Blessing during Bondage in Egypt

1:1 These2 are the names3 of the sons of Israel4 who entered Egypt – each man with his household5 entered with Jacob: 1:2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, 1:3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, 1:4 Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. 1:5 All the people6 who were directly descended7 from Jacob numbered seventy.8 But

Joseph was already in Egypt,9 1:6 and in time10 Joseph11 and his brothers and all that generation died. 1:7 The Israelites,12 however,13 were fruitful, increased greatly, multiplied, and became extremely strong,14 so that the land was filled with them.

1:8 Then a new king,15 who did not know

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1 tn Chapter 1 introduces the theme of bondage in Egypt and shows the intensifying opposition to the fulfillment of promises given earlier to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The first seven verses announce the theme of Israel’s prosperity in Egypt. The second section (vv. 8-14) reports continued prosperity in the face of deliberate opposition. The third section (vv. 15-21) explains the prosperity as divine favor in spite of Pharaoh’s covert attempts at controlling the population. The second section (vv. 8-14) describes a culminating event developing tyranny and provides a transition to the next section – Pharaoh commands the open murder of the males. The power of God is revealed in the chapter as the people flourish under the forces of evil. However, by the turn of affairs at the end of the chapter, the reader is left with a question about the power of God – “What can God do?” This is good Hebrew narrative, most likely meant to be read through tension and then to reveal the sovereign power and majesty of the Lord, the One who is calling for faith every step of the way. See also D. W. Wicke, “The Literary Structure of Exodus 1:2—2:10,” JSOT 24 (1982): 99-107.

2 tn Heb “now these” or “and these.” The vav (ו) disjunctive marks a new beginning in the narrative begun in Genesis.

3 tn The name of the book of Exodus in the Hebrew Bible is שמות (sh’mot), the word for “Names,” drawn from the beginning of the book. The inclusion of the names at this point forms a literary connection to the book of Genesis. It indicates that the Israelites living in bondage had retained a knowledge of their ancestors, and with it, a knowledge of God’s promise.

4 tn The expression בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (b’nei ‘ish’re’el, “sons of Israel”) in most places refers to the nation as a whole and can be translated “Israelites,” although traditionally it has been rendered “the children of Israel.” Here it refers primarily to the individual sons of the patriarch Israel, for they are named. But the expression is probably also intended to indicate that they are the Israelites (cf. Gen 29:1, “eastern people,” or “easterners,” lit., “sons of the east”).

5 tn Heb “a man and his house.” Since this serves to explain “the sons of Israel,” it has the distributive sense. So while the “sons of Israel” refers to the actual sons of the patriarch, the expression includes their families (cf. NIV, TEV, CEB, NLT).

6 tn The word נפשׁ (nefesh) is often translated “soul.” But the word refers to the whole person, the body with the soul, and so “life” or “person” is frequently a better translation.

7 tn The expression in apposition to נפשׁ (nefesh) literally says “those who went out from the loins of Jacob.” This distinguishes the entire company as his direct descendants.

8 sn Gen 46 describes in more detail Jacob’s coming to Egypt with his family. The Greek text of Exod 1:5 and of Gen 46:27 and two Qumran manuscripts, have the number as seventy-five, counting the people a little differently. E. H. Merrill in conjunction with F. Delitzsch notes that the list in Gen 46 of those who entered Egypt includes Hezron and Hamul, who did so in potency, since they were born after the family entered Egypt. Joseph’s sons are also included, though they too were born in Egypt. “The list must not be pressed too literally” (E. H. Merrill, Kingdom of Priests, 49).

9 tn Heb “and Joseph was in Egypt” (so ASV). The disjunctive vav word order in Hebrew draws attention to the fact that Joseph, in contrast to his brothers, did not come to Egypt at the same time as Jacob.

10 tn The text simply uses the vav (ו) consecutive with the preterite, “and Joseph died.” While this construction shows sequence with the preceding verse, it does not require that the death follow directly the report of that verse. In fact, readers know from the record in Genesis that the death of Joseph occurred after a good number of years. The statement assumes the passage of time in the natural course of events.

11 tn The verse has a singular verb, “and Joseph died, and all his brothers, and all that generation.” Typical of Hebrew style the verb need only agree with the first of a compound subject.

12 sn Since the deaths of “Joseph and his brothers and all that generation” were common knowledge, their mention must serve some rhetorical purpose. In contrast to the flourishing of Israel, there is death. This theme will appear again: In spite of death in Egypt, the nation flourishes.

13 tn Heb “the sons of Israel.”

14 tn The disjunctive vav marks a contrast with the note about the deaths of the first generation.

15 sn Using וָאֶבֶן (wv od) twice intensifies the idea of their becoming strong (see GKC 431-32 §133.k).

16 sn The text is clearly going out of its way to say that the people of Israel flourished in Egypt. The verbs פָּרַע (par, “be fruitful”), יָשִׂים (yashîm, “swarm, teem”), זִיכָרוֹת (zîk’rōt, “memory, remembrance”), and בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (b’nei ‘ish’re’el, “sons of Israel”) twice intensifies the idea of their becoming strong (see GKC 431-32 §133.k).

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about Joseph, came to power over Egypt. 1:9 He said to his people, “Look at the Israelite people, more numerous and stronger than we are! 1:10 Come, let’s deal wisely with them. Otherwise they will continue to multiply, and it is a war breaks out, they will ally themselves with our enemies and fight against us and leave the country.”

1:11 So they put foremen over the Israelites to oppress them with hard labor. As a result they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. 1:12 But the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more they multiplied and spread. 1:27 As a result the Egyptians loathed the Israelites, 1:13 and they made the Israelites serve rigorously. 20:1:14 They made their lives bitter by hard service with mortar and bricks and by all kinds of service in the fields. Every

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enjoy thepatched translation includes "bitter" and humiliation. This king was trying to crush the Israelites, but all Egypt will know that he is the true God. The Lord, however, will work to make sure that Pharaoh and all Egypt will know that he is the true God. The verb הָעָנָה (‘anah) introduces a conditional clause – "if" (see GKC 335 §112. The relative clause comes last in the verse in Hebrew. It simply clarifies that the new king had no knowledge about Joseph. It also introduces a major theme in the early portion of Exodus, as a later Pharaoh will claim not to know who Yahweh is. The Lord, however, will work to make sure that Pharaoh and all Egypt will know that he is the true God.

tn Heb “and he said.”

tn Heb “princes of work.” The word שָׂרֵי (šārē) introduces the foundational clause for the exhortation to follow by drawing the listeners’ attention to the Israelites. In other words, the exhortation that follows is based on this observation. The connection could be rendered “since, because,” or the like.

tn The verb is the Hitpael construction of כָּתַמ (khatam, “to be complete”) and therefore it has the idea of acting shrewdly, dealing wisely. The basic idea in the word group is that of skill. So a skilful decision is required to prevent the Israelites from multiplying any more.

tn Pharaoh’s speech invites evaluation. How wise did his plans prove to be?

tn The word פֶּן (pen) expresses fear or precaution and can also be translated “lest” or “else” (R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 75-76, §461).

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kind of service the Israelites were required to give was rigorous.  

1:15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah,  

1:16 “When you assist the Hebrew women in childbirth, observe at the delivery: If it is a son, kill him; but if it is a daughter, she may live.”  

1:17 But the midwives feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them; they let the boys live.  

1:18 Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this and let the boys live?”  

1:19 The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women – for the Hebrew women are vigorous; they give birth before the midwife gets to them!”  

1:20 So God treated the midwives well, and the people multiplied and became very strong.  

1:21 And because the midwives feared God, he made households for them.  

1:22 Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “All sons that are born you must throw into the river, but all daughters you may let live.”

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1 tn The line could be more literally translated, “All their service in which they served them [was] with rigor.” This takes the referent of הַעֲבֹדָה (ḥaab̄ōḏeh) to be the Egyptians. The pronoun may also refer to the kinds of service and so not be needed in English: “All their service in which they served [was] with rigor.”  

2 tn Heb “and the king of Egypt said.”  

3 sn The word for “midwife” is simply the Piel participle of the verb יָלַד (ŷalāḏ, “to give birth”). So these were women who assisted in the childbirth process. It seems probable that giving birth is the object of the verb, only in portraying the king as a wicked fool bent on destroying Israel.  

4 tn hudā ’ (hāḏēḵ, “to give birth”). So these were women who assisted in the childbirth process. It seems probable that giving birth is the object of the verb, only in portraying the king as a wicked fool bent on destroying Israel.  

5 tn The verse starts with the verb that began the last verse; to read it again seems redundant. Some versions render it “spoke” in v. 15 and “said” in v. 16. In effect, Pharaoh has been delayed from speaking while the midwives are named.  

6 tn The form is the Piel infinitive construct serving in an adverbal clause of time. This clause lays the foundation for the main clause, namely, “God made households for them.” This is the apodosis to the preceding temporal clause; it has the causal clause and lays the foundation for the main clause, namely, “God made households for them.” This is the second verb in Pharaoh’s speech which has the force of a definite order, but the first imperfect has the force of a definite order, but the first imperfect has the force of a negative clause. The translation is not terrified by worldly threats. There probably was enough authority that prohibited killing. Fearing God is a basic part of the truth in what they were saying to be believable, but they clearly had no intention of honoring the king by participating in murder, and they saw no reason to give him a straitforward answer. God honored their actions.  

7 sn The temporal indicator יָלַד (ŷalāḏ) focuses attention on the causal clause and lays the foundation for the main clause, namely, “God made households for them.” This is the second time the text affirms the reason for their defiance, their fear of God.  

8 sn Or “families”; Heb “houses.”  

9 sn The substantive יָלַד (ŷalāḏ) followed by the article stresses the entirety – “all sons” or “all daughters” – even though the nouns are singular in Hebrew (see GKC 411 §127.b).  

10 tn Heb “and they [fem, pl.] feared”; the referent (the midwives) has been specified in the translation for clarity.  

11 tn The verb is the Piel preterite of יָלַד (ŷalāḏ, “to live”). The Piel often indicates a factitive nuance with stative verbs, showing the cause of the action. Here it means “let live, cause to live.” The verb is the exact opposite of Pharaoh’s command for them to kill the boys.  

12 tn The verb בָּרָה (bara) followed by the lamed (ָו) preposition has here the nuance of “summon.” The same construction is used later when Pharaoh summons Moses.
The Birth of the Deliverer

2:1 A man from the household of Levi married a woman who was a descendant of Levi. But the woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a healthy child, she hid him for three months.

2:2 But when she was no longer able to hide him, she took a papyrus basket for him and sealed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and set it among the reeds along the edge of the Nile.

2:3 The child was discovered by a sympathetic woman, there would be no deliverance God desired to be superhuman, as the chapter’s final note about answering prayer shows.

2:4 His sister stationed herself at a distance to find out what would happen to him.

2:5 Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself by the Nile, while her attendants were walking alongside the river. And she saw the basket among the reeds. She sent one of her attendants, who took it. She opened it, and saw the child—about three months old.
and hunting lodges in the area. See also N. Osborn, “Where the Delta area things were closer. Here all the people would Moses had had to travel up the Nile to meet with Pharaoh. In Nile as in later periods. The proximity of the royal residences would indicate that Miriam is a teenager and so about fifteen usually translated either “virgin” or “young woman.” The word is do.” so the suggestion by Miriam was proper and necessary. Since have undertaken the task of nursing a foreigner’s baby, and expressing the purpose: “in order that she may.” It is here subordinated to the preceding imperfect (“shall 3. tn The object of the verb “get/summon” is “a woman.” But מָעָרָא (maneget, “nursing”), the Hiphil participle of the verb מָעָר (manay, “to suck”), is in apposition to it, clarifying what kind of woman should be found – a woman, a nursing one. Of course Moses’ mother was ready for the task.

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5 sn The text uses קָרַא (qara), meaning “to call” or “summon.” Pharaoh himself will “summon” Moses many times in the plague narratives. Here the word is used for the daughter standing near the mother to take of him. The narratives in the first part of the book of Exodus include a good deal of foreshadowing of events that occur in later sections of the book (see M. Fishbane, Biblical Text and Texture).

6 sn No respectable Egyptian woman of this period would have the task of nursing a foreigner’s baby, and so the suggestion by Miriam was proper and necessary. Since she was standing a small distance away from the events, she was able to come forward when the discovery was made.

7 tn Heb “Go” (so KJV, ASV); NASB “Go ahead”; TEV “Please do.”

8 sn The word used to describe the sister (Miriam probably) is קָרַא (qara, “called”).

9 sn During this period of Egyptian history the royal palaces were in the northern or Delta area of Egypt, rather than up the Nile as in later periods. The proximity of the royal residences to the Israelites makes this and the plague narratives all the more realistic. Such direct contact would have been unlikely if Moses had had to travel up the Nile to meet with Pharaoh. In the Delta area things were closer. Here all the people would have had access to the tributaries of the Nile near where the royal family came, but the royal family probably had pavilions and hunting lodges in the area. See also N. Osborne, “Where on Earth Are We? Problems of Position and Movement in Space,” *BT* 31 (1980): 239-42.

10 tn The verb is the Hiphil imperative of the verb קָרַא (qara), and so is properly rendered “cause to go” or “take away.”

11 sn The possessive pronoun on the noun “wage” expresses the indirect object: “I will pay wages to you.”

12 tn The verb is the preterite of קָרַא (qara), and so might be rendered “and he became great.” But the context suggests that it refers to when he was weaned and before he was named, perhaps indicating he had three or four years old (see Gen 21:8).

13 sn The declarative expression literally reads: “and he was to her for a son.” In this there are two prepositions lamed. The first expresses possession: “he was to her” means “she had.” The second is part of the usage of the verb: יָנָ֖א (yanaq) with the lamed (v) preposition means “to become.”

14 sn The naming provides the climax and summary of the story. The name of “Moses” (מֹשֶׁה, moshèh) is explained by “I have drawn him (from the water)” (מָשָׁה, mashàh) from the water). The etymology appears that the name is etymologically connected to the verb in the saying, which is from מָשָׁה (mashàh, “to draw out”). But commentators have found it a little difficult that the explanation of the name by the daughter of Pharaoh is in Hebrew when the whole background is Egyptian (U. Cassuto, Exodus, 20). Moreover, the Hebrew spelling of the name is the form of the active participle (“the one who draws out”); to be a precise description it should have been spelled מָשָׁה (mashàh), the passive participle (“the one drawn out”). The etymology is not precise; rather, it is a wordplay (called paraonomasia). Either the narrator merely attributed words to her (which is unlikely outside of fiction), or the Hebrew account simply translated what she had said into Hebrew, finding a Hebrew verb with the same sounds as the name. Such wordplays on names (also popular etymology) are common in the Bible. Most agree that the name is an Egyptian name. Josephus attempted to connect the biblical etymology with the name in Greek, Muses, stating that Μυθος is Egyptian for water, and uses means those rescued from it (Ant. 2.9.6 [2.228]; see also J. Gwyn Griffiths, “The Egyptian Derivation of the Name Moses,” JBL 72 (1953): 225). But simply “son of the Nile” is not derived from the Greek rendering. Due to the estimation Egyptians had of the Nile, the princess would have thought of the child from the river as a supernatural provision. The Egyptian hieroglyphic ms can be the noun “child” or the perfective verb “be born.” This was often connected with divine elements for names: Ptah-mose, “Ptah is born.” Also the name Ramesses (Ra-msw) means “[the god] Re’ is he who has born him.” If the name Moses is Egyptian, there are some philological difficulties (see the above article for their treatment); the significance of all this is that when the child was named by the princess, an Egyptian word related to ms was used, meaning something like “child” or “born.” The name might have even been longer, perhaps having a theophoric element (divine name) with it. The name is not derived from the Nile, but is a name that is thought to have been derived from the Nile, the source of life in Egypt. But the sound of the name recalled for the Hebrews the verb “to draw out” in their own language. Translating the words of the princess into Hebrew allowed for the effective wordplay to capture the significance of the story in the sound of the name. The implication for the reader is that the story is something to this effect: “You called him ‘born one’ in your language and after your custom, but in our language that name means ‘drawing out’ – which is what was to become of him. You drew him out of the water, but he would draw us out of Egypt through the water.” So the circumstances of the story show Moses to be a man of destiny, and this naming episode summarizes how divine providence was at work in Israel. To the Israelites the name forever commemorated the portent of this event in the early life of the great deliverer (see Isa 63:11).
EXODUS 2:11

The Presumption of the Deliverer

2:11 In those days, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and observed their hard labor, and he saw an Egyptian man attacking a Hebrew man, one of his own people. Then he looked this way and that, and saw that no one was there; and then he attacked the Egyptian and concealed the body.

1 sn Chapter 1 described how Israel was flourishing in spite of the bondage. Chapter 2 first told how God providentially provided the deliverer, but now when this deliverer attempted to deliver one of his people, it turned out badly for him, and he had to flee for his life. This section makes an interesting study in the presumption of the leader, what Christian expositors would rightly describe as trying to do God’s work by the flesh. The section has two parts to it: the flight from Egypt over the failed attempt to deliver (vv. 11-15), and Moses’ introduction to life as the deliverer in Midian (vv. 18-22).

2 sn The expression “those days” refers to the days of bondage. 3 tn The preterite with the vav (v) consecutive is here subordinated to the next and main idea of the verse. This is the second use of this verb in the chapter. In v. 10 the verb had the sense of “when he began to grow” or “when he got older,” but here it carries the nuance of “when he had grown up.” 4 tn Heb “brothers.” This term does not require them to be literal siblings, or even close family members. It simply refers here to fellow Hebrews, people with whom Moses has begun to feel a sense of kinship. They are “brothers” in a broad sense, ultimately fellow members of the covenant community. 5 tn The verb כֹּה וָכֹה (co’o, “to see”) followed by the preposition bet (b) can indicate looking on something as an overseer, or supervising, or investigating. Here the emphasis is on Moses’ observing their labor with sympathy or grief. It means more than that he simply saw the way his fellow Hebrews were being treated (cf. 2:25). 6 sn This journey of Moses to see his people is an indication of the nature of Moses’ personal concern over the incident, since the appositional clause adds no new information. 7 tn Heb “brothers.” This kinship term is used as a means of indicating the nature of Moses’ personal concern over the incident, since the appositional clause adds no new information. 8 tn The text literally says, “and he turned thus and thus” (כו וַיהי, vayyifen koh vakkho). It may indicate that he turned his gaze in all directions to ascertain that no one would observe what he did. Or, as B. Jacob argues, it may mean that he saw that there was no one to do justice and so he did it himself (Exodus, 37-38, citing Isa 59:15-16). 9 tn Heb “he saw that there was no man.” 10 sn The verb כָּן (k’yon) is from the root כָּנָה (kannah, “to smite, attack”) which is used in v. 11. This new attack is fatal. The repetition of the verb, especially in Exodus, anticipates the idea of “eye for eye, tooth for tooth.” The problem is, however, that Moses was not authorized to take this matter into his own hands in this way. The question the next day was appropriate, “Are you a ruler and a judge over us?” The answer? No one – yet. 11 tn Heb “him”; for stylistic reasons the referent has been specified as “the body.”

12 tn The preterite with the vav consecutive is subordinated to the main idea of the verse.
13 tn Heb “the second day” (so KJV, ASV). 14 tn The deictic particle is used here to predicate existence, as in “here were” or “there were.” But this use of הָיָה (hineneh) indicates also that what he encountered was surprising or sudden – as in “Oh, look!” 15 tn The word רָאָה (rasha) is a legal term, meaning the guilty. This guilty man rejects Moses’ intervention for much the same reason Pharaoh will later (5:2) – he does not recognize his authority. Later Pharaoh will use this term to declare himself as in the wrong (9:27) and God in the right. 16 tn This is the third use of the verb נָכָה (nakha) in the passage; here it is the Hiphil imperfect. It may be given a progressive imperfect nuance – the attack was going on when Moses tried to intervene. 17 sn Heb “your neighbor.” The word רָע (re’khah) appears again in 33:11 to describe the ease with which God and Moses conversed. The Law will have much to say about how the Israelites were to treat their “neighbors, fellow citizens” (Exod 20:16-17; 21:14, 18, 35; 22:7-11, 14, 26; cf. Luke 10:25-37). 18 tn Heb “And he”; the referent (the man) has been specified in the translation for clarity. 19 tn Heb “Who placed you for a man, a ruler and a judge over us?” The pleonasm does not need to be translated. For similar constructions see Lev 21:9; Judg 6:8; 2 Sam 1:13; Esth 7:6. 20 tn The line reads “[is it] to kill me you are planning?” The form הָוָא (ha’aw) is the active participle used verbally; it would literally be “[are you] saying,” but in this context it conveys the meaning of “thinking, planning.” The Qal infinitive then serves as the object of this verbal form – are you planning to kill me? 21 tn Heb “the Egyptian.” Here the Hebrew article functions in an anaphoric sense, referring back to the individual Moses killed. 22 tn The verb form is “and he said.” But the intent of the form is that he said this within himself, and so it means “he thought, realized, said to himself.” The form, having the vav consecutive, is subordinated to the main idea of the verse, that he was afraid. 23 tn The term הָדָלָא (haddalav, “the word [thing, matter, incident]”) functions here like a pronoun to refer in brief to what Moses had done. For clarity this has been specified in the translation with the phrase “what I did.” 24 tn The form with the vav consecutive is here subordinated to the main idea that Pharaoh sought to punish Moses. 25 tn Heb הָדָלָא (haddalav, “the word [thing, matter, incident]”) functions here like a pronoun to refer in brief to what Moses had done. 26 tn The vav (v) consecutive with the preterite shows result – as a result of Pharaoh’s search for him, he fled.
settled in the land of Midian, and he settled 2 by a certain well. 

2:16 Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and began to draw 3 water 4 and fill 5 the troughs in order to water their father’s flock. 

2:17 When some 6 shepherds came and drove them away, 7 Moses came up and defended them 8 and then watered their flock. 

2:18 So when they came home 10 to their father Reuel, 11 he asked, “Why have you come home so early 12 today?” 

2:19 They said, “An Egyptian man rescued us 13 from the shepherds, 14 and he actually 15 drew water for us and watered the flock!” 

2:20 He said 16 to his daughters, “Where is he? 27 Why in the world 18 did you leave the man? Call him, so that he may eat 19 a meal 20 with us.” 

2:21 Moses agreed 22 to stay with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage. 

2:22 When she bore 23 a son, Moses named him Gershom, for he said, “I have become a resident foreigner in a foreign land.” 25

4 sn The location of Midyan or Midian is uncertain, but it had to have been beyond the Egyptian borders on the east, either in the Sinai or beyond in the Arabah (south of the Dead Sea) or even on the east side of the Gulf of Aqaba. The Midianites seem to have traveled extensively in the desert regions. R. A. Cole (Exodus [TOTC], 60) reasons that since they later were enemies of Israel, it is unlikely that these traditions would have been made up about Israel’s great lawgiver. Further, he explains that “Ishmaelite” and “Kenite” might have been clan names within the region of Midian. But see, from a different point of view, G. W. Coats, “Moses and Midian,” JBL 92 (1973): 3-10.

2 sn The verb reads “and he sat” or “and he lived.” To translate it “he sat by a well” would seem anticlimactic and unconnected. It probably has the same sense as in the last clause, namely, that he lived in Midian, and he lived near a well, which detail prepares for what follows. 

3 sn The word has the definite article, “the well.” Gesenius lists this use of the article as that which denotes a thing that is yet unknown to the reader but present in the mind under the circumstances (GKC 407-8 §126.d-f). Where there was a well, people would settle, and as R. A. Cole says it, for people who settled there it was “the well” (Exodus [TOTC], 60). 

4 tn The preterites describing their actions must be taken in an ingressive sense, since they did not actually complete the job. Shepherds drove them away, and Moses watered the flocks. 

5 sn The object “water” is not in the Hebrew text, but is implied. 

6 sn This also has the ingressive sense, “began to fill,” but for stylistic reasons is translated simply “fill” here. 

7 tn The definite article here is the generic use; it simply refers to a group of shepherds. 

8 sn The actions of the shepherds are subordinated to the main statement about what Moses did. 

9 sn The verb is וָנָּשָׁה (vaynashah), Some shepherds came and drove the daughters away. The choice of this verb in the narrator (nosekim with the name of Moses’ first son, Gershom. Moses senses very clearly that he is a sojourner in a strange land – he has been driven away. 

10 sn The verb used here is וַיִּשָּׁה (vayyishah), “and he saved them”). The word means that he came to their rescue and delivered them. By the choice of words the narrator is portraying Moses as the deliverer – he is just not yet ready to deliver Israel from its oppressors. 

10 tn The verb means “to go, to come, to enter.” In this context it means that they returned to their father, or came home. 

11 sn The name “Reuel” is given here. In other places (e.g., chap. 18) he is called Jethro (cf. CEV, which uses “Jethro” here). Some suggest that this is simply a confusion of tradition, but it is not uncommon for ancient Semitic kings and priests, to have more than one name. Several of the kings of Israel, including Solomon, did. “Reuel” means “friend of God.” 

12 tn The sentence uses a verbal hendiadys construction: מִלְחָרִים בֹּא, “you have made quick [to come]”. The finite verb functions as if it were an adverb modifying the infinitive, which becomes the main verb of the clause. 

13 sn Two observations should be made at this point. First, it seems that the oppression at the well was a regular part of their routine because their father was surprised at their early return, and their answer alluded to the shepherds rather automatically. Secondly, the story is another meeting-at-the-well account. Continuity with the patriarchy is thereby kept in the mind of the reader (cf. Gen 24; 29:1-12). 

14 tn Continuing the theme of Moses as the deliverer, the text now uses another word for salvation (גָּרֶשׁ; natsal, “to deliver, rescue”) in the sense of plucking out or away, snatching out of danger. 

15 sn The construction is emphatic with the use of the perfect tense and its infinitive absolute: נָצַל נָצַל (daloh dalah). B. Jacob says, “They showed their enthusiasm through the use of the infinitive absolute – And think of that, he even drew water for us; a man like that saved us girls!” (Exodus, 41). 

16 tn “Heb “And he said.” 

17 tn The conjunction vav (ו) joins Reuel’s question to what the daughters said as logically following with the idea, “if he has done all that you say, why is he not here for me to meet?” (see GKC 485 §154.b). 

18 sn This uses the demonstrative pronoun as an enclitic, for emphasis (R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 24, §118). The question reads more literally, “Why is this [that] you left him?” 

19 tn The imperfect tense coming after the imperative indicates purpose. 

20 tn Heb “bread,” i.e., “food.” 

21 tn Or “and Moses was willing” to stay with Reuel. The Talmud understood this to mean that he swore, and so when it came time to leave he had to have a word from God and permission from his father-in-law (Exod 4:18-19). 

22 tn The words “in marriage” are implied, and have been supplied in the translation for clarity. 

23 tn The preterite with the vav (ו) consecutive is subordinated to the next clause, which reports the naming and its motivation. 

24 tn Heb “and he called”; the referent (Moses) has been specified in the translation for clarity. 

25 sn Like the naming of Moses, this naming that incorporates a phonetic wordplay forms the commemorative summary of the account just provided. Moses seems to have settled into a domestic life with his new wife and his father-in-law. But when the first son is born, he named him עֶרֶל (geresh). There is little information available about what the name by itself might have meant. If it is linked to the verb “drive away” (vayagorsh), then the final mem (ן) would have to be explained as an enclitic mem. It seems most likely that that verb was used in the narrative to make a secondary wordplay on the name. The primary explanation is the popular etymology supplied by Moses himself. He links the name to the verb נָשָׁה (nashah, “to sojourn, to live as an alien”). He then adds that he was a sojourner, and so when it came time to leave he had to have a word from God and permission from his father-in-law. The word “foreign” (גֵּר, ger; the participle) in a foreign land. The word foreign (נָּוְקָר, nokyar) adds to the idea of his being a resident foreigner. The final syllable in the name would then be connected to the adverb “there” (לָוָּה, sham). Thus, the name is given the significance in the story of “sojourner there” or “alien there.” He no doubt knew that this was not the actual meaning of the name; the name itself had already been introduced into the family of Levi (1 Chr 6:1, 16). He chose the name because its sounds reflected his sentiment at that time. But to what was Moses referring? In view of naming customs among the Semites, he was most likely
The Call of the Deliverer

2:23 During that long period of time the king of Egypt died, and the Israelites, groaned because of the slave labor. They cried out, and their desperate cry, because of their slave labor went up to God. 2:24 God heard their groaning. God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and with Jacob; 2:25 God saw the Israelites, and God understood… 9

3:1 Now Moses was shepherding the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert to Horeb. 3:2 The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from within a bush. 3:3 He looked — and the bush was ablaze with fire, but it was not being consumed.

The first little section, 2:23-25, serves as a transition and in effect is where God supplies proof of his power. The next section of the book is often referred to as "the Call of Moses," and that is certainly true. But it is much more than that. It is the divine preparation of the servant of God, a servant who already knew what his destiny was. In this section Moses is shown how his destiny will be accomplished. It will be accomplished because the divine presence will guarantee the power, and the promise of that presence comes with the important "I AM" revelation. The message that God sends through this servant and other "I will be with you" passages, is that when the promise of God's presence is correctly appropriated by faith, the servant of God can begin to build confidence for the task that lies ahead. It will no longer be, "Who am I that I should go?" but "I AM with you" that matters. The word for this painfully intense "groaning" appears elsewhere to describe a response to having two broken arms (Gen 16:12), a function of the phrase "two broken arms." It indicates that it refers to the "sons of Israel." The text again uses the deictic particle with vav (‘ennu, ‘and”), traditionally rendered "then and it came to pass.", (Heb sn). This has been left untranslated for stylistic reasons.

The two verbs "heard" and "remembered," both pretenses, say far more than they seem to say. The verb נָאַח (shava'ı̂), "to hear," ordinarily includes responding to what is heard. It can even be found in idiomatic constructions meaning "to obey." To say God heard their complaint means that God responded to it. Likewise, the verb זָכַר (zakhar), "to remember," means to begin to act on the basis of what is remembered. A prayer to God says, "Remember me," is asking for more than mere recollection (see B. S. Childs, Memory and Tradition in Israel [SBT], 1-8). The structure of this section at the end of the chapter is powerful. There are four descriptions of the Israelites, with a fourfold repetition from God. On the Israelites' side, they groaned (זָקַח [zakakh], זָכַר [zakhar]) and cried out (זָאַע [za'aw], זָאַה [za'ah]) to God. On the divine side God heard (זָאַע, חומָע) their groaning, remembered (זָקַח, זָכַר) his covenant, looked (זָאַה, רָאָה) at the Israelites, and took notice (זָיִד, yada') of them. These verbs emphasize God's sympathy and compassion for the people. God is near to those in need; in fact, the deliverer had already been chosen. It is important to note at this point the repetition of the word "God." The text is waiting to introduce the name "Yahweh" in a special way. Meanwhile, the fourfold repetition of "God" in vv. 24-25 is unusual and draws attention to the statements about his attention to Israel's plight.

8 tn Heb "and God saw.
9 tn Heb "and God knew."
thought,2 “I will turn aside to see2 this amazing3 sight. Why does the bush not burn up?” 4

3:4 When the Lord5 saw that6 he had turned aside to look, God called to him from within the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And Moses7 said, “Here I am.”

3:5 God8 said, “Do not approach any closer;10 Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.”12 3:6 He added, “I am the God of your father,13 the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Then Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look.14

2 In Heb “And Moses said.” The implication is that Moses said this to himself.

3 In Heb “great.” The word means something extraordinary here. In using this term Moses revealed his reaction to the strange sight and his anticipation that something special was about to happen. So he turned away from the flock to investigate.

4 In Heb “perfect.” Here it has the progressive nuance – the bush is not burning up.

5 In the preterite with the vav (vav, v'æré'h) to express the purpose or result (logical sequence); “I will turn aside in order that I may see.”

10 In Heb “and he said”; the referent (Moses) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

11 sn Even though the Lord was drawing near to Moses, Moses could not casually approach him. There still was a barrier between God and human, and God had to remind Moses of this with instructions. The removal of sandals was, and still is in the East, a sign of humility and reverence in the presence of the Holy One. It was a way of excluding the dust and dirt of the world. But it also took away personal comfort and convenience and brought the person more closely in contact with the earth.

12 tn The causal clause includes within it a typical relative clause, which is made up of the relative pronoun, then the independent personal pronoun with the participle, and then the preposition with the resumptive pronoun. It would literally be “which you are standing on it,” but the relative pronoun and the resumptive pronoun are combined and rendered, “on which you are standing.”

13 sn This self-revelation by Yahweh prepares for the revelation of the holy name. While no verb is used here, the pronoun and the predicate nominative are a construction used throughout scripture to convey the “I Am” disclosures – “[I am] the God of... .” But the significant point here is the naming of the triad, for this God is the covenant God, who will fulfill his promises.

14 tn The clause uses the Hiphil infinitive construct with a preposition after the perfect tense: יָרֵא מֵהַבִּיט (yare mᵉḥabbît, at God.

3:7 The Lord said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt. I have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.16 3:8 I have come down to deliver them18 from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up from that land to a land that is both good and spacious,19 to a land flowing with milk and honey.20 to the region of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.21 3:9 And now indeed22 the cry23 of the Israelites has come to me, and I have also seen how severely the Egyptians oppress them.24 3:10 So now go, and I will send

The preposition min (mīn) is used before infinitives after verbs like the one to complete the verb (see BDB 583 s.v. 7b).

16 tn The use of the infinitive absolute with the perfect tense intensifies the statement: I have surely seen – there is no doubt that I have seen and will do something about it.

18 sn Two new words are introduced now to the report of God’s suffering: “affliction” and “pain/suffering.” These add to the dimension of the oppression of God’s people.

21 sn God’s coming down is a frequent anthropomorphism in Genesis and Exodus. It expresses his direct involvement, often in the exercise of judgment.

22 sn The Hiphil infinitive with the suffix is יָדָה (yadhā, “to deliver them”). It expresses the purpose of God’s coming down. The verb itself is used for delivering or rescuing in the exercise of judgment – “to deliver” or “to rescue” (GKC 416-17). It is often in the exercise of judgment.

23 sn Even though the Lord was drawing near to Moses, Moses could not casually approach him. There still was a barrier between God and human, and God had to remind Moses of this with instructions. The removal of sandals was, and still is in the East, a sign of humility and reverence in the presence of the Holy One. It was a way of excluding the dust and dirt of the world. But it also took away personal comfort and convenience and brought the person more closely in contact with the earth.

24 sn Even though the Lord was drawing near to Moses, Moses could not casually approach him. There still was a barrier between God and human, and God had to remind Moses of this with instructions. The removal of sandals was, and still is in the East, a sign of humility and reverence in the presence of the Holy One. It was a way of excluding the dust and dirt of the world. But it also took away personal comfort and convenience and brought the person more closely in contact with the earth.
3:11 Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, or that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” 3:12 He replied, “Surely I will be with you, and this will be the sign to you that I have sent you: When you bring the people out of Egypt, you and they will serve God on this mountain.”

3:13 Moses said to God, “If I 10 I go to the Israelites and tell them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ 11 what should I say 12 to them?”

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1 sn The verse has a sequence of volitives. The first form is the imperative הָלֵךְ (ḥālēḵ, “go”). Then comes the cohortative/imperfect form with the vav (ו), “and I will send you” or more likely “that I may send you” (יָשַׁלֶּחַ, v’əšləḵakha), which is followed by the imperative with the vav, “and bring out” or “that you may bring out” (יָצֹא, v’rōṣe). The series of actions begins with Moses going. When he goes, it will be the Lord who speaks to Moses, and here he sends him, it will be with the purpose of leading Israel out of Egypt.

2 tn Heb “And Moses said.”

3 sn These instructions for Moses are based on the preceding revelation made to him. The deliverance of Israel was to be God’s work – hence, “I will send you.” When God commissioned people, often using the verb “to send,” it indicated that they went with his backing, his power, and his authority. Moses had not brought Israel out of Egypt by himself. Thus, it is necessary to have a sign to Moses. Moses will need one to prove to the Israelites what God will do. The particle הִנֵּה (hinneh) can function as an exclamation, i.e., “surely, indeed,” which is frequently found with oaths (R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 73, §449). The imperfect tense הָלִיך (ḥālīkh) carries the modal nuance of obligatory imperfect, i.e., “that I should go.” Moses at this point is overwhelmed with the task of representing God, and with his personal insufficiency, and so in honest humility questions the choice.

4 tn Heb “And he said”; the word “replied” clarifies for English readers that speaker is God.

5 sn When he was younger, Moses was confident and impulsive, but now that he is older the great responsibility makes him unsure. The remainder of this chapter and the next chapter record the four difficulties of Moses and how the Lord deals with them (11-12, 13-22; then 4:1-9; and finally 4:10-17). These instructions for Moses are based on the preceding revelation made to him. The deliverance of Israel was to be God’s work – hence, “I will send you.” When God commissioned people, often using the verb “to send,” it indicated that they went with his backing, his power, and his authority. Moses had not brought Israel out of Egypt by himself. Thus, it is necessary to have a sign to Moses. Moses will need one to prove to the Israelites what God will do. The particle הִנֵּה (hinneh) can function as an exclamation, i.e., “surely, indeed,” which is frequently found with oaths (R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 73, §449). The imperfect tense הָלִיך (ḥālīkh) carries the modal nuance of obligatory imperfect, i.e., “that I should go.” Moses at this point is overwhelmed with the task of representing God, and with his personal insufficiency, and so in honest humility questions the choice.

6 sn Here is the introduction of the main motif of the commission, which will be the explanation of the divine name. It will make little difference who the servant is or what that servant’s abilities might be, if God is present. The mention of God’s presence means that he is present not in a general way but in no way authenticating the servant: it represents abundant provisions to the believer (see below on v. 14).

7 sn In view of Moses’ hesitancy, a sign is necessary to support the promise. A sign is often an unusual or miraculous event that introduces, authenticates, or illustrates the message. One expects a direct connection between the sign and the message (for a helpful discussion, see S. Porubcan, ‘The Word ‘OT in Isaia 7.14,’ CJS 22 [1960]: 144-49). In this passage the sign is a confirming one, i.e., when Israel worshipers at the mountain that will be the proof that God delivered them from Egypt. Thus, the purpose of the exodus that makes possible the worship will be to prove that it was God who brought it about. In the meantime, Moses will have to trust in Yahweh.

8 tn The verb יָשַׁלֶּחַ (yəšālēḵ) is one of the foremost words for worship in the Torah. Keeping the commandments and serving Yahweh usually sum up the life of faith; the true worshiper seeks to obey him. The highest title anyone can have in the OT is “the servant of Yahweh.” The verb here could be rendered interpretively as “worship,” but it is better to keep it to the basic idea of serving because that emphasizes an important aspect of worship, and it highlights the change from Israel’s serving Egyptian, which has been prominent in the earlier chapters. The words “and they” are supplied to clarify for English readers that the subject of the verb is plural (Moses and the people), unlike the other second person forms in vv. 10 and 12, which are singular.

9 tn Heb “And Moses said.”

10 sn The particle הִנֵּה (hinneh) in this clause introduces the foundation for what comes later – the question. Moses is saying, “Suppose I do all this and they ask this question – what should I say?”

11 sn There has been considerable debate about the name of Yahweh in the Pentateuch, primarily because of theories that have maintained that the name Yahweh was not known in antiquity (see also 6:3 and notes there). The argument of this whole section nullifies that view. The idea that God’s name was revealed only here raises the question of what he was called earlier. The word “God” is not a name. “El Shaddai” is used only a few times in Genesis. But Israel would not have had a nameless deity – especially since Genesis says that from the very beginning people were making proclamation of the name of Yahweh (Gen 4:26; 12:8). It is possible that they did not always need a name if they were convinced that only he existed and there was no other God. But probably what Moses was anticipating was the Israelites wanting to be sure that Moses came with a message from their God, and that some sign could prove it. They would have known his name (Yahweh), and they would have known the ways that he had manifested himself. It would do no good for Moses to come with a new name for God, for that would be like introducing them to a new god. They would in no way authenticate to them Moses’ call, only confuse; after all, they would not be expecting a new name – they had been praying to their covenant God all along. They would want to be sure that their covenant God actually had sent Moses. To satisfy the Israelites Moses would have had to have been familiar with the name Yahweh – as they were – and know that he appeared to individuals. They would also want to know if Yahweh had sent Moses, how this was going to work in their deliverance, because they had been crying to him for deliverance. As it turned out, the Israelites had less problem with this than Moses anticipated – they were delighted when he came. It is likely that much of this concern was Moses’ own need for assurance that this was indeed the God of the fathers and that the promised deliverance was now to take place

12 sn The imperfect tense here has a deliberative nuance (“should”), for Moses is wondering what would be best to say when the Israelites want proof of the calling.
3:14 God said to Moses, “I AM that I AM.” And he said, “You must say this to the Israelites, ‘I AM’ has sent me to you.’” 3:15 God also said to Moses, “You must say this to the Israelites, ‘The LORD – the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob – has sent me to you. This is my name forever, and this is my memorial from generation to generation.’”

3:16 “Go and bring together the elders of Israel and tell them, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, appeared to me – the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – saying, ‘I have attended carefully to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt, 3:17 and I have promised that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.’”

