



THE WORD ON THE STREET

A PARAPHRASE BY BOB BOYD

Exodus

Going In to the Going Out

Foreword

I share my study notes, which I call the “Word on the Street,” with others in hopes God will use them to awaken in you and other readers, a fascination and love for the Bible and its teachings. It is God’s “Handbook for Living.”

I believe you will find my notes to be in common, conversational language, as I would say the words to you as a friend. Sometimes they may be a little “gritty,” just like our ordinary daily conversations. If they help you to understand the message of the Scriptures then they have served their purpose well.

Prior to my spiritual reawakening in 1978, my focus was on material things and self-gratification. When I was 15 I had a spiritual experience, and I had been sincere in my teens, but I became more and more indifferent to spiritual matters. After I graduated high school, my principal values were earning money, building my business, playing music and drinking.

My uncontrolled downward spiral into alcohol addiction produced more and more horrendous results and troubles in my life and consequently in the lives of others. I was steadily and alarmingly doing things that were far removed from what I knew to be the right and godly way of living.

In 1978 God mercifully gave me a moment of clarity and a new vision of myself and what He had originally intended for me. I desperately needed the forgiveness of Christ as illustrated in His Parable of the Prodigal Son. God showed me that Christ offers me a better life, and that He died on the cross to give me the hope of eternal life. He is still my only hope of surviving, spiritually and physically. He gave me the desire to go to any lengths necessary to recommit my life to Him. He gave me the will to ask Him to do for me what I could not do for myself; to free me from my addiction to alcohol and restore me to a right relationship with God, and security to be in His presence forever. He also revealed to me that I can do nothing to “earn” a place in Heaven, that it is God’s free gift to me if I believe and trust Jesus and His sacrifice for me.

God did remove my desire for alcohol and the life style it offered. I was in awe of a God Who could and would (and did) forgive me and heal my body and soul despite the way I had mistreated my “temple” for those past 25 years. I asked God to change me, and I became willing to do whatever He required.

God moved me to recommit my life to Christ, and to make Him first and foremost in my life. My desires now are to continue to seek God’s will for me through the Scriptures, and to be committed to God’s work of witnessing, as described in the Gospel of Christ. I

ask God daily to show me His will for me and to help me to keep my priorities straight. I have had spiritual setbacks, but none that have caused me to go back to my addiction and all its accompanying sins.

I am so grateful that God didn't give up on me. Instead, God has given me a fascination with His word and a dedication to studying His word. He also gave me a new approach to studying His word; to analyze it verse by verse, and with the aid of several good study guides, to write my own paraphrase, my own version or "take" on what He revealed to me. I shared some of these paraphrases and was encouraged to continue to study this way. I began to post a chapter every week on a special "Word on the Street" Facebook page.

With the help of my friend and brother Jim McMurry, I now move to a new phase of sharing my scripture studies with others. I pray you will read with a renewed interest, the greatest and most important book ever written.

–Bob Boyd bgboyd6@sbcglobal.net



Bob Boyd at the “Afterthought” 2005

.....Watercolor by Jim McMurry

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Intro to EXODUS (or, Going In to the Going Out)

Moses, for sure, wrote Genesis and Exodus. Exodus means “going out.” One way to look at it, is that Genesis is Conception, and Exodus is Birth and Infancy of the Israeli people.

Moses was born about 1525 years before Jesus was born. For his first 40 years, he was raised as the adopted son of Pharaoh’s daughter. She had pulled him from the reeds in the edge of the Nile River. His mom and sis had put him to save him from being murdered by Pharaoh, along with all the other little boy babies. He was doing that to cut down on the population explosion of the Hebrews. They were having “countless kids” as God promised, and were beginning to outnumber the Egyptians. Moses’ name in Egyptian, means “drawn out of.” The little basket he was floating in, was called an “ark.”

When he was 40, he killed an Egyptian who was beating up on a Hebrew. Someone saw him burying his crime in the sand, so he had to blow the country to save his neck. He spent the next 40 years in Midian tending sheep.

When Moses was 80, God spoke to him out of a bush that was on fire. God told him to get on back down to Egypt, so he could lead all the Hebrews out of slavery. So he spent the rest of his life doing just that.

The reason Moses wrote Exodus was to tell how God and Moses got God’s chosen people out of slavery and how they became a nation of their own in the Promised Land. Moses died at age 120, still a lean, clean machine. He could still see well and had his strength. He must have been a tough old bird. But because he screwed up once (as you will see as you read on,) God wouldn’t let him go into the Promised Land. “You can look, but not touch,” God said. When Moses died, God buried him where nobody would ever find his body, because God knew the people would build a shrine to worship Moses. He was that good. The Hebrews would be nowhere if it hadn’t been for Moses.

CHAPTER 1

Sure enough, after Joe and all his bros died, the Hebrews multiplied BIG time for the next 400 years. They filled the land and got to be a huge, powerful bunch of folks. We’re talkin’ a BIG bunch here; maybe 1 to 2 million folks!

So about that time a new Egyptian king arose. He didn’t know or care about Joe saving everybody from starving. All he could see was more Hebrews swarming around and running out everybody’s ears. One day told all the Egyptians, “Folks, we gotta do something about those Hebrews. There’s gettin’ to be too many of them! Why, there are more of them than us! If we were have a war, they might join the other side! Where will that leave US?” So this new king started beatin’ up on the Hebrews and made them be slave workers and build cities. They gave the Hebrews really hard jobs and beat them like yard dogs, if they didn’t keep up. “Tote that barge! Lift that bale!” But the more he did, the more they kept havin’ kids!

The new king then told the 2 head baby-birther midwife ladies, Shiprah and Puah, “Hey, girls. I order you to let the girl babies live, but kill the boy babies!”

Well, they kind of ignored the king’s order. They knew God didn’t want them killing babies! When the king complained, “What’s goin’ on here?” They just said, “Hey, king. These Hebrew women are quick! They birth their babies before we can get to their house!” (This was true, no doubt; God was at work here, see?)

So the king got really hacked and told ALL the people, “Throw the boy Hebrew babies into the river and drown ‘em!”

CHAPTER 2

So this Levite man and his wife had a baby boy. He was so cute, his mom hid him for 3 months, then put him in a waterproof wicker basket. Then she set it in the edge of the river amongst the reeds. The baby’s big sister stationed herself where she could keep an eye on him.

Then Pharaoh’s daughter (perhaps Hatshepsut?) came to take a bath in the river, and she had some servant girls with her. When she spied the little basket she said, “Hey, girls! Go fetch me that basket!” When she peeked into it she saw this cute little feller, but aw, he was crying! She felt so sorry for the little kid. She said, “Hmmm. This must be a little Hebrew baby!”

Big sis was standing by. She said helpfully, “How about I go fetch you a Hebrew nursemaid?”

“Do it!” said the princess. So sis (was it Miriam?) hurried to bring the baby’s mama. (We are told later her name was Jochebed.)

When princess saw the Hebrew mama she said, “Hebrew lady, take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.” Which of course the mama did, and the baby boy grew and was weaned at age 3, and mama brought him to P’s daughter, who said, “Hmm. I’ll name him Moses, because he was drawn out of the water!”

Fast forward; (we’re moving along pretty fast here.) Moses, now a grown man, is aware he is a Hebrew. He sees how the Egyptians are beating up on his bros and it really burns him up. One day he sees this Egyptian beating up on a Hebrew slave. Moses checks around to see if anybody’s watchin’, then he offs the Egyptian and buries him in the sand!

Next day he saw 2 Hebrew men scuffling. “Hey, hey! How come you’re beatin’ up on your buddy there?” (Never interfere in a fight between buddies.)

One of the men said, “Who do you think YOU are? A judge, or something? Are you gonna kill me, too, like you did the Egyptian?”

“Whoa!” Moses thinks. “Folks know I offed that guy!” And sure enough, he heard that Pharaoh had a warrant out for his arrest. So he took it on the lam. He blew town. He lit out. That’s how he ended up in Midian, and rested by a well. (Like I said, we’re moving along pretty fast here.)

