be enclosed with curtains of finely twined linen, set in sockets of brass and capped by crowns of silver, suggesting purity resting upon the strength of government and crowned with the symbol of redemption.

The screen before the entrance to the court was similar to that before the holy place, and in turn was somewhat like the veil before the holy of holiest. As we have seen, intertwined colors picture the person of Christ. Thus no man might pass within the court save through the symbol of mediation. Likewise there could be no entrance into the holy place of fellowship and testimony but through the same gateway. And none might reach the inner

chamber of the presence of God without participating in the very body and blood of the mediator.

Oil was also commanded to be brought for the continuing light of the lampstand. This clearly symbolized the Holy Spirit who gives the light of revelation in the midst of the darkness of human knowledge.

Following the revelation to Moses of the precise pattern of the Tabernacle, he was then shown the divine mind concerning the priesthood; The priesthood in Israel was to be vested in Aaron and the sons of the tribe of Levi. Aaron as the high priest foreshadowed the work of Christ as confirmed by the book of Hebrews. The garments of the high priest were to represent the glory and beauty of Christ as our High Priest. The vestments of the high priest with their colors of gold, purple, scarlet and white, spoke eloquently of the Person and work of Jesus. The shoulder pieces, each adorned with two onyx stones, engraved with the names of the 12 tribes, symbolized the office of burden-bearing. On the head was the glorious breastplate embellished with precious stones containing also the names of the 12 tribes. At the center of this were the strange Urim and Thummim (Lights and Perfections) which indicated in some mystic manner the work of the priest in discovering the divine mind and will.

The robe of the ephod was entirely blue, suggesting the heavenly matters with which the high priest was to be engaged. The alternating bells and pomegranates on the skirts of the robe spoke of testimony and fruitfulness necessary to priestly intercession. Attached to the golden mitre on the head was a plate bearing the words "Holy to the Lord," indicating the exquisitely balanced perfection of the priestly office.

The consecration of the priests to their office is described in chapter 29, consisting of a threefold function: washing, dressing and anointing. The washing symbolizes the forgiveness of sin; the dressing symbolizes imputation of righteousness; the anointing speaks of the enduing of the Holy Spirit. The offerings which follow are repeated in more detail in the book of Leviticus. They emphasize anew the truth that Jehovah wants always to be before His people, that God could meet with them only through sacrifice and the cleansing of sin. The priests alone are to feed upon the meat of the offerings as a symbol of the necessity of understanding all that is involved in the work of redemption, that by these means and these alone would a living God be able to dwell among a sinful people.

At this point the altar of incense which is supremely the altar of priesthood is introduced. It completes the furniture of the holy place and speaks of the offering of praise and adoration unto God. The bronze laver is then described, which stood before the entrance of the holy place within the outer court.

Finally, we have instructions concerning the use of anointing oil and incense. The whole is symbolic of the fact that only those who had given the half-shekel of redemption, had been cleansed at the bronze laver, and anointed by the fragrant oil could truly offer the worship of prayer and thanksgiving typified by the incense. The Lord who gave these complicated instructions was able also to call and equip certain workmen to construct the Tabernacle and all its furnishings. Two men, Bezalel of Judah and Oholiab of Dan, were filled with the Spirit of God in order to provide the skilled labor necessary to this work.

Then the Sabbath was brought in as essential to all, typifying that the energy by which they labored was to be that of those who have entered into God's rest and have ceased from their own labors. As we have seen before, the Sabbath is forever the symbol of restful activity, dependent upon the Spirit of God.

While these careful instructions were being given to Moses on the mountain top, the people at the bottom of the mountain were already falling into grievous sin. The people who had so wondrously been redeemed from Egypt and led through the waters of the Red Sea and fed miraculously by manna from heaven and refreshed by water from the rock, now manifest a great wickedness in making and worshipping a golden calf. In a scene reminiscent of Abraham pleading with God for the salvation of Sodom and Gomorrah, we see Moses pleading before God on behalf of this people. As with Abraham, it was God Himself who was using Moses to call upon His mercy and allay His wrath. Moses pleaded not so much for the people but for God Himself. He reminded Him that His honor is at stake and pleaded the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He thus became the instrument to turn aside the divine wrath.

On coming down from the mountain with the tables of stone, and surveying the scene of idolatry and

debauchery, Moses angrily threw the plates to the ground, breaking them at the foot of the mountain. He ground the golden calf to powder and compelled the people to drink of the water into which it was thrown. He called, "Who is for the Lord?" In response, the Levites gathered to him and he sent them throughout the camp with a sword in every hand and 3,000 of the worst offenders were slain. The next day he returned to the presence of God and there confessed the sin of the people and pled that they might be spared even if he himself must be blotted out of God's book. God responded by sending him back again to lead the people and promising the angel of the Presence to go with him. Though the angel of the Presence will go before the people to Canaan, nevertheless Jehovah indicated that He would not dwell among them in their sinful state. This remoteness is indicated by the tent of meeting (the predecessor of the Tabernacle) being placed outside the camp where God would commune with Moses.

Moses again interceded before Jehovah saying, "If Thy presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here" (Exod. 33:15). With this God acquiesced and Moses asked for funkier display of the glory of God. Hidden in the cleft of the rock he saw the back parts of God but not His face. While man is yet on earth, God may be seen only by the results of His passing by; the vision of the face of God is reserved only for heaven.