3:18 “The elders” will listen to you, and then you and the elders of Israel must go to the king of Egypt and tell him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, let us go three days’ journey into the wilderness,

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1 tn The verb form used here is הָלַךְ (helḵ), the Qal perfect, first person common singular, of the verb הָלַךְ (hālāḵ, “to be”). It forms an excellent paronomasia with the name. So when God used the verb to express his name, he used this form saying, “I AM.” When his people refer to him as Yahweh, they personify the singular form of the very same verb, they say “he is.” Some commentators argue for a future tense translation, “I will be who I will be,” because the verb has an active quality about it, and the Israelites lived in the light of the promises for the future. They argue that “I AM” would be of little help to the Israelites in bondage. But a translation of “I will be” does not effectively do much more except restrict it to the future. The idea of the verb would certainly indicate that God is not bound by time, and while he is present (“I AM”) he will always be present, even in the future, and so “I AM” would embrace that as well (see also Ruth 2:13; Ps 50:21; Hos 1:9). The Greek translation of the OT used a participle to capture the idea, and several times in the Gospels Jesus used the powerful “I am” with this significance (e.g., John 8:58). The point is that Yahweh is sovereignly independent of time, manner, and place. The same verb, they say “he is.” Some commentators argue for a causative Hiphil translation of “I will cause to be,” but nowhere in the Bible does this verb appear in Hiphil or Piel. A good summary of the views can be found in G. H. Parke-Taylor, Yahweh, the Divine Name in the Bible (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1991), 125-30. The second object for the verb is the passive participle יָשָׂר, “the Israelites” (v. 5:20).

2 tn Or “Thus you shall say” (also in the following verse). The word “must” in the translation conveys the imperative and imperative force of the statement.

3 sn Heb “Yahweh,” traditionally rendered “the LORD.” First the verb “I AM” was used (v. 14) in place of the name to indicate the Lord’s promise to be with him (v. 12). Now in v. 15 the actual name is used for clear identification: “Yahweh...has sent me.” This is the name that the patriarchs invoked and proclaimed in the land of Canaan.

4 sn The words “name” and “memorial” are at the heart of the two parallel clauses that form a poetic pair. The Hebrew word “remembrance” is a poetical synonym for “name” (cf. Job 18:17; Ps 135:13; Prov 10:7; Isa 26:28) and conveys the idea that the nature or character of the person is to be remembered and praised (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 24).

5 tn The repetition of “generation” in this expression serves as a periphrasis for the superlative: “to the remotest generation” (GKC 432 §133.1).

6 tn The form is the perfect tense with the sequential vav (ו) linking the nuance to the imperative that precedes it. Since the imperative calls for immediate action, this form either carries the same emphasis, or instructs action that immediately follows it. This applies likewise to “say,” which follows.

7 sn “The God of your fathers” is in simple apposition to the name “the LORD” (Heb “Yahweh”) as a recognizable identification. If the holy name were a new one to the Israelites, an explanation would have been needed. Meanwhile, the title “God of your father” was widely used in the ancient Near East and also in Genesis (26:24; 28:13; 31:5, 29; 46:1; 3: N. M. Sarna, Exodus [JPSTC], 268).

8 tn The form is the Niphal perfect of the verb “to see.” See the note on “appeared” in 3:2.

9 tn The verb פָּעַל (paʿal) has traditionally been rendered “to visit.” This only partially communicates the point of the word. When God “visited” someone, it meant that he intervened in their lives to change their circumstances or their destiny. When he visited the Amalekites, he destroyed them (1 Sam 15:2). When he visited Sarah, he provided the long awaited child (Gen 21:1). It refers to God’s active involvement in human affairs for blessing or for cursing. Here it meant that God had begun to act to deliver the Israelites from bondage and give them the blessings of the covenant. The form is joined with the infinitive absolute to capture the idea, and several times in the Gospels Jesus used the powerful “I am” with this significance (e.g., John 8:58). The point is that Yahweh is sovereignly independent of time, manner, and place. The same verb, they say “he is.” Some commentators argue for a causative Hiphil translation of “I will cause to be,” but nowhere in the Bible does this verb appear in Hiphil or Piel. A good summary of the views can be found in G. H. Parke-Taylor, Yahweh, the Divine Name in the Bible (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1991), 125-30. The second object for the verb is the passive participle יָשָׂר, “the Israelites” (v. 5:20).

10 sn The second object for the verb is the passive participle מִשְׁלַחְתּ (mishlakht), “who has sent” (cf. Gen 3:24). To say that God has visited the oppression (or “attended to” it) affirms that God has decided to judge the oppressing people as he blesses Israel.

11 tn Heb “And I said.”

12 tn See the note on this list in 3:8.

13 tn Heb “And they will listen”; the referent (the elders) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

14 tn This is the combination of the verb וַיִּשְׁמַע (yismam) followed by בִּקְרֵא (bikra), an idiomatic formation that means “listen to your voice,” which in turn implies a favorable response.

15 sn The verb נִמְצָא (nimtsa) has the idea of encountering in a sudden or unexpected way (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 25).

16 sn The form used here is the cohortative of מְלָכָה (malkah), “ruler.” It could be a resolve, but more likely before Pharaoh it is a request.
so that we may sacrifice4 to the Lord our God.’ 3:19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go,2 not even under force.3 3:20 So I will extend my hand4 and strike Egypt with all my wonders5 that I will do among them, and after that he will release you.6 3:21 ‘I will grant this people favor with’ the Egyptians, so that when8 you depart you will not leave empty-handed. 3:22 Every9 woman will ask her neighbor and the one who happens to be staying10 in her house for items of silver and gold11 and for clothing. You will put these articles on your sons and daughters – thus you will plunder Egypt!’ 12

The Source of Sufficiency

4:13 Moses answered again,14 ‘And if they do not believe me or pay attention to me,15 but say, ‘The Lord has not appeared to you?’ 12 The Lord said to him, ‘What is that in your hand?’ He said, ‘A staff.’ 3:3 The Lord10 said, ‘Throw it to the ground.’ So he threw it to

have been intended to test the waters, so to speak – How did Pharaoh feel about the Israelites? Would he let them go and worship their God as they saw fit? In any case, it gave him the opportunity to grant to the Israelites a permission that other groups are known to have received (N. M. Sarna, Exodus [JP-STC], 19).

3 tn Here a cohortative with a nifal (-ki) follows a cohortative; the second one expresses purpose or result: “let us go...in order that we may.”

2 tn After verbs of perception, as with “I know” here, the object may be a noun clause introduced with the particle ָּ (ki) – “I know that...” Gesenius observes that the object clause may have a kind of accusative and an infinitive construction especially after הָיָה [natan] with the idea of “allow”; “he will not permit you to go” (see GKC 491 §157b, n. 2).

10 sn In chap. 3, the first part of this extensive call, Yahweh promises to deliver his people. At the hesitancy of Moses, God guarantees his presence will be with him, and that assures the success of the mission. But with chap. 4, the second half of the call, the tone changes sharply. Now Moses protests his inadequacies in view of the nature of the task. In many ways, these verses address the question, “Who is sufficient for these things?” There are three basic movements in the passage. The first nine verses tell how God gave Moses the Source of Sufficiency (4:19). The second section records how God dealt with the speech problem of Moses (4:10-12). And finally, the last section records God’s provision of a helper, someone who could talk well (4:13-17).

11 sn The two uses of the root נָצַל (natzal) in this verse contribute to its force. When the Lord “sends” (Piel the Israelites out of this world) Pharaoh will understand the clear idea conveyed by the word נָצַל (natzal) in the annunciation of the effects that his hand will have. At any rate, Pharaoh will have to be forced to let Israel go.

4 sn The outstretched arm is a bold anthropomorphism. It describes the power of God. The Egyptians will later admit that the plagues were by the hand of God (Exod 8:19).

5 sn The word נָשַׁל (nashal) does not specify what the intervention will be. The text unfolds it will be clear that the plagues are intended. Signs and portents could refer to things people might do, but “wonders” only God could do. The root refers to that which is extraordinary, surpassing, amazing, difficult to comprehend. See Isa 9:6; Gen 18:14; Ps 139:6.

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7 tn Heb “in the eyes of.” This idiom usually means that someone will be treated well by the observer. It is unlikely that it means here that the Egyptians will like the Hebrews. Rather, it means that the Egyptians will give things to the Hebrews free – gratis (see 12:35-36). Not only will God do mighty works to make the king yield, but also he will work in their favor and “send” (Piel the Israelites out of this world). The text unfolds it will be clear that the plagues are intended. Signs and portents could refer to things people might do, but “wonders” only God could do. The root refers to that which is extraordinary, surpassing, amazing, difficult to comprehend. See Isa 9:6; Gen 18:14; Ps 139:6.

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9 sn The Source of Sufficiency

10 sn ‘a woman’, one representing all.

11 sn Heb “from the sojourner” ‘but his neighbor’ and the ‘sojourner’ (‘one who happens to be staying in her house”) are feminine. The difference between them seems to be primarily that the second is temporary, “a lodger” perhaps or “visitor,” while the first has permanent residence.

12 tn Heb “vessels of silver and vessels of gold.” These phrases both use genitives of material, telling what the vessels are made of.

13 sn It is clear that God intended the Israelites to plunder the Egyptians, as they might a defeated enemy in war. They will not go out “empty.” They will “plunder” Egypt. This verb (נָצַל [natzal] from נָצַל [natsal]) usually means “rescue, deliver,” as if plucking out of danger. But in this stem it carries the idea of plunder. So when the text says that they will ask your sons and daughters – thus you will plunder Egypt. This verb (נָצַל [natzal]) means “a woman,” one representing all.

14 sn Heb “What if.” The use of גָּלְעַן (gal’an) is unusual here, introducing a conditional idea in the question without a following consequence clause (see Exod 8:22 HT [8:26 ET]; Jer 2:10; 2 Chr 7:13). The Greek has “if not” but adds the clause “what shall I say to them.”

15 sn Heb “listen to my voice,” so as to respond positively.

16 sn Or “rod” (KJV, ASV); NCV, CEV “walking stick”; NLT “shepherd’s staff.”

17 sn The staff appears here to be the shepherd’s staff that he was holding. It now will become the instrument with which Moses will do the mighty works, for it is the medium of the display of the divine power (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 27; also, L. Shama, “How Moses Turned a Staff into a Snake and Back Again,” BAR 9 [1983]: 72-73.)

18 sn Heb “he;” the referent (the Lord) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
of the Nile will become blood on the dry ground."18

4:10 Then Moses said to the Lord,17 “O Lord,19 I am not an eloquent man,20 neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant, for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”22

4:11 The Lord said to him, “Who gave23 a mouth to man, or who makes a person mute or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?24

4:4 But the Lord said to Moses, “Put out your hand and grab it by the tail” – so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand2 – 4:5 “that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”

4:6 The Lord also said to him, “Put your hand into your robe.” So he put his hand into his robe, and when he brought it out – there was his hand,4 leprous like snow!15 4:7 He said, “Put your hand back into your robe.” So he put his hand back into his robe, and when he brought it out from his robe – there it was,6 restored7 like the rest of his skin!19 4:8 “If they do not believe you or pay attention to10 the former sign, then they may11 believe the latter sign. 4:9 And if23 they do not believe even these two signs or listen to you,14 then take15 some water from the Nile and pour it out on the dry ground. The water you take out

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1 sn The details of the verse are designed to show that there was a staff that became a snake, and Moses ran from it.
2 sn The particle hinneh points out the startling or amazing sight as if the reader were catching the first glimpse of it with Moses.
3 sn This sudden skin disease indicated that God was able to bring such diseases on Egypt in the plagues and that only he could remove them. The whitening was the first stage of the disease called leprosy and identified with Moses’ garment. The inside chest pocket of a jacket is a rough modern equivalent.
4 sn The particle hinneh points out the startling or amazing sight as if the reader were catching the first glimpse of it with Moses.
5 sn The designation in Moses’ address is אדני (‘ēdānī), a term of respect and deference such as “lord, master, sir” but pointed as it would be when it represents the tetragrammaton. B. Jacob says since this is the first time Moses spoke directly to Yahweh, he did so hesitantly.
6 sn When a noun clause is negated with כִּיַּשֵּׁר (kìyāsher), rather than כָּשֵׁר (kāsher), there is a special emphasis, since the force of the negative falls on a specific word (GKC 479 §152.d). The expression “eloquent man” is כְּבַד לָשׁוֹן (kīwad ’lōshon), often rendered “bosom,” refers to the front of the chest and a fold in the garment where there may have been a place for carrying (see Prov 6:27; 16:33; 21:14). So “into your robe” should be understood loosely here and in v. 7 as referring to the inside of the top front of Moses’ garment. The inside chest pocket of a jacket is a rough modern equivalent.
7 sn The sudden skin disease indicated that God was able to bring such diseases on Egypt in the plagues and that only he could remove them. The whitening was the first stage of the disease called leprosy and identified as Hansen’s disease in modern times.
8 sn In his address to the elders, Moses uses the term כְּבַד לָשׁוֹן (kīwad ’lōshon), often rendered “bosom,” to describe the mouth and then כְּבַד פֶּה (kīwad pēh), “heavy of mouth,” to describe the tongue.
9 sn A rhetorical question is meant to prod Moses’ faith. Both use genitives of specification, the mouth and the tongue, and then כְּבַד פֶּה (kīwad pēh), “heavy of mouth,” to describe the tongue.
10 sn The verb דָּאַשׁ (dā‘ash) means “to place, put, set”; the sentence here more precisely says, “Who put a mouth into a man?”
11 sn The argument by Moses is here met by Yahweh’s rhetorical questions. They are intended to be sharp – it is reproof for Moses. The message is twofold. First, Yahweh is fully able to overcome all of Moses’ deficiencies. Second, Moses is exactly the way that God intended him to be. So the rhetorical questions are meant to prod Moses’ faith.
12 sn The final question obviously demands a positive answer. But the clause is worded in such a way as to return to the theme of “I AM.” Isaiah 45:5-7 developed this same idea of God’s control over life. Moses protests that he is not an eloquent speaker, and the Lord replies with reminders about himself and promises. “I will be with your mouth,” an assertion that repeats the verb he used four times in 3:12 and 14 and in promises to Isaac and Jacob (Gen 26:3; 31:3).
4:12 So now go, and I will be with your mouth\(^1\) and will teach you\(^2\) what you must say.

4:13 But Moses said,\(^3\) “O\(^4\) my Lord, please send someone else whom you wish to send.”

4:14 Then the Lord became angry with Moses, and he said, “What about your brother Aaron on the Levite?\(^5\) I know that he can speak very well.\(^6\) Moreover, he is coming\(^7\) to meet you, and when he sees you he will be glad in his heart.\(^8\)

4:15 “So you are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And as for me, I will be with your mouth\(^9\) and with his mouth,\(^10\) and I will teach you both\(^11\) what you must do.\(^12\) 4:16 He\(^13\) will speak for you to the people, and it will be as if I were your mouth;\(^14\) and as if you were his God.\(^15\)

4:17 You will also take in your hand this staff, with which you will do the signs.”

The Return of Moses

4:18\(^16\) So Moses went back\(^17\) to his father-in-law Jethro and said to him, “Let me go, so that I may return to my relatives\(^18\) in Egypt and see\(^19\) if they are still alive.” Jethro said to Moses, “Go to your brothers.”

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\(^1\) sn The promise of divine presence always indicates intervention (for blessing or cursing). Here it means that God would be working through the organs of speech to help Moses speak. See Deut 18:18; Jer 1:9.

\(^2\) sn The verb לָטַּה (lā'tah), the Hiphil perfect with a vav (ו) consecutive. The form carries the instructional meaning because it follows the imperative “go.” In fact, there is a sequence at work here: “go...and that I may teach you.” It is from יָרָא (yara), the same root behind תּוֹרָה (torah, “law”). This always referred to teaching either wisdom or revelation. Here Yahweh promises to teach Moses what to say.

\(^3\) tn The form is the imperfect tense. While it could be taken as a future (“what you will say”), an obligatory imperfect captures the significance better (“what you must say” or “what you are to say”). Not even the content of the message will be known until it is spoken (see GKC 488-89 §155.4).

\(^4\) tn Heb “And he said”; the referent (Moses) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

\(^5\) tn The word מִי (mi) is a particle of entreaty; it seeks permission to speak and is always followed by “Lord” or “my Lord.”

\(^6\) tn The text has simply יַעֲדֵה (yad), “let me go” (םיַעֲדֵה). The form is the imperfect tense. While it could be taken so also expresses purpose: “let me go that I may return...and when he sees you he will be glad in his heart.”

\(^7\) tn Heb “and the anger of Yahweh burned against.”

\(^8\) sn Moses had not dared openly to say “except me” when he asked God to send whomsoever he wanted to send. But God knew that is what he meant. Moses should not have resisted the call or pleased such excuses or hesitated with such weak resignation to doing God’s will — it is his final attempt to avoid the call. It carries the force of asking God to send someone else. This is an example of an independent relative clause governed by the genitive: “by the hand of — whomever you will send” (see GKC 488-89 §155.4).

\(^9\) tn Heb “And he said”; the referent (Moses) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

\(^10\) sn Moses will be like God to Aaron, giving him the words as if he were his God. Or “and will help him speak.” The independent pronoun puts emphasis ("as for me") on the subject ("I").

\(^11\) tn The word “both” is supplied to convey that this object (“you”) and the subject of the next verb (“you must do”) are plural in the Hebrew text, referring to Moses and Aaron. In 4:16 “you” returns to being singular in reference to Moses.

\(^12\) sn It is unlikely that this simply means that as a brother he will be pleased to see Moses, for the narrative has no time for that kind of comment. It is interested in more significant things. The implication is that Aaron will rejoice because of the revelation of God to Moses and the plan to deliver Israel from bondage (see B. Jacob, Exodus, 93).

\(^13\) tn Or “I will help you speak.” The independent pronoun puts emphasis (“as for me”) on the subject (“I”).

\(^14\) tn Or “and will help him speak.”

\(^15\) tn The word “both” is supplied to convey that this object (“you”) and the subject of the next verb (“you must do”) are plural in the Hebrew text, referring to Moses and Aaron. In 4:16 “you” returns to being singular in reference to Moses.

\(^16\) tn The imperfect tense carries the obligatory nuance here as well. The relative pronoun with this verb forms a noun clause functioning as the direct object of “I will teach.”

\(^17\) sn This last section of the chapter reports Moses’ compliance with the commission. It has four parts: the decision to return (18–20), the confrontation with Jethro (21–23), the confrontation with Yahweh (24–26), and the presentation with Aaron (27–31).

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\(^24\) tn The two verbs form a verbal hendiadys, the second verb becoming adverbial in the translation: “and he went and he returned” becomes “and he went back.”

\(^25\) tn There is a sequence here with the two cohortative forms: יָדַּע (yadh) + v’; יָדַע (yadh) + v’; “let me go in order that I may return.”

\(^26\) tn Heb “brothers.”

\(^27\) tn This verb is parallel to the preceding cohortative and so expresses purpose: “let me go that I may return...and that I may see.”
in peace." 4:19 The Lord said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, because all the men who were seeking your life are dead." 4:20 Then Moses took his wife and sons and put them on a donkey and headed back to the land of Egypt, and Moses took the staff of God in his hand. 4:21 The Lord spoke to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh. That does not seem as likely as the second option (indicating that it was symbolically Moses' foreskin). The point is that this son of Abraham had not complied with the sign of the Abrahamic covenant. No one, according to Exodus 12:40-51, would take part in the Passover-exodus who had not complied. So how could the one who was going to lead God's people to the Promised Land be the one from whom Moses fled, then he could not be the pharaoh of the exodus, but his son would be – and that puts the date of the exodus after 1236, a date too late for anyone. See E. H. Merrill, Kingdom of Priests, 62.

7 tn The construction may involve a verbal hendiadys using the two infinitive forms: "when you go to return" (literally, בְּלֶכְתְּךָ לָשׁוּב, b’lekh’takhla lashuv). The clause is temporal, subordinated to the instruction to do the signs. Therefore, its focus cannot be on going to return, i.e., preparing or beginning to return.

8 tn The construction reflects the perfect with the aorist subjunctive (1504-1450 a.c.). to fit this period of Moses' life. This would place Moses' return to Egypt near 1450 a.c., in the beginning of the reign of Amenhotep II, whom most conservatives identify as the pharaoh of the exodus. Rameses II, on the other hand, ruled for a very long reign (1304-1236). But if he were the one from whom Moses fled, then he could not be the pharaoh of the exodus, but his son would be – and that puts the date of the exodus after 1236, a date too late for anyone. See E. H. Merrill, Kingdom of Priests, 62.

9 sn Only Gershom has been mentioned so far. The other son's name will be explained in chapter 18. The explanation of Gershom's name was important to Moses' sojourn in Midian. The explanation of the name Eliezer fits better in the later chapter (18:2-4).

10 sn The verb would literally be rendered "and returned"; however, the narrative will record other happenings before he arrived in Egypt, so an ingressive nuance fits here – he began to return, or started back. 10 tn Heb "And Yahweh said."

11 The two verb forms in this section are the imperative, "send out" (מָצַא, ma’atsa), followed by the perfect with the infinitive construct (תֵּבַע, teba’u). The second could be coordinated and function as a second command: "see...and then do"; or it could be subordinated logically: "see...so that you do." Some commentators who take the first option suggest that Moses was supposed to contemplate these wonders before doing them before Pharaoh. That does not seem as likely as the second interpretation reflected in the translation. 11 Or Or "in your power"; Heb "in your hand."

12 tn Heb "strengthen" (in the sense of making stubborn or obstinate). The text has the expression רְאֵה הַלֶּחֶק (r’eh hal’ehkh), "I will make strong his will," or "I will strengthen his resolve," recognizing the "heart" as the location of decision making (see Prov 16:1, 9).

13 tn The sequence of the instruction from God uses the perfect tense with הִנְנֶה (hinneh), following the preceding imperfects. 14 tn The instantaneous use of the perfect tense fits well with the prophetic announcement of what Yahweh said or says. It shows that the words given to the prophet are still binding.

15 sn The metaphor uses the word "son" in its connotation of a political dependent, as it was used in ancient documents to describe what was intended to be a loyal relationship with well-known privileges and responsibilities, like that between a good father and son. The word can mean a literal son, a descendant, a chosen king (and so, the Messiah), a disciple (in Proverbs), and here, a nation subject to God. If the people of Israel were God's "son," then they should serve him and not Pharaoh. Malachi reminds people that the Law said "a son honors his father," and so God asked, "If I am a father, where is my honor?" (Mal 1:6).

16 tn The text uses the imperative, "send out" (תָּשַׁלְחֶה, shalakh) followed by the imperfect or jussive with the suffix (וֹ) to express purpose.

17 tn The Piel infinitive serves as the direct object of the verb, answering the question of what Pharaoh would refuse to do. The command and refusal to obey are the grounds for the announcement of death for Pharaoh's son.

18 tn The construction is very emphatic. The particle הִנְנֶה (hinneh) gives it an immediacy and a vividness, as if God is already beginning to act. The particle with this particle has the nuance of an imminent future act, as if God is saying, "I am about to kill." These words are not repeated until the last plague.

19 tn Or Or "at a lodging place" or "at an inn."

20 sn The next section (vv. 24-26) records a rather strange story. God had said that if Pharaoh would not comply he would kill his son – but now God was ready to kill Moses, the representative of Israel, God's own son. Apparently, one would reconstruct that on the journey Moses fell seriously ill, and his wife, learning that he was returning to life, availed herself of the opportunity of circumcision of her son and casting the foreskin at Moses' feet (indicating that it was symbolically Moses' foreskin). The point is that this son of Abraham had not complied with the sign of the Abrahamic covenant. No one, according to Exodus 12:40-51, would take part in the Passover-exodus who had not complied. So how could the one who was going to lead God's people to the Promised Land be the one from whom Moses fled, then he could not be the pharaoh of the exodus, but his son would be – and that puts the date of the exodus after 1236, a date too late for anyone. See E. H. Merrill, Kingdom of Priests, 62.

21 sn Here is the first mention of the hardening of the heart of Pharaoh. God tells Moses that God must do the miracles, but he also announces that he will harden Pharaoh's heart, as if working against Moses. It will help Moses to know that God is bringing about the resistance in order to bring a greater victory with greater glory. There is a great deal of literature on this, but see among the resources F. W. Danker, "Hardness of Heart: A Study in Biblical Thematic," CMT 44 (1973): 89-100; R. R. Wilson, "The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart," CBQ 41 (1979): 18-36; and R. B. Chisholm Jr., "Divine Hardening in the Old Testament," BSac 153 (1996): 410-34.

22 tn Or Or "so that."
the Lord let him alone. (At that time she said, “A bridegroom of blood,” referring to the circumcision.)

4:27 The Lord said to Aaron, “Go to the wilderness to meet Moses. So he went and met him at the mountain of God and greeted him with a kiss. 4:28 Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him and all the signs that he had commanded him. 4:29 Then Moses and Aaron went and brought together all the Israelite elders. 4:30 Aaron spoke all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people, 4:31 and the people believed. When they heard that the Lord had attended to the Israelites and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed down close to the ground.

Opposition to the Plan of God

5:1 Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Release my people so that they may hold a pilgrimage feast to me in the desert.’” 5:2 But Pharaoh said, “Who is the Lord that I should obey him by releasing Israel? I do not know the Lord, and I will not release Israel!”

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1 tn Heb “he”; the referent (the Lord) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
2 tn Or “Therefore.” The particle הָה (’ha) here is not introducing the next item in a series of events. It points back to the past (“at that time,” see Gen 4:26) or to a logical connection (“therefore, consequently”).
3 tn The Hebrew simply has לָמָּמוּל (lammolot, “to the circumcision[s]”). The phrase explains that the saying was in reference to the act of circumcision. Some scholars speculate that there was a ritual prior to marriage from which this verse and its meaning derived. But it appears rather that if there was some ancient ritual, it would have had to come from this event. The difficulty is that the son is circumcised, not Moses, making the comparative mythological view untenable. Moses had apparently not circumcised Eliezer. Since Moses was taking his family with him, God had to make sure the sign of the covenant was kept. It may be that here Moses sent them all back to Jethro (18:2) because of the difficulties that lay ahead.
4 tn Heb “And Yahweh said.”
5 sn S. R. Driver considers that this verse is a continuation of vv. 17 and 18 and that Aaron met Moses before Moses started back to Egypt (Exodus, 33). The first verb, then, might have the nuance of a past perfect: Yahweh had said.
6 tn Heb “and kissed him.”
7 tn The form and the last one in the verse are rendered with the past perfect nuance because they refer to what the Lord had done prior to Moses’ telling Aaron.
8 sn These are the leaders of the tribes who represented all the people. Later, after the exodus, Moses will select the most capable of them and others to be rulers in a judicial sense (Exod 18:21).
9 tn Heb “And Aaron spoke.”
10 sn The LXX (Greek OT) has “and they rejoiced,” probably reading רָאָה (rāhā), of what the MT reading, רָאָה (rāhā), “and they heard.” To rejoice would have seemed a natural response of the people at the news, and the enthusiasm of the worshipers in the preceding verse is a natural complement to what they now hear. To hear would have the nuance of “that I might know.” Pharaoh will come to know this Yahweh. It says more than that he took notice of them, took pity on them, or remembered them. He had not yet fulfilled the promises, but he had begun to act by calling Moses and Aaron. The translation “attended to” attempts to capture that much.
12 sn The verb הָעַרְבָּה (harʿāḇah) is usually rendered “worshiped.” More specifically, the verbal root הָעַרְבָּה (harʿāḇah) in the hiphʿal stem means “to cause oneself to be low to the ground.” While there is nothing wrong with giving it a general translation of “worship,” it may be better in a passage like this to take it in conjunction with the other verb (“bow”) as a verbal hendiadys, using it as an adverb to that verb. The implication is certainly that they prayed, or praised, and perhaps rendered some other aspect of worship, but the text may just be describing it from their posture of worship. With this response, all the fears of Moses are swept aside—they believed and they were thankful to God.
13 sn The enthusiasm of the worshipers in the preceding chapter turns sour in this one when Pharaoh refuses to cooperate. The point is clear that when Moses and Pharaoh met, it was with the intention to devote their full service and allegiance to God, they encounter opposition from the world. Rather than finding instantaneous blessing and peace, they find conflict. This is the theme that will continue through the plague narratives. But what makes chapter 5 especially interesting is how the people react to this opposition. The chapter has three sections: first, the report of the stern opposition of the king (vv. 6-14); then the report of the stern opposition of the king (vv. 6-14); and finally, the sad account of the effect of this opposition on the people (vv. 15-21).
14 tn Heb “Yahweh.”
15 tn The form יָשַׂר (yashār), the Piel imperative, has been traditionally translated “let [my people] go.” The Qal would be “send”; so the Piel “send away, release, dismiss, discharge.” B. Jacob observes, “If a person was dismissed through the use of this verb, then he ceased to be within the power or sphere of influence of the individual who had dismissed him. He was completely free and subsequently acted entirely on his own responsibility” (Exodus, 115).
16 tn The verb עָנָה (ʿanāh) means to hold a feast or to go on a pilgrimage feast. The Arabic cognate of the noun form is hajj, which is best known for the pilgrim feast of Mohammed (hajj). The form in the text עָנָה (ʿanāh) is subordinated to the imperative and thus shows the purpose of the imperative.
17 tn Heb “Yahweh.” This is a rhetorical question, expressing doubt or indignation or simply a negative thought that Yahweh is nothing (see erotesis in E. W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech, 944-45). Pharaoh is not asking for information (cf. 1 Sam 25:5-10).
18 tn The relative pronoun introduces the consecutive clause that depends on the interrogative clause (see GKC 318-19 §107.ii).
19 tn The imperfect tense here receives the classification of obligatory imperfect. The verb שָׁמַע (shama) followed by “in the voice of” is idiomatic; rather than referring to simple audition—“that I should hear his voice”—it conveys the thought of listening that issues in action—“that I should obey his voice.”
20 tn The Piel infinitive construct here has the epexegetical usage with lamed (ְ); it explains the verb “obey.”
21 sn This absolute statement of Pharaoh is part of a motif that will develop throughout the conflict. For Pharaoh, the Lord (Yahweh) did not exist. So he said “I do not know the Lord [i.e., Yahweh].” The point of the plagues and the exodus will be “that he might know.” Pharaoh will come to know this Yahweh, but not in any pleasant way.
5:3 And they said, “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Let us go a three-day journey into the desert so that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God, so that he does not strike us with plague or the sword.” 5:4 The king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why do you cause the people to refrain from their work? Return to your labor!” 5:5 Pharaoh was thinking, “The people of the land are many, and you are giving them rest from their labor.”

5:6 That same day Pharaoh commanded the slave masters and foremen who were over the people: 5:7 “You must no longer give straw to the people for making bricks as before. Let them go and collect straw for themselves.” 5:8 But you must require of them the same quota of bricks that they were making before. Do not reduce it, for they are slackers. That is why they are crying, ‘Let us go sacrifice to our God.’ 5:9 Make the work harder for the men so they will keep at it and pay no attention to lying words!”

5:10 So the slave masters of the people and their foremen went to the Israelites and said, “Thus says Pharaoh: ‘I am not giving you straw. 5:11 You go and get straw for yourselves wherever you can find it, because there will be no reduction at all in your workload.’”

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4 In the word “journey” is an adverbial accusative telling the distance that Moses wanted the people to go. It is qualified by “three days.” It is not saying that they will be gone three days, but that they will go a distance that will take three days to cover (see Gen 31:22-23; Num 10:33; 33:8).

5 The purpose clause here is formed with a second conjoined with a waw (ו): “let us go...and let us sacrifice.” The purpose of the going was to sacrifice.

6 Where did Moses get the idea that they should have a pilgrim feast and make sacrifices? God had only said they would serve Him in that mountain. In the OT the pilgrim feasts to the sanctuary three times a year incorporated the ideas of serving the Lord and keeping the commands. So the words here use the more general idea of appearing before their God. They had been letting the work go, Pharaoh reasoned, and the people were not required to work hard because there was no homeland yet. Moses later spoke of the journey as necessary to avoid offending Egyptian sensibilities (8:25-26).

7 The last clause of this verse is rather unexpected here: “test him [afflict] us with pestilence or sword.” To fail to comply with the summons of one’s God was to invite such calamities. The Law would later incorporate many such things as the curses for disobedience. Moses is indicating that Pharaoh had a good reason to fear Yahweh’s presence than Pharaoh could cause. He would give them the rest that Yahweh refused to give. It should be noted also that it was not Israel who doubted that Yahweh had sent Moses, as Moses had feared – but rather Pharaoh.

8 In Heb “And Pharaoh said.” This is not the kind of thing that Pharaoh is likely to have said to Moses, and so it probably is not what he thought or reasoned within himself. Other passages (like Exod 2:14; 3:3) show that the verb “said” can do this. (See U. Cassuto, Exodus, 67.)

9 In Heb “and Pharaoh commanded on that day.”

10 In the Greek has “scribes” for this word, perhaps thinking of the lesser officials as keeping records of the slaves and the bricks.

11 In the phrase “who were” is supplied for clarity.

12 In vv. 6:14 the second section of the chapter describes the severe measures by the king to increase the labor by decreasing the material. The emphasis in this section must be on the harsh treatment of the people and Pharaoh’s reason for it – he accuses them of idleness because they want to go and worship. The real reason, of course, is that he wants to discredit Moses (v. 9) and keep the people as slaves.

13 The construction is a verbal hendiadys: לֹא תֹאסִפוּן לָתֵת (‘do not add to give’). The imperfect tense acts adverbially, and the infinitive becomes the main verb of the clause: “you must no longer give.”
the people spread out⁴ through all the land of Egypt to collect stubble for straw. 5:13 The slave masters were pressuring⁵ them, saying, “Complete⁶ your work for each day, just like when there was straw!”

5:14 The Israelite foremen whom Pharaoh’s slave masters had set over them were beaten and were asked,⁴ “Why did you not complete your requirement for brickmaking as in the past – both yesterday and today?”⁵

5:15 The Israelite foremen went and cried out to Pharaoh, “Why are you treating your servants this way? 5:16 No straw is given to your servants, but we are told,⁸ ‘Make bricks!’ Your servants are even⁹ being beaten, but the fault¹⁰ is with your people.”

5:17 But Pharaoh replied,¹¹ “You are slackers! Slackers!¹² That is why you are saying, ‘Let us go sacrifice to the Lord.’ 5:18 So now, get back to work!¹³ You will not be given straw, but you must still produce¹⁴ your quota¹⁵ of bricks!” 5:19 The Israelite foremen saw¹⁶ that they were in trouble when they were told,¹⁸ “You must not reduce the daily quota of your bricks.”

5:20 When they went out from Pharaoh, they encountered Moses and Aaron standing there to meet them,¹⁹ 5:21 and they said to them, “May the Lord look on you and judge,²⁰ because you have made us stink²¹ in the opinion of²² Pharaoh.

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¹ tn The verb רִפְיָה (ropyeh) is from the hollow root רָפָה (putas) and means “scatter, spread abroad.”
² tn Or “pressed.”
³ tn חָלָל (kallal) is the Piel imperative; the verb means “to finish, complete” in the sense of filling up the quota.
⁴ tn The quotation is introduced with the common word הַאֲדָמָה (’adamah) and no mention of who said the question.
⁵ tn The idioms for time here are found also in 3:10 and 5:7-8. This question no doubt represents many accusations shouted at Israelites during the period when it was becoming obvious that, despite all their efforts, they were unable to meet their quotas as before.
⁶ sn The last section of this event tells the effect of the oppression on Israel, first on the people (15-19) and then on Moses and Aaron (20-21). The immediate reaction of Israel was to cry to Pharaoh – something they would learn should Pharaoh that these Hebrew foremen did, but they were confused, and then a prepositional phrase: אֹתָם בְּרָע (’otam b’ra), meaning something like “[they saw] them in trouble” or “them in trouble.” Gesenius shows a few examples where the accusative of the reflexive pronoun is represented by the sign of the accusative with a suffix, and these are marked emphasis (GKC 439 §135.k).
⁷ tn The imperfect לֵאמֹר (ləmor), which usually simply means “saying.” The thing that was said was clearly the decree that was given to them.
⁸ tn Moses and Aaron would not have made the appeal to Pharaoh that these Hebrew foremen did, but they were concerned to see what might happen, and so they waited to meet the foremen when they came out.
⁹ tn The foremen vented their anger on Moses and Aaron. The two jussives express their desire that the evil these two have caused be dealt with. “May Yahweh look on you and may he judge” could mean only that God should decide if Moses and Aaron are at fault, but given the rest of the comments it is clear the foremen want more. The second jussive could be subordinated to the first – “so that he may judge [you].”
¹⁰ tn Heb “And he said.”
¹¹ tn Heb “And he said.”
¹² tn Or “loafers.” The form נִרְפִּים (nirpim) is derived from the verb נָרַף (rafah), meaning “to be weak, to let oneself go.”
¹³ tn The text has two imperatives: “go, work.” They may be used together to convey one complex idea (so a use of hendiadys): “go back to work.”
¹⁴ tn The imperfect לִטֶן (litenu) is here taken as an obligatory imperative: “you must give” or “you must produce.”
¹⁵ sn B. Jacob is amazed at the wealth of this tyrant’s vocabulary in describing the work of others. Here, חָנוֹן (tokhen) is another word for “quota” of bricks, the fifth word used to describe their duty (Exodus, 137).
¹⁶ tn The common Hebrew verb translated “saw,” like the common English verb for seeing, is also used to refer to mental perception and understanding, as in the question “See what I mean?” The foremen understood how difficult things would be under this ruling.
¹⁷ tn The text has the sign of the accusative with a suffix and then a prepositional phrase: יֵבָזֵן בַּאֲרֵץ (yevazen ba’aretz), meaning something like “[they saw] them in trouble” or “themselves in trouble.” Gesenius shows a few examples where the accusative of the reflexive pronoun is represented by the sign of the accusative with a suffix, and these are marked emphasis (GKC 439 §135.k).
¹⁸ tn The clause “when they were told” translates רַעָה (’ra), which usually simply means “saying.” The thing that was said was clearly the decree that was given to them.
¹⁹ tn The common Hebrew verb translated “saw,” like the common English verb for seeing, is also used to refer to mental perception and understanding, as in the question “See what I mean?” The foremen understood how difficult things would be under this ruling.
²⁰ tn The foremen vented their anger on Moses and Aaron. The two jussives express their desire that the evil these two have caused be dealt with. “May Yahweh look on you and may he judge” could mean only that God should decide if Moses and Aaron are at fault, but given the rest of the comments it is clear the foremen want more. The second jussive could be subordinated to the first – “so that he may judge [you].”
²¹ tn Heb “you have made our aroma stink.”
²² tn Heb “in the eyes of.”
and his servants, so that you have given them an excuse to kill us!  

The Assurance of Deliverance

5:22 Moses returned to the Lord, and said, “Lord, why have you caused trouble for this people? Why did you ever send me? 5:23 From the time I went to speak to Pharaoh in your name, he has caused trouble for this people, and you have certainly not rescued them!”

6:1 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh, for compelled by my strong hand he will release them, and by my strong hand he will drive them out of his land.”

6:2 God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am the Lord.”

1 tn In Heb “in the eyes of his servants.” This phrase is not repeated in the translation for stylistic reasons.

2 tn In Heb “to put a sword in their hand to kill us.” The infinitive construct with the lamed (בּלָתֶת, latał) signifies the result (“so that”) of making the people stink. Their reputation is now so bad that Pharaoh might gladly put them to death. The next infinitive could also be understood as expressing result: “put a sword in their hand so that they can kill us.”

3 sn In view of the apparent failure of the mission, Moses seeks Yahweh for assurance. The answer from Yahweh not only assures him that all is well, but that there will be a great deliverance. The passage can be divided into three parts: the complaint of Moses (5:22-23), the promise of Yahweh (6:1-9), and the instructions for Moses (6:10-13). Moses complains because God has not delivered his people as he had said he would, and God answers that he will bring about his salvation in a way he has never done before. Moses must keep his commission to speak God’s word. See further, E. A. Martens, “Tackling Old Testament Theology,” JETS 20 (1977): 123-32. The message is very similar to that found in the NT, “Where is the promise of his coming?” (2 Pet 3:4). The complaint of Moses (5:22-23) can be worded with Peter’s “words were a sign of the coming of the Lord.”

4 tn In Heb “and Moses returned.”

5 tn The designation in Moses’ address is “Lord” (יהוה, ‘adonay) – the term for “lord” or “master” but pointed as it would be when it represents the tetragrammaton.

6 tn The verb is הָעִדֵה (hāyēḏeh), the Hiphil perfect of הָעָד (huḏa’). The word itself means “to do evil,” and in this stem “to cause to stumble” is the sense of the man’s closeness to God. God never has objected to such bold complaints by the devout. He then notes how God was angered by his defenders in the book of Job rather than by Job’s heated accusations.

7 tn In the demonstrative pronoun serves for emphasis in the question (see R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 24, §118). This second question continues Moses’ bold approach to God, more chiding than praying. He is implying that if this was the result of the call, then God had no purpose calling him (compare Jeremiah’s similar complaint in Jer 20).