Well, a Midianite preacher named Reuel had 7 daughters. When they all showed up to draw water for their dad’s critters, a bunch of shepherds showed up and shooed them away. So Moses jumped in and helped them. (Did he whoop up on the shepherds? Don’t know, but I suspect he was a tough guy to deal with.) Anyway, he helped the gals water their dad’s critters.

So they went home and their dad asked, “How come you’re already done and back home?”

“Dad, this Egyptian guy chased off the shepherds and drew lots of water for us and watered all your critters!”

Dad said, “So where is this guy? Why did you just leave him there? Go fetch him and bring him home to supper!”

(Fast forward again.) So Moses liked it there, hanging out with Reuel and the Midianites, and Reuel gave him his oldest daughter, Zipporah (which means “bird,”) and pretty soon she bore him a son they named Gershom, which means “stranger.”

Meanwhile, back in Egypt, the Pharaoh with the arrest warrant died, but the Israelites were still in a big mess. They were weeping and wailing about sweating and making bricks for nothing. But God was listening. Finally He said, O.k., it’s time for Me to do what I promised Abe, Izzy and Jake!”

CHAPTER 3

So here’s Moses. For 40 years he’s been living in Midian, herding sheep for his daddy in law. (He came to work for Reuel when he was about 40.) One day he led the sheep critters to the back of the desert, ‘way back into the boonies. That’s where he came upon this mountain called Sinai, the “Mountain of God.”

Whoa! He looked around and here was the Angel of the Lord in a bush! The bush was on fire, but it didn’t burn up! So Moses said, “Wow! Check it out! I gotta see this up close!”

When the LORD saw He had Moses' attention, He hollered, "Hey, Moses!"

Of course, Moses said, I'm right here!"

"Stand back! Don't get too close. And take off your shoes. This is a special place!"

He went on. "I'm Abe's God, and Izzy and Jake's God." Moses was afraid to look! "I know what's going on with my special people down in Egypt. They keep hollering at me for help. And they are RIGHT! It's time for me to come to take them out of Egypt to a good land, with lots of groceries. It's a land where I've been letting a lot of heathen folks live, until now."

"So here's the deal, Moses. You got the job. You're my man. I'm sending you as my CEO, Liberator and Travel Director."

Moses: "Whoa! Hold on! Why me?"

God: "Hey, don't sweat it. I'm going with you, you know. You're gonna bring 'em out, and come and serve Me on this mountain!"

Moses: "O.k., say I get there and tell the Israelis 'Abe, Izzy and Jake's God sent me.' What if they ask me what Your name is?"

God: "I AM WHO I AM! Tell them, I AM has sent you. If you use the right approach, they'll listen to you. Then you and the main men of Israel, the guys with the long beards, will go with you to see the King of Egypt, and y'all will tell him, 'Our God has come to us and told us to go make a 3-day trip out into the desert. He wants us to worship Him and kill and burn some animal sacrifices out there.' Now, I'm telling you up front, he's not going to go for that. No way. Not until I sock them with a bunch of wonders that will blow them all away. After that, you bet they'll let you go! They'll be glad to get rid of you guys. Besides, I'll make sure you get lots of Egyptian stuff before you leave there, like silver, gold and clothes for your kids. Man, you're going to rip them off pretty good before I'm done!!"

CHAPTER 4

Moses asked, "What happens if they won't listen to me? What if they say, 'Naw, God didn't tell you that!'"

The LORD said, "What's that you're holding in your hand?"

"What, this stick?"

"Yeah. Throw it down." Bang! He threw it down and it turned into a snake! Moses ran like a bandit! "Now grab it by the tail." Moses did, and it turned back into a stick!

LORD: "When you do that with the stick, that'll get their attention, and they'll believe I sent you. Now stick your hand into your shirt." Moses did, and when he pulled it out, it was white with a bad case of leprosy! "Do it again." This time it came out o.k. Wow! "Now, Moses, if these 2 tricks don't convince them I sent you, get a bucket of river water and pour it out on the ground. It'll become BLOOD."

But Moses still had problems. "Hey, LORD, You got the wrong guy for this job. I'm not a good talker."

“Yeah, but Who made your mouth? Who makes handicaps? I DO! So get outa here! I’ll be your mouth, and teach you what to say!”

Moses: “Hey, LORD, come on. How about give the job to somebody else?”

By now, the Lord is beginning to get hacked with Moses, and that ripped it. “O.k. You got a bro named Aaron, who’s a good, slick talker. Looky! He’s coming out to meet you, and will be tickled to see you. Lay all this plan on HIM. And quit worrying! I’ll be with you and him both and make sure you know what to do and say. He’s gonna be your mouthpiece, and you’re my agent. Now, get outa here! And don’t forget your STICK!”

So Moses went back to his daddy-in-law, and said, “Dad, I’d love to go back to Egypt to visit my kinfolk and see if they’re still living (after 40 years,) and I’m hoping you’ll let me.”

He replied, “Yeah, go for it, Moses. It’s o.k. with me.”

God had told Moses, “You can go back to Egypt now. They guys who put out a warrant on you and put you on their hit list, are history. Now, here’s the plan: Pull out all those tricks I showed you. They won’t work, ‘cause I’ve made Pharaoh hard-hearted. He won’t turn loose of my people. THEN, you tell him ‘O.k., God says: “Israel is my firstborn son. If you won’t let him/them go, I’m telling you now, I’m gonna KILL your firstborn son!”

So Moses took his wife and 2 sons and put them on donkeys, took that stick in his hand and went back to Egypt. Now, this a weird and wild happening. On the way, God was about to kill Moses, ‘cause he hadn’t circumcised his boys yet. (That was a very vital sign that every male was dedicated to God and indicated they were in fact Hebrew.) But his wife Zipporah (“Zip”) took the bull by the horns and circumcised their son with a sharp stone. This was to save Moses’ life. She was pretty hacked she had to do it, I think. But as a result, God let Moses go.

Meanwhile, in Egypt, God told Aaron, “Go meet Moses at Mount Sinai.” When he got there he was glad to see his younger bro (Aaron was the oldest son) and Moses filled him in on God’s plan. They rounded up all the Hebrew geezers in Egypt, Aaron relayed the plan to them, and Moses pulled out all God’s wonders with the stick and the hand. That did it. They believed Moses and Aaron were God’s field reps sent to ease their pain and slavery, so they worshipped and thanked God.

CHAPTER 5

So here’s Moses and Aaron, (M and A,) got an audience with Pharaoh, (P,) the big guy, the king and head honcho of Egypt.

“Here’s a message from the LORD God of the Hebrews. Turn my people loose, so they can go into the desert and throw a big bash for Me.”

P. scoffed. “Who says? I don’t know this ‘lord’ you’re talking about. Your request is denied.”

M and A said, (probably A., as he was the designated mouthpiece,) “The God of the Hebrews called a meeting with us. Please, let us go and sacrifice some of our best animals to worship Him, or He might come down on us big time!”

P. sneered. “M and A., why are you messing with my labor pool? Get them back to work! You’d be keep them from their jobs!” So P. told his foremen and general managers “The Hebrew slaves have got too much time on their hands and are lazy. Make them find their own straw for making bricks! But they gotta keep making the same number of bricks every day! That’ll keep ‘em busy so they won’t be thinking about goofing off in the desert!”

So that made the Hebrews worse off than they had been before, because of M. and A.’s demands. So they lodged an official labor complaint against P. This included the Hebrew foremen. When they came out of the meeting with P., M. and A. were there waiting for them. “Now, you two have ripped it! God’s gonna get you for this. You’ve really screwed us up. Why, they’re ready to KILL us!”

Moses went back to the Real Boss (God) and said, “LORD, why’d you do this, and why did you send me to speak in Your name? All it’s done so far is cause them more grief! You haven’t saved them yet!”