Strengthened by this vision, Moses was called again to ascend the mount and to receive two other tablets inscribed by the hand of God. There on the mountain top the Law and the covenants were renewed and the necessity to keep the feasts and the Sabbath was again decreed. After another 40-day stay with the divine presence, Moses came down the mountain with a shining countenance to greet the people. When he learned of his shining face, he put a veil upon his face that he might speak to the people unhindered. Later we learn from the apostle Paul that he kept the veil there that the people might not see the fading glory. This is to contrast the glory of the law with the superior glory of the face of Jesus Christ.

Chapters 35 to 39 contain the account of the actual building of the Tabernacle. Once again the Sabbath law is restated as emphasizing the need for all activity to be performed in the consciousness of the divine activity superseding the human. The offerings commanded in chapter 25 were brought by the people for the construction of the Tabernacle. The offerings were wholly voluntary, and the labor on the Tabernacle was to be done only by those who came with a willing heart. So abundant was the offering that Moses had to command the people to cease their giving.

First the curtains for the Tabernacle proper were set up and then the beams for the building itself. These were overlaid with cloths of blue, purple and scarlet stuff, with fine-twined linen and cherubim skillfully worked in. The furniture of the Tabernacle was then constructed, beginning with the Ark of the Covenant with its cherubim overshadowing the mercy seat. This was followed by the table of showbread, the golden lampstand and the altar of incense. For the outer court the altar of burnt offering was made, with its horns and grating. Then the great laver of bronze was cast. Finally the curtains of the outer court were hung on each side and the screen for the gate of the court was embroidered in blue and purple and scarlet stuff with fine twined linen. Then the accounting was given of the work of the materials of which the Tabernacle was made.

Full details are given concerning the holy garments of the priest which were made strictly according to the pattern shown to Moses. At last the statement is made, "Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was completed; and the sons of Israel did according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses; so they did" (Exod. 39:32)

Moses blessed the people for their obedient labors and, according to the instruction of God, set up the furniture of the Tabernacle all in its proper place. When the work was finished and the Tabernacle stood exactly according to the pattern which God had shown Moses on the mountain, then the cloud covered the tent and the glory of the Lord came down and filled the whole of the Tabernacle. So splendid was this glory that Moses was not able to enter the Tabernacle. Moreover the cloud of glory remained over the Tabernacle as a permanent guide. Throughout the years of their wanderings it was to be a symbol to the people of the presence of God and the sign of the divine intent to move or to settle.

What shall we make of this amazing building and its precise God-given design? We have already seen that its intimate detail is a foreview of both the Person and the work of Christ, but in the Epistle to the Hebrews we are given a funkier hint as to its significance. There in chapter 3 verse 5 we are told, "Moses was faithful in all His

house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house, whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end." There the full meaning of the Tabernacle is stated plainly for us. It was the symbol of man himself. It was a symbol of Christ because Christ was the perfect man, but it was also the symbol of every believer in Christ who with his Lord shares the glory of the Son of Man.

As the Tabernacle in the wilderness was built in three parts--an outer court, the holy place, the holy of holies--so man is a threefold construction consisting of body, soul and spirit. The human spirit is intended to be the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, and this is symbolized by the Ark of the Covenant with its mercy seat by which the living God can dwell within His people. The apostle Paul confirms this when he says, "You are a temple of God" (I Cor. 3:16). The soul of man corresponds to the holy place, and the furniture within, that of the table of the bread of the Presence, the golden lampstand and the altar of incense, reflect the qualities of emotion (essential to fellowship), mind (encompassing knowledge which gives light), and will (making obedient choices which redound to the praise and glory of God).

The outer court symbolized the body of man with its exposure to the outside world. As Paul tells us in Romans 6, the body is the seat of sin and therefore the site of the altar of sacrifice. It is also the place of defilement and requires the cleansing work of the laver. But above all else, man is to be the dwelling place of God and the anointing of the Holy Spirit is to suffuse his being with the presence and power of God.

It has always troubled me to hear Sunday School teachers and others teach children that a building is the house of God. It is true that the Tabernacle of the Old Testament is called the house of God, but it was a mere shadow. The Temple in Jerusalem took its place, and it too was a shadow. When we come to the New Testament we never find a building designated as the house of God. The house of God in the New Testament is a human body. The apostle Paul declares in I Corinthians 3:16 "Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" When we teach that a building is the house of God, we make it very difficult for people to grasp the idea that their bodies are the temples of God. Nothing is more important than to realize that Jesus Christ Himself is dwelling in your body, which is His temple. Deep at the center of your life is the holy of holies, your human spirit, and in that place the Spirit of God dwells.

Sometimes we hear that the weakness of the Old Testament was that they were under the Law and did not know the grace of God. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is true, they were under the Law, but the Law was not given to them to be their Savior. It was given to reveal their sin and to make them aware of how hopeless was their condition apart from God's redemptive grace. Their problem was not the Law, but the Tabernacle and its system of sacrifices. It was not sufficiently complete; it was not real enough. It consisted only of shadows, just kindergarten pictures, and could never really accomplish anything. Thus when we come to the book of Hebrews we learn that the shadows are done away because they are fulfilled in the great anti-type, the Lord Jesus Christ. We read: "We have confidence to enter the holy place" (Heb. 10: 19). We need no longer fear to enter; for in the blood of Jesus, by means of the cross, God has set aside all that separates us from Him and has brought us near to Himself.

Thus the great message of the book of Exodus is that by means of the cross God has made it possible for a holy, righteous God to dwell with sinful man. The Tabernacle is the picture of God's dwelling with His people. The great truth for us is that God has so totally handled the problem of sin in the sacrifice of His Son that, as Paul says in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." We have perfect access to the Father through the Son, and God's indwelling Spirit will never leave us or forsake us. He has taken up His abode in our hearts.

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