8 sn Now the verb (הִרְדוֹ, hīrdō) has a different subject – Pharaoh. The ultimate cause of the trouble was God, but the immediate cause was Pharaoh and the way he increased the work. Meanwhile, the Israelite foremen have pinned most of the blame on Moses and Aaron. Moses knows all about the sovereign of God, and as he speaks in God’s name, he sees the effect it has on pagans like Pharaoh. So the rhetorical questions are designed to prod God to act differently.

9 tn The Hebrew construction is emphatic: יְהֹוָה אֵל אֲדֹנָי אֶהְיֶה (yāhweh el ‘adonai ehyeh). The verb יִתַּסֵּל (yitsōl) means “to deliver, rescue” in the sense of plucking out, even plundering. The infinitive absolute strengthens both the idea of the verb and the negative. God had not delivered this people at all.

10 tn In Heb “your people.” The pronoun (“them”) has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons here, to avoid redundancy.

11 tn The expression “I will do to Pharaoh” always refers to the plagues. God would first show his sovereignty over Pharaoh before defeating him.

12 tn The expression “with a strong hand” (יְהֹוָה־יָד חֲזָקָה, yāhweh-yād khazaqāh) could refer (1) to God’s powerful intervention (“compelled by my strong hand”) or (2) to Pharaoh’s forceful pursuit (“he will forcefully drive them out”). In Exod 3:20 God has summarized what his hand would do in Egypt, and that is probably what is intended here, as he promises that Moses will see what God will do. All Egypt ultimately desired that Israel be released (12:33), and when they were released Pharaoh pursued them to the sea, and so in a sense drove them out – whether that was his intention or not. But ultimately it was God’s power that was the real force behind it all. U. Cassuto (Exodus, 74) considers that it is unlikely that the phrase would be used in the same verse twice with the same meaning. So he thinks that the first “strong hand” is God’s, and the second “strong hand” is Pharaoh’s. It is true that if Pharaoh acted forcefully in any way that contributed to Israel leaving Egypt it was because God was acting forcefully in his life. So in an understated way, God is saying that when forced by God’s strong hand, Pharaoh will indeed release God’s people.

13 sn Or “and he will forcefully drive them out of his land,” if the second occurrence of “strong hand” refers to Pharaoh’s rather than God’s (see the previous note).

14 tn In Exod 12:33 the Egyptians were eager to send (release) Israel away in haste, because they all thought they were going to die.

15 sn The announcement “I am the LORD” (Heb “Yahweh”) draws in the preceding revelation in Exod 3:15. In that place God called Moses to this task and explained the significance of the name “Yahweh” by the enigmatic expression “I am that I am.” “I am” (יְהֹוָה, ‘ehyeh) is not a name; “Yahweh” is. But the explanation of the name with this sentence indicates that Yahweh is the one who is always there, and that guarantees the future, for everything he does is consistent with his nature. He is eternal, never changing; he remains. Now, in Exodus 6, the meaning of the name “Yahweh” will be more fully unfolded.
Exodus 6:4

Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty,2 but by3 my name the Lord.4 I was not known to them.5

6:4 I also established my covenant with them6 to give them the land of Canaan, where they were living as resident foreigners.7 6:5 I8 have also heard9 the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving.10 and I have remem-

1 tn The preposition bet (2) in this construction should be classified as a bet essentiue, a bet of essence (see also GKC 371 §119).

2 tn The traditional rendering of the title as "Almighty" is reflected in LXX and Jerome. But there is still little agreement on the etymology and exact meaning of אֵל־שַׁדַּי (el-shadday). Suggestions have included the idea of "mountain God," meaning the high God, as well as "the God with breasts." But there is very little evidence supporting such conclusions and not much reason to question the ancient versions.

3 tn The source-title (פִּקְדָן, "my name," and Yahweh in opposition to it), is an adversative accusative, specifying how the patriarchs "knew" him.

4 tn Heb "Yahweh," traditionally rendered in English as "the Lord." The phrase has been placed in quotation marks in the translation to indicate it represents the tetragrammaton.

5 tn The verb is the Niphal form יָדַע (yada). If the text had wanted to say, "I did not make myself known," then a His phil form would have been more likely. It is saying, "but by my name Yahweh I was not known to them.

6 tn There are a number of important issues that need clarification in the interpretation of this section. First, it is important to note that "I am Yahweh" is not a new revelation of a previously unknown name. It would be introduced differently if it were. This is the identification of the covenant God as the one calling Moses — that would be proof for the people that their God had called him. Second, the title "El Shadday" is not a name, but it is true. It is that in the patriarchal accounts "El Shadday" is used six times; in Job it is used thirty times. Many conclude that it does reflect the idea of might or power. "El Shadday" is used six times; in Job it is used thirty times.

7 tn The supposed Yahwistic source, wrote using the name as part of his theology. Third, the texts of Genesis show that Yahweh had appeared to the patriarchs (Gen 12:1, 17:1, 18:1, 26:2, 26:24, 28:12, 35:1, 48:3), and that he spoke to each one of them (Gen 17:1, 22:16, 26:24). The name Yahweh occurs 162 times in Genesis, 34 of those times on the lips of speakers in Genesis (W. C. Kaiser, Jr., "Exodus," EBC 2:340-41). They also made proclamation of Yahweh by name (4:26, 12:8), and they named places with the name (22:14). These passages should not be ignored or passed off as later interpretation. Fourth, "Yahweh" is revealed as the God of promise, who was true to his word and could be believed. He would do as he said (Num 23:19; 14:35; Exod 12:25; 22:24; 24:14; 36:36; 37:14). Fifth, there is a difference between promise and fulfillment in the way revelation is appréhended. The patriarchs were individuals who received the promises but without the fulfillment. The fulfillment could only come after the Israelites became a nation. Now, in Egypt, they are ready to become that promised nation. The two periods were not distinguished by not having and by having the name, but by two ways God revealed the significance of his name. "I am Yahweh" to the patriarchs indicated that he was the absolute, almighty, eternal God. The patriarchs were individuals sojourning in the land, God appeared to them in the significance of El Shadday. That was not his name. So Gen 17:1 says that "no one knew" that Yahweh appeared, and said, "I am El Shadday."

8 tn The form is the Hiphil participle יָשָׁב (yashav), is a nartikul that they were not living in a place where the land of Canaan was the land of Canaan where the family lived (מֵרָם, gare), and, without owning property or having the rights of kinship with the surrounding population.

9 tn The additional independent pronoun יִאָנָי (yani, "I") emphasizes the fact that it was Yahweh himself who heard the cry.

10 tn Heb "And also I have heard." The form is the Hiphil participle יִשָּׁבוּ (yashu), "causing to serve"). The participle occurs in a relative clause that modifies "the Israelites." The clause ends with the accusative "them," which must be combined with the relative pronoun for a smooth English translation. So who the Egyptians are enslaving them," results in the translation "whom the Egyptians are enslaving."
bered my covenant.\(^4\) 6:6 Therefore, tell the Israelites, ‘I am the Lord. I will bring you out\(^5\) from your enslavement\(^6\) to the Egyptians, I will rescue you from the hard labor they impose,\(^4\) and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 6:7 I will take you to myself for a people, and I will be your God.\(^3\) Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from your enslavement\(^6\) to the Egyptians.

6:8 I will bring you to the land I swore to give\(^7\) to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob – and I will give it to you\(^8\) as a possession. I am the Lord!’”

6:9 Moses told this\(^9\) to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him\(^10\) because of their discouragement\(^11\) and hard labor. 6:10 Then the Lord said to Moses, 6:11 “Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt that he must release\(^12\) the Israelites from his land.” 6:12 But Moses replied to\(^13\) the Lord, “If the Israelites did not listen to me, then\(^15\) how will Pharaoh listen to me, since\(^16\) I speak with difficulty?”\(^17\)

6:13 The Lord spoke\(^18\) to Moses and Aaron and gave them a charge\(^19\) for the Israelites and Pharaoh king of Egypt to bring the Israelites out of the land of Egypt.

The Ancestry of the Deliverer

6:14\(^20\) These are the heads of their fathers’ households:\(^21\)

The sons\(^22\) of Reuben, the firstborn son of Israel, were Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi. These were the clans\(^23\) of Reuben.

6:15 The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman. These were the clans of Simeon.

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\(^1\) In As in Exod 2:24, this remembering has the significance of God’s beginning to act to fulfill the covenant promises.

\(^2\) The verb יָשַׁלַּח (yahshelah) is a perfect tense with the vav (ו) consecutive, and so it receives a future translation – part of God’s promises. The word will be used later to begin the Decalogue and other covenant passages – “I am Yahweh who brought you out...”

\(^3\) Heb “from under the burdens of” (so KJV, NASB); NIV “from under the yoke of.”

\(^4\) Heb “from labor of them.” The antecedent of the pronoun is the Egyptians who have imposed slave labor on the Hebrews.

\(^5\) These covenant promises are being reiterated here because they are about to be fulfilled. They are addressed to the nation, not individuals, as the plural suffixes show. Yahweh was their God already, because they had been praying to him and he is acting on their behalf. When they enter into covenant with God at Sinai, then he will be the God of Israel in a new way (19:4-6; cf. Gen 17:7-8; 28:20-22; Lev 26:11-12; Jer 24:7; Ezek 11:17-20).

\(^6\) Heb “from under the burdens of” (so KJV, NASB); NIV “from under the yoke of.”

\(^7\) Heb “which I raised my hand to give it.” The relative clause indicates their goal. The bold anthropomorphism mentions part of an oath-taking ceremony to refer to the whole event and reminds the reader that God swore that he would give the land to them. The reference to taking an oath would have made the promise of God sure in the mind of the Israelite.

\(^8\) Here is the twofold aspect again clearly depicted: God swore the promise to the patriarchs, but he is about to give what he promised to this generation. This generation will know more about him as a result.

\(^9\) The final part of this section focuses on instructions for Moses. The commission from God is the same – he is to speak to Pharaoh and he is to lead Israel out. It should have been clear to him that God would do this, for he had just been reminded how God was going to lead out, deliver, redeem, take the people as his people, and give them land. It was God’s work of love from beginning to end. Moses simply had his task to perform.

\(^10\) Heb “and Moses spoke thus.”

\(^11\) Heb “to Moses.” The proper name has been replaced by the pronoun (“him”) in the translation for stylistic reasons.

\(^12\) The Hebrew נָגַע (miggoter makh) means “because of the shortness of spirit.” This means that they were discouraged, dispirited, and weary – although some have also suggested it might mean impatient. The Israelites were now just not in the frame of mind to listen to Moses.

\(^13\) The form יִשְׂלח (yishlach) is the Piel imperfect or jussive with a sequential, and so it receives a future translation – part of God’s promises.

\(^14\) This analogy is an example of a qal waw lamed comparison. It is an argument by inference from the light (qal) to the heavy (homer), from the simple to the more difficult. If the Israelites, who are Yahwists, would not listen to him, it is highly unlikely Pharaoh would.

\(^15\) The final clause begins with a disjunctive vav (ו), a vav on a nonverb form – here a pronoun. It introduces a circumstantial causal clause.

\(^16\) Heb “and [since] I am of uncircumcised lips.” The “lips” represent his speech (metonymy of cause). The term “uncircumcised” makes a comparison between his speech and that which Israel perceived as unacceptable, unprepared, foreign, and of no use to God. The heart is described this way when it is impervious to good impressions (Lev 26:41; Jer 9:26) and the ear when it hears imperfectly (Jer 6:10). Moses has here returned to his earlier claim – he does not speak well enough to be doing this.

\(^17\) Heb “And Yahweh spoke.”

\(^18\) The term יָשַׁלַּח (yahshelah) is a Piel preterite with a pronominal suffix on it. The verb (yashalah) means “to command” but can also have a much wider range of meanings. In this short summary statement, the idea of giving Moses and Aaron a commission to Israel and to Pharaoh indicates that come what may they have their duty to perform.

\(^19\) This list of names shows that Moses and Aaron are in the line of Levi that came to the priesthood. It helps to identify them and authenticate them as spokesmen for God within the larger clan, or the subdivision of a clan, that is, a family. Here it refers to a clan (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 46).

\(^20\) Or “descendants.”

\(^21\) Or “families,” and so throughout the genealogy.
6:16 Now these are the names of the sons of Levi, according to their records:2 Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. (The length of Levi’s life was 137 years.)

6:17 The sons of Gershon, by their families, were Libni and Shimei.

6:18 The sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. (The length of Kohath’s life was 133 years.)

6:19 The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushli. These were the clans of Levi, according to their records.

6:20 Amram married his father’s sister Jochebed, and she bore him Aaron and Moses. (The length of Amram’s life was 137 years.)

6:21 The sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg, and Zikri.

6:22 The sons of Uzziel were Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri.

6:23 Aaron married Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

6:24 The sons of Korah were Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. These were the Korahite clans.

6:25 Now Eleazar son of Aaron married one of the daughters of Putiel and she bore him Phinehas.

These are the heads of the fathers’ households3 of Levi according to their clans.

6:26 It was the same Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, “Bring the Israelites out of the land of Egypt by their regiments.”4 6:27 They were the men who were speaking to Pharaoh king of Egypt, in order to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. It was the same Moses and Aaron.

The Authentication of the Word

6:28 When6 the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, 6:29 he said to him,7 ‘I am the LORD.’

Tell8 Pharaoh king of Egypt all that9 I am telling10 you.” 6:30 But Moses said before the LORD, “Since I speak with difficulty,11 why should Pharaoh listen to me?”

7:1 So the LORD said to Moses, “See, I have made you like God12 to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet.13 7:2 You are to speak14 everything I command you,15 and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh that he must release16 the Israelites from his land.

7:3 But I will harden17 Pharaoh’s heart, and although

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1 tn Or “generations.”
2 tn Heb “took for a wife” (also in v. 23, 25).
3 tn Heb “heads of the fathers” is taken as an abbreviation for the description of “households” in v. 14.
4 tn Or “by their hosts” or “by their armies.” Often translated “hosts” (ASV, NASB) or “armies” (KJV, נצבים [tsv’îm]) is a military term that portrays the people of God in battle array. In contemporary English, “regiment” is perhaps more easily understood as a force for battle than “company” (cf. NAB, NRSV) or “division” (NIV, NLT), both of which can have commercial associations. The term also implies an orderly departure.
5 sn From here on the confrontation between Yahweh and Pharaoh will intensify until Pharaoh is destroyed. The emphasis at this point, though, is on Yahweh’s instructions for Moses to speak to Pharaoh. The first section (6:28-7:7) ends (v. 6) with the notice that Moses and Aaron did just as (העשׂה, ka’avor) Yahweh had commanded them; the second section (7:8-13) ends with the note that Pharaoh refused to listen, just as (העשׂה) Yahweh had said would be the case.
6 tn The beginning of this temporal clause does not follow the normal pattern of using the preterite of the main verb after the temporal indicator and prepositional phrase, but instead uses a perfect tense following the noun in construct: (בִּיָּמִים, bîy’im). See GKC 422 §130.a. This verse introduces a summary (v. 28-30) of the conversation that was interrupted when the genealogy began.
7 tn Heb “and Yahweh spoke to Moses saying.” This has been simplified in the translation as “he said to him” for stylistic reasons.
8 tn The verb is נָאַה (ná‘ah), the Piel imperative. It would normally be translated “speak,” but in English that verb does not sound as natural with a direct object as "tell."
9 tn The clause begins with הָיָה מֵעָלֶיךָ (‘et kol-‘asher) indicating that this is a noun clause functioning as the direct object of the imperative and providing the content of the commanded speech.
10 tn נַרְדֵּךְ (nárdekh, ‘your prophet’) recalls 4:16. Moses was to be like God to Aaron, and Aaron was to speak for him. This indicates that the idea of a “prophet” was of one who spoke for God, an idea with which Moses and Aaron and the readers of Exodus are assumed to be familiar.
11 tn The imperfect tense here should have the nuance of instruction or injunction: “you are to speak.” The subject is singular (Moses) and made emphatic by the presence of the personal pronoun “you.”
12 tn The phrase translated “everything I command you” is a noun clause serving as the direct object of the verb “speak.” The verb in the clause (everything that I am commanding you) is the Piel imperfect. It could be classified as a future: “everything that I will command you.” A nuance of progressive imperfect also fits well: “everything that I am commanding you.”
13 sn The distinct emphasis is important. Aaron will speak to the people and Pharaoh what Moses tells him, and Moses will speak to Aaron what God commands him. The use of “command” keeps everything in perspective for Moses’ position.
14 tn The form is שילהק (‘shilakh), a Piel perfect with vav (ו) consecutive. Following the imperatives of injunction or instruction, this verb continues the sequence. It could be taken as equal to an imperfect expressing future (“and he will release”) or subordinate to express purpose (“to release” = “in order that he may release”).
15 tn The clause begins with the emphatic use of the pronoun and a disjunctive vav (ו) expressing the contrast “But as for me, I will harden.” They will speak, but God will harden.
16 sn The imperfect tense of the verb בַּיָּשָׁרוּ (qashu) is found only here in these “hardening passages.” The verb (here the Hiphil for ‘I will harden’) summarizes Pharaoh’s resistance to what God would be doing through Moses – he would stubbornly resist and refuse to submit; he would be resolved in his opposition. See R. R. Wilson, “The Hardening of Pharaoh’s Heart,” CBQ 41 (1979): 18-36.
I will multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. 7:4 Pharaoh will not listen to you. 5 I will reach into Egypt and bring out my regiments, my people the Israelites, from the land of Egypt with great acts of judgment. 7:5 Then the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD, when I extend my hand over Egypt and bring the Israelites out from among them.

7:6 And Moses and Aaron did so; they did just as the LORD commanded them. 7:7 Now Moses was eighty years old and Aaron was eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.

7:8 The LORD said 7 to Moses and Aaron, 8 7:9 “When Pharaoh says to you, ‘Do 9 a miracle,’ and you say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and throw it down’ before Pharaoh, it will become a snake.” 7:10 When Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, they did so, just as the LORD had commanded them – Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants and it became a snake. 7:11 Then Pharaoh also summoned moned wise men and sorcerers, and the magicians of Egypt by their secret arts did the same thing. 7:12 Each man threw down his staff, and the staffs became snakes. But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs. 7:13 Yet Pharaoh’s heart became hard, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had predicted.

The First Blow: Water to Blood

7:14 20 The LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is hard, so he refuses to release the people. 7:15 Go to Pharaoh in the morning when he arises.”
most scholars would agree that the water did not actually become blood (any more than the moon will be turned to literal blood [Joel 2:31]), many are not satisfied with this kind of explanation. If the event was a fairly common feature of the Nile, it would not have been any kind of sign to Pharaoh—a land, and it should still be observable. The features that would have to be safeguarded are that it was understood to be done by the staff of God, that it was unexpected and not a mere coincidence—that and the magnitude of the contamination, which seems to imply that the Egyptians were not able to drink the red, contaminated water, and so would expend all their energy looking for water to drink—in frustration of course.

13 **tn** Or “irrigation rivers” of the Nile.
14 **sn** The Hebrew term means “gathering,” i.e., wherever these gathered or collected waters, notably cisterns and reservoirs. This would normally lead one to think of wooden and stone vessels—down to the smallest gatherings.
15 **tn** The imperfect tense with **vav** (ְָ֣ה) after the imperative indicates the purpose or result: “in order that they [the waters] become [be] blood.”
16 **tn** Or “in all.”
17 **sn** Both Moses and Aaron had tasks to perform. Moses, being the “god” to Pharaoh, dealt directly with him and the Nile. He would strike the Nile. But Aaron, “his prophet,” would stretch out the staff over the rest of the waters of Egypt.
18 **tn** Heb “And he raised”; the referent (Moses) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
19 **tn** Gesenius calls the preposition on “staff” the הָּ (het) **instruments**, used to introduce the object (GKC 380-81 §119. q). This construction provides a greater emphasis than an accusative.
20 **tn** The text could be rendered “in the sight of,” or simply “before,” but the literal idea of “before the eyes of” may stress how obvious the event was and how personally they were witnesses of it.
21 **sn** U. Cassuto (Exodus, 98) notes that the striking of the water was not a magical act. It signified two things: (1) the beginning of the sign, which was in accordance with God’s will, as Moses had previously announced, and (2) to symbolize actual “striking,” wherewith the Lord strikes Egypt and its gods (see v. 25).
blood.\(^1\) 7:21 When the fish\(^2\) that were in the Nile died, the Nile began\(^3\) to stink, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood\(^4\) everywhere in the land of Egypt! 7:22 But the magicians of Egypt did the same\(^5\) by their secret arts, and so\(^6\) Pharaoh’s heart remained hard,\(^7\) and he refused to listen to Moses and Aaron\(^8\) – just as the Lord had predicted. 7:23 And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. He did not pay any attention to this.\(^9\) 7:24 All the Egyptians dug around the Nile for water to drink,\(^10\) because they could not drink the water of the Nile.

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\(^1\) sn There have been various attempts to explain the details of this plague or blow. One possible suggestion is that there may not have been the matter Pharaoh was “blood,” but that it gradually turned back to its normal color and substance. However, the effects of the “blood” polluted the water so that dead fish and other contamination left it undrinkable. This would explain how the magicians could also do it – they would not have tried if all water was already turned to blood. It also explains why Pharaoh did not ask for the water to be turned back. This view is put forward by B. Schor; it is summarized by B. Jacob (Exodus, 258), who prefers the view of Rashi that the blow affected only water in use.

\(^2\) tn The first clause in this verse begins with a vav disjunctive, introducing a circumstantial clause to the statement that the water stank. The vav (\(^1\)) consecutive on the next verb shows that the smell was the result of the dead fish in the contaminated water. The result is then expressed with the vav beginning the clause that states that they could not drink it.

\(^3\) tn The preterite could be given a simple definite past translation, but an ingressive past would be more likely, as the smell would get worse and worse with the dead fish.

\(^4\) tn In Heb “and there was blood.”

\(^5\) tn In Heb “thus, so.”

\(^6\) tn The vav consecutive on the preterite introduces the outcome of the matter – Pharaoh was hardened.

\(^7\) tn In Heb “and the heart of Pharaoh became hard.” This phrase translates the Hebrew word שָׁרַץ (sharats; see S. R. Driver, Exodus, 53). In context this represents the continuation of a prior condition.

\(^8\) tn In Heb “to them”; the referents (Moses and Aaron) have been specified in the translation for clarity.

\(^9\) tn The text has רָפָא הָאָמָר (*ro-*‘shat libbo gam-lazo*), which literally says, “and he did not set his heart also to this.” To “set the heart” to something would mean “to consider it.” This Hebrew idiom means that he did not pay attention to it, or take it to heart (cf. 2 Sam 13:20; Ps 48:13; 62:10; Prov 22:17; 24:32). Since Pharaoh had not been affected by this, he did not consider it or its implications further.

\(^10\) tn The text stresses that the water in the Nile, and Nile water that had been diverted or collected for use, was polluted and undrinkable. Water underground also was from the Nile, but it had not been contaminated, certainly not with dead fish, and so would be drinkable.

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**The Second Blow: Frogs**

7:25\(^11\) Seven full days passed\(^12\) after the Lord struck\(^13\) the Nile. 8:1 (7:26)\(^14\) Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and tell him, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Release my people in order that they may serve me! 8:2 But if you refuse to release them, then I am going to plague\(^15\) all your territory with frogs. 8:3 The Nile will swarm\(^16\) with frogs, and they will come

\(^11\) sn An attempt to connect this plague with the natural phenomena of Egypt proposes that because of the polluted water due to the high Nile, the frogs would come out of the water and the smell would get worse and worse with the dead fish. There have been various attempts to explain the details of this plague or blow. One possible suggestion is that there may not have been the matter Pharaoh was “blood,” but that it gradually turned back to its normal color and substance. However, the effects of the “blood” polluted the water so that dead fish and other contamination left it undrinkable. This would explain how the magicians could also do it – they would not have tried if all water was already turned to blood. It also explains why Pharaoh did not ask for the water to be turned back. This view is put forward by B. Schor; it is summarized by B. Jacob (Exodus, 258), who prefers the view of Rashi that the blow affected only water in use. A. Cole (Exodus [TOTC], 91) suggests that this word “frogs” (*tov*), may be an onomatopoeic word, something like “croakers”; it is of Egyptian origin and could be a Hebrew attempt to write the Arabic *dofda*.

\(^12\) sn This word for frogs is mentioned in the OT only in conjunction with this plague (here and Pss 78:45, 105:30). R. A. Cole (Exodus [TOTC], 91) suggests that this word “frogs” (*šaruth*), recalls its use in the creation account (Gen 1:20). The water would be swarm-ing with frogs in abundance. There is a hint here of this being a creative work of God as well.
up and go into your house, in your bedroom, and on your bed, and into the houses of your servants and your people, and into your ovens and your kneading troughs. The purpose of the release: "that they may sacrifice." 8:4 Frogs will come up against you, your people, and all your servants."

8:5 The Lord spoke to Moses, "Tell Aaron, "Extend your hand with your staff over the rivers, and over the canals, and over the ponds, and bring the frogs up over the land of Egypt."" 8:6 So Aaron extended his hand over the waters of Egypt, and frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

8:7 The magicians did the same with their secret arts and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt too.

8:8 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Pray to the Lord that he may take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will release the people that they may sacrifice to the Lord." 8:9 Moses said to Pharaoh, "You may have the honor over me – when shall I pray for you, your servants, and your people, for the frogs to be removed from you and your houses, so that they will be left only in the Nile?"

8:10 He said, "Tomorrow." And Moses said, "It will be as you say, so that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God. 8:11 The frogs will depart from you, your houses, your servants, and your people; they will be left only in the Nile."

8:12 Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the Lord because of the frogs that he had brought on Pharaoh. 8:13 The Lord did as Moses asked – the frogs died out of the houses, the villages, and the fields.

8:14 The Egyptians piled them in countless heaps and the land stank. 8:15 But when the Lord extended his hand over the waters of Egypt, and came up and covered the land of Egypt, 8:16 the result of the plague must have been an encouragement to Moses, which shows how the plague was pointedly directed at Pharaoh: "and against you, and against your people, and against all your servants frogs will go up." 8:17 This will lead to the confrontation (vv. 8-11) and the hardening of Pharaoh (vv. 12-15).

In these first two plagues the fact that the Egyptians could and did duplicate them is ironic. By duplicating the exodus, Pharaoh allows Moses to confirm the power of God. The verb מָצַח (matsakh) means "to summon," and the noun is singular, a collective. B. Jacob notes that the verb מָצַח (matsakh) here is used as a traditional "hoping," which would be simply translated "honor yourself" or "deck yourself with honor." It can be used in the bad sense of self-exaltation. But here it seems to mean "have the honor of advantage over me" in choosing when to remove the frogs. The LXX has "appoint for me." Moses is doing more than extending a courtesy to Pharaoh; he is giving him the upper hand in choosing the time. But it is also a test, for if Pharaoh picked the time it would appear less likely that Moses was manipulating things. As U. Cassuto puts it, Moses is saying "my trust in God is so strong you may have the honor of choosing the time." (Exodus, 103).

13 tn The expression יָרֵא נָדָר (hiqat’er ‘layan) is problematic. The verb would be simply translated “honor yourself” or “deck yourself with honor.” It can be used in the bad sense of self-exaltation. But here it seems to mean “have the honor of advantage over me” in choosing when to remove the frogs. The LXX has “appoint for me.” Moses is doing more than extending a courtesy to Pharaoh; he is giving him the upper hand in choosing the time. But it is also a test, for if Pharaoh picked the time it would appear less likely that Moses was manipulating things. As U. Cassuto puts it, Moses is saying “my trust in God is so strong you may have the honor of choosing the time” (Exodus, 103).

14 tn Or “destroyed”; Heb “to cut off the frogs.”
15 tn The phrase “so that” is implied.
16 tn Or “survive, remain.”
17 tn Heb “And he said”; the referent (Moses) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
18 tn “It will be” has been supplied.
19 tn Heb “according to your word” (so NASB).
20 tn The verb הָעָלַי (ha’al’ay) is used for prayers in which people cry out of trouble or from danger. U. Cassuto observes that Moses would have been in real danger if God had not answered this prayer (Exodus, 103).
21 tn Heb “over the matter of.”
22 tn The verb is an unusual choice if it were just to mean “brought on.” It is the verb הָעָלַי (ha’al’ay) “same, place, put”). S. R. Driver thinks the thought is “appointed for Pharaoh” as a sign (Exodus, 64). The idea of the sign might be too much, but certainly the frogs were positioned for the instruction of the stubborn king.
23 tn Heb “according to the word of Moses” (so KJV, NASB). Just as Moses had told Pharaoh “according to your word” (v. 10), now the Lord does “according to the word” of Moses.
24 tn Heb “and the frogs died.”
25 tn Heb “and they piled them.” For clarity the translation supplies the referent “the Egyptians” as the ones who were piling the frogs.
26 tn The word “heaps” is repeated: הֳמָרִם הֳמָרִם (khomarim khomarim). The repetition serves to intensify the idea to the highest degree – “countless heaps” (see GKC 396 §123.e).
Pharaoh saw that there was relief,\(^4\) he hardened\(^2\) his heart and did not listen to them, just as the Lord had predicted.\(^3\)

**The Third Blow: Gnats**

8:16\(^\text{tn}\) The Lord said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Extend your staff and strike the dust of the ground, and it will become\(^5\) gnats\(^6\) throughout all the land of Egypt.’” 8:17 They did so; Aaron extended his hand with his staff, he struck the dust of the ground, and it became gnats on people\(^7\) and on animals. All the dust of the ground became gnats throughout all the land of Egypt. 8:18 When\(^8\) the magicians attempted\(^9\) to bring forth gnats by their secret arts, they could not. So there were gnats on people and on animals. 8:19 The magicians said\(^10\) to Pharaoh, “It is the finger\(^11\) of God!” But Pharaoh’s heart remained hard,\(^12\) and he did not listen to them, just as the Lord had predicted.

**The Fourth Blow: Flies**

8:20\(^\text{tn}\) The Lord\(^13\) said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning and position yourself before Pharaoh as he goes out to the water, and tell him, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Release my people that they may serve me!” 8:21 If you do not release\(^15\) my people, then I am going to send\(^16\) swarms of flies on you and on your servants and on your people and in your houses. The houses of the Egyptians will be full of flies, and even the ground they stand on. 8:22 But on that day I will mark off\(^19\) the land of Goshen, where my people are staying,\(^20\) so that no swarms of flies none of which is entirely satisfying. At the least their statement highlights that the plague was accomplished by God with majestic ease andeffortlessness. Perhaps the reason that they could not do this was that it involved producing life – from the dust of the ground, as in Genesis 2:7. The creative power of God confounded the magic of the Egyptians and brought on them a loathsome plague.

8:24\(^\text{tn}\) In Heb “and the heart of Pharaoh became hard.” This phrase translates the Hebrew word פָּלָה (palah; see S. R. Driver, Exodus, 53). In context this represents the continuation of a prior condition.

8:25\(^\text{tn}\) The announcement of the fourth plague parallels that of the first plague. Now there will be flies, likely dogflies. Egypt has always suffered from flies, more so in the summer than in the winter. But the flies the plague describes involve something greater than any normal season for flies. The main point that can be stressed in this plague comes by tracing the development of the plagues in sequence. Now, with the flies, it becomes clear that God can inflict suffering on some people and preserve others – a preview of the coming judgment that will punish Egypt but set Israel free. God is fully able to keep the dogfly in the land of the Egyptians and save his people from these judgments.

8:26\(^\text{tn}\) In Heb “And Yahweh said.”

8:27\(^\text{tn}\) The construction uses the predicator of nonexistence – הָיָה (‘), instead of the lamed (‘) proposition, it means “become.”

8:28\(^\text{tn}\) The noun is קִנִים (kinnim). The insect has been variously identified as lice, gnats, ticks, flies, fleas, or mosquitoes. “Lice” follows the reading in the Peshitta and Targum (and so Josephus, Ant. 2:14:3 [2.300]). Greek and Latin had “gnats.” By the preterite with the meaning “send”: "and the magicians did so.”

8:29\(^\text{sn}\) The point of the magicians’ words is clear enough. They knew that there is no one like Yahweh. This plague demonstrates that God is the sovereign Lord God. Everyone should fear him and do what he says. Everyone should pray to the sovereign Lord God. Everyone should pray to Yahweh, who is the one man who prayed to God. Yahweh had made life unpleasant for the people by sending the plague, but he was also the one who would remove the plagues. He is the one who has power to rescue his people from these judgments.

8:30\(^\text{tn}\) That is, in the spring than in the fall; (3) the ordinary house fly, which is common in the spring.

8:31\(^\text{tn}\) The word “finger” is a bold anthropomorphism (a figure of speech in which God is described using human characteristics).

8:32\(^\text{sn}\) The point of the magicians’ words is clear enough. They knew they were beaten and by whom. The reason for their choice of the word “finger” has occasioned many theories, of which is entirely satisfying. At the least their statement highlights that the plague was accomplished by God with majestic ease andeffortlessness. Perhaps the reason that they could not do this was that it involved producing life – from the dust of the ground, as in Genesis 2:7. The creative power of God confounded the magic of the Egyptians and brought on them a loathsome plague.

8:33\(^\text{tn}\) The announcement of the fourth plague parallels that of the first plague. Now there will be flies, likely dogflies. Egypt has always suffered from flies, more so in the summer than in the winter. But the flies the plague describes involve something greater than any normal season for flies. The main point that can be stressed in this plague comes by tracing the development of the plagues in sequence. Now, with the flies, it becomes clear that God can inflict suffering on some people and preserve others – a preview of the coming judgment that will punish Egypt but set Israel free. God is fully able to keep the dogfly in the land of the Egyptians and save his people from these judgments.

8:34\(^\text{tn}\) In Heb “And Yahweh said.”

8:35\(^\text{tn}\) The construction uses the predicator of nonexistence – הָיָה (‘), instead of the lamed (‘) proposition, it means “become.”

8:36\(^\text{tn}\) The noun is קִנִים (kinnim). The insect has been variously identified as lice, gnats, ticks, flies, fleas, or mosquitoes. “Lice” follows the reading in the Peshitta and Targum (and so Josephus, Ant. 2:14:3 [2.300]). Greek and Latin had “gnats.” By the preterite with the meaning “send”: "and the magicians did so.”

8:37\(^\text{sn}\) The point of the magicians’ words is clear enough. They knew that there is no one like Yahweh. This plague demonstrates that God is the sovereign Lord God. Everyone should fear him and do what he says. Everyone should pray to the sovereign Lord God. Everyone should pray to Yahweh, who is the one man who prayed to God. Yahweh had made life unpleasant for the people by sending the plague, but he was also the one who would remove the plagues. He is the one who has power to rescue his people from these judgments.

8:38\(^\text{tn}\) That is, in the spring than in the fall; (3) the ordinary house fly, which is common in the spring.

8:39\(^\text{tn}\) The word “finger” is a bold anthropomorphism (a figure of speech in which God is described using human characteristics).

8:40\(^\text{sn}\) The point of the magicians’ words is clear enough. They knew they were beaten and by whom. The reason for their choice of the word “finger” has occasioned many theories, of which is entirely satisfying. At the least their statement highlights that the plague was accomplished by God with majestic ease andeffortlessness. Perhaps the reason that they could not do this was that it involved producing life – from the dust of the ground, as in Genesis 2:7. The creative power of God confounded the magic of the Egyptians and brought on them a loathsome plague.

8:41\(^\text{tn}\) The announcement of the fourth plague parallels that of the first plague. Now there will be flies, likely dogflies. Egypt has always suffered from flies, more so in the summer than in the winter. But the flies the plague describes involve something greater than any normal season for flies. The main point that can be stressed in this plague comes by tracing the development of the plagues in sequence. Now, with the flies, it becomes clear that God can inflict suffering on some people and preserve others – a preview of the coming judgment that will punish Egypt but set Israel free. God is fully able to keep the dogfly in the land of the Egyptians and save his people from these judgments.

8:42\(^\text{tn}\) In Heb “And Yahweh said.”

8:43\(^\text{tn}\) The construction uses the predicator of nonexistence – הָיָה (‘), instead of the lamed (‘) proposition, it means “become.”

8:44\(^\text{tn}\) The noun is קִנִים (kinnim). The insect has been variously identified as lice, gnats, ticks, flies, fleas, or mosquitoes. “Lice” follows the reading in the Peshitta and Targum (and so Josephus, Ant. 2:14:3 [2.300]). Greek and Latin had “gnats.” By the preterite with the meaning “send”: "and the magicians did so.”

8:45\(^\text{sn}\) The point of the magicians’ words is clear enough. They knew that there is no one like Yahweh. This plague demonstrates that God is the sovereign Lord God. Everyone should fear him and do what he says. Everyone should pray to the sovereign Lord God. Everyone should pray to Yahweh, who is the one man who prayed to God. Yahweh had made life unpleasant for the people by sending the plague, but he was also the one who would remove the plagues. He is the one who has power to rescue his people from these judgments.

8:46\(^\text{tn}\) That is, in the spring than in the fall; (3) the ordinary house fly, which is common in the spring.

8:47\(^\text{tn}\) The word “finger” is a bold anthropomorphism (a figure of speech in which God is described using human characteristics).

8:48\(^\text{sn}\) The point of the magicians’ words is clear enough. They knew they were beaten and by whom. The reason for their choice of the word “finger” has occasioned many theories, of which is entirely satisfying. At the least their statement highlights that the plague was accomplished by God with majestic ease andeffortlessness. Perhaps the reason that they could not do this was that it involved producing life – from the dust of the ground, as in Genesis 2:7. The creative power of God confounded the magic of the Egyptians and brought on them a loathsome plague.

8:49\(^\text{tn}\) The announcement of the fourth plague parallels that of the first plague. Now there will be flies, likely dogflies. Egypt has always suffered from flies, more so in the summer than in the winter. But the flies the plague describes involve something greater than any normal season for flies. The main point that can be stressed in this plague comes by tracing the development of the plagues in sequence. Now, with the flies, it becomes clear that God can inflict suffering on some people and preserve others – a preview of the coming judgment that will punish Egypt but set Israel free. God is fully able to keep the dogfly in the land of the Egyptians and save his people from these judgments.
Exodus 8:23

will be there, that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of this land. 23 I will put a division between my people and your people. This sign will take place tomorrow.”

8:24 The Lord did so; a thick swarm of flies came into Pharaoh’s house and into the houses of his servants, and throughout the whole land of Egypt the land was ruined because of the swarms of flies.

8:25 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God within the land.”

8:26 But Moses said, “That would not be the right thing to do, for the sacrifices we make11 to the Lord our God would be an abomination12 to the Egyptians.13 If we make sacrifices that are an abomination to the Egyptians right before their eyes,14 will they not stone us?15 We must go16 on a three-day journey17 into the desert and sacrifice18 to the Lord our God, just as he is telling us.”

8:28 Pharaoh said, “I will release you20 so that you may sacrifice21 to the Lord your God in the desert. Only you must not go very far. Do23 pray for me.”

8:29 Moses said, “I am going to go out4 from you and pray to the Lord, and the swarms of flies will go away from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people tomorrow. Only do not let Pharaoh deal falsely again28 by not

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12 tn Or “of the earth” (KJV, ASV, NAB).
13 tn The word in the text is נַכּוֹן (nelek, “redemption”). This would give the sense of making of a distinction by redeeming Israel. נָכוֹן (nelek) means “a separation, distinction” to match the verb in the preceding verse. For another view, see G. I. Davies, “The Hebrew Text of Exodus VIII 19 [English 23]: An Emendation,” VT 24 (1974): 489-92.
14 tn Heb “this sign will be tomorrow.”
15 tn Heb “and there came a...”
16 tn Heb “heavy,” or “severe.”
17 tn Here, and in the next phrase, the word “house” has to be taken as an adverbial accusative of termination.
18 tn The Hebrew text has the singular here.
19 tn Concerning the connection of “the land was ruined” with the preceding, S. R. Driver (Exodus, 68) suggests reading with the LXX, Smr, and Peshitta; this would call for adding a conjunction before the last clause to make it read, “into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants’ houses, and into all the houses of Egypt.”
20 tn An “abomination” is something that is off-limits, in the eyes of the Egyptians, and the other is that the word “abomination” could be a derogatory term for idols – we sacrifice what is an Egyptian idol. So that is why he says
21 tn The clause is placed first in the sentence to stress the perfect tense of the verb. This is the verb that is used in Gen 13:10 to describe how Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Swarms of flies would disrupt life, contaminate everything, and bring disease.
22 tn By changing from “the people” to “you” (plural) the speech of Pharaoh was becoming more personal.
23 tn This form, a perfect tense with וְנָא (Vt) consecutive, is equivalent to the imperfect tense that precedes it. However, it must be subordinate to the preceding verb to express the same meaning as the root idea in its imperfect form. This is a subtle attempt to keep them as a subjugated people and prevent their absolute allegiance to their God. This offered compromise would destroy the point of the exodus – to leave Egypt and find a new allegiance under the Lord.
24 tn The construction is very emphatic. First, it uses a verbal hendiadys with a Hiphil imperfect and the Qal infinitive construct – שָׂרַי (As tvarkhiqu lalekhet) is a Qal imperfect of the verb שָׂרַי (shakhat) and is translated “ruined.” If the classification as imperfect stands, then it would indicate that this was being ruined; otherwise, it may simply be a preterite without the vav (Vt) consecutive. The verb describes utter devastation. This is the verb that is used in Gen 13:10 to describe how Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Swarms of flies would disrupt life, contaminate everything, and bring disease.
25 tn After the plague is inflicted on the land, then Pharaoh makes an appeal. So there is the familiar confrontation (vv. 25-29), Pharaoh’s words to Moses are an advancement on his previous words. Now he uses imperatives: “Go, sacrifice to your God. And in the land.” Moses is being told that he will release...and then [must] sacrifice.”
26 tn The form is the perfect tense. It could be future: “as he will tell us,” but it also could be the progressive imperfect if this is now what God is telling them to do: “as he is telling us.”
27 tn By changing from “the people” to “you” (plural) the speech of Pharaoh was becoming more personal.
28 tn This form, a perfect tense with וְנָא (Vt) consecutive, is equivalent to the imperfect tense that precedes it. However, it must be subordinate to the preceding verb to express the same meaning as the root idea in its imperfect form. This is a subtle attempt to keep them as a subjugated people and prevent their absolute allegiance to their God. This offered compromise would destroy the point of the exodus – to leave Egypt and find a new allegiance under the Lord.
29 tn The clause is a little unusual in its formation. The form נָעַקֵן (nawkhen) is the Niphal participle from נָעַק (nak), which usually means “fixed, steadfast.” But here it has a rare meaning of “right, fitting, appropriate.” It functions in the sentence as the predicate adjective, because the infinitive תשָׁקֵה (tishakhet) is the subject – to do so is not right.
30 tn This translation has been smoothed out to capture the sense. The text literally says, “for the abomination of Egypt we will sacrifice to Yahweh our God.” In other words, the animals that Israel would sacrifice were sacred to Egypt, and sacrificing them would have been abhorrent to the Egyptians.
31 tn An “abomination” is something that is off-limits, something that is taboo. It could be translated “detestable” or “loathsome.”
32 tn U. Cassuto (Exodus, 109) says there are two ways to understand “the abomination of the Egyptians.” One is that the sacrifice of the sacred animals would appear an abominable thing in the eyes of the Egyptians, and the other is that the word “abomination” could be a derogatory term for idols – we sacrifice what is an Egyptian idol. So that is why he says
releasing4 the people to sacrifice to the Lord." 8:30 So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord; 8:31 and the Lord did as Moses asked— he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. Not one remained! 8:32 But Pharaoh hardened5 his heart this time also and did not release the people.