CHAPTER 6

(Yahweh speaking!) “Now, Moses. You are going to see what I’m about to do to Pharaoh. When I’m done with him, he’ll not only be glad to get rid of my children; he’ll DRIVE them out of Egypt!” Then God sat Moses down for a pep talk. “First of all, Moses, I AM the LORD. I’m the One Who appeared to Abe, Izzy and Jake. They knew me as God Almighty, but they didn’t know my real name. I made a deal with them and promised I’d give them the Canaan Land, where I first sent Abe as a stranger. Yes, and I heard the cries and groans of my people, Abe’s kids. And no, I haven’t forgotten My promise! So go tell them, ‘I AM the LORD; YHVH, Jehovah, the Creator and manager of all things, and the breath of life itself. I WILL free you from your workload and slavery, and I WILL take you back under my arm. You WILL be My people, and I WILL be Your God! That WILL prove to you Who I AM. Then I WILL take y’all to the lovely place, the land I promised to Abe, Izzy and Jake, and I WILL give it to you as an inheritance. DO NOT FORGET – I AM the LORD!’”

Well, Moses laid all this on the children of Israel (CIs) but they were in such a state they couldn’t focus. So God told Moses, “Go on back to Pharaoh and tell him he’d better turn loose of My people!”

But Moses said, “Lord, he’s just not listening! He says, ‘I don’t give a flip about this YHWH you’re talking about.’” Of course, God was turning Pharaoh more and more hard-nosed about the idea.)

(Verses 14 through 27 are another Hebrew family tree, that gives Moses and Aaron’s lineage.)

CHAPTER 7

So God ordered M and A to go back and see P. again. Moses was 80 and Aaron was 83. Yahweh said, “When Pharaoh asks for a miracle, tell Aaron to throw down that stick.” That’s what he did. Bang! It turned into a snake! But P. called in his magic guys and wise guys, and bang! They all pulled off the same trick some way. So now we got a bunch of snakes crawling around the floor.

Gulp! Gulp! Gulp! Aaron’s snake stick gobbled up all the Egyptian snakes! That didn’t phase Pharaoh a bit. He just got more stubborn, like God said he would.

Later, Yahweh to Moses: “He’s not gonna budge yet. Go to Pharaoh in the morning and meet him on the riverbank. And take your stick! Tell Pharaoh for Me; “Yahweh has said to you, turn my children loose, so they can serve Me in the desert. But so far you have told us, “No way.” Now, Pharaoh, hear this latest bulletin from Yahweh. Just so’s you know for sure Who I AM, the Creator of all, I’m gonna tell my man there to hit the river with his stick, and I’ll turn it into BLOOD. All the fishes will die, the water will stink to high heaven, and nobody will want to drink from it. Now, not only will the river be blood, but all the water in the buckets and pitchers will too.”

So WHACK! Aaron slapped the Nile River with his stick, and Bingo! BLOODY water, all over Egypt. Not a drop to drink! He turned on his heel and went into his house. Folks were digging holes all around the river, trying to come up with water that was fit to drink.

Chapter 8

Once again Yahweh God ordered Moses; “Go tell Pharaoh, I say, ‘Turn loose of my people so they can serve Me. If you don’t, you’re gonna have FROGS coming out of your EARS! That’s right, I said FROGS. They’ll come swarming out the river, and be all over all y’all; in your houses, your beds, in your ovens and dishes, and on YOU.’”

Well, Aaron stuck his stick out over the river, and you never saw so many frogs! Now, that finally got P’s attention, even after his wise guys showed him a similar trick. So P. called in M. and A. and said, “O.k, o.k. Ask your God to clean up this frog mess and I’ll turn the people loose to go do their dumb sacrifice worship.”

Moses told P., “I’ll do that, P., but just s that you’ll know; there is NO GOD like Yahweh!” And so it was, when Moses asked Yahweh, He stopped the frogs. They stayed only in the river. Everybody had to clean up all the dead, rotten, stinking critters. Man! Did they ever stink to high heaven! That ended the Frog Plague.

But just like God predicted, Pharaoh still wouldn't keep his promise and turn the people loose!

God then ordered the 3rd Plague. Aaron hit the dust with his stick, and whoosh! Each particle of dust became a louse! They covered all the humans and critters too.

Everybody was lousy with them. And you know, P.'s wise guys couldn't turn dust to lice critters, and they even today Pharaoh, "This is GOD at work!" But P. just shook his head, folded his arms and clenched his jaw. "No way will I loose my free labor force!"

God said, "Moses, you and Aaron get up early tomorrow and catch P. coming out the river. Give him my same message; "Turn loose my people so they can serve me, or I'm gonna swarm you with countless flies, all over you and all y'all. Every where except in Goshen, because they're my kids, I'm not going to plague them like I do y'all. You're going to have to admit I'm the LORD!"

So the flies appeared, tons and tons of them all over everybody except the Hebrews in Goshen. God kept them flyless. P. called in M. and A. again. "Go, do your sacrifices, but do them here in Egypt."

"King," said Moses, "We can't do that. Because of your beliefs, we can't kill and burn critters that are sacred to you Egyptians. Why, if they see us do it, they might kill us! We need to gout into the desert to do it, like God said."

"Yeah, o.k. You're right. Go into the desert to do it. But don't go very far! Just ask your Yahweh to get rid of these blasted flies!"

"I'll do that, P., but you gotta be straight up with us this time. No more changing your mind!"

So God ended the Flies Plague. But again, P. had lied to M. and A., and like God said, he got even more stubborn!

Chapter 9:

Plague #5 Comin' Up!

God speaking: "Moses, go tell P. to do what I've been telling him, or tomorrow, I'm gonna put my hand on all the Egyptian cattle in the field, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the oxen and the sheep. They're all gonna get sick and die. But the Hebrew critters, they're all gonna be all right."

Next day, sure enough, the Egyptian animals were dropping like flies. They all keeled over dead. P. even checked out the Hebrew beasties; they were all strong as an ox. But did this turn him around? Not yet!

Plague #6: God speaking: "M and A., grab a bunch of ashes out of a furnace. Moses, while P. is watching, throw 'em up into the air. It'll settle on every man and beast, and they'll all break out with real bad sores." When they did, P's wise guys were so sore they couldn't even stand up and show up in court! But P. was still keeping them around

because he didn't like this idea of a god being more powerful than him. (Up until this plague, P. was getting more and more stubborn on his own. When this happened, God started hardening P.'s heart. So God was carrying out His purpose through Pharaoh, while Pharaoh was still responsible for his own actions.)

Plague #7: God speaking: "Tomorrow morning, go tell Pharaoh, turn 'em loose! I've had about enough of your beating up on my kids and refusing to do what I tell you. It's gettin' serious now. You think you run things, but you don't. I've kept y'all alive so far, so you can see there is NO OTHER GOD. Tomorrow, about this time, I'm gonna make a storm like none of you has EVER seen. There's gonna be hail and fire and lightning strikes so fierce it's gonna kill any man or critter that's outdoors, and break every tree, and ruin all your field crops."

Next day about that time, God told Moses to stretch out his hands toward heaven, and wow! The most devastating storm imaginable struck Egypt. There were even big fireballs of lightning zigzagging around on the ground! Some had paid attention to God's warning and were saved; some didn't. But there was no storm on the Hebrews in Goshen.

Well, Pharaoh called in M. and A. and said, "Guys, you're right. This time I've screwed up. The LORD is good, but my people and I are evil. Ask the LORD, please, to hold off on all this storming! I've had enough. I'll turn you guys loose. You don't have to stay any longer."

"O.k., P.," Moses said. "Soon as I leave here, I'll raise my hands to the LORD and He'll stop it, so you will know Who is the Maker and Manager of the Earth. But you're not fooling me, P. I know you and your guys. You don't fear and respect the LORD yet."

Moses and the LORD stopped the storm, and like Moses figured, P. and his guys got stubborn again and still refused to turn God's people loose.

Chapter 10: Plague #8:

Grasshoppers!

God: "Moses, go see Pharaoh again. I've made him and his guys really against turning the Hebrews loose. I'm doing that so they'll see it is ME Who controls all the Earth, and so you can tell your kids and grandkids about all the mighty things I'm doing here, so all y'all will always know Who is the Real Boss!"

M. and A. once again to P.; "God says, how long do you think you can stand against Me? Turn them loose, P., or tomorrow the grasshoppers will cover up and eat up everything in sight, even the trees! They're gonna fill up every one of you Egyptians' homes. You never SAW so many grasshoppers!"

After they left P.'s presence, his guys said, "Hey, boss. Don't you think you better let the Hebrew men go do their worship? They're wrecking our land and our lives here!"