The Fifth Blow: Disease

9:14 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and tell him, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, “Release my people that they may serve me! 9:2 For if you refuse to release them6 and continue holding them,7 9:3 then the hand of the Lord will surely bring a very terrible plague8 on your livestock in the field, on the horses, the donkeys, the camels,9 the herds, and the flocks. 9:4 But the Lord will distinguish10 between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, and nothing11 will die of all that the Israelites have.’” 9:5 The Lord set13 an appointed time, saying, “Tomorrow the Lord will do this9 in the land.” 9:6 And the Lord did this15 on the next day.16 all17 the livestock of the Egyptians18 died, but of the Israelites’ livestock not one died. 9:7 Pharaoh sent representatives to investigate,19 and indeed, not even one of the livestock of Israel had died. But Pharaoh’s heart remained hard,20 and he did not release the people.

The Sixth Blow: Boils

9:821 Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot22 from a furnace, and have Moses throw it into the air while Pharaoh is watching.24 9:9 It will become fine dust over the whole land of Egypt and will cause boils to break out and festers25 on both people and animals. 21 tn There is a wordplay in this section. A pestilence — רָעָה (raah) — will fall on Egypt’s cattle, but no thing — רָעָה (raah) — belonging to Israel would die. It was perhaps for this reason that the verb was changed in v. 1 from “say” to “speak” (רָעָה, dibber). See U. Cassuto, Exodus, 111. 23 tn The lamened preposition indicates possession: “all that was to the Israelites” means “all that the Israelites had.” 25 tn Heb “of Egypt.” The place is put by metonymy for the inhabitants.

9:9 The word “Pharaoh sent.” The phrase “representatives to investigate” is implied in the context. 20 tn Heb “and the heart of Pharaoh was hardened.” This phrase translates the Hebrew word קָבֵד (kaved; see S. R. Driver, Exodus, 53). In context this represents the continuation of a prior condition.

24 tn This sixth plague, like the third, is unannounced. God instructs his servants to take handfuls of ashes from the Egyptians’ furnaces and sprinkle them heavenward in the sight of Pharaoh. These ashes are present, literally, as a dust cloud, as small particles of dust that would cause boils on the Egyptians and their animals. Greta Hort, “The Plagues of Egypt,” ZAW 69 [1957]: 101-3, suggests it is skin anthrax (see W. C. Kaiser, Jr., “Exodus,” EBC 2:359). The lesson of this plague is that Yahweh has absolute control over the physical health and the physical suffering consequent to sin comes to all regardless of their position and status. The Egyptians are helpless in the face of this, as now God begins to touch human life; greater judgments on human wickedness lie ahead.

22 tn This word קָּשָׁן (qashan) is a hapax legomenon, meaning “soot”; it seems to be derived from the verb קָשָׁן (qas), “to breathe, blow.” The “furnace” (קָשָׁן, keshan) was a special kiln for making pottery or bricks. 23 tn The verb קָּשָׁן (qashan) means “to throw vigorously, to toss.” If Moses tosses the soot into the air, it will symbolize that the disease is falling from heaven.

20 tn Heb “before the eyes of Pharaoh.” 25 tn The word קָשָׁן (sh’khun) means “boils.” It may be connected to an Arabic cognate that means “to be hot.” The illness is associated with Job (Job 2:7-8) and Hezekiah (Isa 38:21); it has also been connected with other skin diseases described especially in the Law. The word connected with it is כָּמַּס (acamah); this means “blisters, pustules” and it is sometimes translated as “festered.” The etymology is debat-
animals in all the land of Egypt.” 9:10 So they took soot from a furnace and stood before Pharaoh, Moses threw it into the air, and it caused festering boils to break out on both people and animals.

9:11 The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians. 9:12 But the Lord hardened3 Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not listen to them, just as the Lord had predicted to Moses.

The Seventh Blow: Hail

9:13b The Lord said3 to Moses, “Get up early in the morning, stand4 before Pharaoh, and tell him, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews: “Release my people so that they may serve me! For this time I will send all my plagues upon your very self5 and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. 9:15 For by now I could have stretched out6 my hand and struck you and your people with plague, and you would have been destroyed7 from the earth.

9:16 But9 for this purpose I have caused you to stand:10 to show you11 my strength, and so that my name may be declared12 in all the earth. 9:17 You are still exalting13 yourself against my people by14 not releasing them. 9:18 I am going to cause very severe hail to rain down15 about this time tomorrow, such hail as has never occurred16 in Egypt from the day it was founded17 until now. 9:19 So now, send instructions18 to gather19 your livestock and all your possessions in the fields to a safe place. Every person20 or animal caught21 in the field and not brought into the house – the hail will come down on them, and they will die!””

9:20 Those22 of Pharaoh’s servants who feared the word of the Lord hurried to bring23 their servants and livestock into the houses, 9:21 but those24 who did not take25 the word of...
the Lord seriously left their servants and their cattle² in the field.

9:22 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Extend your hand toward the sky² that there may be³ hail in all the land of Egypt, on people and on animals,²⁴ and on everything that grows⁵ in the field in the land of Egypt.” 9:23 When Moses extended⁶ his staff toward the sky, the Lord sent thunder⁸ and hail, and fire fell to the earth;⁸ so the Lord caused hail to rain down on the land of Egypt. 9:24 Hail fell¹⁰ and fire mingled¹¹ with the hail; the hail was so severe¹² that there had not been any like it¹³ in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. 9:25 The hail struck everything in the open fields, both¹⁴ people and animals, throughout all the land of Egypt. The hail struck everything that grows¹⁵ in the field, and it broke all the trees of the field to pieces. 9:26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived, was there no hail.

1 tn Heb “his servants and his cattle.”
2 tn Or “‘the heavens’” (also in the following verse). The Hebrew term שמים (shəmāyim) may be translated “heavens” or “sky” depending on the context.
3 tn The jussive with the conjunctive (יָכַּהֲךָ, vəhi) coming after the imperative provides the purpose or result.
4 tn Heb “on man and on beast.”
5 tn The preterite with the vav (ו) consecutive is here subordinated to the next clause in view of the emphasis put on the subject, Yahweh, by the disjunctive word order of that clause.
6 tn By starting the clause with the subject (an example of disjunctive word order) the text is certainly stressing that Yahweh alone did this.
7 tn The expression יָמְסָל כְּלוֹתַנְנוּ (matan qolot) literally means “gave voices” (also “voice”). This is a poetic expression for sending the thunder. Ps 29:3 talks about the “voice of Yahweh” – the God of glory thunders!
8 tn This clause has been variously interpreted. Lightning would ordinarily accompany thunder; in this case the mention of fire could indicate that the lightning was beyond normal and that it was striking in such a way as to start fires on the ground. It could also mean that fire went along the ground from the pounding hail.
9 tn The verb is the common preterite יָחַּה (yəḥā), which is normally translated “and there was” if it is translated at all. The verb יָחַּה (yəḥā), however, can mean “be, become, befall, fall, fall out, happen.” Here it could be simply translated “there was hail,” but the active “hail fell” fits the point of the sequence better.
10 tn The verb is the common preterite יָרָא (yāʾā), which is normally translated “and there was” if it is translated at all. The verb יָרָא (yāʾā), however, can mean “be, become, befall, fail, fall out, happen.” Here it could be simply translated “there was hail,” but the active “hail fell” fits the point of the sequence better.
11 tn The form מִילָאָה (milā’ah) is a Hitpael participle; the clause reads, “and fire taking hold of itself in the midst of the hail.” This probably refers to lightning flashing back and forth. See also Ezek 1:4, God created a great storm with flashing fire connected to it.
12 tn Heb “very heavy” or “very severe.” The subject “the hail” is implied.
13 tn A literal reading of the clause would be “which there was not like it in all the land of Egypt.” The relative pronoun must be joined to the resumptive pronoun: “which like it (like which) there had not been.”
14 tn The exact expression is “from man even to beast.” R. J. Williams lists this as an example of the inclusive use of the preposition מ (min) to be rendered “both…and” (Hebrew Syntax, 57, §327).
15 tn Heb “all the cultivated grain of.”
16 sn Pharaoh now is struck by the judgment and acknowledges that he is at fault. But the context shows that this penitence was short-lived. What exactly he meant by this confession is uncertain. On the surface his words seem to represent a recognition that he was in the wrong and Yahweh right.
17 tn The word בְּשָׁמָיִם (bəšəmāyim) can mean “ungodly, wicked, guilty, criminal.” Pharaoh here is saying that Yahweh is right, and the Egyptians are not – so they are at fault, guilty. S. R. Driver says the words are used in their forensic sense (in the right or wrong standing legally) and not in the ethical sense of morally right and wrong (Exodus, 75).
18 sn The text has Heb “the voices of God.” The divine epithet that can be used to express the superlative (cf. Jonah 3:3).
19 tn The expression הָרָעָה (ḥāra’, “the mighty thunder and hail”) is much from being”) means essentially “more than enough.” This indicates that the storm was too much, or, as one might say, “it is enough.”
20 sn The last clause uses a verbal hendiadys: “you will not add to stand,” meaning “you will no longer stay.”
21 sn This verse begins with the disjunctive vav to mark a strong contrastive clause to what was said before this.
22 tn This clause provides the purpose/result of Moses’ intention: he will pray to Yahweh and the storms will cease “that you might know....” It was not enough to pray and have the plague stop. Pharaoh must “know” that Yahweh is the sovereign Lord over the earth. Here was that purpose of knowing through experience. This clause provides the key for the exposition of the plague: God demonstrated his power over the forces of nature to show his sovereignty – the earth is Yahweh’s. He can destroy it. He can preserve it. If people sin by ignoring his word and not fearing him, he can bring judgment on them. If any fear Yahweh and obey his instructions, they will be spared. A positive way to express the expositional point of the chapter is to say that those who fear Yahweh and obey his word will escape the powerful destruction he has prepared for those who sinfully disregard his word.
23 tn The verb begins with the disjunctive vav to mark a strong contrastive clause to what was said before this.
24 tn The adverb הַרְכָּמ (herem, “before, not yet”) occurs with the imperfect tense to give the sense of the English present tense to the verb negated by it (GKC 314-15 §107.f). Moses is saying that he knew that Pharaoh did not really stand in awe of God, so as to grant Israel’s release, i.e., fear not in the religious sense but “be afraid of” God – fear “before” him (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 76).
The Eighth Blow: Locusts

10:12 The LORD said
to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, in order to display these signs of mine before him. 10:2 and in order that in the hearing of your son and your grandson you may tell how I made fools of the Egyptians and about my signs that I displayed among them, so that you may know that I am the LORD.”

10:3 So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh and told him, “Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews: ‘How long do you refuse to humble yourself before me?’ Release my people,

\[\text{tn} \] The Egyptians dreaded locusts like every other ancient civilization. They had particular gods to whom they looked for help in such catastrophes. The locust-scaring deities of Greece and Asia were probably looked to in Egypt as well (especially in view of the origins in Egypt of so many of those religious ideas). The announcement of the plague falls into the now-familiar pattern. God tells Moses to go and speak to Pharaoh but reminds Moses that he has hardened his heart. Yahweh explains that he has done this so that he might show his power, so that in turn they might declare his name from generation to generation. This point is stressed so often that it must not be minimized. God was laying the foundation of the faith for Israel – the sovereignty of Yahweh.

\[\text{tn} \] “in his midst.”

\[\text{tn} \] The expression is unusual: הִשַּׁלְמוּ הָעֵצִים (“that you may declare in the ears of”). The clause explains an additional reason for God’s hardening the heart of Pharaoh, namely, so that the Israelites can tell their children of God’s great wonders. The expression is highly poetic and intense – like Ps 44:1, which says, “we have heard with our ears.” The emphasis would be on the clear teaching, orally, from one generation to another.

\[\text{tn} \] The verb הִלְעַדְתִי (hit‘aladi) is a bold anthropomorphism. The word means to occupy oneself at another’s expense, to toy with someone, which may be paraphrased with “mock.” The whole point is that God is shaming and disgracing Egypt, making them look foolish in their arrogance and stubbornness (W. C. Kaiser, Jr., “Exodus,” EBC 2:366-67). Some prefer to translate it as “I have dealt ruthlessly” with Egypt (see U. Cassuto, Exodus, 123).

\[\text{tn} \] “of Egypt.” The place is put by metonymy for the inhabitants.

\[\text{tn} \] The word “about” is supplied to clarify this as another object of the verb “to call.”

\[\text{tn} \] Heb “put” or “placed.”

\[\text{tn} \] The perfect tense with the preterite prefix; it thus parallels the imperfect tense that began v. 2 – “that you might tell.”

\[\text{tn} \] The verb מָעַס (me‘asa), a Piel perfect. After “how long,” the form may be classified as present perfect (“how long have you refused”), for it describes actions begun previously but with the effects continuing. (See GKC 311 §106:g–h). The use of a verb describing a state or condition may also call for a present translation (“how long do you refuse”) that includes past, present, and potentially future, in keeping with the question “how long.”

\[\text{tn} \] The clause is built on the use of the infinitive construct to express the direct object of the verb – it answers the question of what Pharaoh was refusing to do. The Niphal infinitive
ple so that they may serve me! 10:4 But if you refuse to release my people, I am going to bring4 locusts5 into your territory6 tomorrow. 10:5 They will cover4 the surface7 of the earth, so that you6 will be unable to see the ground. They will eat the remainder of what escaped8 – what is left over8 for you – from the hail, and they will eat every tree that grows for you from the field. 10:6 They will fill your houses, the houses of your servants, and all the houses of Egypt, such as9 neither10 your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen since they have been12 in the land until this day!” Then Moses12 turned and went out from Pharaoh.

10:7 Pharaoh’s servants said to him, “How long13 will this man be a menace44 to us? Release the people so that they may serve the Lord their God. Do you not know15 that Egypt is destroyed?”

10:8 So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, “Go, serve the Lord your God. Exactly who is going with you?”16

10:9 Moses said, “We will go with our young and our old, with our sons and our daughters, and with our sheep and our cattle we will go, because we are to hold27 a pilgrim feast for the Lord.”

10:10 He said to them, “The Lord will need to be with you18 if I release you and your dependents19 Watch out!20 Trouble is right in front of you!21 10:11 No!22 Go, you men23 only, and serve the Lord, for that24 is what you want.”25 Then Moses and Aaron26 were driven27 out of Pharaoh’s presence.

construct (note the elision of the [he] prefix after the preposition [see GKC 139 §51.1]) is from the verb הָלְךָ (halakh). The verb in this stem would mean “humble oneself.” The question is somewhat rhetorical, since God was not yet through humbling Pharaoh, who would not humble himself. The issue between Yahweh and Pharaoh is deeper than simply whether God was going to bring Egypt. But that does not make much sense in the sentence between your border.” The suffix on the sign of the accusative refers in a genitive case. The suffix on the sign of the accusative refers in a genitive case.

1 The Hebrew construction הַגְּבָרִים (gibrîm) is often translated “the elders” or “the old men” or “the fathers.” The suffix on the sign of the accusative refers in a genitive case.

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8 The suffix on the sign of the accusative refers in a genitive case.

9 The suffix on the sign of the accusative refers in a genitive case.

10 The suffix on the sign of the accusative refers in a genitive case.

11 The suffix on the sign of the accusative refers in a genitive case.

12 As the next phrase explains “what escaped” refers to the locusts that had not been destroyed.

13 The Hebrew construction הַגְּבָרִים (gibrîm) is often translated “the elders” or “the old men” or “the fathers.” The suffix on the sign of the accusative refers in a genitive case.

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Then Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you! So now, forgive my sin this time only, and pray to the Lord your God that he would only take this death away from me.” Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord, and the Lord turned a very strong west wind, and it picked up the locusts and blew them into the Red Sea. Not one locust remained in all the territory of Egypt. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not release the Israelites.

10:14 The Lord said to Moses, “Extend your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up over the land of Egypt and eat everything that grows in the ground, everything that the hail has left.” The ground had the color of the ground and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Nothing green remained on the trees or on anything that grew in the fields throughout the whole land of Egypt.

10:15 They covered the surface of all the ground, so that the ground became dark with them, and they ate all the vegetation of the ground and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Nothing green remained on the trees or on anything that grew in the fields throughout the whole land of Egypt.

10:16 The third part of the passage now begins, the confrontation that resulted from the onslaught of the plague. Pharaoh goes a step further here – he confesses he has sinned and adds a request for forgiveness. But his acknowledgment does not go far enough, for this is not genuine confession. Since his heart was not yet submissive, his confession was vain.

10:17 The severity of the plague prompted Pharaoh to confess his sin against Yahweh and them, now in much stronger terms than before. He also wants forgiveness – but in all probability what he wants is relief from the consequences of his sin. He pretended to convey to Moses that this was it, that he was through sinning, so he asked for forgiveness “only this time.”

10:18 Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you! So now, forgive my sin this time only, and pray to the Lord your God that he would only take this death away from me.” Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord, and the Lord turned a very strong west wind, and it picked up the locusts and blew them into the Red Sea. Not one locust remained in all the territory of Egypt. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not release the Israelites.
The Ninth Blow: Darkness

10:21 The Lord said to Moses, “Extend your hand toward heaven, so that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness so thick that it can be felt.”

10:22 So Moses extended his hand toward heaven, and there was absolute darkness throughout the land of Egypt for three days. 10:23 No one could see another person, and no one could rise from his place for three days. But the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.

10:24 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, “Go, serve the Lord – only your flocks and herds will be detained. Even your families may go with you.”

10:25 But Moses said, “Will you also provide us with sacrifices and burnt offerings that we may present them to the Lord our God? 10:26 Our livestock must also go with us! Not a hoof is to be left behind! For we must take these animals to serve the Lord our God. Until we arrive there, we do not know what we must use to serve the Lord.”

10:27 But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he was not willing to release them. 10:28 Pharaoh said to him, “Go from me! Watch out for yourself! Do not appear before me again, for when you see my face you will die!” 10:29 Moses said, “As you wish! I will not see your face again.”
EXODUS 11:1

The Tenth Blow: Death

11:1 The Lord said to Moses, “I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt; after that he will release you from this place. When he releases you, he will drive you out completely from this place. 11:2 Instruct the people that each man and each woman is to request from his or her neighbor six items of silver and gold.”

1 sn The last plague is the most severe; it is that for which all the others were preliminary warnings. Up to this point Yahweh had been showing his power to destroy Pharaoh, and now he would begin to bring death to the Egyptians, a death that would fulfill the warning of talionic judgment—let my son go, or I will kill your son.” The passage records the announcement of the judgment first to Moses and then through Moses to Pharaoh. The first two verses record the word of God to Moses. This is followed by a parenthetical note about how God had elevated Moses and Israel in the eyes of Egypt (v. 3). Then there is the announcement to Pharaoh (vv. 4-8). This is followed by a parenthetical note on how God had hardened Pharaoh so that Yahweh would be elevated over him. It is somewhat problematic here that Moses is told not to see Pharaoh’s face again. On the one hand, given the nature of Pharaoh to blow hot and cold and to change his mind, it is not impossible for another meeting to have occurred. But Moses said he would not do it (v. 29). One solution some take is to say that the warning in 10:28 originally stood after chapter 11. A change like that is unwarranted, and without support. It may be that vv. 1-3 are parenthetical, so that the announcement in v. 4 follows closely after 10:29 in the chronology. The instruction to Moses in 11:1 might then have been given before he left Pharaoh or even before the interview in 10:24-29 took place. Another possibility, supported by language in Akkadian, is that the expression “see my face” (and in v. 29 “see your face”) has to do with seeking to have an official royal audience (W. H. C. Propp, Exodus 1-18 [AB], 342). Pharaoh thinks that he is finished with Moses, but as 11:8 describes, Moses expects that in fact Moses will soon be the one in a position like that of royalty granting an audience to Egyptians.

2 tn The verb means “to drive out, expel.” With the infinitive absolute it says to Pharaoh “will drive you out vigorously.” He will be glad to be rid of you—it will be a total expulsion.

3 tn The words are emphatic: בְּשָׁם יִרְאוֹת (‘gash rash y‘gash rash). The piel verb means “to drive out, expel.” With the infinitive absolute it says to Pharaoh “will drive you out vigorously.” He will be glad to be rid of you—it will be a total expulsion.

4 tn Heb “Speak now in the ears of the people.” The expression is emphatic; it seeks to ensure that the Israelites hear the instruction.

5 tn The verb translated “request” is מָקה לַקָּדָשׁ (malka lakkadosh), the Qal jussive: “let them ask.” This is the point introduced in Exod 5:22. The meaning of the verb might be stronger than simply “ask”; it might have something of the idea of “implore” (see also its use in the naming of Samuel, who was “asked” from Yahweh [1 Sam 1:20]).

6 tn “each man is to request from his neighbor and each woman from her neighbor.”


8 sn The last plague is the most severe; it is that for which all the others were preliminary warnings. Up to this point Yahweh had been showing his power to destroy Pharaoh, and now he would begin to bring death to the Egyptians, a death that would fulfill the warning of talionic judgment—let my son go, or I will kill your son.” The passage records the announcement of the judgment first to Moses and then through Moses to Pharaoh. The first two verses record the word of God to Moses. This is followed by a parenthetical note about how God had elevated Moses and Israel in the eyes of Egypt (v. 3). Then there is the announcement to Pharaoh (vv. 4-8). This is followed by a parenthetical note on how God had hardened Pharaoh so that Yahweh would be elevated over him. It is somewhat problematic here that Moses is told not to see Pharaoh’s face again. On the one hand, given the nature of Pharaoh to blow hot and cold and to change his mind, it is not impossible for another meeting to have occurred. But Moses said he would not do it (v. 29). One solution some take is to say that the warning in 10:28 originally stood after chapter 11. A change like that is unwarranted, and without support. It may be that vv. 1-3 are parenthetical, so that the announcement in v. 4 follows closely after 10:29 in the chronology. The instruction to Moses in 11:1 might then have been given before he left Pharaoh or even before the interview in 10:24-29 took place. Another possibility, supported by language in Akkadian, is that the expression “see my face” (and in v. 29 “see your face”) has to do with seeking to have an official royal audience (W. H. C. Propp, Exodus 1-18 [AB], 342). Pharaoh thinks that he is finished with Moses, but as 11:8 describes, Moses expects that in fact Moses will soon be the one in a position like that of royalty granting an audience to Egyptians.

9 tn Heb “in the eyes of the servants of Pharaoh and in the eyes of the people.” In the translation the word “Egyptian” has been supplied to clarify that the Egyptians and not the Israelites are meant here.

10 sn The presence of this clause about Moses, which is parapathetical in nature, further indicates why the Egyptians gave rather willingly to the Israelites. They were impressed by Moses’ miracles and his power with Pharaoh. Moses was great in stature—powerful and influential.

11 tn Heb “about the middle of the night.”

12 tn Heb “I will go out in the midst of Egypt.”

13 sn The firstborn in Egyptian and Israelite cultures was significant, but the firstborn of Pharaoh was most important. Pharaoh was considered a god, the son of Re, the sun god, for the specific purpose of ruling over Re’s chief concern, the land of Egypt. For the purpose of re-creation, the supreme god assumed the form of the living king and gave seed which was to become the next king and the next “son of Re.” Moreover, the Pharaoh was the incarnation of the god Horus, a falcon god whose province was the heavens. Horus represented the living king who succeeded the dead king Osiris. Every living king was Horus, every dead king Osiris (see J. A. Wilson, “Egypt,” Before Philosophy, 83-84). To strike any firstborn was to destroy the heir, who embodied the hopes and aspirations of the Egyptians, but to strike the firstborn son of Pharaoh was to destroy this cardinal doctrine of the divine kingship of Egypt. Such a blow would be enough for Pharaoh, for then he would drive the Israelites out.

14 tn Heb “thus it is that there has never been.”

15 tn Heb “and like it it will not add.”

16 tn Or perhaps “growl”; Heb “not a dog will sharpen his tongue.” The expression is unusual, but it must indicate that not only would no harm come to the Israelites, but that no unfriendly threat would come against them either—not even so much as a dog barking. It is possible this is to be related to the watchdog (see F. F. Fryer, Remarks on Keret 114-136). JNSL 11 [1983]: 75).

17 tn Heb “against man or beast.”

18 sn Moses’ anger is expressed forcefully. “He had appeared before Pharaoh a dozen times either as God’s emissary or when summoned by Pharaoh, but he would not come again; now they would have to search him out if they needed help” (B. Jacob, Exodus, 289-90).
The Institution of the Passover

12:1 The Lord said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not listen to you, so that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.”

12:2 “This month is to be your beginning of months; it will be your first month of the year. 12:3 Tell the whole community of Israel, ‘In the tenth day of this month they each should take a lamb9 for themselves according to their families – a lamb for each household. 12:4 If any household is too small for a lamb, the man10 will have his next-door neighbor15 to take one in addition to his own.”

12:5 Your lamb must be18 perfect,19 a male, one year old;20 you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 12:6 You must care for it until the fourteenth day of this month, and then the whole community23 of Israel will kill it around sundown.24 12:7 They will take some of the blood and put it on the two side posts and top of the doorframe of the houses where they will

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1 tn Heb “that are at your feet.”
2 tn Heb “and he”; the referent (Moses) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
3 sn The thought is essentially the same as in Exod 7:3-4, but the wonders, or portents, here refer to what is yet to be done in Egypt.
4 sn Chapter 12 details the culmination of the ten plagues on Egypt and the beginning of the actual deliverance from bondage. Moreover, the celebration of this festival of Passover would become a central part of the holy calendar of Israel. The contents of this chapter have significance for NT studies as well, since the Passover was a type of the death of Jesus. The structure of this section before the crossing of the sea is as follows: the institution of the Passover (12:1-28), the night of farewell and departure (12:29-42), and the arrival in the promised land (12:43-50).
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7 sn The verb's object “it” is supplied from the context.
8 sn The text has יָד (yad) in its own right.
9 tn The expression “house of the father” is a common expression for a family. sn The Passover was to be a domestic institution. Each lamb was to be shared by family members.
10 tn Heb “according to the house of their fathers.” The expression “house of the father” is a common expression for a family.
11 sn Later Judaism ruled that “too small” meant fewer than ten (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 88).
12 sn The clause uses the comparative min (מִין) construction: יִנָּא עַל חוֹבִית (yim’at habbayit mihyot mish; “the house is small from being from a lamb,” or “too small for a lamb”). It clearly means that if there were not enough people in the household to have a lamb by themselves, they should join with another family. For the use of the comparative, see GKC 423 §133.c.
13 sn Heb “he and his neighbor”; the referent (the man) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
14 sn The construction uses a perfect tense with a vav (ְּ) consecutive after a conditional clause: “if the household is too small…then he and his neighbor will take.”
15 sn Heb “of the doorframe of the houses where they will take.”
16 tn The reference is normally taken to mean whatever each person could eat. B. Jacob (Exodus, 299) suggests, however, that the reference may not be to each individual person’s appetite, but to each family. Each man who is the head of a household was to determine how much his family could eat, and this in turn would determine how many families shared the lamb.
17 sn The construction “between the two evenings” is supplied from the context.
18 sn The text has יִשְׂרָאֵל (yishra‘el) in its own right.
19 sn The wonderfully phrase “lamb…will be to you.” This may be interpreted as a possessive use of the lamed, meaning, “[the] lamb…you have” (your lamb) for the Passover. In the context instructing the people to take an animal for this festival, the idea is that the one they select, their animal, must meet these qualifications.
20 sn The Hebrew word לִשְׁנָה (lishnah) means “perfect” or “whole” or “complete” in the sense of not having blemishes and diseases — no physical defects. The rules for sacrificial animals applied here (see Lev 22:19-21; Deut 17:1).
21 sn The idiom “a son of a year” (נִשָּׁנָה, ben shannah), meaning “a yearling” or “one year old” (see GKC 418 §128.v).
22 sn Because a choice is being given in this last clause, the imperfect tense nuance of permission should be used. They must have a perfect animal, but it may be a sheep or a goat. The verb’s object “it” is supplied from the context.
23 sn Heb “all the assembly of the community.” This expression is a pleonasm. The verse means that everyone will kill the lamb, i.e., each family unit among the Israelites will kill its animal.
24 sn Heb “between the two evenings” or “between the two settings” (בֵּין הָעַרְבָּיִם, ben ha’arbayim). This expression has had a good deal of discussion. (1) Ig. Onq. says “between the two suns,” which the Talmud explains as the time between the sunset and the time the stars become visible. More technically, the first “evening” would be the time between sunset and the appearance of the crescent moon, and the second “evening” the next hour, or from the appearance of the crescent moon to full darkness (see Deut 16:6 — “at the going down of the sun”). (2) Saadia, Rashi, and Kimchi say the first evening is when the sun begins to decline in the west and cast its last rays. The second evening begins at sunset, or, roughly from 3–5 p.m. The Mishnah (m. Pesahim 5:1) indicates the lamb was killed about 2:30 p.m. — anything before noon was not valid. S. R. Driver concludes from this survey that the first view is probably the best, although the last view was the traditionally accepted one (Exodus, 89-90). Late afternoon or early evening seems to be intended, the time of twilight perhaps.
eat it. 

12:8 They will eat the meat the same night; 
then they will eat it roasted over the fire with bread made without yeast and with bitter herbs. 

12:9 Do not eat it raw or boiled in water, but roast it over the fire with its head, its legs, and its entrails. 

12:10 You must leave nothing until morning, but you must burn with fire whatever remains of it until morning. 

12:11 This is how you are to eat it – dressed to travel, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. You are to eat it in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover.

12:12 I will pass through the land of Egypt in the same night, and I will attack all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both of humans and of animals, and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. 

I am the LORD. 

12:13 The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, so that when I see the blood I will pass over you, and this plague will not fall on you to destroy you. 

12:14 This day will become a memorial forever for you, and you will celebrate it as a festival to the LORD – you will celebrate it perpetually as a lasting ordinance. 

12:15 For seven days you

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1 tn Heb “this night.”

2 sn Bread made without yeast could be baked quickly, not requiring time for the use of a leavening ingredient to make the dough rise. In Deut 18:3 the unleavened cakes are called “the bread of affliction,” which alludes to the alarm and haste of the Israelites. In later Judaism and in the writings of Paul, leaven came to be a symbol of evil or corruption, and so “unleavened bread” – bread made without yeast – was interpreted to be a picture of purity or freedom from corruption or defilement (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 90-91).

3 sn This ruling was to prevent their eating it just softened by the fire or partially roasted as differing customs might prescribe or allow.

4 tn Heb “your loins girded.”

5 tn The meaning of בְּכֹתִי (pesakh) is debated. (1) Some have tried to connect it to the Hebrew verb with the same radicals that means “to halt, leap, limp, stumble.” See 1 Kgs 18:26 (a clear meaning. It is probably not the same word as “to limp” in the exodus tradition (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 92-93). The verb seems to have a secondary meaning for “to halt” (i.e., to stop in one’s tracks). This is the sense of לְפָסַחְתִּי (pasakhi). The verb לְפָסַחְתִּי is the Hiphil participle of פָּסַח (pasakh), “to pass over.” This word itself is a harsh term; it was used to describe Yahweh’s destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 13:10).

6 tn The phrase נָכָה (nakhah) means “to strike, smite, attack;” it does not always mean “to kill,” but that is obviously its outcome in this context. This is also its use in 2:12, describing how Moses killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand.

7 tn Heb “from man to beast.”

8 tn The phrase נָכָה (nakhah) means “to strike, smite, attack;” it does not always mean “to kill,” but that is obviously its outcome in this context. This is also its use in 2:12, describing how Moses killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand.

9 tn He will rescue it.” The word “plague” (נֶגֶף, negef) is literally “a blow” or “a striking.” It usually describes a calamity or affliction given to those who have aroused God’s anger, as in Exod 30:12; Num 8:19; 16:46, 47; Josh 22:17 (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 92-93).

10 sn This perfect tense with the vav (ו) consecutive to continue the instruction, is followed by the cognate accusative יָחַטְמָן (khatamn), “the Day of Yahweh”), which the prophets predicted as the day of the divine battle. On it the enemy would be wiped out. For further information, see B. S. Childs, Memory and Tradition in Israel (SBT). The point of the word “remember” in the Hebrew is not simply a recollection of an event, but a reliving of it, a reactivating of its significance. In covenant rituals “remembrance” or “memorial” is designed to prompt God and worshipper alike to act in accordance with the covenant. Jesus brought the motif forward to the new covenant with “this do in remembrance of me.”

11 sn The verb תְּקֵרֵא (t’kore; “to call”) is an adverbial accusative of time. The expression is an adverbial accusative of time. The context clearly indicates what had begun in Exod 6:1. But the statement that God would judge the gods of Egypt is appropriately introduced here (see Num 33:4) because with the judgment on Pharaoh and the deliverance from bondage, Yahweh would truly show himself to be the one true God, “I am Yahweh” is fitting here (see B. Jacob, Exodus, 312).

12 sn Both of the verbs for seeing and passing over are perfect tenses with vav (ו) consecutive: נָכָה (nakhah); נֶגֶף (negef). The first of these parallel verb forms is subordinated to the second as a temporal clause. See Gesenius’s description of perfect consecutive in the protais and apoposis (GKC 494 §159.g).
must eat 1 bread made without yeast. 2 Surely 3 on the first day you must put away yeast from your houses because anyone who eats bread made with yeast 4 from the first day to the seventh day will be cut off 5 from Israel.

12:16 On the first day there will be a holy convocation, 6 and on the seventh day there will be a holy convocation for you. You must do no work of any kind 7 on them, only what every person will eat—that alone may be prepared for you. 12:17 So you will keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because on this very 8 day I brought your regiments 9 out from the land of Egypt, and so you must keep this day perpetually as a last-

2 In or "you will eat." The statement stresses their obligation—they must eat unleavened bread and avoid all leaven.
3 Surely: this word serves to emphasize, not restrict here (B. S. Childs, Exodus [OTL], 183, n. 15).
4 In Heb “every eater of unleavened bread.” The participial phrase stands at the beginning of the clause as a casus pendens, that is, it stands grammatically separate from the sentence. It names a condition, the contingent occurrences of which involve a further consequence (GKC 361 §I.16.w).
5 In The verb נפש (nefesh) is the Niphal perfect with the vav (v) consecutive; it is a common formula in the Law for divine punishment. Here, in sequence to the idea that someone might eat bread made with yeast, the result would be that “that soul [the verb is feminine] will be cut off.” The verb is the equivalent of the imperfect tense due to the consecutive; a translation with a nuance of the imperfect of possibility (“may be cut off”) fits better perhaps than a specific future. There is the real danger of being cut off, while the punishment might include excommunication from the community, the greater danger was in the possibility of divine intervention to root out the evildoer (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 94). Gesenius lists this as the use of a perfect with a vav consecutive after a particle (a casus pendens) to introduce the apodosis (GKC 327 §I.2.4).
6 In Lev 20:3, 5-6, God speaks of himself as cutting off a person from among the Israelites. The rabbis mentioned premature death and childlessness as possible judgments in such cases, and N. M. Sarna comments that “one who deliberately excludes himself from the religious community of Israel cannot be a beneficiary of the covenantal blessings” (Exodus [JPS], 58).

This refers to an assembly of the people at the sanctuary for religious purposes. The word “convocation” implies that the people were called together, and Num 10:2 indicates they were called together by trumpets.
7 In Heb “all/every work will not be done.” The word refers primarily to the work of one’s occupation. B. Jacob (Exodus, 322) explains that since this comes prior to the fuller description of laws for Sabbaths and festivals, the passage simply restricts all work except for the preparation of food. Once the laws are added, this qualification is no longer needed. Gesenius translates this as “no manner of work shall be done” (GKC 478-79 §152.b).
8 In Heb “on the bone of this day.” The expression means “the substance of the day,” the day itself, the very day (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 222). Gesenius says this is now to be explained as “the destroyer” although some take it to mean “destruction” (GKC 406 §126.m, n. 1).
9 In “you” has been supplied.
nance for you and for your children forever. 12:25 When you enter the land that the LORD will give to you, just as he said, you must observe this ceremony. 12:26 When your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ – 12:27 then you will say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the LORD’s Passover, when he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck Egypt and delivered our households.’” The people bowed down to the ground, and the Israelites went away and did exactly as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.

The Deliverance from Egypt

12:29 It happened at midnight – the LORD attacked all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the prison, and all the firstborn of the cattle. 12:30 Pharaoh got up in the night, along with all his servants and all Egypt, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no house in which there was not someone dead. 12:31 Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron in the night and said, “Get up, get out from among my people, both you and the Israelites! Go, serve the LORD as you have requested!” 12:32 Also, take your flocks and your herds, just as you have requested, and leave. But bless me also.”

12:33 The Egyptians were urging the people on, in order to send them out of the land quickly, for they were saying, “We are all dead!” 12:34 So the people took their dough before the yeast was added, with their kneading troughs bound up in their clothing on their shoulders. 12:35 Now the Israelites had done as Moses told them – they had requested from the Egyptians silver and gold items and clothing.

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1 tn The verb used here and at the beginning of v. 24 is רָקוּם (qum); it can be translated “watch, keep, protect,” but in this context the point is to “observe” the religious customs and practices set forth in these instructions.
2 tn Heb “what is this service to you?”
3 sn This expression “the sacrifice of Yahweh’s Passover” occurs only here. The word רָצוּכֵה (zva’akh) means “slaughtering” and so a blood sacrifice. The fact that this word is used in Lev 3 for the peace offering has linked the Passover as a kind of peace offering, and both the Passover and the peace offerings were eaten as communal meals.
4 tn The verb means “to strike, smite, plague”; it is the same verb that has been used throughout this section (נָגַף, nagaf). Here the construction is the infinitive construct in a temporal clause.
5 tn The two verbs form a verbal hendiadys: “and the people bowed down and they worshiped.” The words are synonymous, and so one is taken as the adverb for the other.
6 tn Heb “went away and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.” The final phrase “so they did,” which is somewhat redundant in English, has been represented in the translation by the adverb “exactly.”
7 sn The next section records the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and so becomes the turning point of the book. Verses 28 and 29 could be included in the exposition of the previous section as the culmination of that part. The message might highlight God’s requirement for deliverance from bondage through the application of the blood of the sacrifice, God’s instruction for the memorial of deliverance through the purging of corruption, and the compliance of those who believed the message. But these verses also form the beginning of this next section (and so could be used transitionally). This unit includes the judgment on Egypt (29-30), the exodus from Egypt (31-39) and the historical summation and report (40-42).
8 tn The verse begins with the temporal indicator בִּנְיֵין (nayin), often translated “and it came to pass.” Here it could be left untranslated: “In the middle of the night Yahweh attacked.” The word order of the next and main clause furthers the emphasis by means of the vav disjunctive on the divine name preceding the verb. The combination of these initial disjunctive and disjunctive elements helps to convey the suddenness of the attack, while its thoroughness is stressed by the repetition of “firstborn” in the rest of the verse, the merism (“from the firstborn of Pharaoh...to the firstborn of the captive”), and the mention of cattle.
9 tn Heb “arose,” the verb רָצוּךְ (qum) in this context certainly means “awake, come, rise.” The ceremonial act. The entire country woke up in terror because the deaths.
10 tn The noun is an adverbial accusative of time – “in the night” or “at night.”
12:36 The Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, and they gave them whatever they wanted, and so they plundered Egypt.

12:37 The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Sukkoth. There were about 600,000 men on foot, plus their dependants.

12:38 A mixed multitude also went up with them, and flocks and herds—a very large number of cattle. They baked cakes of bread without yeast using the dough they had brought from Egypt, for it was made without yeast—because they were thrust out of Egypt and were not able to delay, they could not prepare food for themselves either.

12:40 Now the length of time the Israelites lived in Egypt was 430 years.

12:41 At the end of the 430 years, on the very day, all the regiments of the Lord went out of the land of Egypt. 12:42 It was a night of vigil for the Lord to bring them out from the land of Egypt, and so on this night all Israel is to keep the vigil to the Lord for generations to come.

Participation in the Passover

12:43-49 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the ordinance of the Passover. No Egyptian, who came to faith, or who just wanted to escape Egypt (maybe slaves or descendants of the Hyksos). The expression prepares for later references to ruffian who came along.

10 sn Heb “and very much cattle.”

11 sn For the use of this word in developing the motif, see Exod 2:17, 22; 6:1; and 11:1.

12 tn Heb “and also.”

13 tn The verb is הִשַּׁאֵל (hišša‘al, “they made”); here, with a potential nuance, it is rendered “they could [not] prepare.”

14 sn Here as well some scholars work with the number 430 to try to reduce the stay in Egypt for the bondage. Some believe that in this time number includes seven regiments of the Egyptians. But God would reduce the bondage by half. S. R. Driver (Exodus, 102) notes that P thought Moses was the fourth generation from Jacob (6:16-27), if those genealogies are not selective. Exodus 6 has Levi—Kohath—Amram—Moses. This would require a period of about 100 years, and that is unusual. There is evidence, however, that the list is selective. In 1 Chr 2:3-20 the text has Bezalel (see Exod 31:2-5) a contemporary of Moses and yet the seventh from Judah. Elishama, a leader of the Ephraimites (Num 10:22), was in the ninth generation from Jacob (1 Chr 7:22-26). Joshua, Moses’ assistant, was, however, from Jacob from the first generation (1 Chr 7:27). So the “four generations” leading up to Moses are not necessarily complete. With regard to Exod 6, K. A. Kitchen has argued that the four names do not indicate successive generations, but tribe (Levi), clan (Kohath), family (Amram), and individual (Moses; K. A. Kitchen, Ancient Orient and Old Testament, 54-55). For a detailed discussion of the length of the sojourn, see E. H. Merrill, A Kingdom of Priests, 75-79.

15 sn This military term is used elsewhere in Exodus (e.g., 6:26; 7:4; 12:17, 50), but here the Israelites are called “the regiments of the Lord.”

16 sn There is some ambiguity in hebrew לֵיל שִׁמְעֵרִים (līl šim’ūrîm hu ‘la’adonay [lāyveḥeh]). It is likely that this first clause means that Yahweh was on watch for Israel to bring them out, as the next clause says. He was protecting his people (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 102). Then, the night of vigil will be transferred to Israel, who now must keep it “to him.”

17 tn “and so” has been supplied.

18 tn Heb “This night is for Yahweh a vigil for all Israelites for their generations.”

19 sn The section that concludes the chapter contains regulations pertaining to the Passover. The section begins at v. 43, but vv. 40-42 form a good setting for it. In this unit vv. 43-45 belong together because they stress that a stranger and foreigner cannot eat. Verse 46 stands by itself, ruling that the meal must be eaten at home. Verse 47 instructs that the whole nation was to eat it. Verses 48-49 make provision for foreigners who may wish to participate. And vv. 50-51 record the obedience of Israel.
EXODUS 12:44

13:18 The Lord spoke⁹ to Moses: 13:2 “Set apart⁸ to me every firstborn male – the first

1 tn This is taken in the modal nuance of permission, reading that no foreigner is permitted to share in it (apart from being a member of the household as a circumcised slave [v. 44] or obeying v. 48, if a free individual).

2 tn This is the partitive use of the הֶרֶץ (ḥeret) preposition, expressing that there is an extension to something and includes the idea of participation in it (GKC 380 §119).

3 tn Both the participle “foreigner” and the verb “lives” are from the verb וָניָר (waniyir), which means “to sojourn, to dwell as an alien.” This reference is to a foreigner who settles in the land. He is the protected foreigner; when he comes to another area where he does not have his clan to protect him, he must come under the protection of the Law, or the people. If the “resident foreigner” is circumcised, he may participate in the Passover (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 104).

4 tn The infinitive absolute functions as the finite verb here, and “every male” could be either the object or the subject (see GKC 347 §113.aa and 387 §121.a).

5 tn פָּטֶר (petter) refers to the native-born individual, the native Israelite as opposed to the “stranger, alien” (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 104); must be rendered, F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel, 127, 210.

6 tn Heb “one law will be.”

7 tn Heb “did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.” The final phrase “so they did,” which is somewhat redundant in English, has been represented in the translation by the adverb “exactly.”

8 sn This next section seems a little confusing at first glance: vv. 1 and 2 call for the dedication of the firstborn, then vv. 3-10 instruct concerning the ritual of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and then vv. 11-16 return to the firstborn. B. Jacob (Exodus, 360) explains that vv. 3-16 contain a sermon, in which Moses “began his speech by reminding the people of the events which had just occurred and how they would be recalled by them in the future,” and then he explained the rulings that went along with it. So the first two verses state the core of the sermon, a new command calling for the redeemed (firstborn) to be sanctified. The second portion stresses that God requires the redeemed to remember their redemption by purifying themselves (3-10). The third section (11-16) develops the theme of dedication to Yahweh. The point is that in view of God’s mighty redemption, the redeemed (represented by the firstborn) must be set apart for Yahweh’s service.

9 tn Heb “and Yahweh spoke.”

10 tn The verb “sanctify” is the Piel imperative of זכָר (zakhar). In the Qal stem it means “be holy, be set apart, be distinguished,” and in this stem “sanctify, set apart.”

11 sn Here is the central principle of the chapter – the firstborn were sacred to God and must be “set apart” (the meaning of the verb “sanctify”) for his use.

12 tn The word וָנֵס (wanes) means “that which opens”; this construction literally says, “that which opens every womb,” which means “the first offspring of every womb.” Verses 12 and 15 further indicate male offspring.

13 tn Heb “to me it.” The preposition here expresses possession; the construction is simply “it [is, belongs] to me.”

14 tn The form is the infinitive absolute of וָנֵס (zakhar, “remember”). The use of this form in place of the imperative (also found in the Decalogue with the Sabbath instruction) stresses the basic meaning of the root word, everything involved with remembering (emphatic imperative, according to GKC 346 §113.bb). The verb simply means that there will be proper action based on what was remembered.

15 sn There is a pattern in the arrangement of vv. 3-10 and 11-16. Both sections contain commands based on the mighty deliverance as reminders of the deliverance. “With a mighty hand” occurs in vv. 3, 9, 14, 16. An explanation to the son is found in vv. 8 and 14. The emphases “sign on your hand” and “between your eyes” are part of the conclusions to both halves (vv. 9, 16).

16 tn Heb “from a house of slaves.” “House” is obviously not meant to be literal; it indicates a location characterized by slavery, a land of slaves, as if they were in a slave house. Egypt is also called an “iron-smelting furnace” (Deut 4:20).

17 tn Heb “from this” [place].

18 tn The verb is a Nippal imperfect; it could be rendered “must not be eaten.” Its nuance is the instruction or injunction category, but permission fits this sermonic presentation very well – nothing with yeast may be eaten.

19 tn The word מָעָץ (ma‘atz) means literally “the day, today, this day.” In this sentence it functions as an adverbial accusative explaining when the event took place.

20 sn Abib appears to be an old name for the month, meaning something like “month of fresh young ears” (Lev 2:14 [Heb]) (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 106). B. Jacob (Exodus, 364) explains that these names were not precise designations, but general seasons based on the lunar year in the agricultural setting.

21 tn The form is the active participle, functioning verbally.

22 tn See notes on Exod 3:8.

23 tn The object is a cognate accusative for emphasis on the meaning of the service – “you will serve this service.” W. C. Kaiser notes how this noun was translated “slavery” and “work” in the book, but “service” or “ceremony” for Yahweh. Israel was saved from slavery to Egypt into service for God as remembered by this ceremony (“Exodus,” EBC 2:383).
13:6 For seven days² you must eat² bread made without yeast, and on the seventh day there is to be³ a festival to the Lord. 13:7 Bread made without yeast must be eaten⁴ for seven days;⁵ no bread made with yeast shall be seen⁶ among you, and you must have no yeast among you within any of your borders.

13:8 You are to tell your son⁷ on that day.⁸ ‘It is⁹ because of what¹⁰ the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ 13:9¹¹ It¹² will be a sign¹³ for you on your hand and a memorial¹⁴ on your forehead,¹⁵ so that the law of the Lord may be¹⁶ in your mouth,¹⁷ for²⁸ with a mighty hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt. 13:10 So you must keep¹⁸ this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year.¹⁹

13:11 When the Lord brings you²² into the land of the Canaanites,²³ as he swore to you and to your fathers, and gives it²⁴ to you, 13:12 then you must give over²⁵ to the Lord the first-born of every beast.²⁶ Every firstling²⁶ of a beast that you have²⁷ – the males will be the Lord’s.²⁸ 13:13 Every firstling²⁹ of a donkey you must redeem³⁰ with a lamb, and if you do not redeem it, then you must break its neck.³¹

² tn Heb “Seven days.”
³ tn The imperfect tense functions with the nuance of instruction or injunction. It could also be given an obligatory nuance: “you must eat” or “you are to eat.” Some versions have simply made it an imperative.
⁴ tn The phrase “there is to be” has been supplied.
⁵ tn The imperfect has the nuance of instruction or injunction again, but it could also be given an obligatory nuance.
⁶ tn The construction is an adversative accusative of time, answering how long the routine should be followed (see GKC 374 §118.k).
⁷ tn or “visible to you” (B. Jacob, Exodus, 366).
⁸ tn The form is the Hiphil perfect with the vav (.Writer) consecutive, carrying the sequence forward: “and you will declare to your son.”
⁹ sn A very important part of the teaching here is the manner in which the memory of the deliverance will be retained in Israel; they were to teach their children the reasons for the feast, as a binding link forever. This will remind the nation of its duties to Yahweh in gratitude for the great deliverance.
¹⁰ tn Heb “day, saying.” “Tell...saying” is redundant, so “saying” has not been included in the translation here.
¹¹ tn “It is” has been supplied.
¹² tn The text uses צה (zeh), which Gesenius classifies as the use of the pronoun to introduce a relative clause after the preposition (GKC 447 §138.k) – but he thinks the form is corrupt. B. S. Childs, however, sees no reason to posit a corruption.
¹³ tn Heb “for a sign.”
¹⁴ tn Heb “for a memorial.”
¹⁵ tn Heb “between your eyes” (KJV and ASV both similar); the same expression occurs in v. 16.
¹⁶ sn That these festivals and consecrations were to be signs and memorials is akin to the expressions used in the book of Proverbs (Prov 3:3, “bind them around your neck...write them on your heart”). The people were to use the festivals as outward and visible tokens to remind them to obey what the Law required.
¹⁷ tn The purpose of using this ceremony as a sign and a memorial is that the Law might be in their mouth. The imperfect tense, then, receives the classification of final imperfect in the purpose clause.
¹⁸ tn “Mouth” is a metonymy of cause; the point is that they should be ever talking about the Law as their guide as they go about their duties (see Deut 6:7; 11:19; Josh 1:8).
¹⁹ tn This causal clause gives the reason for what has just been instructed. Because Yahweh delivered them from bondage, he has the strongest claims on their life.
²⁰ tn The form is a perfect tense with the vav (.Writer) consecutive, functioning as the equivalent of an imperfect of instruction or injunction.
²¹ tn Or “every year,” or “year after year.”
²² tn Heb “and it will be when Yahweh brings (will bring) you.”
²³ tn The name “the Canaanite” (and so collective for “Canaanites”) is occasionally used to summarize all the list of Canaanish tribes that lived in the land.
²⁴ tn The verb יָשָׁנָה (yashannah) is the Qal perfect with the vav (.Writer) consecutive; this is in sequence to the preceding verb, and forms part of the protasis, the conditional clause. The main clause is the instruction in the next verse.
²⁵ tn The unusual choice of words in this passage reflects the connection with the deliverance of the firstborn in the exodus when the Lord passed over the Israelites (12:12, 23). Here the Law said, “you will cause to pass over (יָשָׁנָה, v’li’yanu) to Yahweh.” The Hiphil perfect with the vav (.Writer) provides the main clause after the temporal clauses. Yahweh here claimed the firstborn as his own. The remarkable thing about this is that Yahweh did not keep the firstborn that was dedicated to him, but allowed the child to be redeemed by his father. It was an acknowledgment that the life of the child belonged to God as the one redeemed from death, and that the child represented the family. Thus, the observance referred to the dedication of all the redeemed to God.
²⁶ sn It was once assumed by some that child sacrifice lay behind this text in the earlier days, but that the priests and prophets removed those themes. Apart from the fact that there is absolutely no evidence for anything like that, the Law and prophets removed those themes. Apart from the fact that there is absolutely no evidence for anything like that, the Law and prophets removed those themes. Apart from the fact that there is absolutely no evidence for anything like that, the Law and prophets removed those themes.
²⁷ tn The descriptive noun מְזֻרָה (mizzarah) is related to the verb drop, cast”; it refers to a newly born animal that is dropped or cast; it is used to refer to a newly born animal that is dropped or cast from the womb. The expression then reads, “and all that first open [the womb], the casting of a beast.”
²⁸ sn That is, the firstborn.
²⁹ tn Heb “every opener of a womb,” that is, the firstborn from every womb.
³⁰ tn The descriptive noun שֶׁהָגָר (sheger) is related to the verb drop, cast; it refers to a newly born animal that is dropped or cast from the womb. The expression then reads, “and all that first open [the womb], the casting of a beast.”
³¹ sn That is to you.” The preposition expresses possession.
³² tn The Hebrew text simply has “the males to Yahweh.” It indicates that the Lord must have them, or they belong to the Lord.
³³ tn Heb “and every opener [of a womb].”
³⁴ tn The verb לִכּה (likhah), the instructional imperfect, refers to the idea of redemption by paying a cost. This word is used regularly of redeeming a person, or an animal, from death or servitude (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 109).
³⁵ tn The conditional clause uses an imperfect tense; this is followed by a perfect tense with the vav consecutive providing the obligation or instruction. The owner might not redeem the donkey, but if he did not, he could not keep it, he had to kill it by breaking its neck (so either a lamb for it, or the donkey itself). The donkey could not be killed by shedding blood because that would make it a sacrifice, and that was not possible with this kind of animal. See G. Brin, “The Firstling
Every firstborn of your sons you must redeem. 13:14 In the future, your son asks you, ‘What is this?’ you are to tell him, ‘With a mighty hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the land of slavery. 13:15 When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to release us, the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of people to the firstborn of animals. That is why I am sacrificing to the Lord the first male offspring of every womb, but all my firstborn sons I redeem. 13:16 It will be for a sign on your hand and for frontlets on your forehead, for with a mighty hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.’


sn One was to sacrifice the firstborn animals to Yahweh, but the children were to be redeemed by their fathers. The redemption price was five shekels (Num 18:15-16).

2 sn As with v. 8, the Law now requires that the children be instructed on the meaning of this observance. It is a memorial of the deliverance from bondage and the killing of the firstborn in Egypt.

3 tn Heb “tommorow.”

4 tn Heb “and it will be when your son will ask you.”

5 sn This question is cryptic; it simply says, “What is this?” but certainly refers to the custom just mentioned. It asks, “What does this mean?” or “Why do we do this?”

6 tn The expression is “with strength of hand,” making “hand” the genitive of specification. In translation “strength” becomes the modifier, because “hand” specifies where the strength was. But of course the whole expression is anthropomorphic for the power of God.

7 tn Heb “house of slaves.”

8 tn Heb “dealt hardly in letting us go” or “made it hard to let us go” (see S. R. Driver, Exodus, 110). The verb is the simple Hiphil perfect form הָעָצַבְתָּנוּ (hu’atsavtu, “he made hard”); the infinitive construct עְצַבֶּהוּ (ʿetsbehu, “to release us”) could be taken etymologically, meaning “he made releasing us hard.” But the infinitive more likely gives the purpose or the result after the “he made.” The verb is figurative for “be stubborn” or “stubbornly refuse.”

9 tn The text uses “man” and “beast.”

10 sn The form is the active participle.

11 tn The word is חֹסֵף (qotsaf, “frontlets”). The etymology is uncertain, but the word denotes a sign or an object placed on the forehead (see m. Shabbat 6:1). The Gemara interprets it as a word meaning to tell to someone, חֻסֵף (chusaf). In the text 1:10 it is an armlet worn by Saul (see S. R. Driver, Exodus, 110). These bands may have resembled the Egyptian practice of wearing as amulets “forms of words written on folds of papyrus tightly rolled up and sewn in linen” (W. C. Kaiser, Jr., “Exodus,” EBC 2:384).

12 sn The pattern of the passage now emerges more clearly: it concerns the grateful debt of the redeemed. In the first part eating the unleavened bread recalls the night of deliverance in Egypt, and it calls for purity. In the second part the dedication of the firstborn was an acknowledgment of the deliverance of the firstborn from bondage. They were to remember the deliverance and choose purity; they were to remember the deliverance and choose dedication. The NT will also say, “You are not your own, for you were bought with a price, therefore, glorify God” (1 Cor 6:20). Here too the truths of God’s great redemption must be learned well and retained well from generation to generation.

The Leading of God

13:17-19 When Pharaoh released the people, God did not lead them by the way to the land of the Philistines, although that was nearby, for God said, “Lest the people change their minds and return to Egypt when they experience war.” 13:18 So God brought the people around by the way of the desert to the Red Sea,

sn This short section (vv. 17-22) marks the beginning of the journey of the Israelites toward the sea and Sinai. The emphasis here is on the leading of Yahweh – but this leading the people to think of their deliverance as manifested in a singular, superhuman event. The way of God is repeated with these phenomena. Although a primary application of such a passage would be difficult, the general principle is clear: God, by his clear revelation, leads his people to the fulfillment of the promise. This section has three short parts: the leading to the sea (17-18), the bones of Joseph (19), and the leading by the cloud and pillar (20-22).

tn The construction for this temporal clause is the temporal indicator with the vav (v) consecutive, the Piel infinitive construct with a preposition, and then the subjective genitive “Pharaoh.”

sn The term Philistines has been viewed by modern scholars as an anachronism, since the Philistines were not believed to have settled in the region until the reign of Rameses III (in which case the term would not fit either the early or the late view of the exodus). But the OT clearly refers to Philistines in the days of the patriarchs. The people there in the earlier period may have been Semites, judging from their names, or they may have been migrants from Crete in the early time. The Philistines after the exodus were of Grecian origin. The danger of warfare at this time was clearly with Canaanitish tribes. For further details, see K. A. Kitchen, “The Philistines,” Peoples of Old Testament Times, 53-54; J. M. Grintz, “The Immigration of the First Philistines in the Inscriptions,” Tarbiz 17 (1945): 32-42, and Tarbiz 19 (1947): 64; and E. Hindson, The Philistines and the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970), 39-59.

tn The participle חֹזֵף (qotsaf) introduces a concessive clause here (see R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 73, §448).

19 tn Or “thought.”

20 tn Before a clause this conjunction וה (wah) expresses fear or precaution (R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 75-76, §461). It may be translated “lest, else,” or “what if.”

21 tn נִינָאָט (ninaatkhem) is the Niphal imperfect of נִיעָט (nukham); it would normally be translated “repent” or “re lent.” This nomenclature usage gives a good illustration of the basic meaning of having a change of mind or having regrets.

22 tn Heb “see.”

23 tn The Hebrew term נַעֲיָם (Yam Sy) cannot be a genitive (“wilderness of the Red Sea”) because it follows a noun that is not in construct; instead, it must be an adverbial accusative, unless it is simply joined by apposition to “the wilderness” (and to the Red Sea (E. S. Childs, Exodus [OLT], 217).

sn The translation of this name as “Red Sea” comes from the sea’s Greek name in the LXX and elsewhere. The Red Sea on today’s maps is farther south, below the Sinai Peninsula. But the title Red Sea in ancient times may very well have covered both the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba (see Deut 1:1; 1 Kgs 9:26). The name “Sea of Reeds” in various Eng lish versions (usually in the form of a marginal note) and commentaries reflects the meaning of the Hebrew word הָרֶם a
and the Israelites went up from the land of Egypt prepared for battle.3
13:19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the Israelites solemnly swear,3 “God will surely attend to you, and you will carry my bones up from this place with you.”
13:20 They journeyed from Sukkoth and camped in Etham, on the edge of the desert.
13:21 Now the Lord was going before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them in the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light,4 so that they could5 travel day or night.8
13:22 He did not remove the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people.9

**The Victory at the Red Sea**

14:10 The Lord spoke to Moses: 14:2 “Tell the Israelites that they must turn and camp10 before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; you are to camp by the sea before Baal Zephon opposite it.12

14:3 Pharaoh will think13 regarding the Israelites, ‘They are wandering around confused14 in the land – the desert has closed in on them.’15

14:4 I will harden16 Pharaoh’s heart, and he will chase after them. I will gain honor17 because of Pharaoh and because of all his army, and the Egyptians will know18 that I am the Lord.” So this is what they did.19

14:5 When it was reported20 to the king of Egypt that the people had fled,21 the heart of word for reedy water plants (Exod 2:3; 5; Isa 19:6; Jonah 2:6 [Eng. v. 5]) that may have a connection with an Egyptian word used for papyrus and other marsh plants. On this basis some have taken the term Yam Suh as perhaps referring to Lake Menzaleh or Lake Ballah, which have abundant reeds, north of the extension of the Red Sea on the western side of Sinai. Whatever exact body of water is meant, it was not merely a marshy swamp that the people waded through, but a body of water large enough to make passage impossible without divine intervention, and deep enough to drown the Egyptian army. Lake Menzaleh has always been deep enough to preclude passage on foot (E. H. Merrill, Kingdom of Priests, 66).


**tn** The term קמשולם (khashumish) is placed first for emphasis; it forms a circumstantial clause, explaining how they went up. Unfortunately, it is a rare word with uncertain meaning. Most translations have something to do with “in battle array” or “prepared to fight” if need be (cf. Josh 1:14; 4:12). The LXX took it as “armed with weapons.” The LXX had “in the fifth generation.” Some have opted for “in five divisions.”

**tn** Heb “he”; the referent (Joseph) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

**tn** Heb “solemnly swear, saying” (so NASB). The construction means by oath, in absolute terms. God had already appeared to Moses in the fire of the bush, and so here again is revelation with fire. Whatever the exact nature of these things, they formed direct, visible revelations from God, who was guiding the people in a clear and unambiguous way. Both clouds and fire would again and again represent the presence of God in his power and majesty, guiding and protecting his people, by judging his enemies.

**tn** The infinitive construct here indicates the result of these manifestations – “so that they went” or “could go.”

**tn** These are adverbial accusatives of time.

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11 tn The two imperfects follow the imperative and therefore express purpose. The point in the verses is that Yahweh was giving the orders for the direction of the march and the encampment by the sea.
12 sn The places have been tentatively identified. W. C. Kaiser summarizes the suggestions that Pi-hahiroth as an Egyptian word may mean “temple of the [Syrian god] Ht” or “The Hir waters of the canal” or “The Dwelling of Hator” (“Exodus,” EBC 2:387; see the literature on these names, including C. DeWitt, The Date and Route of the Exodus, 17).
13 tn Heb “and Pharaoh will say,”
14 tn The word translated “wandering around confused” indicates that Pharaoh thought the Israelites would be so perplexed and confused that they would not know which way to turn in order to escape – and they would never dream of crossing the sea (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 115).
15 tn The expression has also been translated “the desert has shut [the way] for them,” and more freely “[the Israelites are] hemmed in by the desert.”
16 tn In this place the verb היו (hazaq) is used: it indicates that God would make Pharaoh’s will strong or firm.
17 tn The form is וידבקו (v’dibkavo), the Niphal cohortative; coming after the perfect tenses with וָּיָּבַד (vayyibad) conveys expressing the future, this cohortative indicates the purpose of the hardening and chasing. Yahweh intended to gain glory by this final and great victory over the strength of Pharaoh. There is irony in this expression since a different form of the word was used frequently to describe Pharaoh’s hard heart. So judgment will not only destroy the wicked – it will reveal the glory and majesty of the sovereignty of God.
18 tn This is the perfect tense with the וָּיָּבַד (vayyibad) conveys expressing the future, this cohortative indicates the purpose of the hardening and chasing. Yahweh intended to gain glory by this final and great victory over the strength of Pharaoh. There is irony in this expression since a different form of the word was used frequently to describe Pharaoh’s hard heart. So judgment will not only destroy the wicked – it will reveal the glory and majesty of the sovereignty of God.
19 tn “and they did so.”
20 tn Heb “and it was told.” The present translation uses “reported,” since this involves information given to a superior.
21 tn The verb must be given a past perfect translation because the fleeing occurred before the telling.
Pharaoh and his servants were turned against the people, and the king and his servants said,1  
1 tn Heb “and they said.” The referent (the king and his servants) is supplied for clarity.

“What in the world have we done?2  
2 tn The question literally is “What is this we have done?” The demonstrative pronoun is used as an enclitic particle for emphasis (R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 24, §118).

For we have released the people of Israel3 from serving us!”  
3 tn Heb “released Israel.” By metonymy the name of the nation is used collectively for the people who constitute it (the Israelites).

14:6 Then he prepared his chariots and took his army4 with him.  
4 tn Heb “his people.”

He took six hundred select5 chariots, and all the rest of the chariots of Egypt,6 and officers7 on all of them.

14:8 But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he chased after the Israelites. Now the Israelites were going out defiantly.8  
8 tn The passive participle of the verb “to choose” means that these were “chosen” or superb chariots.

14:9 The Egyptians chased after them, and all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh and his horsemen and his army overtook them camping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-Zephon.  
9 tn Heb “Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-Zephon.” The deictic particle calls attention in a dramatic way to what was being seen. It captures the surprise of Israelites. “and be- holder, the Egyptians were marching after them.” The deictic particle calls attention in a dramatic way to what was being seen. It captures the surprise of the people, and the king and his servants said, “What in the world have we done?” For we have released the people of Israel from serving us!” Then he prepared his chariots and took his army with him. He took six hundred select chariots, and all the rest of the chariots of Egypt, and officers on all of them.

14:8 But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he chased after the Israelites. Now the Israelites were going out defiantly.

14:9 The Egyptians chased after them, and all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh and his horsemen and his army overtook them camping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-Zephon. When Pharaoh got closer, the Israelites looked up,10 and there were the Egyptians marching after them,11 and they were terrified.12 The Israelites cried out to the LORD,13 and they said to Moses, “Is it because there were no graves in Egypt, that you have taken us away to die in the desert?14 What in the world have you done to us by bringing15 us out of Egypt?  
15 tn Or “what evil (NIV, NRSV)”

14:12 Isn’t this what we told you in Egypt, ‘Leave us alone so that we can serve the Egyptians, because it is better for us to serve16 the Egyptians than to die in the desert!’17  
16 tn B. Jacob (Exodus, 396-97) notes how the speech is overly dramatic and came from a people given to using such exaggerations (Num 16:14), even using a double negative. The challenge to Moses brings a double irony. To die in the desert would be without proper burial, but in Egypt there were graves – it was a land of tombs and graves! Gesenius notes that two negatives in the sentence do not nullify each other but make the sentence all the more emphatic: “Is it because there were no graves…” (GKC 483 §152).

14:13 Moses said to the people, “Do not fear.”18 Stand firm19 and see the salvation20 of the LORD that he will provide for you today; for the Egyptians that you see today you will criesed to the LORD, and now the LORD would deliver.

14:14 and they said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the desert? What in the world have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Isn’t this what we told you in Egypt, ‘Leave us alone so that we can serve the Egyptians, because it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!’

14:13 Moses said to the people, “Do not fear. Stand firm and see the salvation of the LORD that he will provide for you today; for the Egyptians that you see today you will

18 tn Heb “better for us to serve.”

21 tn Since Hebrew does not use quotation marks to indicate the boundaries of quotations, there is uncertainty about whether the Israelites’ statement in Egypt includes the end of v. 12 or consists solely of “leave us alone so that we can serve the Egyptians.” In either case, the command to Moses to leave them alone rested on the assumption, spoken or unspoken, that serving Egypt would be less risky than what Moses was proposing. Now with the Egyptian army on the horizon, the Israelites are sure that their worst predictions are about to take place.

22 tn The use of רָע (‘al) with the jussive has the force of “stop fearing.” It is a more immediate negative command than נָפַל (‘al) with the imperfect (as in the Decalogue).

23 tn The force of this verb in the Hitpael is “to station oneself” or “stand firm” without fleeing.

24 tn The form is an imperative with a נָשִּׁיר ( ‘al) that could also be rendered “stand firm and you will see” meaning the result, or “stand firm that you may see” meaning the purpose.

25 tn Or “victory” (NAB) or “deliverance” (NIV, NRSV).

26 tn Heb “do,” i.e., perform or accomplish.
never, ever see again.\(^1\) 14:14 The Lord\(^2\) will fight for you, and you can be still.\(^3\)

14:15 The Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on.\(^4\) 14:16 And as for you,\(^5\) lift up your staff and extend your hand toward the sea and divide it, so that\(^6\) the Israelites may go through the middle of the sea on dry ground. 14:17 And as for me, I am going to harden\(^7\) the hearts of the Egyptians so that\(^8\) they will come after them, that I may be honored\(^9\) because\(^10\) of Pharaoh and his army and his chariots and his horsemen. 14:18 And the Egyptians will know\(^11\) that I am the Lord when I have gained my honor\(^12\) because of Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

14:19 The angel of God, who was going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them, and the pillar\(^13\) of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. 14:20 It came between the Egyptian camp and the Israelite camp; it was a dark cloud\(^14\) and it lit up the night so that one camp did not come near the other\(^15\) the whole night. 14:21 Moses stretched out his hand toward the sea, and the Lord drove the sea apart\(^17\) by a strong east wind all that night, and he made the sea into dry land, and the water was divided. 14:22 So the Israelites went through the middle of the sea on dry ground, the water forming a wall\(^18\) for them on their right and on their left.

14:23 The Egyptians chased them and followed them into the middle of the sea – all the horses of Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.
14:24 In the morning watch4 the Lord looked down5 on the Egyptian army 6 through the pillar of fire and cloud, and he threw the Egyptian army 7 into a panic. 8 14:25 He jammed 9 the wheels of their chariots so that they had difficulty driving, 10 and the Egyptians said, “Let’s flee 11 from Israel, for the Lord fights 12 for them against Egypt!”

14:26 The Lord said to Moses, “Extend your hand toward the sea, so that the waters may flow 10 back on the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen!” 14:27 So Moses extended his hand toward the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state 13 when the sun began to rise. 12 Now the Egyptians were fleeing 14 before it, but the Lord overthrew 15 the Egyptians in the middle of the sea. 14:28 The water returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the army of Pharaoh that was coming after the Israelites into the sea 16 – not so much as one of them survived! 14:29 But the Israelites walked on dry ground in the middle of the sea, the water forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. 14:30 So the Lord saved 17 Israel on that day from the power 18 of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead 19 on the shore of the sea. 14:31 When Israel saw 20 the great power 21 that the Lord had exercised 22 over the Egyptians, they 23 feared the Lord, and they believed in 24 the Lord and in his servant Moses. 26

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1 tn The night was divided into three watches of about four hours each, making the morning watch about 2:00–6:00 a.m. The text has this as “the watch of the morning,” the genitive qualifying which of the night watches was meant.

2 tn This particular verb הָמַם (hashaq) is a bold anthropomorphism: Yahweh looked down. But its usage is always with some demonstration of mercy or wrath. S. R. Driver (Exodus, 120) suggests that the look might be with fiery flashes to startle the Egyptians, throwing them into a panic. Ps 77:17–19 pictures torrents of rain with lightning and thunder.

3 tn Heb “camp.” The same Hebrew word is used in Exod 14:20. Unlike the English word “camp,” it can be used of a body of people at rest (encamped) or on the move.

4 sn Heb “camp.”

5 tn The verb הָמַם (hamam) means “throw into confusion.” It is used in the Bible for the panic and disarray of an army before a superior force (Josh 10:10; Judg 4:15).

6 tn The word in the text is יָבַשׁ (yavash), which would be translated “and he turned aside” with the sense perhaps of removing the wheels. The reading in the LXX, Smr, and Syriac suggests a root יָבַשׁ (yasar, “to bind”). The sense here might be “closed – presumably by their sinking in the wet sand” (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 120).

7 tn The clause is יִרְדַּפֶּה (yirdepha), (yavanahgoehu bikhevdat). The verb means “to drive a chariot”; here in the Piel it means “cause to drive.” The suffix is collective, and so the verbal form can be translated “and caused them to drive.” The idea of the next word is “helplessness” or “handicap;” it recalls the previous uses of related words to describe Pharaoh’s heart. Here it indicates that the driving of the crippled chariots was with difficulty.

8 tn The cohortative has the hortatory use here, “Let’s flee.” Although the form is singular, the sense of it is plural and so hortatory can be used. The form is singular to agree with the singular subject, “Egypt,” which obviously means the Egyptian army. The word for “flee” is used when someone runs away before a superior force (Josh 10:10; Judg 4:15).

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14 tn The verb means “shake out” or “shaking off.” It has the significance of “throw downward.” See Neh 5:13 or Job 38:13.

15 sn Heb “that was coming after them into the sea.” The referent of “them” (the Israelites) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

16 tn Heb “not was left among them as much as one.”

17 tn The Hebrew term וּבָא (yavo) is the key summation of the chapter, and this part of the book: “So Yahweh saved Israel.” This is the culmination of all the powerful works of God through these chapters.

18 sn Heb “the hand,” with “hand” being a metonymy for power.

19 tn The participle “dead” is singular, agreeing in form with “Egypt.”

20 tn The preterite with the מ (vayn) consecutive introduces a clause that is subordinate to the main points that the verse is making.

21 tn Heb “the great hand,” with “hand” being a metonymy for work or power. The word play using “hand” contrasts the Lord’s hand/power at work on behalf of the Israelites with the hand/power of Egypt that would have killed them.

22 tn Heb “did, made.”

23 tn Heb “and the people feared.”

24 tn The verb is the Hiphil preterite of מָנָן (manan).

25 sna R. Driver says that the belief intended here is not simply a crediting of a testimony concerning a person or a thing, but a laying firm ground for a morally valid argument. (Exodus, 122). Others take the Hiphil sense to be declarative, and that would indicate a considering of the object of faith trustworthy or dependable, and therefore to be acted on. In this passage it does not mean that here they came to faith, but that they became convinced that he would save them in the future.

26 sn Here the title of “servant” is given to Moses. This is the highest title a mortal can have in the OT – the “servant of Yahweh.” It signifies more than a believer; it describes the highest title a mortal can have in the OT – the “servant of Yahweh.” It signifies more than a believer; it describes the...
The Song of Triumph

15:1 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord. They said,

“I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously, for the horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea.

15:2 The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.

1 The basic form of the verb is יָשִׁיר (yashir), which means “to sing.” It is used here in the sense of praising God for his actions.

2 The verb is יַשִּׁיר (yashir), a perfect tense form. But after the adverb “then” this form is to be treated as a pronominal suffix. The participle is accusative, the object of the infinitive absolute may mean “he is highly exalted” or “he has done majestically” or “he is gloriously glorious.”

3 The Hebrew expression has יָשִׁיר (yashir), a form. But after the adverb “then” this form is to be treated as a pronominal suffix. The participle is accusative, the object of the infinitive absolute may mean “he is highly exalted” or “he has done majestically” or “he is gloriously glorious.”

4 The song of triumph begins with a declaration of praise to the Lord. The verb is יָשִׁיר (yashir), which means “to sing.” It is used here in the sense of praising God for his actions.

5 This chapter is a song of praise sung by Moses and the people right after the deliverance from the Sea. The song itself is v. 1b-18. It falls into three sections – praise to God (1b-3), the cause for the praise (4-13), and the conclusion (14-18). The point of the first section is that God’s saving acts inspire praise from his people; the second is that God’s powerful acts deliver his people from the forces of evil; and the third section is that God’s demonstrations of his sovereignty inspire confidence in his people. So the Victory Song is sung, much like the other declarative praise psalms – the resolve to praise, the power of God, the victory over the enemies, the incomparability of God in his redemption, and the fear of the people. See also C. Cohen, “Studies in Early Israelite Poetry I: An Unrecognized Case of Three Line Staircase Parallelism in the Song of the Sea,” JANESCU 7 (1975): 13-17; D. N. Freedman, “Strophe and Meter in Exodus 15,” A Light unto My Path, 163-203; E. Levine, “Theo/Lit: A Study of Exodus 15,” Bib 54 (1973): 301-30; T. C. Butler, “The Song of the Sea”: Exodus 15:1-18: A Study in the Exegesis of Hebrew Poetry,” Diss Ab 32 (1971): 2782-A.

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7 This is the case for the verb יָשִׁיר (yashir), which means “to sing.” It is used here in the sense of praising God for his actions.

8 Hebrew expression has יָשִׁיר (yashir), a form. But after the adverb “then” this form is to be treated as a pronominal suffix. The participle is accusative, the object of the infinitive absolute may mean “he is highly exalted” or “he has done majestically” or “he is gloriously glorious.”


10 Heb “man of war” (so KJV, ASV). “Warrior” is now the preferred translation since “man of war” is more commonly known today as a warship. The expression indicates that Yahweh is a warrior. Other passages use similar descriptions: Isa 42:13 has “man of wars”; Ps 24:8 has “mighty man of battle.” See F. Cross, “The Divine Warrior in Israel’s Early Cult,” Biblical Mon., 11:30.

11 “Yahweh” is his name. As throughout, the name “Yahweh” is rendered as the “LORD” in the translation, as is typically done in English translations.

12 In Gesenius notes that the sign of the accusative, often omitted in poetry, is not found in this entire song (GKC 363 §117.b).

13 The word is a substantive, “choice, selection”; it is here used in the construct state to convey an attribute before a participle genitive – “the choice of his officers” means his “choice officers” (see GKC 417 §128.r).

14 The form is a Qal passive rather than a Pual, for there is not Piel form or meaning.

15 The verb form is יָשִׁיר (yashir), which means “to sing.” It is used here in the sense of praising God for his actions.

16 It is a Qal active, the root meaning “to rise up loftily” or “proudly.” But derivatives of the root carry the nuance of majesty or pride (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 132). So the idea of the perfect tense with its infinitive absolute may mean “he is highly exalted” or “he has done majestically” or “he is gloriously glorious.”

17 The common understanding is that Egypt did not have people riding horses at this time, and so the phrase the horse and rider is either viewed as an anachronism or is interpreted to mean charioteers. The word “to ride” can mean on a horse or in a chariot. Some have suggested changing “rider” to “chariot” (re-vocalization) to read “the horse and its chariot.”

18 Heb “Yah.” Moses’ poem here uses a short form of the name Yahweh, traditionally rendered in English by “the LORD.”

19 This is the case for the verb יָשִׁיר (yashir), which means “to sing.” It is used here in the sense of praising God for his actions.

20 This expression is cognate with words in v. 1. Here that same greatness or majesty is extolled as in abundance. This is my God, and I will praise him, my father’s God, and I will exalt him.

15:3 The Lord is a warrior, the Lord is his name.

15:4 The chariots of Pharaoh and his army he has thrown into the sea, and his chosen officers were drowned in the Red Sea.

15:5 The depths have covered them, they went down to the bottom like a stone.

15:6 Your right hand, O Lord, was majestic in power, your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy.

15:7 In the abundance of your majesty you have overthrown those who rise up against you.
16 tn The verb is the prefixed conjugation, the preterite without the vav consecutive. The subject, the “earth,” must be inclusive of the sea, or it may indicate the grave or Sheol; the sea drowned them. Some scholars wish to see this as a reference to Dathan and Abiram, and therefore evidence of a later addition or compilation. It fits this passage well, however.

18 tn The particle כ (zu) is a relative pronoun, subordinating the next verb to the preceding.

19 tn This verb seems to mean “to guide to a watering-place” (See Ps 23:2).

20 tn This verb is a prophetic perfect, assuming that the text means what it said and this song was sung at the Sea. So all these countries were yet to hear of the victory.

21 tn The word properly refers to “pangs” of childbirth. When the nations hear, they will be terrified.

22 tn The verb is again a prophetic perfect.

23 tn This is a prophetic perfect.

24 tn This verb is imperfect tense.

25 tn The two words can form a nominal hendiadys, “a dreadful fear,” though most English versions retain the two separate terms.

26 tn The form is an imperfect.