So P. called in M. and A. and said, “O.k. Go on. Who all is going?”

Moses: “Everybody! Men, women and kids, flocks and herds.”

P.; “No way. Only the men can go. All the rest must stay. (He wanted to keep hostages so they would have to return.) “Now, get outa here!” This time they were driven out of his presence.

So God said, “O.k., Moses. Here we go. Stretch out your hand over Egypt. I’ll send an east wind and blow in all the grasshoppers.” Whoosh! Overnight, a gazillion grasshoppers blew in. The land was black with them, and they ate all the greenery, the trees, even what the hail had left.

That got Pharaoh’s attention big time. “Hey, M. and A.! Get in here quick! I guess I’ve really screwed up this time. Ask your God to forgive me just this once, and get rid of all this creepy crawly hungry death!!”

Once again, Moses asked the LORD to end the plague. He sent a very strong west wind and blew all the grasshoppers into the Red Sea. Every grasshopper was gone! But, you guessed it. After the obstinate Pharaoh got all the grasshoppers out of his home and his hair, he said, “No way! You can’t leave!”

Plague #9: Darkness.

Same drill. God says, “Moses, reach for the sky! I’m gonna make it dark as night there for 3 whole days!” So they couldn’t see each other or even get around to work for 3 days. But the Hebrews had lights in their homes and were o.k.

P. once again calls in M. “Go serve your God. Take your kids. But leave your critters!”

“Hey, P. We gotta have critters to burn to the LORD. We’re not leaving even a hoof behind. Why, we don’t even know what we’re gonna need until we get there to worship!”

P. is getting REALLY hacked now! “Then get away from me! I don’t want to see you guys again! If I see you, y’all are HISTORY!”

Moses calmly replied, “You got it, P. I’ll never see your face again!”

Chapter 11:

The Final Straw

During the dark days, God had said, “O.k., Moses. One more plague. This one will get Pharaoh’s attention big time, and he’ll not only turn all my people loose, he’ll run y’all off! But first, you need to go tell everybody to ask their Egyptian neighbors to give them gold and silver things.” (By now, Moses had a lot of clout with P.’s servants and the Hebrews.)

Then Moses dropped the big bomb on Pharaoh; “Hear this from the LORD Himself! About midnight, I the LORD will go out into the middle of Egypt, and every first-born child will die, from Pharaoh’s household down to the servant at the mill, to all the

animals! Everybody will scream bloody murder, except, that is, for My children, the Hebrews. They will be safe and at peace. That's so's everybody will see who belongs to Me. All these guys you got hangin' 'round you, Pharaoh, will bow down to me and say, "Get out! And take all the Hebrews with you!" Then Moses stomped in a fire of anger, out of P's throne room. You could tell he'd just about had it with P. But even THIS death threat didn't phase Pharaoh, because the LORD made him even more hardnosed against losing his free work force!

Chapter 12

Now here's another special bulletin from the LORD: "Tell all my people to mark their calendars. You're gonna start a new year this month. On the 10th, pick out a perfect lamb (if you've got one; if not, work it out with your buddy next door.) At sundown on the 14th, everybody kill your lamb. Put some of its blood on your door facings and frame. Then roast the whole critter, head, guts and all, and eat it all with some flatbread without yeast and some bitter herbs, like garlic. If you have any leftovers, next morning, burn it up! Oh, yes. Be dressed to leave town while you're eating your lamb dinner. When I come by your place, I'll be killing all the firstborn with a plague, but I'll pass by your house. If I see your lamb's blood on the door frame, you're home safe, free and clear."

"Here's more. You're going to keep this feast every year. For a week, same time, same same, no yeast in your bread. No working on days 1 and 7. Tell your kids why you always do this: 'On that day we get to leave Egypt to go to the land God promised to us.'" (God had shown them already how silly and stupid it was for the Egyptians to be worshiping frogs and the sun and cows and lice and flies. They're just critters! Hey, don't worship the creation; worship the Creator of all things! Hello!)

"And, Moses and Aaron! It's time for you all to get out of there. Take your herds of critters and go, and be grateful to Me for your freedom."

The Egyptians were so ready to be rid of them all, that they had given them a lot of good stuff, like gold and silver and suits and dresses, whatever they asked for!

So they all trooped out of Rameses to Succoth. There were about 600,000 men 20 years and older, plus all their women and kids, about 2 million in all, plus all their flocks and herds of critters. There were even some Egyptians and other folks with them who wanted to stick with the winners. God had laid down the law about the Passover; who could eat it, when and how. So that's how the LORD freed all His children from Egyptian slavery. It had been exactly 430 years since there were only 70 of them. The day they boldly walked away became a very famous and memorable day for all Hebrews everywhere forever!

Chapter 13

God proved to them all that He was the deliverer Whose leadership rescued them from slavery. God to Moses: “All the firstborns will be Mine from now on. During Passover, eat your bread without yeast for a week. I’m taking y’all to a land with lots of good stuff like milk and honey.”

With a huge column of fire at night and smoke by day, God led them around by the Red Sea, not through the Philistines’ land. And sure enough, Moses took old Joe’s bones with him like Joe said, 430 years ago!

Chapter 14

Latest update from the LORD to Moses:

“Moses, tell my people (Jake’s kids) to turn and camp between Migdol and the Red Sea. Pharaoh will think they are lost and wandering around. He’ll decide to come after them. That’s when I’m gonna show them Who is the Real Boss!”

Pharaoh’s guys told him, “Hey, boss! The Hebrews have all run off!”

The angry Pharaoh blustered, “Why have we let our free labor force get away?” So he geared up his personal chariot, organized all his commanding officers and their best chariots, 600 of them, and took off after the Hebrews with his entire army. They caught up with them where they were camped by the Red Sea.

Meanwhile at the camp, the children of Israel (C.I.’s) were saying, “Hey! Look! Here come Pharaoh and his army!” Well, that scared them. First they prayed “LORD, help us!” Then they complained to Moses, “Ah ha! You’ve brought us out here to die! Why didn’t you leave well enough alone? It’d be better for us to live as slaves, than to die out here in the desert!”

Moses: “Don’t sweat it, y’all! Stand still! You’re about to see the most humongous miracle yet! God is about to wipe them out! Get a good look at the Egyptian army, ‘cause you’ll never see them again, ever!”

Then the LORD said, “Moses! What’s holding y’all up? Get on out there! Stick out that stick over the sea and split it apart, and all y’all C.I.’s will cross on the dry bottom! The Egyptians will follow you, then you’re about to see Who is really in charge here.”

Wow! Looky here! The Angel of God in the column of smoke and fire, who stood in front of the C.I. camp, moved to the rear. All the Egyptians could see was a cloud and darkness, but the C.I.s could light on their side. So it stood guard all night long!

So Moses followed the LORD’s orders. He stretched out his hand with the stick in it, over the sea. The LORD blew all the waters back all night long, with a fierce east wind, and made a dry road across the sea bottom. The water was 2 huge walls standing up on both sides of the dry road. The dumb Egyptians came trooping down the bank in their chariots and tried to chase them through the dry roadway between the walls of water.

Well, their chariot wheels started falling off. Then they got scared and cried, “Hey! We’re in big trouble here! The LORD is fighting for them against us!”

Then the LORD dropped the big bomb. He said, “Moses, stretch out your stick again, and I’ll close up the sea walls on the Egyptians.” The waters closed over the Egyptian army and wiped them all out. They were all drowned, every one. Next morning the sea was calm and level, and the Egyptians were all dead, lying along the seashore. But the CIs were all safe on the other side!

So the LORD saved them that day, and they believed the LORD and His servant Moses.

Chapter 15

Moses and the CIs were so happy, they burst into song! They sang about how the LORD, the glorious winner, threw the horses and riders into the sea. “I’m with Him forever, because He rescued me, I’ll keep on telling how great He is,” they sang. “The LORD is a warrior Who sinks His enemies like stones to the bottom. Nobody is like You, LORD!” On and on, over and over, the CIs raved joyously about this event, when they passed through the waters on the dry land. It was as if they were reborn, passing from the bondage restrictions to freedom!