27 tn The adjective is in construct form and governs the noun “arm” (“arm” being the anthropomorphic expression for what God did). See GKC 428 §132.c.


29 tn Clauses beginning with כ (lad) express a limit that is not absolute, but only relative, beyond which the action continues (GKC 446-47 §138.g).

30 tn The verb כות (qonah) here is the verb “acquire, purchase,” and probably not the homonym “to create, make” (see Gen 4:1; Deut 32:6; and Prov 8:22).

31 tn The verb is imperfect.

32 sn The “mountain” and the “place” would be wherever Yahweh met with his people. It here refers to Canaan, the land promised to the patriarchs.

33 tn The verb is perfect tense, referring to Yahweh’s previous choice of the holy place.
ever!

15:19 For the horses of Pharaoh came with his chariots and his footmen into the sea, and the Lord brought back the waters of the sea on them, but the Israelites walked on dry land in the middle of the sea.

15:20 Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a hand-drum in her hand, and all the women went out after her with hand-drums and with dances.

15:21 Miriam sang in response to them, “Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea.”

The Bitter Water

15:22 Then Moses led Israel to journey away from the Red Sea. They went out to the Desert of Shur, walked for three days into the desert, and found no water. 15:23 Then they came to Marah, but they were not able to drink the waters of Marah, because they were bitter. (That is why its name was called Marah.)

15:24 So the people murmured against Moses, saying, “What can we drink?” 15:25 He cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree. 15:26 When Moses threw it into the water, the water became safe to drink. There the Lord made it a binding ordinance, and there he tested them. 15:26 He said, “If you were not able to do.

15:27 “What can we drink?” since the previous verse reports that they were not able to drink the water.

15:28 It is likely that Moses used words very much like this when he prayed. The difference seems to lie in the prepositions – he cried “to” Yahweh, but the people murmured “against” Moses.

15:29 But his song is the same as the song of the sea on them, his chariots and his footmen into the sea. 15:30 Then Moses and the army of Israel sang this song of praise to the Lord.

15:31 Miriam sang in response to him, for he had triumphed gloriously; the horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea.

Many scholars have attempted to explain these things with natural phenomena. Here Marah is identified with Ain Hawarah. It is said that the waters of this well are notoriously salty and brackish; Robinson said it was six to eight feet in diameter and the water about two feet deep; the water is unpleasant, salty, and somewhat bitter. As a result the Arabs say it is the worst tasting water in the area (B. Kaiser, Jr., “Exodus,” EBC 2:398). But that would not be a sufficient amount of water for the number of Israelites in the first place, and in the second, they could not drink it at all. Third, how did Moses change it?

15:32 The verb נָסָה (nasah) formula in the Pentateuch serves to explain to the reader the reason for the way things were. It does not necessarily mean here that Israel named the place – but certainly they could have.

15:33 The imperfect tense here should be given a potential nuance: “What can we drink?” since the previous verse reports that they were not able to drink the water.

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will diligently obey the Lord your God, and do what is right in his sight, and pay attention to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, then all the diseases I brought on the Egyptians I will not bring on you, for I, the Lord, am your healer."

15:27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there by the water.

The Provision of Manna

16:1 When they journeyed from Elim, the entire company of Israelites came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their exodus from the land of Egypt. 16:2 The entire company of Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron in the desert. 16:3 The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died on the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this desert to kill this whole assembly with hunger!”

8 sn Exod 16 plays an important part in the development of the book’s theme. It is part of the wider section that is the prologue leading up to the covenant at Sinai, a part of which was the obligation of obedience and loyalty (P. W. Ferris, Jr., Hebrew Syntax, 91-92, §547).

9 tn The sentence begins with a preterite and vav (ו) consecutive, which can be subordinated to the next clause with the preterite and vav consecutive. Here it has been treated as a temporal clause.

10 tn The word is often rendered “congregation” (so KJV, ASV, NASB, NRSV), but the modern perception of a congregation is not exactly what is in mind in the desert. Another possible rendering is “community” (NAB, NIV, NCV, TEV) or “assembly.” The Hebrew word is used of both good and bad groups (Judg 14:8; Ps 1:5; 106:17-18).

11 tn The form in the text is בְּצֵאת (b’zet; “after their going out”), it clearly refers to their deliverance from Egypt, and so it may be vividly translated.

12 tn Or “community” or “assembly.”

13 tn The text reads: ספִּיטָם (spitam, “after their going out”), it clearly refers to their deliverance from Egypt, and so it may be vividly translated.

14 tn The form is a Qal infinitive construct used in a temporal clause, and the preterite “when we ate” has the same structure.

15 sn That the complaint leading up to the manna is unjustified can be seen from the record itself. They left Egypt with flocks and herds and very much cattle, and about 45 days later they are complaining that they are without food. Moses reminded them later that they lacked nothing (Deut 3:7; for the whole sermon on this passage, see 8:1-20). Moreover, the complaint is absurd because the food of work gangs was far more meager than they recall. The complaint was really against Moses. They crave the eating of meat and of bread and so God will meet that need; he will send bread from heaven and quail as well.

16 tn פִּילֶפַח (philaḥ) is the Hiphil infinitive construct showing purpose. The people do not trust the intentions or the plan of their leaders and charge Moses with bringing everyone out to kill them.
16:4 Then the Lord said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people will go out and gather the amount for each day, so that I may test them. Will they will walk in my law or not?” 16:5 On the sixth day they will prepare what they bring in, and it will be twice as much as they gather every other day.”

16:6 Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you will know that the Lord has brought you out of the land of Egypt; 16:7 and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your murmurings against us. As for us, what are we? That you should murmur against us?”

16:8 Moses said, “You will know this: when the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening and bread in the morning to satisfy you, because the Lord has heard your murmurings that you are murmuring against him. As for us, what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.”

16:9 Then Moses said to Aaron, “Tell the whole community of the Israelites, ‘Come before the Lord, because he has heard your murmurings.’”

16:10 As Aaron spoke to the whole community of the Israelites and they looked toward the desert, there the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud, 16:11 and the Lord spoke to Moses: 16:12 “I have heard the murmurings of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘During the evening you will eat meat, and in the morning you will obey when the Law was given at Sinai.

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4 sn The particle הָיוֹ (hiywi) before the active participle indicates the imminent future action: “I am about to rain.”

5 sn This verb and the next are the Qal perfect tenses with פָּנִי (pani); they follow the sequence of the participle, and so are future in orientation. The force here is instruction: “they will go out” or “they are to go out.”

6 sn The verb in the purpose/result clause is the Piel imperfect of the verb נָסָה (nasah), נָסַּה (nasassah) – “in order that I may prove them [him].” The giving of the manna will be a test of their obedience to the detailed instructions of God as well as being a test of their faith in him (if they believe him they will not gather too much). In chap. 17 the people will test God, showing that they do not trust him.

7 sn The word “law” here properly means “direction” at this point (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 146), but their obedience here would indicate also whether or not they would be willing to obey when the Law was given at Sinai.

8 sn “and it will be on the sixth day.”

9 sn There is a question here concerning the legislation – the people were not told why to gather twice as much on the sixth day. In other words, this instruction seems to precede by Moses and Aaron are nothing, merely the messengers. Moses had properly claimed to be no public speaker.”

10 sn The words “as for us” attempt to convey the force of the Hebrew word order, which puts emphasis on the pronoun: “and we – what?” The implied answer to the question is that Moses and Aaron are nothing, merely the messengers. The next verse repeats the question to further press the seriousness of what the Israelites are doing.

11 sn “You will know this” has been added to make the line smooth. Because of the abruptness of the lines in the verse, and the repetition with v. 7, B. S. Childs (Exodus [OTL], 273) thinks that v. 8 is merely a repetition by scribal error – even though the versions render it as the MT has it. But B. Jacob (Exodus, 447) suggests that the contrast with vv. 6 and 7 is important for another reason – there Moses and Aaron speak, and it is smooth and effective, but here only Moses speaks, and it is labored and clumsy. “We should realize that Moses had properly claimed to be no public speaker.”

12 sn Here, once again is an infinitive construct with the preposition forming a temporal clause.

13 sn The words “as for us” attempt to convey the force of the Hebrew word order, which puts emphasis on the pronoun: “and we – what?” The implied answer to the question is that Moses and Aaron are nothing, merely the messengers.

14 sn The word order is “not against us [are] your murmurings."

15 sn Or “congregation” (KJV, ASV, NASB, NRSV); the same word occurs in v. 10.

16 sn The verb means “approach, draw near.” It is used in the Torah of drawing near for religious purposes. It is possible that some sacrifice was involved here, but no mention is made of that.

17 sn Heb “and it was as Aaron spoke.” The construction uses the temporal indicator and then the Piel infinitive construction following the subjective genitive “Aaron.”

18 sn S. R. Driver says, “A brilliant glow of fire...symbolizing Yahweh’s presence, gleamed through the cloud, resting...on the Tent of Meeting. The cloud shrouds the full brilliance of the glory, which human eye could not behold” (Exodus, 147-48; see also Ezek 1:28; 3:12, 23; 8:4; 9:3, et al.). A Hebrew word often translated “behold” or “lo” introduces the surprising sight.

19 sn The verb is the Niphal perfect of the verb “to see” – “it was seen.” But the standard way of translating this form is from the perspective of Yahweh as subject – “he appeared.”

20 sn Heb “during the evenings”; see Ezek 12:6.

21 sn One of the major interpretive difficulties is the comparison between Exod 16 and Num 11. In Numbers we find that the giving of the manna was about 24 months after the Exod 16 time (assuming there was a distinct time for this chapter), that it was after the erection of the tabernacle, that Taberah (the Burning) preceded it (not in Exod 16), that the people were tired of the manna [not that there was no bread to eat] and so God would send the quail, and that there was a severe tragedy over it. In Exod 16 both the manna and the qal are given on the same day, with no mention of quail on the following days. Contemporary scholarship generally assigns the accounts to two different sources because complete reconciliation seems impossible. Even if we argue that
be satisfied with bread, so that you may know that I am the Lord your God."

16:13 In the evening the quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning a layer of dew was all around the camp. 16:14 When the layer of dew had evaporated, there on the surface of the desert was a thin flaky substance, thin like frost on the earth. 16:15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" because they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread the Lord has given you for food."

16:16 "This is what the Lord has commanded: `Each person is to gather for himself what he can eat, an omer per person according to the number of people; each one will pick it up for whoever lives in his tent.'"

Exodus has a thematic arrangement and "telescopes" some things to make a point, there will be still be difficulties in harmonization. Two considerations must be kept in mind: 1) First, these events were highly rhetorical. If this is so, then they should be treated separately as events that appeared or occurred during the period of the wanderings. Similar things need not be the same thing. 2) Secondly, strict chronological order is not always maintained in the Bible narratives, especially if it is a didactic section. Perhaps Exod 16 describes the initiation of the giving of manna as God's provision of bread, and therefore placed in the prologue of the covenant, and Num 11 is an account of a mood which developed over a period of time in response to the manna. Num 11 would then be looking back from a different perspective.

3 tn The verb means "to be sated, satisfied"; in this context it indicates that they would have sufficient bread to eat – they would be full.

4 tn The form is a Qal perfect with the vav (ו) consecutive; it is in sequence with the imperfect tenses before it, and so forth with an an imperfect to the main clause. The main point of the verse is what they said.

5 tn Heb "a man to his brother."

6 tn The text has: "אֵין אָדָם לָחֶם בָּנוֹת, אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהָיו" (man hu 'ki lo yad'v'u mah hu'). From this statement the name "manna" was given to the substance. (man for "what" is not found in Hebrew, but appears in Syriac as a contraction of man da, "what?" This word is used here apparently for the sake of etymology. B. S. Childs (Exodus [OTL], 274) follows the approach that any connections to words that actually meant "what?" are unnecessary, for it is a play on the name (whatever it may have been) and therefore related only by sound to the term being explained. This, however, presumes that a substance was known prior to this account – a point that Deuteronomy does not seem to allow. S. R. Driver says that it is not known how early the contraction came into use, but that verse seems to reflect it (Exodus, 149). Probably one must simply accept that in the early Israelite period man meant "what?" There seems to be sufficient evidence to support this. See EA 286s, UT 435; DNWSI 1:157.

7 sn B. Jacob (Exodus, 454-55) suggests that Moses was saying to them, "it is not manna. It is the food Yahweh has given you." He comes to this conclusion based on the strange popular etymology from the interrogative word, noting that people do not call things "what?"


9 tn The form is the plural imperative: "Gather [you] each day's bread, and bring them in vast numbers."

10 The preterite with vav (ו) consecutive is here subordinated as a temporal clause to the main clause; since that clause calls special attention to what was there after the dew evaporated.

11 sn Translations usually refer to the manna as "bread." In fact it appears to be more like grain, because it could be ground in hand-mills and made into cakes. The word involved says it is thin, flake-like (if an Arabic etymological connection is correct). What is known about it from the Bible in Exodus is that it was a very small flake-like substance, it would melt when the sun got hot, if left over it bred worms and became foul, it could be ground, baked, and boiled. It was abundant when the sun got hot, if left over it bred worms and became stink. The suggestion is in no way convincing. Bodenheimer argues that "worms" could mean "ants" that carried them away, but that is contrived – the text could have said ants. The fact that the Bible calls it "bread" creates no problem. יָקָה (yakha) is used in a wide range of meanings from bread to all kinds of food including goats (Judg 13:15-16) and honey (1 Sam 14:24-28). Scripture does not say that manna was the only thing that they ate for the duration. But they did eat it throughout the forty years. It simply must refer to some supernatural provision for them in their diet. Modern suggestions may invite comparison and analysis, but they do not satisfy one of the key presuppositions of the text.

12 tn The preterite with vav consecutive is here subordinated to the next verb as a temporal clause. The main point of the verse is what they said.

13 tn Heb "a man to his brother."

14 tn The text has: "אֵין אָדָם לָחֶם בָּנוֹת, אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהָיו" (man hu 'ki lo yad'v'u mah hu'). From this statement the name "manna" was given to the substance. (man for "what" is not found in Hebrew, but appears in Syriac as a contraction of man da, "what?" This word is used here apparently for the sake of etymology. B. S. Childs (Exodus [OTL], 274) follows the approach that any connections to words that actually meant "what?" are unnecessary, for it is a play on the name (whatever it may have been) and therefore related only by sound to the term being explained. This, however, presumes that a substance was known prior to this account – a point that Deuteronomy does not seem to allow. S. R. Driver says that it is not known how early the contraction came into use, but that verse seems to reflect it (Exodus, 149). Probably one must simply accept that in the early Israelite period man meant "what?" There seems to be sufficient evidence to support this. See EA 286s, UT 435; DNWSI 1:157.

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17 tn Heb "the thing that."

18 tn The perfect tense could be taken as a definite past with Moses now reporting it. In this case a very recent past. But in declaring the word from Yahweh it could be instantaneous, and receive a present tense translation – "here and now he commands you."

19 tn The form is the plural imperative: "Gather [you] each man according to his eating."

20 sn The omer is an amount mentioned only in this chapter, and its size is unknown, except by comparison with the ephah (v. 36). A number of recent English versions approximate the omer as "two quarts" (cf. NCV, CEV, NLT); TEV "two litres."

21 tn Heb "for a head."

22 tn The word "number" is an accusative that defines more precisely how much was to be gathered (see GKC 374 §118.h).

23 tn Traditionally "souls."

24 tn Heb "will take."

25 tn "lives" has been supplied.
16:17 The Israelites did so, and they gathered—some more, some less. 16:18 When they measured with an omer, the one who gathered much had nothing left over, and the one who gathered little lacked nothing; each one had gathered what he could eat.

16:19 Moses said to them, “No one is to keep any of it until morning.” 16:20 But they did not listen to Moses; some kept part of it until morning, and it was full of worms and began to stink. Moses was angry with them. 16:21 So they gathered it each morning, each person according to what he could eat, and when the sun got hot, it would melt. 16:22 And on the sixth day they gathered twice as much food, two omers’ per person; and all the leaders of the community came and told Moses. 16:23 He said to them, “This is what the Lord has said: ‘Tomorrow is a time of cessation from work,’ a holy Sabbath to the Lord. Whatever you want to bake, bake today; whatever you want to boil, boil today; whatever is left put aside for yourselves to be kept until morning.’”

16:24 So they put it aside until the morning, just as Moses had commanded, and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it.

16:25 Moses said, “Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in the area. 16:26 Six days you will gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any.”

16:27 On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather it, but they found nothing. 16:28 So the Lord said to Moses, “How long do you refuse to obey my commandments and my instructions? 16:29 See, because the Lord has given you the Sabbath, that is why he is giving you food for two days on the sixth day. Each of you stay where you are; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day.”

16:30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

16:31 The house of Israel called its name “manna.” It was like coriander seed and was white, and it tasted like wafers with honey.

16:32 Moses said, “This is what the Lord has commanded: Fill an omer with it to be kept for generations to come, so that they may see it and place it before the Lord, and it will be a sign of God’s love—this was accomplished through the double portion on the sixth day. Take a jar and put in it an omer full of manna, and place it before the Lord to be kept for generations to come.”

16:33 Just as the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the Testament for safekeeping.

16:35 Now the Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a land that was inhabited; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. 16:36 (Now an omer is one tenth of an ephah.)

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2 tn The preterite with the vav (י) consecutive is subordinat-ed here as a temporal clause.
3 tn The address now is for “man” (גאשׁ, ish), “each one”; here the instruction seems to be focused on the individual heads of the households.
4 tn Or “some of it,” “from it.”
5 tn Heb “men”; this usage is designed to mean “some” (see GKC 447 §138).
6 tn The verb רכשׁ (rakah) is equivalent to a passive – “it was changed” – to which “worms” is added as an accusative of result (GKC 388:89 §121.d, n. 2).
7 tn Heb “morning by morning.” This is an example of the repetition of words to express the distributive sense; here the meaning is “every morning” (see GKC 388 §121.c).
8 tn The perfect tenses here with vav (י) consecutives have the distributive sense; they function in a protasis-apodosis relationship (GKC 494 §159.a).
9 sn Heb “and it happened/was.”
10 tn This construction is an exception to the normal rule for the numbers 2 through 10 taking the object numbered in the plural. Here it is “two of the omer” or “the double of the omer” (see GKC 433 §134.e).
11 tn Heb “for one.”
12 tn The word suggests “the ones lifted up” above others, and therefore the rulers or the chiefs of the people.
13 sn The meaning here is probably that these leaders, the natural heads of the families in the clans, saw that people were gathering twice as much and they reported this to Moses, perhaps afraid it would stink again (U. Cassuto, Exodus, 197).
14 tn The noun נבון (shabaton) has the abstract ending on it: “resting, ceasing.” The root word means “cease” from something, more than “to rest.” The Law would make it clear that they were to cease from their normal occupations and do no common work.
15 tn The technical expression is now used: שבת-קדשׁ (shabat-qodesh, “a holy Sabbath”) meaning a “cessation of/for holiness” for Yahweh. The rest was to be characterized by holiness.
16 tn The two verbs in these objective noun clauses are desiderative imperfects – “bake whatever you want to bake.”
17 tn The word “today” is implied from the context.
Water at Massa and Meribah

The whole community of the Israelites traveled on their journey from the Desert of Sin according to the Lord’s instruction, and they pitched camp in Rephidim. Now there was no water for the people to drink. So the people contended with Moses, and they said, “Give us water to drink!” Moses said to them, “Why do you contend with me? Why do you test the Lord?” But the people were very thirsty there, for they were murmuring against Moses and said, “Why in the world did you bring us up out of Egypt – to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?”

Then Moses cried out to the Lord, “What will I do with this people? – a little more and they will stone me!” The Lord said to Moses, “Go over before the people; take with you some of the elders of Israel and

[sn] The point of this chapter, with all its instructions and reports included, is God’s miraculous provision of food for his people. This is a display of sovereign power that differs from the display of military power. Once again the story calls for faith, but here it is faith in Yahweh to provide for his people. The provision is also a test to see if they will obey the instructions of God. Deut 8 explains this. The point, then, is that God provides for the needs of his people that they may demonstrate their dependence on him by obeying him. The exposition of this passage must also correlate to John 6. God’s providing manna from heaven to meet the needs of his people takes on new significance in the application that Jesus makes of the subject to himself. There the requirement is the same – will they believe and obey? But at the end of the event John explains that they murmured about Jesus.

[1] This is the famous story telling how the people rebelled against Yahweh when they thirsted, saying that Moses had brought them out into the wilderness to kill them by thirst, and how Moses with the staff brought water from the rock. As a result of this the name was called Massa and Meribah because of the testing and the striving. It was a challenge to Moses’ leadership as well as a test of Yahweh’s presence. The narrative in its present form serves an important point in the argument of the book. The story turns on the gracious provision of God who can give his people water when there is none available. The narrative is structured to show how the people strove. Thus, the story intertwines God’s free flowing grace with the sad memory of Israel’s sins. The passage can be divided into three parts: the situation and the complaint (1-3), the cry and the miracle (4-6), and the commemoration by naming (7).

[3] sn The text says that they journeyed “according to their journeys.” Since the verb form (and therefore the derived noun) essentially means to pull up the tent pegs and move along, this verse would be saying that they traveled by stages, or, from place to place.

[4] sn The location is a bit of a problem. Exod 19:1-2 suggests that it is near Sinai, whereas it is normally located near Kadesh in the north. Without any details provided, M. Noth concludes that two versions came together (Exodus [OTL], 138). S. R. Driver says that the writer wrote not knowing that they were 24 miles apart (Exodus, 157). Critics have long been bothered by this passage because of the two names given at the same place. If two sources had been brought together, it is not possible now to identify them. But Noth insisted that if there were two different locations named Massah and Meribah, more was involved than one would expect. In his view the names Massah and Meribah occur alone in Scripture (Deut 9:22, and Num 20:1 for examples), but together in Ps 95 and in Deut 33:8. But none of these passages is a clarification of the difficulty. Most critics would argue that Massah was a secondary element that was introduced into this account, because Exod 17 focuses on Meribah. From that starting point they can diverge greatly on the interpretation, usually having something to do with a water test. But although Num 20 is parallel in several ways, there are major differences: 1) it takes place 40 years later than this, 2) the name Kadesh is joined to the name Meribah there, and 3) Moses is punished there. One must conclude that if an event could occur twice in similar ways (complaint about water would be a good candidate for such), then there is no reason a similar name could not be given.

[5] sn The disjunctive vav introduces a parenthetical clause that is essential for this passage – there was no water.

[6] tn Here the construction uses a genitive after the infinitive construct for the subject: “there was no water for the drinking of the people” (GKC 353-54 §115.c).
[7] sn The verb נָסָה (nasah) is from the root נָשָׁה (nsh); it forms the basis of the name “Meribah.” The word means “strive, quarrel, be in contention” and even “litigation.” A translation “quarrel” does not appear to capture the magnitude of what is being done here. The people have a legal dispute – they are contending with Moses as if bringing a lawsuit.

[8] tn The imperfect tense with the vav (ו) follows the imperative, and so it carries the nuance of the logical sequence, showing purpose or result. This may be expressed in English as “give us water so that we may drink,” but more simply with the English infinitive, “give us water to drink.”

[9] sn One wonders if the people thought that Moses and Aaron had water and were withholding it from the people, or whether Moses was actually getting water that demanded. The people should have come to Moses to ask him to pray to God for water, but their action led Moses to say that they had challenged God (B. Jacob, Exodus, 476).

[10] tn In this case and in the next clause the imperfect tenses are to be taken as progressive imperfects – the action is in progress.

[11] sn The verb נָשָׁה (nasah) means “to test, tempt, try, prove.” It can be used of people simply trying to do something that they are not sure of (such as David trying on Saul’s armor), or of God testing people to see if they will obey (as in testing Abraham, Gen 22:1), or of people challenging others (as in the Queen of Sheba coming to test Solomon), and of the people in the desert in rebellion putting God to the test. By doubting that God was truly in their midst, and demanding that he demonstrate his presence, they tested him to see if he would act. There are times when “proving” God is correct and required, but that is done by faith (as with Gideon); when it is done out of unbelief, then it is an act of disloyalty.

[12] tn The verbs and the pronouns in this verse are in the singular because “the people” is singular in form.

[13] tn The demonstrative pronoun is used as the enclitic form for special emphasis in the question. It literally says, “why is this you have brought us up?” (R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 24, §118).

[14] sn Their words deny God the credit for bringing them out of Egypt, impugn the integrity of Moses and God by accusing them of bringing the people out here to die, and show a lack of faith in God’s ability to provide for them.

[15] tn The preposition לְפָנֵי (lifney) is here specification, meaning “with respect to” (see R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 49, §273).

[16] tn Or “they are almost ready to stone me.”

[17] tn The perfect tense with the vav (ו) consecutive almost always develops an independent force; this is true in sentences where it follows an expression of time, as here (see GKC 334 §112.x).

[18] tn “Pass over before” indicates that Moses is the leader who goes first, and the people follow him. In other words, לִפְנֵי (lifney) indicates time and not place here (B. Jacob, Exodus, 477-78).
take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile and go. 17:6 I will be standing before you there on the rock in Horeb, and you will strike the rock, and water will come out of it so that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in plain view of the elders of Israel.

17:7 He called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of their testing the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

Victory over the Amalekites

17:8 Amalek came and attacked Israel in Rephidim. 17:9 So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some of our men and go out, fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.”

17:10 So Joshua fought against Amalek just as Moses had instructed him, and Moses and Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 17:11 Whenever Moses would raise his hands, then Amalek prevailed. 17:12 When the hands of Moses became heavy, they took a stone and put it under him, and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side and one on the other, and so his hands were steady until the sun went down. 17:13 So
Joshua destroyed Amalek and his army with the sword.\footnote{1} 17:14 The Lord said to Moses, “Write this as a memorial in the book and rehearse it in Joshua’s hearing;\footnote{2} for I will surely wipe out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. 17:15 Moses built an altar, and he called it “The Lord is my Banner.”\footnote{3} 17:16 for he said, “For a hand was lifted up to the throne of the Lord—\footnote{4} that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”\footnote{11}

\footnote{1} The Hebrew word is “place,” meaning that the events would be written in a book that was existing now, but in one dedicated to this purpose (book, meaning scroll). See GKC 408 §126.s.
\footnote{2} The presence of the article does not mean that he was to write this in a book that was existing now, but in one dedicated to this purpose (book, meaning scroll).
\footnote{3} The message of this short narrative concerns the power of God to protect his people. The account includes the difficulty, the victory, and the commemoration. The victory must be retained in memory by the commemoration.
\footnote{4} The Hebraic word is “place,” meaning that the events would be written in a book for a memorial.
\footnote{5} This is an important report that Jethro has heard, this is an important narrative.

\footnote{12} This chapter forms the transition to the Law. There has been the deliverance, the testing passages, the provision in the wilderness, and the warfare. Any God who can do this for his people deserves their allegiance. In chap. 18 the Lawgiver is giving advice, using laws and rulings, but then he is given advice to organize the elders to assist. Thus, when the Law is fully revealed, a system will be in place to administer the point of the passage is that a great leader humbly accepts advice from other godly believers to delegate responsibility. He does not try to do it all himself; God does not want one individual to do it all. The chapter has three parts: vv. 1-12 tell how Jethro heard and came and worshiped and blessed; vv. 13-23 have the advice of Jethro, and then vv. 24-27 tell how Moses implemented the plan and Jethro went home. See further E. J. Runions, “Exodus Motifs in 1 Samuel 7 and 8,” EvQ 52 (1980): 130-31; and also see for another idea T. C. Butler, “An Anti-Moses Tradition,” JSOT 12 (1979): 9-15.

\footnote{13} This clause begins with (k) (ki). This is an important narrative.

\footnote{14} This is an important narrative.

\footnote{15} The line here is very difficult. The Hebrew text has rendered it “for a hand on the throne of Yah (cfr. Exod 20).” If the word is “throne” (and it is not usually spelled like this), then it would mean Moses’ hand was extended to the throne of God, showing either intercession or source of power. It could not be turned to mean that the hand of Yah was taking an oath to destroy the Amalekites. The LXX took the same letters, but apparently saw the last four (makhath) as a verbal form; it reads “with a secret hand.” Most scholars have simply assumed that the text is wrong, and should be emended to (nisc) to fit the name, for this is the pattern of naming in the OT with popular etymologies – some motif of the name must be found in the sentiment. This would then read, “My hand on the banner of Yah.” It would be an expression signifying that the banner, the staff of God, should ever be ready at hand when the Israelites fight the Amalekites again. There is an important expression that the banner, the staff of God, should ever be ready at hand.

\footnote{16} This is an adverbial accusative that defines the place (see GKC 373-74 §118.g).

The Advice of Jethro

18:1-12 Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses’ father-in-law, heard about all that God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt.\footnote{14} 18:2 Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, took Moses’ wife Zipporah after he had sent her back,\footnote{15} and her two sons, one of whom was named Gershon (for Moses had said, “I have been a foreigner in a foreign land”),\footnote{16} and the other Elihezer (for Moses had said, “The God of my father has been my help,” and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh”).\footnote{17}

18:5 Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, together with Moses’ sons and his wife, came to Moses in the desert where he was camping so he could talk to Moses.\footnote{20}
mountain of God. Moses’ father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to eat food with the father-in-law of Moses before God.

18:13 On the next day, Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning until evening. 18:14 When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, “What is this that you are doing for the people? Why are you sitting by yourself, and all the people stand around you from morning until evening?”

18:15 Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God. 18:16 When they have a dispute, it comes to me and I decide between a man and his neighbor, and I make known the decrees of God and his laws.”

1 sn The mountain of God is Horeb, and so the desert here must be the Sinai desert by it. But chap. 19 suggests that they left Rephidim to go the 24 miles to Sinai. It may be that this chapter fits in chronologically after the move to Sinai, but was placed here thematically. W. C. Kaiser defends the present location of the story by responding to other reasons for the change given by Lightfoot, but does not deal with the travel locations (W. C. Kaiser, Jr., “Exodus,” EBC 2:411). This verse may seem out of place, since the report has already been given that they came to the desert. It begins to provide details of the event that the previous verse summarizes. The announcement in verse 6 may have come in advance by means of a messenger or at the time of arrival, either of which would fit with the attention to formal greetings in verse 7. This suit a meeting between two important men; the status of Moses has changed. The LXX solves the problem by taking the pronoun “I” as the personal “hearth” and reads it this way: “one said to Moses, ‘Behold, your father-in-law has come....’”

3 sn This is more than polite oriental custom. Jethro was Moses’ benefactor, father-in-law, and a priest. He paid much respect to him. Now he could invite Jethro into his home (see B. Jacob, Exodus, 496).

4 sn This verse may seem out of place, since the report has already been given that they came to the desert. It begins to provide details of the event that the previous verse summarizes. The announcement in verse 6 may have come in advance by means of a messenger or at the time of arrival, either of which would fit with the attention to formal greetings in verse 7. This suit a meeting between two important men; the status of Moses has changed. The LXX solves the problem by taking the pronoun “I” as the personal “hearth” and reads it this way: “one said to Moses, ‘Behold, your father-in-law has come....’”

5 tn Heb “found them.”

6 tn Here “how” has been supplied.

7 tn The word קִדְמָה (khada) is rare, occurring only in Job 3:6 and Ps 21:6, although it is common in Aramaic. The LXX translated it “he shuddered.” U. Cassuto suggests that that rendering was based on the midrashic interpretation in b. Sanhedrin 94b, “he felt cuts in his body” – a wordplay on the root ceremony. The form is ידו (lidrosh), the Qal infinitive construing the purpose. To inquire of God would be to seek God’s will on a matter, to obtain a legal decision on a matter, or to settle a dispute. As a judge Moses is speaking for God, but as the servant of Yahweh Moses’ words will be God’s words. The psalms would later describe judges as “gods” because they made the right decisions based on God’s Law.

8 sn The verb יָכַב (banakh) is the Qal passive participle of the verb. Here must be supplied a jussive, making this participle the predicate: “May Yahweh be blessed.” The verb essentially means “to enrich”; in praise it would mean that he would be enriched by the praises of the people.

9 s The word עָדָה (‘ada) is found in the context of the Egyptians.

10 tn The end of this sentence seems not to have been finished, or it is very elliptical. In the present translation the phrase “he has destroyed them” is supplied. Others take the last prepositional phrase to be the completion and supply only a verb: “[he was] above them.” U. Cassuto (Exodus, 216) takes the word “god” to be the subject of the verb “act proudly,” giving the sense of “precisely (א), in respect of these things of which the gods of Egypt boasted - He is greater than they (יָכַב, ‘adhem).” He suggests rendering the clause, “excelling them in the very things to which they laid claim.”

11 sn The verb is “and he took” (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB). It must have the sense of getting the animals for the sacrifice. The Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate have “offered.” But Cody argues because of the precise wording in the text Jethro did not offer the sacrifices but received them (A. Cody, “Exodus 18:12: Jethro Accepts a Covenant with the Israelites,” Bib 49 [1968]: 39-61).

12 sn Jethro brought offerings as if he were the one who had been delivered. The “burnt offering” is singular, to honor God first. The other sacrifices were intended for the invited guests to eat (a forerunner of the peace offering). See B. Jacob, Exodus, 498.

13 tn The word לֶכְה (lekhem) here means the sacrifice and all the foods that were offered with it. The eating before God was part of covenantal ritual, for it signified that they were in communion with the Deity, and with one another.

14 tn Heb “and it was/happened on the morrow.”

15 sn This is a simple summary of the function of Moses on this particular day. He did not necessarily do this every day, but it was time now to do it. The people would come to solve their difficulties or to hear instruction from Moses on decisions to be made. The tradition of “sitting in Moses’ seat” is drawn from this passage.

16 tn Heb “what is this thing.”

17 sn This question, “what are you doing for the people,” is qualified by the next question. Sitting alone all day and the people standing around all day showed that Moses was exhibiting too much care for the people – he could not do this.

18 sn The form is לְדוּת (lidrosh), the Qal infinitive construing the purpose. To inquire of God would be to seek God’s will on a matter, to obtain a legal decision on a matter, or to settle a dispute. As a judge Moses is speaking for God, but as the servant of Yahweh Moses’ words will be God’s words. The psalms would later describe judges as “gods” because they made the right decisions based on God’s Law.

19 sn Or “thing,” “matter,” “issue.”

20 sn The verb פָּרֹע (paro) means “to judge”; more specifically, it means to make a decision as an arbiter or umpire. When people brought issues to him, Moses decided between them. In the section of laws in Exodus before the Ten Commandments come the decisions, the מיספנシン (mispportun).

21 sn The “decrees” or “statutes” were definite rules, stereotyped and permanent; the “laws” were directives or pronouncements given when situations arose. S. R. Driver suggests this is another reason why this event might have taken place after Yahweh had given laws on the mountain (Exodus, 165).
18:17 Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “What4 you are doing is not good! 18:18 You will surely wear out,2 both you and these people who are with you, for this is too3 heavy a burden4 for you; you are not able to do it by yourself. 18:19 Now listen to me,7 I will give you advice, and may God be with you: You be a representative for the people to God,6 and you bring their disputes8 to God; 18:20 warn9 them of the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they must walk10 and the work they must do.11 18:21 But you choose12 from the people capable men,13 God-fearing,14 men of truth,15 those who hate bribes,16 and put them over the people17 as rulers18 of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 18:22 They will judge19 the people under normal circumstances,20 and every difficult case21 they will bring to you, but every small case22 they themselves will judge, so that23 you may make it easier for yourself,24 and they will bear the burden25 with you. 18:23 If you do this thing, and God so commands you,26 then you will be able27 to endure,28 and all these people29 will be able to go30 home31 satisfied.”32

18:24 Moses listened to33 his father-in-law and did everything he had said. 18:25 Moses chose capable men from all Israel, and he made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 18:26 They judged the people under normal circumstances; the difficult cases they would

1tn Heb “the thing.”
2tn The verb means “to fall and fade” as a leaf (Ps 1:3). In Ps 18:45: it is used figuratively of foes fading away, failing in strength and courage (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 166). Here the infinitive absolute construction heightens the meaning.
3tn Gesenius lists the specialized use of the comparative min (ס), where with an adjective the thought expressed is that the quality is too difficult for the attainment of a particular aim (GKC 430 §133.c).
4tn Here “a burden” has been supplied.
5tn Heb “hear my voice.”
6tn The line reads “Be you to the people before God.” He is to be their representative before God. This is introducing the aspect of the work that only Moses could do, what he has been doing. He is to be before God for the people, to pray for them, to appeal on their behalf. Jethro is essentially saying, I understand that you cannot delegate this to anyone else, so continue doing it (U. Cassuto, Exodus, 219-20).
7tn The form is the perfect tense with the vav (ְ) consecutive; following the imperative it will be instruction as well. Since the imperative preceding this had the idea of “continue to be” as you are, this too has that force.
8tn Heb “words”; KJV, ASV “the causes”; NRSV “cases”; NLT “questions.”
9tn The perfect tense with the vav (ְ) consecutive continues the sequence of instruction for Moses. He alone was to be the mediator, to guide them in the religious and moral instruction.
10tn The verb and its following prepositional phrase form a relative clause, modifying “the way.” The imperfect tense should be given the nuance of obligatory imperfect – it is the way they must walk.
11tn This last part is parallel to the preceding: “work” is also the direct object of the verb “make known,” and the relative clause that qualifies it also uses an obligatory imperfect.
12tn The construction uses the independent pronoun for emphasis, and then the imperfect tense “see” (הָיָתָּה, khazah) – “and you will see from all…. ” Both in Hebrew and Ugaritic expressions of “seeing” are used in the sense of choosing (Gen 41:33). See U. Cassuto, Exodus, 220.
13tn The expression is נָּשִׁי קֹהֲלֵי (“capable men”). The attributive genitive is the word used in expressions like “mighty man of valor.” The word describes these men as respected, influential, powerful people, those looked up to by the community as leaders, and those who will have the needs of the community in mind.
14tn The description “fearers of God” uses an objective genitive. It describes them as devout, worshipful, obedient servants of God.
15tn The expression “men of truth” (גָּדוֹל חַיִל, ’anshe khayil) indicates that these men must be seekers of truth, who know that the task of a judge is to give true judgment (U. Cassuto, Exodus, 220). The word “truth” includes the ideas of faithfulness or reliability, as well as factuality itself. It could be understood to mean “truthful men,” men whose word is reliable and true.
16tn Heb “haters of bribes.” Here is another objective genitive, one that refers to unjust gain. To hate unjust gain is to reject and refuse it. Their decisions will not be swayed by greed.
17tn Heb “over them”; the referent (the people) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
18tn It is not clear how this structure would work in a judicial setting. The language of “captains of thousands,” etc., is used more for military ranks. There must have been more detailed instruction involved here, for each Israelite would have come under four leaders with this arrangement, and perhaps difficult cases would be sent to the next level. But since the task of these men would also involve instruction and guidance, the breakdown would be very useful. Deut 1:9, 13 suggests that the choice of these people was not simply Moses’ alone.
19tn The form is the perfect tense with the vav (ְ) consecutive, making it equivalent to the imperfect of instruction in the preceding verse.
20tn Heb “in every time,” meaning “in all normal cases” or “under normal circumstances.” The same phrase occurs in v. 26.
21tn Heb “great thing.”
22tn Heb “thing.”
23tn The vav here shows the result or the purpose of the instructions given.
24tn The expression נְפַל לְפָנֵי (“in your presence”) means literally “and make it light off yourself.” The word plays against the word for “heavy” used earlier – since it was a heavy or burdensome task, Moses must lighten the load.
25tn Here “the burden” has been supplied.
26tn The form is a Piel perfect with vav (ְ) consecutive; it carries the same nuance as the preceding imperfect in the conditional clause.
27tn The perfect tense with vav (ְ) consecutive now appears in the apodosis of the conditional sentence – “if you do this…then you will be able.”
28tn Heb “to stand.” B. Jacob (Exodus, 501) suggests that there might be a humorous side to this: “you could even do this standing up.”
29tn Literally “this people.”
30tn The verb is the simple imperfect, “will go,” but given the sense of the passage a potential nuance seems in order.
31tn Heb “his place.”
32tn Heb “in peace.”
33tn The idiom “listen to the voice of” means “obey, comply with, heed.”
bring² to Moses, but every small case they would judge themselves.

18:27 Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way,² and so Jethro³ went⁴ to his own land.⁵

Israel at Sinai

19:1⁶ In the third month after the Israelites went out² from the land of Egypt, on the very day,³ they came to the Desert of Sinai. 19:2 After they journeyed⁸ from Raphidim, they came to the Desert of Sinai, and they camped in the desert; Israel camped there in front of the mountain.¹⁰

¹ tn This verb and the verb in the next clause are imperfect tenses. In the past tense narrative of the verse they must be customary, describing continuous action in past time. ² tn The verb יָשַׁלָּלָה (yashalalah) has the same root and same stem used in the passages calling for Pharaoh to “release” and let go, the Hebrew of peaceful and righteous relationship. Moses sent Jethro to his home. ³ tn Heb “he”; the referent (Jethro) has been specified in the translation for clarity. ⁴ tn The prepositional phrase included here Genesius classifies as a pleonastic dativus ethicus to give special emphasis to the significance of the occurrence in question for a particular reader. (GKC 381a) ⁵ sn This chapter makes an excellent message on spiritual leadership of the people of God. Spiritually responsible people are to be selected to help in the work of the ministry (teaching, deciding cases, meeting needs), so that there will be peace, and so that leaders will not be exhausted. Probably capable people are more ready to do that than leaders are ready to relinquish control. But leaders have to be willing to take the risk, to entrust the task to others. Here Moses is the model of humility, receiving correction and counsel from Jethro. And Jethro is the ideal adviser, for he has no intention of remaining there to run the operation. ⁶ sn This chapter is essentially about mediation. The people are getting ready to meet with God, receive the Law from him, and enter into a covenant with him. All of this required mediation and preparation. Through it all, Israel will become God’s unique possession, a kingdom of priests on earth – if they comply with his Law. The chapter can be divided as follows: vv. 1-8 tell how God, Israel’s great deliverer promised to make them a kingdom of priests; this is followed by God’s declaration which Moses would be the mediator (v. 9); vv. 10-22 record instructions for Israel to prepare themselves to worship Yahweh, and vv. 23-25 focus on the mediation of Moses on behalf of the people. Having been redeemed from Egypt, the people will now be granted a covenant with God. See also R. E. Bee, “A Statistical Study of the Sinai Pericope,” Journal of the Royal Statistical Society 135 (1972): 406-21. ⁷ sn The construction uses the infinitive construct followed by the subjective genitive to form a temporal clause. ⁸ tn Heb “on this day.” ⁹ tn The form is a preterite with vav (ו) consecutive, “and they journeyed.” It is here subordinated to the next clause as a temporal clause. But since the action of this temporal clause preceded the actions recorded in v. 1, a translation of “after” will keep the sequence in order. Verse 2 adds details to the summary in v. 1. ¹⁰ sn The mountain is Mount Sinai, the mountain of God, the place where God had met and called Moses and had promised that they would be here to worship him. If this mountain is Jebel Musa, the traditional site of Sinai, then the plain in front of it would be Er-Rahah, about a mile and a half long by half a mile wide, fronting the mountain on the NW side (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 169). The plain itself is about 5000 feet above sea level. A mountain on the west side of the Arabian Peninsula has also been suggested as a possible site.

19:3 Moses¹¹ went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, “Thus you will tell the house of Jacob, and declare to the people¹² of Israel: 19:4 ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt and how I lifted you on eagles’ wings³³ and brought you to myself.¹⁴ 19:5 And now, if you will diligently listen to me¹⁵ and keep¹⁶ my covenant, then you will be my¹⁷ special possession¹⁸ out of all the nations, for all the earth is mine. 19:6 and you will be to me¹⁹ a kingdom of priests²⁰ and a holy nation.²¹ These

¹¹ tn Heb “and Moses went up.” ¹² tn This expression is normally translated as “Israelites” in this translation, but because in this place it is parallel to “the house of Jacob” it seemed better to offer a fuller rendering. ¹³ tn The figure compares the way a bird would teach its young to fly and leave the nest with the way Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt. The bird referred to could be one of several species of eagles, but more likely is the griffin-vulture. The image is that of a lower and loving father. ¹⁴ sn The language here is the language of a bridegroom bringing the bride to the chamber. This may be a deliberate allusion to another metaphor for the covenant relationship. ¹⁵ tn Heb “listen to my voice.” The construction uses the imperfect tense in the conditional clause, preceded by the infinitive absolute from the same verb. The idiom “listen to the voice of” implies obedience, not just mental awareness of sound. ¹⁶ tn The verb is a perfect tense with הַוָּעַב (havoab) consecutive; it continues the idea in the protasis of the sentence: “and [if you will] keep.” ¹⁷ tn The lamed preposition expresses possession here: “to me” means “my.” ¹⁸ tn The noun is זהָלָה (zolah), which means a special possession. The point is that Israel was to be God’s special possession, but the prophets will later narrow it to the faithful remnant. All the nations belong to God, but Israel was to stand in a place of special privilege and enormous responsibility. See Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4; and Mal 3:17. See M. Greenberg, “Hebrew s’gulla: Akkadian sikiltu,” JAOS 71 (1951): 172ff. ¹⁹ tn Or “for me” (NIV, NRSV), or, if the lamed (ו) preposition has a possessive use, “my kingdom” (so NCV). ²⁰ tn The construction “a kingdom of priests” means that the kingdom is made up of priests. W. C. Kaiser ("Exodus," EBC 2:417) offers four possible renderings of the expression: 1) apposition, viz., “kings, that is, priests”; 2) as a construct with a genitive of specification, “royal priesthood”; 3) as a construct with the genitive being the attribute, “priestly king”; and 4) as a construct with a possessive use, “my kingdom.” The last is to be rejected since it requires a possessive pronoun introverted; then it becomes simply “kings and priests.” He takes the latter view that they were to be kings and priests. (Other references are R. B. Y. Scott, “A Kingdom of Priests (Exodus xix. 6),” OTS 8 [1950]: 213-19; William L. Moran, “A Kingdom of Priests,” The Bible in Current Catholic Thought, 7-20). However, due to the parallelism of the next description which uses an adjective, this is probably a construct relationship. This kingdom of God will be composed of a priestly people. All the Israelites would be living wholly in God’s service and enjoying the right of access to him. And, as priests, they would have the duty of representing God to the nations, following what they perceived to be the duties of priests – proclaiming God’s word, interceding for people, and making provision for people to find God through atonement (see Deut 3:9-10). ²¹ tn They are also to be a “holy nation.” They are to be a nation separate and distinct from the rest of the nations. Here is another aspect of their duty. It was one thing to be God’s special possession, but to be that they had to be priestly and holy. The duties of the covenant will specify what it would mean to be a holy nation. In short, they had to keep themselves free from everything that characterized pagan people (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 131). So it is a bilateral covenant: they received special privileges but they must provide special services by the special discipline. See also H. Kruse, “Exodus 19:5 and
are the words that you will speak to the Israelites.”

19:7 So Moses came and summoned the elders of Israel. He set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him, 19:8 and all the people answered together, “All that the LORD has commanded we will do!” 19:9 So Moses brought the words of the people back to the LORD.

19:9 The LORD said to Moses, “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and so that they will always believe in you.” And Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

19:10 The LORD said to Moses, “Go to the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and make them wash their clothes 19:11 and be ready for the third day, for on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. 19:12 You must set boundaries for the people all around, saying, ‘Take heed to yourselves not to go up on the mountain nor touch its edge. Whoever touches the mountain will surely be put to death! 19:13 No hand will touch him— but he will surely be stoned or shot through, whether a beast or a human being; he must not live.’ When the ram’s horn sounds a long blast they may go up on the mountain.”

19:14 Then Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. 19:15 He said to the people, “Be ready for the third day. Do not go near your wives.”

19:16 On the third day in the morning there was thunder and lightning and a dense cloud on the mountain, and the sound of a very loud horn; all the people who were in the camp trembled. 19:17 Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their place at the foot of the mountain. 19:18 Now Mount Sinai was completely covered with smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire, and its smoke went up like the smoke of a great furnace, and the whole mountain shook violently. 19:19 When the sound of the horn grew louder and louder, Moses was speaking and God was answering him with a voice.

19:20 The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain, and the LORD summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. 19:21 The LORD said to Moses,
“Go down and solemnly warn the people, lest they force their way through to the Lord and look, and many of them perish. 22 Let the priests also, who approach the Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break through them against them.”

19:23 Moses said to the Lord, “The people are not able to come up to Mount Sinai, because you solemnly warned us. 24 ‘Set boundaries for the mountain and set it apart.’”

19:24 The Lord said to him, “Go, get down, and come up, and Aaron with you, but do not let the priests and the people force their way through to come up to the Lord, lest he break through against them.”

19:25 So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them. 6

The Decalogue

20:1 God spoke all these words: 20:2 “I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you from the land of Egypt, from the burden of Egypt.”

And then in chap. 24 the covenant will be inaugurated. So when Israel entered into covenant with God, they entered into a theocracy by expressing their willingness to submit to his authority. The Law was the binding constitution for the nation of Israel under Yahweh their God. It was specifically given to them at a certain time and in a certain place. The Law legislated how Israel was to live in order to be blessed by God and used by him as a kingdom of priests. In the process of legislating their conduct and their ritual for worship, the Law revealed God. It revealed the holiness of Yahweh as the standard for all worship and service, and in revealing that it revealed the holiness of God. But what the Law condemned, the Law (Leviticus) also made provision for in the laws of the sacrifice and the feasts intended for atonement. The NT teaches that the Law was good, and perfect, and holy. But it also teaches that Christ was the end goal of the Law, that it ultimately led to him. It was a pedagogue, Paul said, to bring people to Christ. And when the fulfillment of the promises came in him, but not to God under the Law. What this means for Christians is that what the Law of Israel revealed about God and his will is timeless and still authoritative over faith and conduct, but what the Law regulated for Israel in their existence as the people of God has been done away with in Christ. The Ten Commandments reveal the essence of the Law; the ten for the most part are reiterated in the NT because they reflect the heart of the character of God. The NT often raises them to a higher standard, to guard the spirit of the Law as well as the letter.

4 The imperative הָעַל (ha’al) means “charge” them — put them under oath, or solemnly warn them. God wished to ensure that the people would not force their way past the barriers that had been set out.

5 The verb יִפְרֹץ (yifratz) is the imperfect tense from יָפָר (parats), “to make a breach, to break through.”

6 This passage has many themes and emphases that could be developed in exposition. It could serve for meditation: the theology drawn from the three parts could be subordinated to the theme of holiness: God is holy, therefore adhere to his word for service, approach him through a mediator, and adore him in purity and fearful reverence. A developed outline for the exposition could be: I. If the people of God will obey him, they will be privileged to serve in a unique way (1:8); II. If the people of God are to obey, they must be convinced of the divine source of their commands (9); and finally, III. If the people of God are convinced of the divine approval of their mediator, and the divine source of their instruction, then they must sanctify themselves before him (10-25).

7 This chapter is the heart of the Law of Israel, and as such is well known throughout the world. There is so much literature on it that it is almost impossible to say anything briefly and do justice to the subject. But the exposition of the book must point out that this is the charter of the new nation of Israel. These ten commands (words) form the preambles; they will be followed by the decisions (judgments).
of house of slavery.\footnote{tn}{tn Heb “the house of slaves” meaning “the land of slavery.”}

20:3 “You shall have no\footnote{tn}{tn Heb “you will not” and has the strongest expectation of obedience; it is best reflected in the English “shall not” and is understood as part of the description of the children already mentioned).} other gods before me.\footnote{tn}{tn Here the phrase “of anything” has been supplied.}

20:4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image\footnote{tn}{tn Heb “under the earth” (so KJV, ASV, NASB, NRSV).} or any likeness\footnote{tn}{tn The combination of these two verbs customarily refers to a pattern in the antithesis, which is the antithesis of such things (see J. J. Stamm and M. E. Andrew, The Ten Commandments in Recent Research [SBT, 86]. The first verb is אֲשֶׁר לְךָ (asher l’kha), now to be classified as a hiphil perfect from אִשָּׁר (ishar), “to cause oneself to be low to the ground.” It is used of the true worship of God as well. The second verb is מְנַעָה (manah), “to restrain” or “to subdue.” The two could be taken as a hapludic: “you will not prostrate yourself to serve them.” In an interesting side comment U. Cassuto (Exodus, 242) offers an explanation of the spelling of the second verb: he suggests that it was spilled with the qamets khatuf vowel to show contempt for pagan worship, as if their children for the sins of the fathers (cf. Lev 18:25; Isa 26:21; Jer 32:32; 36:31; Hos 8:8; Joel 3:9; Jer 7:18). These words are not usually translated no less, not say enough. The verse may indicate that those who hate Yahweh and do not keep his commandments will repeat the sins their fathers committed and suffer for them. Deut 24:16 says that individuals will die for their own sins and not their father’s sins (see also Deut 7:10 and Ezek 18). It may have more to do with patterns of sin being repeated from generation to generation; all of which he describes as giving strong motivation for loyalty to him and for avoiding idolatry. There is a justice at work in the dealings of God that is not present in the pagan world.}

20:5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them,\footnote{sn}{sn The word “jealous” is the same word often translated to the verb, then the verb itself takes a slightly different nu}

20:6 and showing covenant faithfulness\footnote{tn}{tn Or “use” (NCV, TEV); NIV, CEV, NLT “misuse”; NRSV “make wrongful use” (so RSV).} to a thousand generations\footnote{tn}{tn Or “vain” (so RSV); NIV, CEV, NLT “insincere purpose” (so RSV).} of those who love me and keep my commandments.\footnote{tn}{tn This is an important qualification to the principle. The word rendered “reject” is often translated “hate” and carries with it the idea of defiantly rejecting and opposing God and his word. Such people are doomed to carry on the sins of their ancestors and bear guilt with them all their days.}

20:7 “You shall not take\footnote{tn}{tn Hebrew for “generations” is not found in v. 5 or 6. The numbers are short for a longer expression, which is understood as part of the description of the children already mentioned).} the name of the LORD your God in vain,\footnote{tn}{tn The Hebrew word for “generations” is not found in v. 5 or 6. The numbers are short for a longer expression, which is understood as part of the description of the children already mentioned).} for the LORD will not forgive\footnote{tn}{tn Or “use” (NCV, TEV); NIV, CEV, NLT “misuse”; NRSV “make wrongful use” (so RSV).} the transgression of fathers by dealing with children to the third and fourth generations\footnote{tn}{tn Or “use” (NCV, TEV); NIV, CEV, NLT “misuse”; NRSV “make wrongful use” (so RSV).} of those who reject me,\footnote{tn}{tn This is an important qualification to the principle. The word rendered “reject” is often translated “hate” and carries with it the idea of defiantly rejecting and opposing God and his word. Such people are doomed to carry on the sins of their ancestors and bear guilt with them all their days.} and showing covenant faithfulness\footnote{tn}{tn Or “vain” (so RSV); NIV, CEV, NLT “insincere purpose” (so RSV).} to a thousand generations\footnote{tn}{tn Or “vain” (so RSV); NIV, CEV, NLT “insincere purpose” (so RSV).} of those who love me and keep my commandments.

20:8 The possession is expressed here by the use of the named (אֲרָא) preposition and the verb “to be”: הָאָרַע (ha’ere’), there will not be to you).\footnote{tn}{tn The Hebrew word for “generations” is not found in v. 5 or 6. The numbers are short for a longer expression, which is understood as part of the description of the children already mentioned).} The negative with the imperfect expresses the emphatic prohibition; it is best reflected in the English “shall not” and is understood as part of the description of the children already mentioned).
hold guiltless a anyone who takes his name in vain.

20:8 “Remember the Sabbath day to set it apart as holy.” 20:9 For six days you may labor and do all your work, 20:10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; on it you shall not do any work, you, your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your cattle, or the resident foreigner who is in your gates. 20:11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

20:12 “Honor your father and your mother, that you may live a long time in the land the Lord your God is giving to you.

20:13 “You shall not murder.

20:14 “You shall not commit adultery.

20:15 “You shall not steal.

20:16 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

20:17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or your neighbor’s male or female servant, or your neighbor’s ox or donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

a Or “leave unpunished.”

b The text uses the infinitive absolute הָשָּׁבָת (zakhor) for the commandment for the Sabbath day, which is the sign of the Sinaitic Covenant. The infinitive absolute functions in place of the emphatic imperative here (see GKC 346 §113.b.b); the absolute stresses the basic verbal idea of the root — remembering. The verb includes the mental activity of recalling and pondering as well as the consequent actions for such remembering.


d The Piel infinitive construct provides the purpose of remembering the Sabbath day — to set it apart, to make it distinct from the other days. Verses 9 and 10 explain in part how this was to be done. To set this day apart as holy taught Israel the difference between the holy and the profane, that there was something higher than daily life. If an Israelite bent down to the ground laboring all week, the Sabbath called his attention to the heavens, to pattern life after the Creator (B. Jacob, Exodus, 569-70).

20:12 “You shall not commit adultery.

20:13 “You shall not murder.

20:14 “You shall not commit adultery.

20:15 “You shall not steal.

20:16 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

20:17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or your neighbor’s male or female servant, or your neighbor’s ox or donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

20:17 “You shall not cover your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or your neighbor’s male or female servant, or your neighbor’s ox or donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

20:12 “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live a long time in the land the Lord your God is giving to you.

20:13 “You shall not murder.

20:14 “You shall not commit adultery.

20:15 “You shall not steal.

20:16 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

20:17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or your neighbor’s male or female servant, or your neighbor’s ox or donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

20:12 “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live a long time in the land the Lord your God is giving to you.

20:13 “You shall not murder.

20:14 “You shall not commit adultery.

20:15 “You shall not steal.

20:16 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

20:17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house.
nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that belongs to your neighbor."  

20:18 All the people were seeing the thundering and the lightning, and heard the sound of the horn, and saw the mountain smoking – and when the people saw it they trembled with fear and kept their distance.  

20:19 They said to Moses, “You speak to us and we will listen, but do not let God speak with us, lest we die.”  

20:20 Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you so that you do not sin.”  

20:21 The people kept their distance, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.


2 tn The participle is used here for durative action in the past time (GKC 359 §116.o).

3 tn The verb “to see” (יָרָא, ra’ah) refers to seeing with all the senses, or perceiving. W. C. Kaiser suggests that this is an example of the figure of speech called zeugma because the verb has two together, one that suits the verb and the other that does not. So, the verb “heard” is inserted here to clarify (“Exodus,” EBC 2:427).

4 tn The verb “saw” is supplied here because it is expected in English (see the previous note on “heard”).

5 tn The preterite with yav (ה’), consecutive here subordinated as a temporal clause to the following clause, which receives the prominence.

6 tn The meaning of מְנַעַת (ma’at) is to “shake, sway to and fro” in fear. Compare Isa 7:2 – “and his heart shook…as the trees in fear. Compare Isa 7:2 – “and his heart shook…as the trees in fear.”

7 tn Heb “and they stood from/at a distance.”

8 sn The negative form לָשֵׂן (‘lashen) is used here with the imperfect tense (see for other examples GKC 483 §152.x). This gives the imperfect the nuance of a final imperfect: that you might not sin. Others: to keep you from sin.

9 sn לְשׁוֹנָה (l’shohn) is the Piel infinitive construct; it forms the purpose of God’s coming with all the accompanying phenomena. The verb can mean “to try, test, prove.” The sense of “prove” fits this context best because the terrifying phenomena were intended to put the fear of God in their hearts so that they would obey. In other words, God was inspiring them to prove and simply test to see if they were smoke to the wind.

10 tn The suffix on the noun is an objective genitive, referring to the fear that the people would have of God (GKC 439 §135.m).

11 tn The negative form לָשֵׂן (‘lashen) is used here with the imperfect tense (see for other examples GKC 483 §152.x). This gives the imperfect the nuance of a final imperfect: that you might not sin. Others: to keep you from sin.

12 tn In Isa 5:14 “and test them” refers to the people. Obedience then becomes a response of devotion and adoration to the Redeemer who set them free. It becomes loyal service, not enslavement to laws. The point could be worded this way: God requires that his covenant people, whom he has redeemed, and to whom he has revealed himself, give their absolute allegiance and obedience to him. This means they will worship and serve him and safeguard the well-being of each other.

13 sn Based on the revelation of the holy sovereign God, this pericope instructs Israel on the form of proper worship of such a God. It focuses on the altar, the centerpiece of worship. The point of the section is this: those who worship this holy God must preserve holiness in the way they worship – they worship where he permits, in the manner he prescribes, and with the blessings he promises. This paragraph is said to open the Book of the Covenant, which specifically rules on matters of life and worship.

14 sn The instructions here call for the altar to be made of natural things, not things manufactured or shaped by man. The altar was either to be made of clumps of earth or natural, unhewn rocks.

15 sn The “burnt offering” is the offering prescribed in Lev 1. Everything of this animal went up in smoke as a sweet aroma to God. It signifies complete surrender by the worshiper who brought the animal, and complete acceptance by God, thereby making atonement. The “peace offering” is legislated in Lev 3 and 7. This was a communal meal offering to celebrate being at peace with God. It was made usually for thanksgiving, for payment of vows, or as a freewill offering.

16 sn Gesenius lists this as one of the few places where the noun in construct seems to be indefinite in spite of the fact that the genitive has the article. He says מִנֶּסֶת (mneset) means “in all the place, sc. of the sanctuary,” and is a dogmatic correction of “in every place” (מִנֶּסֶת, kol-meset). See GKC 412 §127.e.

17 sn The verb is יְצִית (‘tzit, “to remember”), but in the Hiphil especially it can mean more than remember or cause to remember (remind) – it has the sense of praise or honor. B. S. Childs says it has a denominative meaning, “to proclaim” (Exodus [OTL], 447). The point of the verse is that God will give Israel reason for praising and honoring him, and in every place that occurs he will make his presence known by blessing them.

18 tn Heb “them” referring to the stones.

19 sn Heb “of hewn stones.” Gesenius classifies this as an adverbial accusative – “you shall not build them (the stones of the altar) as hewn stones.” The remoter accusative is in apposition to the nearer (GKC 372 §117.kk).
have defiled it. And you must not go up by steps to my altar, so that your nakedness is not exposed."

The Decisions

21:1: "These are the decisions that you will set before them:

Hebrew Servants

21:2: "If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years; and in the seventh year he will go out free from you. If he came in by himself, he will go out by himself; if he had a wife when he came in, then his wife will go out with him. 21:4 If his master gave him a wife and children, the slave will be released from the service of his master. 21:5 But if the servant declares, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' then his master must bring him to the judges. 21:6 Then his master will bring him to the judges, and his master will pierce his ear with an awl, and he shall serve him forever."

21:7: "If a man sells his daughter as a female servant, she will not go out as the male servants do. 21:8 If she does not please her master, who has designated her for himself, then he must let her be redeemed. He has no

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1. The verb is a preterite with וָאוּ (vav) consecutive. It forms the apodosis in a conditional clause: "if you lift up your tool on it...you have defiled it."

2. Heb "uncovered" (so ASV, NAB).

3. The noun clause.

4. The imperfect with the infinitive absolute means that in a case like this the infinitive emphases the importance of the condition on which some consequence depends (GKC 432:43 §113.0).

5. Or as a desiderative imperfect, it would say, "I do not want to go out from you." The imperative absolute means that the declaration is unambiguous, that the servant will clearly affirm that he wants to stay with the master. Gesenius says that in a case like this the infinitive emphasizes the importance of the condition on which some consequence depends (GKC 432:43 §113.0).

6. The word והַי (khofshi) means "free." It is possible that there is some connection between this word and a technical term used in other cultures for a social class of emancipated slaves who were freedman again (see I. Mendelsohn, "New Light on Exodus 21:7 and 22:7 from the Laws of Eshnunna," BASOR 68 (1973): 27-51; 76 (1975): 129-44; and The Hebrew Slave, Comments on the Law Slaves -- Ex. 21:2-11, VT 26 (1975): 129-44).

7. The imperfect with the infinitive absolute means that the verb is a preterite with וָאוּ (vav) consecutive. It forms the apodosis in a conditional clause: "if you lift up your tool on it...you have defiled it."
right to sell her to a foreign nation, because he has dealt deceitfully with her. 21:9 If he designated her for his son, then he will deal with her according to the customary rights of daughters.

21:10 If he takes another wife, he must not diminish the first one’s food, her clothing, or her marital rights. 6 21:11 If he does not provide her with these three things, then she will go out free, without paying money.7

Personal Injuries

21:12 “Whoever strikes someone9 so that he dies40 must surely be put to death.12 21:13 But if he does not do it with premeditation,12 but it happens by accident,13 then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee. 21:14 But if a man willfully attacks his neighbor to kill him cunningly,14 you will take him even from my altar that he may die.

21:15 “Whoever strikes15 his father or his mother must surely be put to death.

21:16 “Whoever kidnaps someone16 and sells him,17 or is caught still holding him,18 must surely be put to death.

21:17 “Whoever treats his father or his mother disgracefully19 must surely be put to death.

21:18 “If men fight, and one strikes his neighbor with a stone or with his fist and he does not die, but must remain in bed,20 21:19 and then21 if he gets up and walks about22 outside on his staff, then the one who struck him is innocent, except he must pay23 for the injured person’s loss of time and see to it that he is fully healed.

21:20 “If a man strikes his male servant or his female servant with a staff so that he or she26

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14 tn The word פָּרַע (parəʿ) is problematic. It could mean with prior intent, which would be connected with the word in Prov 8:5, 12 which means “understanding” (or “prudence” - fully aware of the ways things are). It could be connected also to an Arabic word for “enemy” which would indicate this was done with malice or evil intentions (U. Cassuto, Exodus, 270). The use here seems parallel to the one in Josh 9:4, an instance involving intentionality and clever deception.

18 sn This is the same construction that was used in v. 12, but here there is no mention of the parents’ death. This attack, then, does not lead to their death – if he killed one of them then v. 12 would be the law. S. R. DRIVER says that the severity of the penalty was in accord with the high view of parents (Exodus, 216).

19 sn The implication is that it would be an Israelite citizen who was kidnapped and sold to a foreign tribe or country (like Joseph). There was always a market for slaves. The crime would be in forcibly taking the individual away from his home and religion and putting him into bondage or death.

20 tn Literally “and he is found in his hand” (KJV and ASV both similar), being not yet sold.

21 tn The form is a Piel participle from כָּלַל (qallal), meaning in Qal “be light,” in Piel “treat lightly, curse, revile, declare contemptible, treat shamefully.” (See its use in Lev 13:14; Josh 24:3; Judg 9:26-28; 1 Sam 3:13; 17:43; 2 Sam 16:9-13; Prov 30:10-11; Eccl 7:21-22: 10:20.) It is opposite of “honor” (יָכָד, kaved; Qal “be heavy”; Piel “honor,” as in 20:12) and of “bless.” This verse then could refer to any act contrary to the commandment to honor the parents. B. Jacob (Exodus, 640) cites parallels in Sumerian where people were severely punished for publicly disowning their parents. “21:15. 17 taken together evoke the picture of parents who, physically and verbally, are forcibly turned out of the house (cf. Prov. 19:26)” (C. Houtman, Exodus, 3:148).

22 tn The verb is a Hiphil perfect with vav (ו) consecutive; it follows the sequence of the imperfect before it – “if he gets up and walks about outside.” This is proof of recovery.

23 tn The imperfect tense carries a nuance of obligatory imperfect because this is binding on the one who hit.

24 tn Heb “his”; the referent (the injured person) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

25 tn The word appears to be the infinitive from the verb “to sit” with a meaning of “his sitting down”; some suggest it is from the verb “to rest” with a meaning “cease.” In either case the point in the context must mean compensation is due for the time he was down.

26 tn Heb “so that he”; the words “or she” have been supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.
dies as a result of the blow, he will surely be punished. However, if the injured servant survives one or two days, the owner will not be punished, for he has suffered the loss.

21:22 “If men fight and hit a pregnant woman and her child is born prematurely, but there is no serious injury, he will surely be punished in accordance with what the woman’s husband demands of him, and he will pay what the court decides.

21:23 But if there is serious injury, then you will give a life for a life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

21:26 “If a man strikes the eye of his male servant or his female servant so that he destroys it, he will let the servant go free as compensation for the eye. If he knocks out the tooth of his male servant or his female servant, he will let the servant go free as compensation for the tooth.

Laws about Animals

21:28 “If an ox goes a man or a woman so that either dies, then the ox must surely be stoned and its flesh must not be eaten, but the owner of the ox will be acquitted. But if the ox had the habit of goring, and its owner was warned, and he did not take the necessary precautions, and then it killed a man or a woman, the ox must be stoned and the man must be put to death.

21:30 If a ransom is set for him, then he must pay the redemption for his life according to whatever amount was set for him. If the ox goes a son or a daughter, the owner will be dealt with according to this rule. If the ox goes a male servant or a female servant, the owner must pay thirty shekels of silver, and the ox must be stoned.

21:33 “If a man opens a pit or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls into it, the owner of the pit must repay the loss. He must give money to its owner.

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1 tn Heb “under his hand.”
2 tn Heb “will be avenged” (how is not specified).
3 tn Heb “if he”; the referent (the servant struck and injured in the previous verse) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
4 tn Heb “he”; the referent (the owner of the injured servant) has been supplied in the translation for clarity.
5 tn This last clause is a free paraphrase of the Hebrew, “for he is his money” (so KJV, ASV); NASB “his property.” It seems that if the slave survives a couple of days, it is probable that the master was punishing him and not intending to kill him. If he then dies, there is no penalty other than that the owner loses the slave who is his property - he suffers the loss.
6 tn This line has occasioned a good deal of discussion. It may indicate that the child was killed, as in a miscarriage; or it may mean that there was a premature birth. The latter view is taken here because of the way the whole section is written: (1) “her children come out” reflects a birth and not the loss of children, (2) there is no serious damage, and (3) payment is to be set for any remuneration. The word פלילים (phililem) means “translated “serious damage.” The word was taken in the previous verse as “unimpeachable.” U. Cassuto says the point of the phrase is that the owner was punishing him and not intending to kill him. If he then dies, there is no penalty other than that the owner loses the slave who is his property - he suffers the loss.
7 tn The word נבר⏫ (biflim) means “with arbitraries.” The point then seems to be that the amount of remuneration for damages that was fixed by the husband had to be approved by the courts. S. R. Driver mentions an alternative to this unusual reading presented by Buddle, reading כנבר as “untimely birth” (Exodus, 219). See also E. A. Speiser, “The Stem, PBL in Hebrew,” JBL 82 (1963): 301-6.
8 sn The text now introduces the Lex Talionis with cases that were not likely to have applied to the situation of the pregnant woman. See also E. A. Speiser, “Eye for Eye, Tooth for Tooth,” Indiana Theological Studies 16 (1979): 326-43.
9 tn The form מלחם (shlakahal) is the Piel perfect with the vav (ה) consecutive, rendered “and destroys it.” The verb is a strong one, meaning “to ruin, completely destroy.”
10 tn Heb “him”; the referent (the male or female servant) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
11 sn Interestingly, the verb used here for “he must go” is the same verb throughout the first part of the book for “release” of the Israelites from slavery. Here, an Israelite will have to release the injured slave.
owner, and the dead animal\(^1\) will become his.

21:35 If the ox of one man injures the ox of his neighbor so that it dies, then they will sell the live ox and divide its proceeds,\(^2\) and they will also divide the dead ox.\(^3\) 21:36 Or if it is known that the ox had the habit of goring, and its owner did not take the necessary precautions, he must surely pay\(^4\) ox for ox, and the dead animal will become his.\(^5\)

**Laws about Property**

22:1\(^6\) (21:37)\(^7\) “If a man steals an ox or a sheep and kills it or sells it, he must pay back\(^8\) five head of cattle for the ox, and four sheep for the one sheep.\(^9\)

22:2 “If a thief is caught\(^10\) breaking in\(^11\) and is struck so that he dies, there will be no blood guilt for him.\(^12\) 22:3 If the sun has risen on him, then there is blood guilt for him. A thief\(^13\) must surely make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he will be sold for his theft. 22:4 If the stolen item should in fact be found\(^14\) alive in his possession,\(^15\) whether it be an ox or a donkey or a sheep, he must pay back double.\(^16\)

22:5 “If a man gives his neighbor money or articles\(^17\) for safekeeping,\(^18\) and it is stolen from the man’s house, if the thief is caught,\(^19\) he must repay double. 22:6 If the thief is not caught,\(^20\) then the owner of the house will be brought before the judges\(^21\) to see whether he has laid\(^22\)

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\(^1\) tn Here the term “animal” has been supplied.

\(^2\) tn Literally “its silver” or “silver for it.”

\(^3\) tn Heb “divide the dead.” The noun “ox” has been supplied.

\(^4\) tn The construction now uses the same Piel imperfect (v. 34) but adds the infinitive absolute to it for emphasis.

\(^5\) sn The point of this section (21:28-36) seems to be that one must ensure the safety of others by controlling one’s property and possessions. This section pertained to neglect with animals, but the message would have applied to similar situations. The people of God were to take heed to ensure the well-being of others, and if there was a problem, it had to be made right.

\(^6\) sn The next section of laws concerns property rights. These laws protected property from thieves and oppressors, but also set limits to retribution. The message could be: God’s laws demand that the guilty make restitution for their crimes against property and that the innocent be exonerated.

\(^7\) sn Beginning with 22:1, the verse numbers through 22:31 in the English Bible differ from the verse numbers in the Hebrew text (BHS), with 22:1 ET = 21:37 HT, 22:2 ET = 22:1 HT, etc., through 22:31 ET = 22:30 HT. Thus in the English Bible ch. 22 has 31 verses, while in the Hebrew Bible it has 30 verses, with the one extra verse attached to ch. 21 in the Hebrew Bible.

\(^8\) tn The imperfect tense here has the nuance of obligatory imperf ect – he must pay back.

\(^9\) tn בָּקַר (baqar) and צֹאן (so’ay) are the categories to which the ox and the sheep belonged, so that the criminal had some latitude in paying back animals.

\(^10\) tn Heb “found” (so KJV, ASV, NRSV).

\(^11\) tn The word יַדַע (bannuhkevet) means “digging through” the walls of a house (usually made of mud bricks). The verb is used only a few times and has the meaning of dig in (as into houses) or row hard (as in Jonah 1:13).

\(^12\) tn The text has “there is not to him bloods.” When the word “blood” is put in the plural, it refers to bloodshed, or the price of blood that is shed, i.e., blood guiltiness.

\(^13\) sn This law focuses on what is reasonable defense against burglary. If someone killed a thief who was breaking in during the night, he was not charged because he would not have known it was just a thief, but if he happened during the day, he was guilty of a crime, on the assumption that in daylight the thief posed no threat to the homeowner’s life and could be stopped and made to pay restitution.

\(^14\) tn The words “a thief” have been added for clarification.

\(^15\) sn The use of the word “blood” is put in the plural, it refers to bloodshed, or the price of blood that is shed, i.e., blood guiltiness.

\(^16\) sn The phrase “his livestock” is supplied from the next clause.

\(^17\) sn This is a Hiphil participle of the verb “to burn, kindle” used substantively. This is the one who caused the fire, whether by accident or not.

\(^18\) sn Thorn bushes were used for hedges between fields, but thorn bushes also burned easily, making the fire spread rapidly.

\(^19\) sn Here again the word used is “the gods,” meaning the judges who made the assessments and decisions. In addition to other works, see J. R. Vannoy, “The Use of the Word ha’elohim in Exodus 21:6 and 22:7,” The Law and the Prophets, 225-41.

\(^20\) sn The phrase “to see” has been supplied.

\(^21\) sn The line says “if he has not stretched out his hand,” This could be the oath formula, but the construction here would be unusual, or it could be taken as “whether” (see W. C. Kaiser, Jr., “Exodus,” EBC 2:438). U. Cassuto (Exodus, 286) does not think the wording can possibly fit an oath; nevertheless, an oath would be involved before God (as he takes it instead of “judges”) – if the man swore, his word would be accepted, but if he would not swear, he would be guilty.
his hand on his neighbor’s goods. 22:9 In all cases of illegal possessions,\(^2\) whether for an ox, a donkey, a sheep, a garment, or any kind of lost item, about which someone says “This belongs to me,”\(^3\) the matter of the two of them will come before the judges,\(^4\) and the one whom\(^5\) the judges declare guilty\(^6\) must repay double to his neighbor.

22:10 If a man gives his neighbor a donkey or an ox or a sheep or any beast to keep, and it dies or is hurt\(^6\) or is carried away\(^7\) without anyone seeing it,\(^8\) 22:11 then there will be an oath to the Lord\(^9\) between the two of them, that he has not laid his hand on his neighbor’s goods, and its owner will accept this, and he will not have to pay. 22:12 But if it was stolen\(^10\) from him,\(^11\) he will pay its owner. 22:13 If it is torn in pieces, then he will bring it for evidence,\(^12\) and he will not have to pay for what was torn.

22:14 “If a man borrows an animal\(^13\) from his neighbor, and it is hurt or dies when its owner was not with it, the man who borrowed it\(^14\) will surely pay. 22:15 If its owner was with it, he will not have to pay; if it was hired, what was paid for the hire covers it.\(^15\)

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\(^1\) tn Heb “concerning every kind [thing] of trespass.”
\(^2\) tn The text simply has “this is it” (יִהְיֶה הָקָל, hiʾ kəl).
\(^3\) tn Again, or, “God.”
\(^4\) tn This kind of clause Gesenius calls an independent relative clause – it does not depend on a governing substantive but expresses a substantival idea (GKC 445-46 §138. e).
\(^5\) tn The verb means “to be guilty” in Qal; in Hiphil it would imply, “I will surely respond.”
\(^6\) tn “an oath by Yahweh” (בְּתוּלָה, bÿtulah); it describes a young woman who is not married or a young woman engaged to be married; in any case, she is presumed to be a virgin.
\(^7\) tn Or “pledged” for marriage.
\(^8\) tn The verb means “to be guilty” in Qal; in Hiphil it would imply, “I will surely respond.”
\(^9\) tn The accusative here is the masculine singular pronoun, “God.”
\(^10\) tn Both with this verb “stolen” and in the next clauses with “torn in pieces,” the text uses the infinitive absolute construction with less than normal emphasis; as Gesenius says, in conditional clauses, an infinitive absolute stresses the importance of the condition on which some consequence depends (GKC 342-43 §113.c).
\(^11\) sn The point is that the man should have taken better care of the animal.
\(^12\) tn The word פָּרַע (ʾed) actually means “witness,” but the dead animal that is returned is a silent witness, i.e., evidence. The word is an adverbial accusative.
\(^13\) tn Heb “if a man asks [an animal] from his neighbor” (see also Exod 12:36). The ruling here implies an animal is borrowed, and if harm comes to it when the owner is not with it, the borrower is liable. The word “animal” is supplied in the translation for clarity.
\(^14\) tn Heb “he”; the referent (the man who borrowed the animal) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
\(^15\) tn Literally “it came with/for its hire,” this expression implies that the owner who hired it out and was present was prepared to take the risk, so there would be no compensation.

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**Moral and Ceremonial Laws**

22:16\(^6\) “If a man seduces a virgin\(^17\) who is not engaged\(^18\) and has sexual relations with her, he must surely endow\(^19\) her to be his wife. 22:17 If her father refuses to give her to him, he must pay money for the bride price of virgins.

22:18 “You must not allow a sorceress to live.\(^20\) 22:19 “Whoever has sexual relations\(^21\) with a beast must surely be put to death. 22:20 “Whoever sacrifices to a god other than the Lord\(^22\) alone must be utterly destroyed.\(^23\) 22:21 “You must not wrong\(^24\) a foreigner\(^25\) nor oppress him, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

22:22 “You must not afflict\(^26\) any widow or orphan. 22:23 If you afflict them\(^27\) in any way and they cry to me, I will surely hear\(^28\) their cry, 22:24 and my anger will burn and I will kill you
with the sword, and your wives will be widows and your children will be fatherless.  

22:25 “If you lend money to any of my people who are needy among you, do not be like a moneylender to him; do not charge him interest.

22:26 If you do take the garment of your neighbor in pledge, you must return it to him by the time the sun goes down;  

22:27 for it is his only covering — it is his garment for his body.  

What else can he sleep in?  

And when he cries out to me, I will hear, for I am gracious.

22:28 “You must not blaspheme God or curse the ruler of your people.

22:29 “Do not hold back offerings from your granaries or your vats.  

You must give me the firstborn of your sons.  

22:30 You must also do this for your oxen and for your sheep; seven days they may remain with their mothers, but give them to me on the eighth day.

22:31 “You will be holy to me; you must not eat any meat torn by animals in the field.  

You must throw it to the dogs.

Justice

23:16 “You must not give a false report.  

Do not make common cause with the wicked to be a malicious witness.

23:2 “You must not do anything to turn after the crowd to do evil as to pervert justice.

23:3 and you must not show partiality to a poor man in his lawsuit.

23:4 “If you encounter your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, you must by all means return it to him.

23:5 If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen under its load, you must return it to its owner; do not charge him interest.

23:6 “Do not make common cause with the sword and not with the people to me; you must not eat any meat torn by animals in the field.  

You must throw it to the dogs.

23:7 “You shall not hate your brother in your heart.  

Do not hold back offerings from your granaries or your vats.  

You must give me the firstborn of your sons.  

23:8 You must also do this for your oxen and for your sheep; seven days they may remain with their mothers, but give them to me on the eighth day.

23:9 “You will be holy to me; you must not eat any meat torn by animals in the field.  

You must throw it to the dogs.

23:10 “You must not give a false report.  

Do not make common cause with the wicked to be a malicious witness.

23:11 “You must not do anything to turn after the crowd to do evil as to pervert justice.

23:12 and you must not show partiality to a poor man in his lawsuit.

23:13 “If you encounter your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, you must by all means return it to him.

23:14 If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen under its load, you must return it to its owner; do not charge him interest.

23:15 “Do not make common cause with the sword and not with the people to me; you must not eat any meat torn by animals in the field.  

You must throw it to the dogs.

23:16 “You must not give a false report.  

Do not make common cause with the wicked to be a malicious witness.

23:17 “You must not do anything to turn after the crowd to do evil as to pervert justice.

23:18 and you must not show partiality to a poor man in his lawsuit.

23:19 “If you encounter your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, you must by all means return it to him.