Miriam, Moses and Aaron’s sis, had been around since the beginning, when she hid and watched her baby brother Moses in the little basket. She grabbed a small drum and led all the women, singing and dancing for joy.

3 days later, they had found no water. The CIs were getting pretty thirsty by then. Then they found some bitter water, and let out a howl to Moses; “When you gonna get us some water?” So God showed Moses a tree and told him to throw it into the waters, and it made the water sweet. Moses said, “Now, y’all, if you’ll listen up to what the LORD says, and DO what He says, you won’t get any of those diseases He gave to the Egyptians. Remember, He says, ‘I AM the LORD Who heals you!’”

Soon they came to Elim. They found 12 wells of water and 70 palm trees there, so they camped there and “elim-inated” their thirst!

Chapter 16

Next stop, 30 days after they left Egypt:

Everybody got on Moses and Aaron's case, moaning and groaning and grumbling. "Hey! Why didn't the LORD just kill us in Egypt, where we had plenty of groceries and goodies? But no! You brought us all out here to starve to death!"

God doesn't like to hear that. Nobody likes to hear their kids grumbling. "O.k., Moses, I'm gonna rain bread from heaven down on y'all. You'll go out every day and gather some of it up. We'll see whether they can follow My orders this time!"

Moses told the CIs, "Don't grumble at me and Aaron! The LORD is in charge here. He heard you grumbling and is going to give you meat in the evening, and bread every morning!"

So that evening God sent a million quails, little feathered friends. They dropped out of the sky, ready to be killed, cooked and eaten. Then the next morning, when the heavy dew lifted, they found loads of a breadlike stuff. They said, "Ma na," which is Hebrew for, "What the heck is this stuff?"

Moses said, "Go gather up about a half gallon of the stuff for each person. But eat it all; don't try to keep it overnight." Them that did found the next morning, that it had worms and was stinky.

On the 6th day, they gathered twice as much, about a gallon apiece, like the LORD said. "Cook it on Saturday so you'll have it to eat Sunday, 'cause there won't be any falling on Sunday!" This time the stored stuff kept fresh overnight, because God preserved it like He said.

Moses: "Now y'all put up a pot of this stuff and we'll save it as a memo of God's mercy and provision to us." So for 40 years, they ate the LORD's manna in the desert.

Chapter 17

On the move again, they camped at Rephidim, where there was no water. "Hey, Moses! We're bad thirsty! What are you gonna do about it?"

Moses replied, "Get off my case! The LORD's in charge here, not me! See His pillar of fire and smoke there? Get on HIS case!"

(Moses always went to God for answers, like the dumb CIs should have.) "Hey, LORD! I need some help here! They're so mad they're about ready to start chunkin' rocks at me!"

God replied, "O.k. Go get some of the Hebrew geezers to go with you to that rock in Horeb. Take My stick with you. I'll be there. Whack that rock with My stick and you'll get lots of drinking water gushing out the rock."

Well, more trouble. They ran into a tribe of desert folks called Amalekites, who didn't like them stompin' around on their turf. They were Esau's redneck kids, and were constant troublemakers for the CIs. Read on.

So Moses said, "Joshua," ("Josh," first mention of his name, more later; he's got a whole book named after him.) "Joshua, pick out some of our toughest guys and defend us against the Amalekites. I'll stand on a hill with God's stick." Moses took God's stick,

Aaron and Hur, Caleb's boy, and climbed up a hill where he could look down over the battlefield. When he was pointing the stick out over them, our side was winning, but if his hand drooped, their side started winning. So they got a rock for him to sit on, and Aaron and Hur held his arms up, until sundown. By then we had them licked. Yay! God wins!

"This is one for the books," Moses said. "Write all this down, guys." And he built a slaughter place and named it "The-Lord-Is-My-flag!"

Chapter 18

Moses' daddy-in-law Jethro got word of Moses' doin's in Egypt, so he brought Moses' wife Zipporah ("Zip," the lady who circumcised their son) and his sons Gershom and Eleizer from Midian to the camp near God's Mountain. Moses joyfully came out to meet them. He gave them a big old bow and a bear hug. "How y'all been doin'?" "We're gettin' along fine, how're y'all?" Then they went into Moses' tent to sit and visit a spell. Moses told Jethro the whole story, how the LORD brought them all out of slavery. Jethro, who was an old geezer priest who believed in the one and only God, not all the phony gods. He said, "Praise the LORD!" (but he used the Gentile name "Elohim" for God, not "Jehovah," the name reserved for Hebrews only.) Then they all worshiped and burned critters as offerings to God, Hebrews and gentiles all buddy-buddy together, and God was pleased.

Next day, Jethro saw Moses sitting all day long, sunup 'til sundown, hearing the problems of his people, the CIs. Jethro asked Moses, "Hey! Tell me what's going on here? How come you taking on all problems by yourself?"

"What else am I gonna do, Dad?" Moses asked. "They keep comin' every day, from can 'til can't. Who else is gonna figure out who's right and who's wrong? Who else is gonna tell 'em what God says?"

Jethro shook his head. "Son, you've got it all wrong. You're messing up. There's a better way. You're gonna wear yourself out pretty quick, then where are y'all gonna be? C'mere, and let me give you some fatherly advice, Son. Keep up the good work, but you need to pick out a bunch of other God-fearin' guys who you trust, guys who love God more than stuff, stand-up guys who love the truth and who put principles before personalities and profits. You need to set up several levels of judging. Some handle the

easy ones, some the harder ones, so that you only get the hardest ones. That will be a much more effective system, and it won't wear YOU out!"

Chapter 19

So now we find Moses and the CIs in the Sinai desert, near God's Mountain, Mount Sinai, where it all started a while back, where God called to Moses from the fire bush and ordered him to go get His people outa Egyptian trouble. Here's god speaking to Moses from the mountain:

"Moses! Go tell all my children: 'y'all have seen what I've done so far. Y'all are my special treasure of all the people in the world, and I own them all, and all the earth, you know, 'cause I made it all Myself. If y'all behave and do what I say, I'll make you a holy nation.'"

Moses went and told all the Hebrew geezers and they said, "You got it. We'll do all He wants us to do!"

Back and forth went Moses as usual, God's go-between, the LORD's mouthpiece. So God answered, "O.k., I'll talk to you from a thick cloud, so they can hear Me when I speak to you."

NOW HEAR THIS! BIG EVENT COMING UP!

"On the 3rd day, everybody's got to wash their clothes and be ready, and tell the guys to stay away from their wives. For I, the LORD will come down onto Mount Sinai. When a trumpet blows loud and long, the people may approach the mountain. But nobody, and I mean NOBODY, man or beast, comes near or touches the base of Sinai, or he's history. Kill him with rocks or shoot him with an arrow."

All this came down on day 3. Moses brought out the CIs. Lightning! Thunder! Smoke! The loudest trumpet blast you ever heard! It was enough to scare the heck out of everybody and make them all shake in their sandals; even Moses! (Hebrews 11:21.) Then it got worse. The mountain was completely engulfed in fire and smoke, and shook like an earthquake. Then the LORD called Moses to come up, and told him "Don't let ANYBODY break through and see Me because it will KILL them! But bring the priests up."

Moses said, "Wait! You said not to do that!"

God replied, "Get outa here! Then come on back up and bring Aaron, but no priests!"

Chapter 20

So the stage was set for the Big Event. Then God laid out the Big Rule Book!

“Now, listen up! I AM the LORD, your God. It was ME Who brought you out of slavery. Now here are your marching orders for all time!

1. Nothing, absolutely nothing and no one, will be more important to you than ME.
2. Never worship any part of my creation, nothing in the sky, or on the land, or in the water. Worship only ME your Creator.
3. No cussing. Never use My Name for any purpose except worship!
4. Everybody will work 6 days a week, but take off the 7th day and rest, like I did. That’s an order.
5. Your dad and mom are special folks. Always treat them with honor and I’ll let you live a long life.
6. Don’t murder anybody.
7. No outside-of-marriage sex.
8. No stealing.
9. No lying.
10. Don’t hanker for your neighbor’s wife or ANY of his stuff.

The people were all blown away by all this show of God’s power and authority, and hearing God Himself talking directly to them. They were shaking in their boots. “Hey, Moses! It scares us for God to talk straight to us! You stay between God and us, or we might die! You do the talking with Him!”

Moses calmed them. “Don’t be scared, y’all. God’s just come to check you out and make sure you fear Him and don’t sin.”

Then God told Moses, “Here’s a few details. Don’t make any gold or silver gods, but make me an altar out of dirt, to burn critters on for Me. If you use rocks for the altar, use plain rocks and don’t be beating around on them with iron tools. That’ll mess ‘em up. And keep your pants on when you go up onto my altar. Don’t show your private parts.”

Chapter 21

For the next 75 verses, the LORD kept on telling, through Moses His mouthpiece, what the penalties were for breaking each of the 10 Commandments. General rules were laid down for this huge body of people who suddenly were free from the laws of Egypt. The New Laws of God were unusually just and fair, and very different from the laws of other ancient cultures.

How about servants? Many of them had slaves or were slaves. Then new laws limited a slave owner's rights over the life of his slave.

What about violence? Here's a list of crimes punishable by execution; whacking and killing somebody; whacking or even insulting, your dad or mom; having sex with an animal.

Speaking of animals, if you had an ox and knew it was mean and dangerous, and didn't keep it corralled, and it attacked and killed somebody, both you and the ox would

be executed.

Chapter 22

"If you catch a man breaking into your home at night and kill him, it's o.k. You're not a murderer. If it's in the daytime, it's up to a judge to decide.

"If you seduce a virgin, you gotta pay her daddy whatever he wants, even if he refuses to let you marry her.

"If you make sacrifices to any god other than the LORD, you're dead.

"Witches are to be executed.

"Don't bad-mouth a ruler of your people.

"Don't eat road kill; throw it to the dogs.

"Don't mistreat strangers, widows or orphans. If you do, the LORD will run you off, or make YOU a single person or orphan.

"If you loan money to a poor man, don't charge him interest.

"Give up your firstborn child and the firstborn of each of your animals, and of your harvest, willingly and gladly to the LORD.

. "Live holy and wholly to God." These laws are all tough but just.

Chapter 23

"Don't lie and bad mouth people or carry mean gossip around. Don't join in with bad guys, and don't take bribes. Remember, poor folks have rights, too.

"If you find a guy's lost cow or mule or other critter, take it back to him. If you see a bad guy's mule fall under his burden, help him up.

"Every 7th year, let your land rest up, and every 7th day, take a break from work and let your critters and everybody else take a break. And don't even mention the name of other gods. Don't even go there!

"All you guys go to 3 feasts a year: Unleavened bread, Harvest and Ingathering. Show up and honor the LORD.

"Now, look. I'm sending My Angel to run interference for you. My name is in Him. Obey Him; don't make Him angry with you. If you do what He says, I'll stand between you and your enemies, amongst the redneck riffraff pagans. Don't cut any deals with the pagans. Do not mess with their silly, phony gods. Knock down their idols! You're gonna run 'em all off. I'll mess up their minds and make 'em run from you, a little at a time, and give you the land."

Chapter 24

"Moses! Bring Aaron and his 2 boys, Nadab and Abihu ("Nad" and "Ab") and 70 of the wise Hebrew geezers. They need to stand back to worship Me, but Moses, you by yourself can come close to Me."

Moses laid out the whole story to the CIs, with all the laws and judgements. The CIs gladly said, "Yes, sir. We will do all that stuff, just like the LORD said."

So Moses wrote it all down in a book. Next morning he got up early and built that dirt altar at the foot of Sinai Mountain, and set up 12 big tall rock around it. (That was for Jake's 12 boys.) Then he sent some young guys to burn critters for sacrifice and peace offerings to God. Then Moses put 1/2 of the dead critters' blood into some big bowls and the other half he sprinkled on the altar. Then Moses took that Book he had been writing everything down in, the "Book of Contract," and read it all to the CIs. Then they gave their "verbal signature" to the Contract. They said, "Yeah Moses. We'll everything the LORD says!" Then Moses sprinkled blood all over the CIs, and said, "This is the blood of the Big Contract Deal the LORD has made with you!."

Then Moses, Aaron, Ab and Nad and the 70 wise geezers all went up the mountain. And it says they actually saw God, without being destroyed by His holiness. He didn't even lay a hand on them. They even ate and drank there!

Then God said, "Moses, come on up higher here. I've got some tablets made out of rock for you, and I wrote the Law and Commandments on them, so you can be the teacher."

So Moses took his sidekick Joshua and told the 70 wise geezers, "You guys wait here for us. You've got Aaron and Hur here to go to if anybody needs advice. Come on, Josh. We gotta go up."

And he and Josh went up the mountain into the Glory Cloud, and waited 6 days; then on the 7th day God said, "Moses, you can come on up now." And he was up there with the LORD for 40 days and nights.

Chapter 25

(Note: Chapters 25 through 31 give detailed descriptions and specifications of all the items for the Children of Israel's new worship program. Chapters 35-40 repeat much of this information and describe the carrying out of the process of making all these items.)

The LORD speaks: "Moses! Tell the CIs to bring Me an offering of gold, silver, and bronze, threads of blue, purple and scarlet, fine linen and goat's hair, badger and red ram skins, acacia wood, oil, spices, incenses and onyx stones. All this stuff must be given to me willingly and from their hearts. Y'all are going to use all this stuff to build me a place to live among you, a kind of tent or tabernacle, and some other items.

"But first, make Me a chest out of acacia wood, 45"X27"X27." Cover it with gold inside and out. Put gold poles into rings on the sides to carry it by. Put the rock tablets

I'm going to give you, inside it. On top will be a lid with 2 angels facing each other and pointing their wings at each other. That's where I'll be to meet you and talk with you, from that "Mercy Seat.

"You'll also make me a table, 24"X18"X24", with rings and carrying poles like the chest, all overlaid with pure gold. Make all kinds of dishes, pans, pitchers and bowls out of pure gold, too. Always have 12 loaves of bread on that table for Me.

"We'll need some light in the tent room where you're gonna put the chest and table, so make a lamp stand of pure gold, with 7 lamps on it. I'll tell you exactly how to design all this stuff. It'll take about 75 pounds of pure gold to make all of it."

Chapter 26

"Now, Moses, tell the CIs they're gonna make that tabernacle, that portable tent home for Me. I'm about to give you exact specs, down to the last detail. It will be easy to set it up and break it down, each time you move from one desert place to another. It will be beautiful on the inside, but plain and dark on the outside. There will be the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies place. A curtain woven with angels designs will hang between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, then an entry curtain. Everything will be made of the finest materials. The incense altar and the bread table will sit in the Holy Place. Across from the bread table will be the golden lampstand, burning and providing light all the time. Inside the Holy of Holies room will be the beautiful golden Ark of the Covenant, ("Chest of the Contract.") The acacia wood boards, the curtain woven with angel designs, the entry curtain to the holy place, the carrying poles, everything will be made exactly as I describe; there will be no human guesswork."

Chapter 27

"Now," the LORD continued, "Make me a portable altar, too. Make it hollow, with acacia wood boards covered with bronze. Make it 7 ½ by 7 ½ square by 3 ½ feet tall, with 4 bronze horns on the 4 corners. Mount bronze rings in the sides and make wood poles covered with bronze to put through the rings, to use to carry the altar.

"Then," the LORD said, "Make the Court of the Tabernacle. It'll be a rectangle 150 by 75 feet, with 7 ½ foot high curtains to block the view of the courtyard. Make a gate with a screen 30 feet long. Make it of fine woven blue, purple and scarlet linen, that opens into the courtyard from one end. The altar will stand in the courtyard. Make all the utensils and metal parts out of bronze. Then tell all the CIs to bring lots of fresh olive oil, and tell Aaron and his boys Ab and Nad to always keep the lamps burning so there will be light!"

Chapter 28

Next, God informed Moses: “Now, we’ve got to get Aaron and all his boys dressed for the occasion of ministering as priests for Me. They’re going to need breastplates, ephods, roses, fancy tunics, turbans, trousers and sashes. Among the CIs are artistically talented desingers who can make all these holy priestly costume garments. I’m giving you the pattern specs for each of the above. The ephod, a kind of linen apron, will be woven of gold, blue, purple and scarlet. The names of Jake’s 12 sons will be carved into black onyx stones mounted on their shoulders, 6 on each stone, right and left, and set in gold. The breastplate will match the apron and will have 12 stones set in the front, one for each of Jacob’s sons. It’ll have gold chains in rings, attached to the ephod on each shoulder. Make a pocket in the breastplate for the Urim and Thummim. Aaron will use these to let Me communicate “yes” and “no” decisions. Make blue robes, with blue, purple and scarlet pomegranates and little golden bells all around the hems, so when Aaron or one of his boys is in the Holy Place or the Holiest Place, folks outside can know if he’s still moving around or dead. Oh, yes! Make a plate of pure gold and write on it, “HOLINESS TO THE LORD.” This will go on the front of the turban. Make pretty tunics and sashes for them too, and hats, and linen trousers. Then anoint, consecrate and sanctify them and make them my official priests. They always have to wear these uniforms when they are serving Me in the tabernacle.

Chapter 29

Here’s how you go about preparing Aaron and his 4 sons for priestly service for Me. You’ll need one young bull and 2 rams, and a basket of unleavened bread (wheat flour, oil.) Bring Aaron and his boys to the tabernacle door and give them sponge baths, then dress them with all the new holy clothes. Then bring on the bull, and have them put their hands on the bull’s head. Then slaughter the critter, right there by the door. With your finger, smear a little of it’s blood on all 4 altar horns, then pour out all the rest beside the altar. Take certain of the bull’s guts and burn them on the altar, but burn the rest of the beast outside the camp as a sin offering.

Then take a ram and have Aaron and his sons lay hands on his head. Kill that beast, and put some of his blood on Aaron’s right ear (so he will hear the Word of God,) on his right thumb (so he will do the work of God,) and his right big toe, so he will walk in the way of God. Do the same with each of his 4 boys. Then cut up the critter and wash it’s guts and legs, and burn the whole animal on the altar. That will waft up to heaven and the LORD will enjoy the sweet aroma of your effort to please Him. Do the same thing with ram #2, but also sprinkle the blood around the altar, and with some oil, sprinkle it onto Aaron and his sons, and their clothes, to make them holy. Take some of ram 2’s guts and right thigh (remember Jake’s wrestling match in Genesis?) and 3 pieces of bread. A and

sons are to take them in their hands and lift them up as an offering to the LORD. Then burn them on the altar for a sweet aroma.

Then comes the “heave” offering with the ram’s heart and breast. Lift it up too. Then boil the flesh of the ram and tell Aaron and sons to eat it and the bread in the basket. If they don’t eat it all up, burn it next morning. Do all the above for 7 days. This altar and whatever touches it shall be most holy.

Now, about daily offerings; every day continually, burn on the altar one dead lamb in the morning, along with about 5 gallons of flour and about a gallon of wine, and a gallon of olive oil. Likewise, the evening lamb, same same. I’ll honor and set aside the tabernacle (place of appointment,) the altar, and Aaron and his sons. I’ll live there among y’all and be their God, who brought y’all up out of Egypt. (Signed,) I AM the LORD.

Chapter 30

God then informed Moses on the Mountain, “You gotta make me an acacia wood incense altar, 18 inches square and 24 inches tall, with 4 horns, with the rings and carrying poles, all overlaid with gold. Aaron’s gotta burn sweet incense on it morning and night.

“Now, about a personal ransom. When you count heads, every man 20 years old and older, everybody has to come up with a half shekel (about 2 tenths of an ounce) of gold, no more, no less, rich or poor. This is to make atonement offering and to keep the plagues away. (Note: Taking a head count of military aged men could be measuring their ability to defend themselves against enemies, and God wanted everyone to trust Him for their defense.)

“Also, make a big bronze wash basin on a stand for Aaron and sons to wash their hands and feet to purify themselves. If they don’t do that, they might die. They and their descendants gotta do this forever as part of their ministry to Me.

“Next, here’s my recipe for the holy anointing oil. Take 12 ½ lbs of liquid myrrh, 12 ½ lbs. of cassia, 6 ¼ lbs. cinnamon, 6 ¼ lbs. sweet cane, and about 3 quarts of pure olive oil. Get your expert perfumers to prepare it. Then anoint (smear it on) everything in the tabernacle, even on Aaron and his sons and their holy costumes. This will consecrate (set aside) them all for Me and My purposes.

“Finally, Moses, let’s talk about the incense. Take a bunch of sweet spices; stacte, onycha, galbanum and pure frankincense, equal amounts of each. Pulverize some of it. Burn some of it in the tabernacle in the Holy Place. But mind you, nobody makes any for their own use! This blend is for My use, holy to the LORD. Whoever makes some for himself, cut him off! (Execute him.) He’s no longer a CI.” (Nadab and Abihu, Aaron’s 2 oldest sons, violated this later and were executed!)

Chapter 31

The LORD continued: “I’ve got 2 guys I’ve hand-picked to pull off all this work. One is a Judahite named Bezalel. He’s Uri’s son and Hur’s grandson.” (Note: remember, Hur helped hold up Moses arms so they could make the sea crossing.) “I gave Bez a heavy dose of My Spirit, and lots of wisdom, understanding and knowledge to make just about anything out of precious metals, jewelry and wood carving, etc.

“The head man I appoint for building all the other stuff, the tabernacle tent, chest, altar, lampstand, laver, garments, table, utensils, oil, incense – everything else, is a Danite named Aholiab.

“Now, let Me reaffirm about the 7th day of each week. NOBODY WORKS on that day! Those are My orders from headquarters!”

When God finished talking on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses 2 slabs of rock with the 10 Commandments (“10 Words”) carved on both sides of them with His own finger!

Chapter 32

So all the CIs were standing around at the bottom of the mountain, bored silly, waiting for their fearless leader to come back down. So they went to Aaron, the #2 man, the “straw boss” in charge while Moses was doing his mountain duty. They hit him up with this idea. “Make us some gods to lead us. Moses ain’t here. Why, he might never come back!”

Aaron gave in too easily. “O.k. Bring me all your gold earrings.” They did, and he took them and molded a calf image with an engraving tool. (Note: people think they have to have a god they can see and touch, although they had seen many of God’s miracles, they quickly slid back into their old pagan ways of worshiping. They fooled themselves into believing this man-made object was the image of the god who brought them out of Egypt. But let’s not be arrogant. We sometimes do the same thing.)

Aaron, probably trying to put a legit face on their sin, even built an altar for them, and said, “Tomorrow we’ll have a feast to the LORD!” So they burned offerings and had a big old wingding in the name of worship, and broke the first 3 commandments already, and probably several more!

Meanwhile, back up on the mountain: God, Who knows all and sees all, knew what the CIs were up to. He said, “Hey! Moses! Get outa here NOW! YOUR people are down there screwing up right and left already! What a stubborn bunch they are! Get away from Me. I’m so mad I’m gonna burn them up! I’ll just make that great nation from YOUR descendants only!”

But Moses prayed, “Hey, why are You so mad at YOUR people? Your mighty hand saved them! Why, the Egyptians will say, “Yeah, He saved them from us, but now He is killing them and burning them up in the mountains! LORD, please, cool it! Remember

Abe, Izzy and Jake? Remember what You promised them? About their countless kids? They were Your good guys! Remember?”

So the LORD cooled it a little, and Moses took the 2 rock slabs and came down. Josh, who was with him now, heard a lot of hollerin’! He said, “Man! Moses, it sounds like there’s a WAR goin’ on down there!”

But Moses quietly said, “Nah. I’m not hearing yells of winning or losing. They’re all singing!” Well, when Moses laid eyes on the golden calf and the folks dancing around like fools, He got so steamed he flang down the inscribed rock slabs and smashed them! (He broke all 10 in one lick!) Then he grabbed up the calf, burned it up and pulverized it into a powder, and threw it into the drinking water, and made all the CIs drink it all up! Then he turned to his dumb bro and said, “What’s goin’ on here, bro? How’d they get you to screw up so bad? Y’all are in a heap o’ trouble, Bro!”

Aaron crawfished. “Hey, bro. Cool it, please! You know how evil this bunch is! They said, ‘Make gods for us to replace Moses, ‘cause we don’t know where in heck he’s gotten off to. Why, he may never come back!’ So I told them, ‘O.k., gimme all your gold, and I took it and threw it into a fire and bang! Out popped this calf!’” (Note: it’s not a very inventive story, but I guess it was the best he could come with on such short notice.)

Now, Moses saw the peeople weren’t going to settle down and do right, and Aaron wouldn’t or couldn’t get them under control. So he stood at the door of the camp and said, “Whoever is on the LORD’s side, come here to me NOW!” All Levi’s descendants gathered with Moses pretty quick. Moses knew that drastic actions were needed. “Alright, guys, the LORD says, ‘Take your swords and go kill all your bros, buddies and neighbors who are still sinning’” So they did. The death count was about 3 thousand men!

Next day, Moses said to the CIs, “Y’all have really ripped it! Now I’m going back up to talk to the LORD and try to patch things up for you.” So back up the mountain he went. When he got into God’s presence, he said, “LORD, these people have really screwed up. They made a god of gold!” (Note: Some of us have made gold our god sometimes.) I’m begging You, LORD, to forgive them. I You won’t, I want You to blot my name out of Your book You have written!”

But the LORD informed him, “Whoever sinned, I’m blotting them out of My book. But go on back and lead them to the place I will show you. And My Angel will go before you. But I’m telling you now, this is not the last of it.” That’s why the people suffered plagues later.

Chapter 33

(The LORD is still talking.) “Now, I’m ready for y’all to get outa this place and head on up to the land I promised to Abe, Ike and Jake, and their kids. Yes, My Angel will run interference for y’all, and will run off all the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites

(Parasites?) Hivites and Jebusites (CAHPHJs for short.) But I'm not gettin' in amongst y'all. I'm still pretty hacked. I might burn y'all up 'cause you're such a stubborn bunch!"

When the CIs heard the bad news they moaned and groaned. They were so down they didn't wear their baubles, bangles and beads, and that was fine with the LORD and Moses.

So Moses pitched his tent 'way out away from camp and called it The Meeting House. All the other guys stood at their tent doors and watched Moses go into his tent door, and the LORD's pillar of cloud stood at the door while Moses and the LOR chatted like buddies. But when Moses came back to camp, young Josh stayed there in The Meeting House.

Moses said to the LORD, "You say I'm o.k., but You aren't showing me the way, and You haven't said lately that these people are Yours."

God replied, "I'll stick with YOU only, Moses and give YOU rest."

Moses said, "LORD, if You're not gonna stick with all of us, we don't want to go!"

God relented. "O.k., I'll do that, 'cause you're o.k. in my book, Moses. You're a stand-up guy, and I like you, and I know you by name."

Moses pushed it. "Please, LORD, show me Your face."

God replied, "O.k. I'll run all my goodness by you, and will say My name before you. I'll be good and show compassion to the ones I want to (that would be you.) "BUT," He warned, "You can not see My face, or It will KILL you! Come over here and stand on this rock. While My Glory passes, I'll shield you with My hand. Then I'll take away My hand and you'll see only my back side, but NOT my face!"

Chapter 34

The LORD instructed Moses: "Cut Me out a couple more rock slabs like the ones you busted, and bring them up the mountain. I'll write you another copy. But, be sure you're alone. Neither man nor beast will be allowed on the mountain. Just you, Moses."

So Moses followed orders. He cut out the slabs and fetched them with him up the mountain of God. The LORD came down in His cloud, and passed before Moses. The LORD made a proclamation that is now called "The 13 Attributes of God." They are:

So Moses quickly bowed low and worshipped, and prayed, "LORD, if You see me as a good guy, please stick with us. Pardon all our screw-ups, even though we're a stubborn bunch."

The LORD then promised, "Look here. I'm making a deal with y'all. You ain't seen nothing yet! You're gonna see Me pull off some awesome events! Listen up! I'm gonna

run all the heathen ACHPHJs out of your way! But watch it! Don't cut any deals with those redneck idol worshippers. Don't mix with them. Bust up their altars and stone pillars and cut up their dumb wooden statues. When they invite you to join their festivities, just say NO! If you don't, first thing you know you're gonna be messin' with their daughters and accepting their silly multiple man-made gods. I'LL NOT HAVE THAT! I'm the God Who made you and made all things!" And remember all my new laws I made for you. I'll go over them again: Keep the feasts. All your first-born, man and beast, are Mine. When you come to Me, don't show up empty-handed. Work 6 days, rest the 7th, year 'round. Men, come see Me 3 times a year."

Moses stayed up there with the LORD another 40 days and nights without food or water, and God made him another set of rock slabs with the 10 words. When he finally came down the mountain with the 2 slabs, he didn't realize the skin of his face was shining. Everybody was afraid to come near him. He had to call them to come on over so they could talk, and he could give them the 2 new rock slabs with the 10 words. Later he would wear a veil over his face, except when he went to speak with the LORD.

Chapter 35

(Note: chapters 35-40 tell how the making of the LORD's detailed specs for the tabernacle and all the other worship system stuff were carried out.)

Moses said to the CIs; "The LORD says, work 6 days each week, but the 7th is a holy day of rest. If anybody is caught working, even building a fire, on the 7th day of each week, he or she is HISTORY."

Moses continued: "the LORD has ordered me to take a free-will offering from you for Him. Whoever will, come forward and contribute generously and willingly of their precious metal objects, (baubles, bangles and beads from Egypt etc.,) bright colored threads, fine linen and goat's hair, ram and badger skins, acacia wood, oil, spices, incense and onyx stones."

"Now, all you gifted artisans, come and make all this stuff: the tabernacle, ark (chest or "coffer,") table, lampstand, garments and all their accessories." So all the CIs left and came back and brought all the gooies the LORD requested.

Chapter 36

So Moses gave all the contributed stuff to Bezalel (Bez) and Aholiab (Aho,) who supervised the work and instructed all the other gifted artisans. And the craftsmen told Moses, "Hey, Moses! The people have brought us 'way too much stuff already!" So Moses issued a stop order. "Hold it! Y'all don't bring any more gifts!"

Then the artisans went to work and made the tabernacle or tent of appointment with all its parts, exactly as described in chapter 26.

Chapter 37

Then Bez made the acacia wood chest, or Ark of the Testimony, the bread table and the lampstand, as specified in chapter 25.

Chapter 38

Then Bez made the burnt offering altar, bronze basin and stand, and the court of the tabernacle, precisely like the LORD said in chapter 27. Then Ithamar, one of Aaron's sons, got the job of figuring out and counting all the material that was used in the construction of the tabernacle of the testimony. Here is his inventory:

GOLD 29 talents and 730 shekels; almost 2200 lbs. of gold.

SILVER: 100 talents and 1775 shekels: about 7555 lbs. of silver

BRONZE: 70 talents and 2400 shekels, about 5325 lbs. of bronze

Also, the census of men 20 and older brought in a half shekel each (about .25 oz. each) about 9430 lbs. of silver

Chapter 39

Then Bez made the priestly garments, which included the ephod (apron,) the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim in the pocket (they worked kind of like dice,) and all the other garments. When it was all finished, the craftsmen brought it all to Moses to check it out, for his approval and blessing, which he gave.

Chapter 40

"O.k., Moses. It's time to set all this up," God informed him. "Do it on the 1st day of the 1st month. (That's exactly a year since their 1st day of freedom from Egypt.) "Set it up in this order: the tabernacle, the chest, the veil, table and stuff; then the lamp stand,

incense altar, entrance screen; then the burnt offering altar, basin and stand, and the courtyard. Then sprinkle oil on everything.”

“Bring Aaron and sons and bathe them,” the LORD continued, “anoint and consecrate them.” Moses did all the above as God ordered.

Then the cloud covered the Tabernacle of Meeting, and the LORD’s glory filled it. From then on, whenever the cloud and fire were over it, they stayed put until the cloud and fire were lifted. Then they could head ‘em up and move ‘em out, all 2 million of them. This continued throughout all their journeys.



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