23:20 If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen under its load, you must return it to its owner; do not charge him interest.

23:21 “Do not hate your brother in your heart.  

Do not hold back offerings from your granaries or your vats.  

You must give me the firstborn of your sons.  

23:22 You must also do this for your oxen and for your sheep; seven days they may remain with their mothers, but give them to me on the eighth day.

23:23 “You will be holy to me; you must not eat any meat torn by animals in the field.  

You must throw it to the dogs.

23:24 Justice

23:25 “You must not give a false report.  

Do not make common cause with the wicked to be a malicious witness.

23:26 “You must not do anything to turn after the crowd to do evil as to pervert justice.

23:27 and you must not show partiality to a poor man in his lawsuit.

23:28 “If you encounter your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, you must by all means return it to him.

23:29 If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen under its load, you must return it to its owner; do not charge him interest.

23:30 “Do not make common cause with the sword and not with the people to me; you must not eat any meat torn by animals in the field.  

You must throw it to the dogs.

23:31 “You will be holy to me; you must not eat any meat torn by animals in the field.  

You must throw it to the dogs.

23:32 “You must not give a false report.  

Do not make common cause with the wicked to be a malicious witness.

23:33 “You must not do anything to turn after the crowd to do evil as to pervert justice.

23:34 and you must not show partiality to a poor man in his lawsuit.

23:35 “If you encounter your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, you must by all means return it to him.

23:36 If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen under its load, you must return it to its owner; do not charge him interest.

23:37 Justice

23:38 “You must not give a false report.  

Do not make common cause with the wicked to be a malicious witness.

23:39 “You must not do anything to turn after the crowd to do evil as to pervert justice.

23:40 and you must not show partiality to a poor man in his lawsuit.

23:41 “If you encounter your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, you must by all means return it to him.

23:42 If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen under its load, you must return it to its owner; do not charge him interest.
You must not ignore him, but be sure to help him with it.

23:6 “You must not turn away justice for your poor people in their lawsuits. 23:7 Keep your distance from a false charge – do not kill the innocent and the righteous for I will not justify the wicked.

23:8 “You must not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and subverts the words of the righteous.

23:9 “You must not oppress a foreigner, since you know the life of a foreigner, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

Sabbaths and Feasts

23:10 “For six years you are to sow your land and gather in its produce. 23:11 But in the seventh year you must let it fallow and leave it alone so that the poor of your people may eat, and what they leave any animal in the field may eat; you must do likewise with your vineyard and your olive grove. 23:12 For six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you must cease, in order that your ox and your donkey may rest and that your female servant’s son and any hired help may refresh themselves.

23:13 “Pay attention to do everything I have told you, and do not even mention the names of other gods – do not let them be heard on your lips.

23:14 “Three times in the year you must make a pilgrim feast to me. 23:15 You are to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; seven days you must eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you, at the appointed time of the month of Abib, for at that time you came out of Egypt. No one may appear before me empty-handed.

23:16 “You are also to observe the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors that you have sown in the field, and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year when you have gathered in your harvest out of the field. 23:17 At three times in the year all your males will appear before the Lord.

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2 sn The phrase “to do” is added; in Hebrew word order the line reads “you will cease to forsake him” – refrain from leaving your enemy without help.

3 sn The law is emphatic here as well, using the infinitive absolute and the imperfect of instruction (or possibly obligation). There is also a wordplay here: two words עָזַב (uzav) are used, one meaning “forsake” and the other possibly meaning “arrange” based on Arabic and Ugaritic evidence (see U. Cassuto, Exodus, 297-98).

4 sn See also Ps 16:4, where David affirms his loyalty to God with this expression.

5 sn “Yahweh,” or “resident foreigner.” Such an individual would have traveled out of need and depended on the goodwill of the people around him. The rendering “hired help” assumes the foreigner is mentioned in this context because he is working for an Israelite and will benefit from the Sabbath rest, along with his employer.

6 sn The verb is עָזַב (uzab) (see U. Cassuto, Exodus, 297-98). It is related to the word usually translated “soul” or “life.”

7 sn God will not declare right the one who is in the wrong. Society should also be consistent, but it cannot see the intents and motives, as God can.

8 sn “Open the eyes of your heart.”

9 tn The verb means “to crush.” S. R. Driver notes that in this context this would probably mean with an unfair judgment in the courts (Exodus, 239).

10 sn “Soul, life.” – “you know what it feels like.”

11 sn This section concerns religious duties of the people of God as they worship by giving thanks to God for their blessings. The principles here are: God requires his people to allow the poor to share in their bounty (10-12); God requires his people to provide times of rest and refreshment for those who labor for them (12); God requires allegiance to himself (13); God requires his people to come before him in gratitude and share their bounty (14-17); God requires that his people safeguard proper worship forms (18-19).

12 sn Heb “soul, life.”

13 tn Book 15: “Heb and the seventh year”; an adverbial accusative with a disjunctive vav (י)."
23:18 “You must not offer the blood of my sacrifice with bread containing yeast; the fat of my festal sacrifice must not remain until morning.

23:19 The first of the firstfruits of your soil you must bring to the house of the Lord your God.

“You must not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.”

The Angel of the Presence

23:20 “I am going to send an angel before you to protect you as you journey and to bring you into the place that I have prepared.

23:21 Take heed because of him, and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him."

1 tn The verb is עַלְפָּה (‘alpah), an imperfect tense from the same root as the genitive that qualifies the accusative “blood”: “you will not sacrifice the blood of my sacrifice.”


4 sn This passage has some of the most interesting and perplexing expressions and constructions in the book. It is largely promise, but it is part of the Law and so demands compliance by faith. Its points are: God promises to send his angel to prepare the way before his obedient servants (20-23); God promises blessing for his loyal servants (24-33). So the genitive is explained as “my blood-sacrifice” (a genitive of specification; like “the evil of your doings” in Isa 1:16), then a translation of sacrifice would work (U. Cassuto, Exodus, 304).

5 tn The Hebrew is בהיותו (b’hote), an active participle indicating imminent future, something God is about to do.

6 sn The word is עָלָה (olah, “messenger, angel”). This angel is to be treated with the same reverence and fear as Yahweh, for Yahweh will be speaking in him. U. Cassuto (Exodus, 305-6) says that the words of the first clause do not imply a being distinct from God, for in the ancient world the line of demarcation between the sender and the sent is liable easily to be blurred. He then shows how the “Angel of Yahweh” in Genesis is Yahweh. He concludes that the words here mean “I will guide you.” Christian commentators tend to identify the Angel of Yahweh as the second person of the Trinity (W. C. Kaiser, Jr., “Exodus,” EBC 2:446). However, in addition to being a preincarnate appearance, the word could refer to Yahweh – some manifestation of Yahweh himself.

7 tn Heb “protect you in the way.”

8 tn The form is the Hiphil perfect of the verb קָבַע (‘kevu, “to establish, prepare”).

9 sn This means “the manifestation of my being” is in him (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 247). Driver quotes McNeile as saying, “The ‘angel’ is Jehovah Himself in a temporary descent to vis-

10 sn The infinitive absolute here does not add as great an emphasis as normal, but emphasizes the condition that is being set forth (see GKC 342-43 §113.c).

11 sn Heb “will cut them off” (so KJV, ASV).

12 sn The Hebrew is יֶתְנֶה תַּשָּׁבוֹת (matsotevotem, “their standing stones”); these long stones were erected to represent the abode of the numeri or deity. They were usually set up near the altar or the high place. To destroy these would be to destroy the centers of Canaanite worship in the land.

13 tn Both verbs are joined with their infinitive absolutes to provide the strongest sense to these instructions. The images of the false gods in Canaan were to be completely and utterly destroyed. This could not be said any more strongly.

14 tn The perfect tense, masculine plural, with וַיְהוָה (yeyho) consecutive is in sequence with the preceding: do not bow down to them, but serve Yahweh. It is then the equivalent of an imperfect of instruction or injunction.

15 tn The LXX reads “and I will bless” to make the verb conform with the speaker, Yahweh.

16 sn On this unusual clause B. Jacob says that it is the reversal of the curse in Genesis, because the “bread and water” represent the field work and ground suitability for abundant blessing of provisions (Exodus, 734).

17 tn Or “abort”; Heb “cast.”

18 sn No one will die prematurely; this applies to the individual or the nation. The plan of God to bless was extensive, if only the people would obey.

19 tn The word for “terror” is יָרָע (‘ra‘); the word has the thought of “panic” or “dread.” God would make the nations panic as they heard of the exploits and knew the Israelites were drawing near. U. Cassuto thinks the reference to “hornets” in v. 28 may be a reference to this fear, an unreasoning dread, rather than to another insect invasion (Exodus, 308). Others suggest it is symbolic of an invading army or a country like Egypt or literal insects (see E. Neufeld, “Insects as War”

20 sn Heb “kill.”

21 sn The text has “and I will give all your enemies to you as a back.” The verb of making takes two accusatives, the second being the abderal accusative of product (see GKC 371-72 §117, n. 1).

22 sn Heb “and I will send.”
become desolate and the wild animals\(^4\) multiply against you. 23:30 Little by little\(^2\) I will drive them out before you, until you become fruitful and inherit the land. 23:31 I will set\(^2\) your boundaries from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert to the River,\(^4\) for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you. 23:32 “You must make no covenant with them or with their gods. 23:33 They must not live in your land, lest they make you sin against me, for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare\(^5\) to you.”

The Lord Ratifies the Covenant

24:1\(^6\) But to Moses the Lord\(^7\) said, “Come up\(^8\) to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from a distance.\(^9\) 24:2 Moses alone may come\(^10\) near the Lord, but the others\(^31\) must not come near,\(^12\) nor may the people go up with him.”

24:3 Moses came\(^2\)\(^2\) and told and the people all the Lord’s words\(^2\) and all the decisions. All the people answered together,\(^15\) “We are willing to do\(^16\) all the words that the Lord has said.” 24:4 And Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord. Early in the morning he built\(^3\) an altar at the foot\(^18\) of the mountain and arranged\(^19\) twelve standing stones\(^20\) — according to the twelve tribes of Israel. 24:5 He sent young Israelite men,\(^21\) and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls for peace offerings\(^22\) to the Lord. 24:6 Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and half of the blood he splashed on the altar.\(^23\) 24:7 He took the Book of the Covenant\(^24\)

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\(^4\) tn *Heb* “the beast of the field.”

\(^2\) tn The repetition expresses an exceptional or super-fine quality (see GKC 396 §123.e).

\(^6\) tn The form is a perfect tense with vav consecutive.

\(^8\) tn In the Hebrew Bible “the River” usually refers to the Euphrates (cf. NASB, NCV, NRSV, TEV, CEV, NLT). There is some thought that it refers to a river Nahel el Kebir between Lebanon and Syria. See further W. C. Kaiser, Jr., “Exodus,” *EBC* 2:447; and G. W. Buchanan, *The Consequences of the Covenant* (NovTSup), 91-100.

\(^10\) tn The idea of the “snare” is to lure them to judgment; God is apparently warning about contact with the Canaanites, either in worship or in business. They were very syncretistic, and so it would be dangerous to settle among them.

\(^12\) tn Now the imperfect tense negated is used; here the prohibition would fit (“they will not come near”), or the obligatory (“they must not”) in which the subjects are obliged to act – or not act in this case.

\(^2\) sn The general consensus among commentators is that this refers to Moses’ coming from the mountain after he made the ascent in 20:21. Here he came and told them the laws (written in 20:22-23:33), and of the call to come up to Yahweh.

\(^14\) sn The Decalogue may not be included here because the people had heard those commands themselves earlier.

\(^3\) sn The text simply has “one voice” (יַעֲשֶׂה, *gol ’khadh*); this is an adverbial accusative of manner, telling how the people answered – “in one voice,” or unanimously (see GKC 375 §118.q).

\(^5\) sn The verb is the imperfect tense (יָשָׂר, *ni’aseh*), although the form could be classified as a cohortative. If the cohortative, they would be saying that they are resolved to do what God said. If it is an imperfect, then the desiderative would make the most sense: “we are willing to do.” They are not presuppositionally saying they are going to do all these things.

\(^16\) sn The two preterites quite likely form a verbal hendiadys (the verb “to get up early” is frequently in such constructions). Literally it says, “and he got up early [in the morning] and he built”; this means “early [in the morning] he built.” The first verb becomes the noun/second adverb.

\(^18\) sn “under.”

\(^1\) tn The verb “arranged” is not in the Hebrew text but has been supplied to clarify exactly what Moses did with the twelve stones.

\(^20\) tn The number is found in the singular when the number is plural – “twelve standing-stone.” See GKC 433 §3.34.f. The “standing-stones” could be a small piece about a foot high, or a huge column high enough to commemorate treaties (Gen 32), or visions (Gen 28) or boundaries, or graves. Here it will function with the altar as a place of worship.

\(^21\) tn “Under.”

\(^23\) sn The verb “arranged” is not in the Hebrew text but has been supplied to clarify exactly what Moses did with the twelve stones.

\(^24\) sn The construct has “young men of the Israelites,” and so “Israelite” is a genitive that describes them.

\(^2\) tn The verbs and their respective accusatives are cognates. First, they offered up burnt offerings (see Lev 1), which is לָכַּהֲל *vayyilah olot*; then they sacrificed young bulls as peace sacrifices (Lev 3), which is in Hebrew נַעֲשֶׂה *vayyaseh* - ac.

\(^3\) sn The people and Yahweh through this will be united by blood; for half was spattered on the altar and the other half spattered on/toward the people (v. 8).

\(^4\) sn The form is a perfect tense with vav consecutive; it and the preceding perfect tense follow the imperative, and so have either a force of instruction, or, as taken here, are the equivalent of an imperfect tense (of permission).
and read it aloud⁴ to the people, and they said, “We are willing to do and obey”⁵ all that the Lord has spoken.” 24:8 So Moses took the blood and splashed it on⁶ the people and said, “This is the blood of the covenant⁷ that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.” 24:9 Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up,⁵ 24:10 and they saw⁶ the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement⁶ made of sapphire, clear like the sky itself.⁹ 24:11 But he did not lay a hand⁰ on the leaders of the Israelites, so they saw God,¹¹ and they ate and they drank.¹² 24:12¹³ The Lord said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandments that I have written, so that you may teach them.”¹⁵ 24:13 So Moses set out with¹⁴ Joshua his attendant, and Moses went up the mountain of God. 24:14 He told the elders, “Wait for us in this place until we return to you. Here are Aaron and Hur with you. Whoever has any matters of dispute can approach them.” 24:15 Moses went up the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. 24:16 The glory of the Lord resided on Mount Sinai, and be confirmed by a covenant of blood. ¹ The verb is הָאָדָם (‘adam); it can mean “to see, perceive” or “to see a vision” as the prophets did. The LXX safeguarded this by saying, “appeared in the place of God.” B. Jacob says they beheld – prophetically, religiously (Exodus, 474) – but the meaning of the word is unclear. The fact that God did not lay a hand on them – to kill them – shows that they saw something that they never expected to see and live. Some Christian interpreters have taken this to refer to a glorious appearance of the preincarnate Christ, the second person of the Trinity. They saw the brilliance of this manifestation – but not the detail. Later, Moses will still ask to see God’s glory – the real presence behind the pharos – and he will be allowed to see it, though not the full detail. Moses will then glorify God by saying, “appeared in the place of God.” B. Jacob says they beheld “the body of heaven” for “clearness.” The LXX renders it so for “clearness.” The Lord, the Shepherd, then appeared to him, not to destroy them. ³ This is the covenant meal, the peace offering, that they are eating there on the mountain. To eat from the sacriﬁce meant that they were at peace with God, in covenant with him. Likewise, in the new covenant believers draw near to God on the basis of sacrifice, and eat of the sacrifice because they are at peace with him, and in Christ they see the face of the one who destroyed the old covenant, Hebr. הַגּוֹרֶשׁ. ⁴ This last part is recorded in which Moses ascends to Yahweh to receive the tablets of stone. As Moses disappears into the clouds, the people are given a vision of the glory of Yahweh. ⁵ These are the stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments would be written. This is the ﬁrst time they are mentioned. The commandments were apparently proclaimed by God ﬁrst and then proclaimed to the people by Moses. Now that they have been formally agreed on and ratified, they will be written by God on stone for a perpetual covenant. ⁶ The imperfect tense here has the nuance of potential rather than actuality. It serves as a purpose clause, “to teach them,” meaning “I am giving you this Law and these commandments in order that you may teach them.” This duty to teach the Law will be passed especially to parents (Deut 6:6-9, 20-25) and to the tribe of Levi as a whole (Deut 33:9-10; Mal 2:1-9). ⁷ S. R. Driver wishes to safeguard the traditional idea that God could not be seen by reading “they saw the glory of God.” He notes that the perfect tense, הָיָה (‘yah), is explained by the imperfect. Gesenius has “to wit”; see GKC 484-85 §154.a, n. 1(b). ⁸ The last word of the verse is פִּיךַא (‘him); the Hiphil inﬁnitive construct of הָיָה (‘yah). It serves as a purpose clause, “to teach them,” meaning “I am giving you this Law and these commandments in order that you may teach them.” This duty to teach the Law will be passed especially to parents (Deut 6:6-9, 20-25) and to the tribe of Levi as a whole (Deut 33:9-10; Mal 2:1-9). ⁹ S. R. Driver adds, “God appeared” and he has made “meaning started to go.” ¹⁰ This word אַלְכָּה (‘alakh, “and dwelt, abode”). The Lord, the Shepherd, then appeared to him, not to destroy them. ¹¹ Attention to the preparation for Moses’ departure contributes to the weight of the guilt of the faithless Israelites (chap. 32) and of Aaron, to whom Moses had delegated an important duty. ¹² The Hebrew term בַּכִּים (bakkim) is translated “and dwelt, abode.” From this is derived the epithet “the Shekinah Glory,” the dwelling or abiding glory. The “glory of Yahweh” was a display visible at a distance, clearly in view of the Israelites. To them it was like a consuming fire in the midst of the cloud that cov¬
the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day he called to Moses from within the cloud. 24:17 Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in plain view of the people. 24:18 Moses went into the cloud when he went up the mountain, and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

The Materials for the Sanctuary

25:1 The Lord spoke to Moses: 25:2 “Tell the Israelites to take an offering for me; from every person motivated by a willing *heart* you are to receive my offering. 25:3 This is the offering you are to accept from them: gold, silver, bronze, 25:4 blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, goat’s hair, ram skins dyed red, fine leather, acacia wood, oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for fragrant incense, onyx stones, and other gems to be set in the ephod and in the breastpiece. 25:8 Let S. R. Driver (Exodus, 263) corrects the idea of “heave-offering” by relating the root to the Hiphil form of that root, herim, “to lift” or “take off.” He suggests the noun means “what is taken off” from a larger mass and so designated for sacred purposes. The LXX has “something taken off.”

8 tn The verb הָרַע (hay’ra‘) is related to the word for the “freewill offering” (נְדָבָה, n’davah). The verb is used of volunteering for military campaigns (Judg 5:2, 9) and the willingness offerings for both the first and second temples (see 1 Chr 29:5, 6, 9, 14, 17).

9 tn The pronoun is plural.

10 tn The pronoun is plural.

11 sn The blue refers to dye made from shellfish. It has a dark blue or purple-blue, almost violet color. No significance for the color is attached.

12 sn This color is made from the eggs and bodies of the worm coccus ilicus, which is found with the holly plant – so Heb “worm of brilliance.” The powder made from the dried maggots produces a bright red-yellow color (W. C. Kaiser, Jr., “Exodus,” EBC, 2:452). B. Jacob takes the view that these are not simply colors that are being introduced here, but fabrics dyed with these colors (Exodus, 765). At any rate, the sequence would then be metals, fabrics, and leathers (v. 5).

13 sn This is generally viewed as a fine Egyptian linen that had many more delicate strands than ordinary linen.

14 sn Goat’s hair was spun into yarn (35:26) and used to make the material for the first tent over the dwelling. It is ideal for tenting, since it is loosely woven and allows breezes to pass through, but with rain the fibers expand and prevent water from seeping through.

15 sn This means “fine goatskin leather.” Another suggestion connects the Egyptian word for “leather” (エルח, or ekh), literally “made red,” to the tanning or dyeing process (e.g., leather is tanned or dyed red). N. M. Sarna, in his note on the previous verse, suggests the color was probably dark blue or purple-blue, almost violet color. No significance for the color is attached.

16 sn Goat’s hair was spun into yarn (35:26) and used to make the material for the first tent over the dwelling. It is ideal for tenting, since it is loosely woven and allows breezes to pass through, but with rain the fibers expand and prevent water from seeping through.

17 sn The meaning of the word אָוָה (‘avah) is debated. The Arabic ُأُوُسُوعُ is a dolphin, and so some think a sea animal is meant – something like a dolphin or porpoise (cf. NASB; ASV “describing”). The Qal imperfect or jussive with vav, after the imperative “speak,” this verb indicates the purpose or result: “speak...that they may take” and continues with the force of a command.

18 sn The word of the ephod, תְּחָשִׁים (t’khashim) is perhaps better understood as a contribution because it was a freewill offering. There is some question about the etymology of the word. The traditional meaning of “heave-offering” derives from the idea of “elevation,” a root meaning “to be high” lying behind the word. B. Jacob says it is something sorted out of a mass of material and designated for a higher purpose (Exodus, 765).
them make for me a sanctuary, so that I may live among them. **25:9** According to all that I am showing you — the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings — you must make it exactly so.**

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**The Ark of the Covenant**

**25:10** **They are to make an ark of acacia wood — its length is to be three feet nine inches, its width two feet three inches, and its height two feet three inches.** **9** **25:11** You are to overlay it with pure gold — both inside and outside you must overlay it, **11** and you are to make a surrounding border of gold over it. **25:12** You are to cast four gold rings for it and put them on its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other side. **25:13** You are to make poles of acacia wood, overlay them with gold, **25:14** and put the poles into the rings at the sides of the ark in order to carry the ark with them. **25:15** The poles must remain in the rings of the ark; they must not be removed from it. **25:16** You are to put into the ark the testimony that I will give to you.

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**Notes:**

1. The verb is a perfect with וְשָׁכַנְתִּי (ן), a perfect with וְשָׁכַנְתִּי (ן), a perfect with וְשָׁכַנְתִּי (ן), a perfect with וְשָׁכַנְתִּי (ן), a perfect with וְשָׁכַנְתִּי (ן), a perfect with וְשָׁכַנְתִּי (ן).
2. The word here is הַמִּשְׁכָּן (midqash), "a sanctuary" or "holy place"; cf. NLT "sacred residence." The purpose of building it is to enable Yahweh to reside in it (踽שַׁנָּה, יָשָׁק עָנָן) in their midst. U. Cassuto reminds the reader that God did not need a place to dwell, but the Israelites needed a dwelling place for him, so that they would look to it and be reminded that he was in their midst (Exodus, 327).
3. The pronoun is singular.
4. The expression "the pattern of the tabernacle" (בְּחֵיקָתָה, תַּבְנִית Hammikran) has been the source of much inquiry. The word rendered "pattern" is related to the verb "to build"; it suggests a model. S. R. Driver notes that in ancient literature there is the account of Gudea receiving in a dream a complete model of a temple he was to erect (Exodus, 267). In this passage Moses is being shown something on the mountain that should be the pattern of the earthly sanctuary. The most plausible explanation of what he was shown comes from a correlation with comments in the Letter to the Hebrews and the book of Revelation, which describe the heavenly sanctuary as the true sanctuary, and the earthly as the copy or shadow. One could say that Moses was allowed to see what John saw on the island of Patmos, a vision of the heavenly sanctuary. That still might not explain what it was, but it would mean he saw a revelation of the true tent, and that by implication that he learned of the spiritual and eternal significance of all of it. The fact that Israel's sanctuary resembled those of other cultures does not nullify this act of revelation; rather, it raises the question of where the other nations got their ideas if it was not made known early in human history. One can conclude that in the beginning there was much more revealed to the parents in the garden than Scripture tells about (Cain and Abel did know how to make sacrifices before Leviticus legislated it). Likewise, one cannot but guess at the influence of the fallen Satan and his angels in the world of pagan religion. Whatever the source, at Sinai God shows the influence of the fallen Satan and his angels in the world of paganism as early as the Babylonian period. It is likely, then, that the sanctuary was built after God revealed it to Moses. The material that the Israelites used in constructing their sanctuary was likely the material that was available in their environment. The fact that God's sanctuary resembled those of other cultures does not nullify this act of revelation because it raises the question of where the other nations got their ideas if it was not made known early in human history. One can conclude that in the beginning there was much more revealed to the parents in the garden than Scripture tells about (Cain and Abel did know how to make sacrifices before Leviticus legislated it). Likewise, one cannot but guess at the influence of the fallen Satan and his angels in the world of pagan religion. Whatever the source, at Sinai God shows the influence of the fallen Satan and his angels in the world of paganism as early as the Babylonian period. It is likely, then, that the sanctuary was built after God revealed it to Moses. The material that the Israelites used in constructing their sanctuary was likely the material that was available in their environment.

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5. The pronoun is plural.

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7. This section begins with the ark, the most sacred and important object of Israel's worship. Verses 10-15 provide the instructions for it, v. 16 has the placement of the Law in it, vv. 17-21 cover the mercy lid, and v. 22 the meeting above it. The point of this item in the tabernacle is to underscore the focus: the covenant people must always have God's holy standard before them as they draw near to worship. A study of this would focus on God's nature (he is a God of order, precision, and perfection), on the usefulness of this item for worship, and on the typology intended.

8. The word "ark" has long been used by English translations to render בְּנֵי עַר (aron), the word used for the wooden "box," or "chest," made by Noah in which to escape the flood and by the Israelites to furnish the tabernacle.

9. The size is two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. The size in feet and inches is estimated on the assumption that the cubit is 18 inches (see S. R. Driver, *Exodus*, 267).

10. The verbs throughout here are perfect tenses with the וְשָׁכַנְתִּי (ן) constrictives. They are equal to the imperfect tense of instruction and/or injunction.

11. Here the verb is an imperfect tense; for the perfect sequence to work the verb would have to be at the front of the clause.

12. The word "תָּבּוּר (zer) is used only in Exodus and seems to describe something on the order of a crown molding, an ornamental border running at the top of the chest on all four sides. There is no indication of its appearance or function.

13. The "testimony" is the Decalogue (Exod 24:12; 31:18; Deut 4:13; 9:9; 1 Kgs 8:9); the word identifies it as the witness or affirmation of God's commandments belonging to his covenant with Israel. It expressed God's will and man's duty. In other cultures important documents were put at the feet of the gods in the temples.
25:17 “You are to make an atonement lid of pure gold; its length is to be three feet nine inches, and its width is to be two feet three inches. 25:18 You are to make two cherubim of gold; you are to make them of hammered metal on the two ends of the atonement lid. 25:19 Make four cherub on one end and one cherub on the other end; from the atonement lid you are to make the cherubim on the two ends. 25:20 The cherubim are to be spreading their wings upward, overshadowing the atonement lid with their wings, and the cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the atonement lid. 25:21 You are to put the atonement lid on top of the ark, and in the ark you are to put the testimony I am giving you. 25:22 I will meet with you there.

The Table for the Bread of the Presence

25:23-24 You are to make a table of acacia wood; its length is to be three feet, its width one foot six inches, and its height two feet three inches. 25:24 You are to overlay it with four rings of gold, and you are to make a surrounding border of gold for it. 25:25 You are to make a surrounding frame for it about three inches broad, and you are to make a surrounding border of gold for its frame. 25:26 You are to make four rings of gold for it and attach the rings at the four corners where its four legs are. 25:27 The rings are to be close to the frame to provide places for the poles to carry the table. 25:28 You are to make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold, so that the table may be carried with poles.
You are to make its plates, its pitchers, and its bowls, to be used in pouring out offerings; you are to make them of pure gold.

You are to set the Bread of the Presence on the table before me continually.

The Lampstand

You are to make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand is to be made of hammered metal; its base and its shaft, its cups, its buds, and its blossoms are to be from the same piece. Six branches are to extend from the sides of the lampstand; three branches of the lampstand from one side of it and three branches of the lampstand from the other side of it.

Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms are to be on one branch, and three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms are to be on the next branch, and the same for the six branches extending from the lampstand. On the lampstand there are to be four cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms, with a bud under the first two branches from it, and a bud under the next two branches from it, and a bud under the third two branches from it, according to the six branches that extend from the lampstand. Their buds and their branches will be one piece, all of it one hammered piece of pure gold.

You are to make its seven lamps, and then set its lamps up on it, so that it will give light to the area in front of it. Its trimmers and its trays are to be of pure gold. About seventy-five pounds of pure gold is to be used for it, and for all these utensils. Now be sure to make them according to the pattern you were shown on the mountain.

The text uses two imperatives: “see and make.” This is a Hiphil perfect with vav consecutive, showing here the intended result: “so that [the table] might be lifted up [by them].” The word “table” is introduced by what looks like the sign of the accusative, but here it serves to introduce or emphasize the nominative (see GKC 365 §117.f).

Or “deep gold dish.” The four nouns in this list are items associated with the table and its use.

The expression “pouring out offerings” represents Hebrew נזף (nashaph; see §6:6). This literally says, “which it may be poured out with them,” or “with which [libation]s may be poured out.”

The name basically means that the bread is to be set out in the presence of Yahweh. The custom of presenting bread on a table as a thank offering is common in other cultures as well. The bread here would be placed on the table as a symbol of the divine provision for the twelve tribes—continually, because they were to express their thanksgiving continually. Priests could eat the bread after certain times. Fresh bread would be put there regularly.

Clearly the point here is to provide light in the tent for access to God. He provided for his worshipers a light for the way to God, but he also wanted them to provide oil for the lamp to ensure that the light would not go out. Verses 31-36 describe the piece. It was essentially one central shaft, with three branches on either side turned out and upward. The stem and the branches were ornamented every so often with gold that was formed into the shape of the calyx and corolla of the almond flower. On top of the central shaft and the six branches were the lamps.

The word is נֵרוֹת (nerot) – here in construct to a following genitive of material. The main piece was one lampstand, but there were seven lamps on the shaft and its branches. See E. Goodenough, “The Menorah among the Jews of the Roman World,” HUCA 23 (1950/51): 449-92.

U. Cassuto (Exodus, 342-44) says that the description “the cups, knobs and flowers” is explained in vv. 32-36 as three decorations in the form of a cup, shaped like an almond blossom, to be made on one branch. Every cup will have two parts, (a) a knob, that is, the receptacle at the base of the blossom, and (b) a flower, which is called the corolla, so that each lamp rests on top of a flower.

The text uses “ones” again; “the one...the one” means “the one...and the next” in the distributive sense.

The message of this section surely concerns access to God. To expound this correctly, though, since it is an instructional section for building the lampstand, the message would be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God. The breakdown for exposition could be: God requires that his people ensure that light will guide the way of access to God.
The Tabernacle

26:1 “The tabernacle itself you are to make with ten curtains of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet; you are to make them with cherubim that are the work of an artistic designer. 26:2 The length of each curtain is to be forty-two feet, and the width of each curtain is to be six feet—the same size for each of the curtains. 26:3 Five curtains are to be joined, one to another, and the other five curtains are to be joined, one to another. 26:4 You are to make loops of blue material along the edge of the end curtain in one set, and in the same way you are to make loops in the outer edge of the end curtain in the second set. 26:5 You are to make fifty loops on the one curtain, and you are to make fifty loops on the end curtain which is on the second set, so that the loops are opposite one to another. 26:6 You are to make fifty gold clasps and join the curtains together with the clasps, so that the tabernacle is a unit.

26:7 “You are to make curtains of goats’ hair for a tent over the tabernacle; twelve curtains. 26:8 The length of each curtain is to be forty-five feet, and the width of each curtain is to be six feet—the same size for the twelve curtains. 26:9 You are to join five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves. You are to double over the sixth curtain at the front of the tent. 26:10 You are to make fifty loops along the edge of the end curtain in one set and fifty loops along the edge of the curtain that joins the second set. 26:11 You are to make fifty bronze clasps and put the clasps into the loops and join the tent together so that it is a unit. 26:12 Now the part that remains of the curtains of the tent—the half curtain that remains will hang over at the back of the tabernacle. 26:13 The foot and a half on the one side and the foot and a half on the other side of what remains in the length of the curtains of the tent will hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on one side and the other side, to cover it.

26:14 “You are to make a covering for the tent out of ram skins dyed red and over that a covering of fine leather.

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1 sn This chapter is given over to the details of the structure itself, the curtains, coverings, boards and walls and veil. The passage can be studied on one level for its function both practically and symbolically for Israel’s worship. On another level it can be studied for its typology, for the tabernacle and many of its parts speak of Christ. For this one should see the commentaries.

2 tn The word order in Hebrew thrusts the direct object to the front for particular emphasis. After the first couple of pieces of furniture are treated (chap. 25), attention turns to the curtains.

3 tn This is for the adverbial accusative explaining how the dwelling place is to be made.

4 sn S. R. Driver suggests that the curtains were made with threads dyed with these colors (Exodus, 280). Perhaps the colored threads were used for embroidering the cherubim in the curtains.

5 tn The construction is difficult in this line because of the word order. “Cherubim” is an adverbial accusative explaining how they were to make the curtains. And תֵיתָה יָשָׁם (ma’aseh yashmon) means literally “work of a designer”; it is in opposition to “cherubim.” The Hebrew participle means “designer” or “deviser” so that one could render this “of artistic design in weaving” (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 280-81). B. Jacob says that it refers to “artistic weavers” (Exodus, 789).

6 tn Heb “one” (so KJV).

7 tn Heb “twenty-eight cubits” long and “four cubits” wide.

8 tn This is the active participle, not the passive. It would normally be rendered “joining together.” The Bible uses the active voice because it is the result of the sewing in mind, namely, that every curtain accompanies another (U. Cassuto, Exodus, 348).

9 tn Heb “a woman to her sister,” this form of using nouns to express “one to another” is selected because “curtains” is a feminine noun (see GKC 448 §139.e).

10 tn The phrase “the other” has been supplied.

11 tn Here “loops” has been supplied.

12 tn Heb “a woman to her sister.”

13 tn Heb “one”; KJV “it shall be one tabernacle”; NRSV “that the tabernacle may be one whole”; NLT “a single unit.”

14 sn This chapter will show that there were two sets of curtains and two sets of coverings that went over the wood building to make the tabernacle or dwelling place. The curtains of fine linen described above could be seen only by the priests from inside. Above that was the curtain of goats’ hair. Then over that were the coverings, an inner covering of rams’ skins dyed red and an outer covering of hides of fine leather. The movement is from the inside to the outside because it is God’s dwelling place; the approach of the worshiper would be the opposite. The pure linen represented the righteousness of God, guarded by the embroidered cherubim; the curtain of goats’ hair was a reminder of sin through the daily sin offering of a goat; the covering of rams’ skins dyed red was a reminder of the sacrifice and the priestly ministry set apart by blood, and the outer covering marked the separation between God and the world. These are the interpretations set forth by Kaiser; others vary, but not greatly (see W. C. Kaiser, Jr., “Exodus,” EBC 2:459).

15 sn This curtain will serve “for a tent over the tabernacle,” as a dwelling place.

16 tn Heb “you will make them”

17 sn Heb “one”

18 sn The text seems to describe this part as being in front of the tabernacle, hanging down to form a valence at the entrance (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 284).

19 sn Heb “one”

20 sn U. Cassuto (Exodus, 353) cites b. Shabbat 98b which says, “What did the tabernacle resemble? A woman walking on the street with her train trailing behind her.” In the expression “the half curtain that remains,” the verb agrees in gender with the genitive near it.

21 ln Literally “cubit.”

22 sn U. Cassuto states the following: “To the north and to the south, since the tent curtains were thirty cubits long, there were ten cubits left over on each side; these covered the nine cubits of the curtains of the tabernacle and also the bottom cubit of the boards, which the tabernacle curtains did not suffice to cover. It is to this that v. 13 refers” (Exodus, 353).

23 sn Two outer coverings made of stronger materials will be put over the tent and the curtain, the two inner layers.

24 tn See the note on this phrase in Exod 25:5.
“You are to make the frames for the tabernacle out of acacia wood as uprights. Each frame is to be fifteen feet long, and each frame is to be two feet three inches wide, with two projections per frame parallel one to another. You are to make all the frames of the tabernacle in this way. So you are to make the frames for the tabernacle: twenty frames for the south side. And for the back of the tabernacle on the west you will make six frames. You are to make two frames for the corners of the tabernacle on the back. At the two corners they must be doubled at the lower end and finished together at the top in one ring. So it will be for both. So there are to be eight frames and their silver bases, sixteen bases, two bases under the first frame, and two bases under the next frame.

“You are to make bars of acacia wood, five for the frames on one side of the tabernacle, and five for the frames on the second side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames on the back of the tabernacle on the west. The middle bar in the center of the frames will reach from end to end. You are to overlay the frames with gold and make their rings of gold to provide places for the bars, and you are to overlay the bars with gold.

“You are to make a special curtain of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twined linen; it is to be made with cherubim, the work of an artistic designer. You are to hang it on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold, set in four silver bases. You are to hang this curtain under the clasps and bring the ark of the testimony in there behind the curtain. The curtain will make a division for you between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. You are to put the atonement lid on the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place. You are to put the table outside the curtain and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle, opposite the table, and you are to place the table on the north side.

“You are to make a hanging for the entrance of the tent of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twined linen, the work of an embroiderer. You are to make the hanging five posts of acacia wood and overlay them with gold, and their hooks will be gold, and you are to cast five bronze bases for them.

The plural participle “standing” refers to how these bars were set in place. These bars served as reinforcements to hold the upright frames together. The Hebrew term for these bars is also used of crossbars on gates (Judg 16:3; Neh 3:3).
The Altar
27:1 “You are to make the altar of acacia wood, seven feet six inches long, and seven feet six inches wide; the altar is to be square, and its height is to be four feet six inches. 27:2 You are to make its four horns on its four corners; its horns will be part of it, and you are to overlay it with bronze. 27:3 You are to make its pots for the ashes, its shovels, its tossing bowls, its meat hooks, and its fire pans – you are to make all its utensils of bronze. 27:4 You are to make a grating for it, a network of bronze, and you are to make on the network four bronze rings on its four corners. 27:5 You are to put it under the ledge of the altar below, so that the network will come halfway up the altar. 27:6 You are to make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and you are to overlay them with bronze. 27:7 The poles are to be put into the rings so that the poles will be on two sides of the altar when carrying it. 27:8 You are to make the altar hollow, out of boards. Just as it was shown on the mountain, so they must make it.

The Courtyard
27:9 “You are to make the courtyard of the tabernacle. For the south side there are to be hangings for the courtyard of fine twisted wood, seven feet six inches wide; the altar is to be square, and its height is to be four feet six inches. 27:2 You are to make its four horns on its four corners; its horns will be part of it, and you are to overlay it with bronze. 27:3 You are to make its pots for the ashes, its shovels, its tossing bowls, its meat hooks, and its fire pans – you are to make all its utensils of bronze. 27:4 You are to make a grating for it, a network of bronze, and you are to make on the network four bronze rings on its four corners. 27:5 You are to put it under the ledge of the altar below, so that the network will come halfway up the altar. 27:6 You are to make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and you are to overlay them with bronze. 27:7 The poles are to be put into the rings so that the poles will be on two sides of the altar when carrying it. 27:8 You are to make the altar hollow, out of boards. Just as it was shown on the mountain, so they must make it.

The text has “to all its vessels.” This is the lamed (קְבָלָן) of inclusion according to Gesenius, meaning “all its utensils” (GKC 458 §143.e).

The noun מיקחב (mikhbar) means “a grating”; it is related to the word that means a “sieve.” This formed a vertical support for the ledge, resting on the ground and supporting its outer edge (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 292).

The verb is the verb “to be,” here the perfect tense with yiqtol (yiqtol) conjugation. It is “and it will be” or “that it may be,” or “here that it may come” halfway up.

The verb is a Hophal perfect with vav consecutive: וַאֲקָרֶה (’akre’), “and it will be brought”). The particle הַאֲרֵה (’eret) here introduces the subject of the passive verb (see a similar use in 21:28, “and its flesh will not be eaten”).

The construction is the infinitive construct with bet (ב) preposition: “in carrying it.” Here the meaning must be that the poles are not left in the rings, but only put into the rings when they carried it.

The verb is used impersonally; it reads “just as he showed you.” This form then can be made a passive in the translation.

The verb “thus they will make.” Here too it could be given a passive translation since the subject is not expressed. But “they” would normally refer to the people who will be making this and so can be retained in the translation.

Nothing is said about the top of the altar. Some commentators suggest, in view of the previous instruction for making an altar out of earth and stone, that when this one was to be used it would be filled up with dirt clods and the animal burnt on the top of that. If the animal was burnt inside the altar, the wood would not burn. A number of recent scholars think this was simply an imagined plan to make a portable altar after the pattern of Solomon’s – but that is an unsatisfactory suggestion. This construction must simply represent a portable frame for the altar in the courtyard, an improvement over the field altar. The purpose and function of the altar are not in question. Here worshipers would make their sacrifices to God in order to find forgiveness and atonement, and in order to celebrate in worship with him. No one could worship God apart from this; no one could approach God apart from this. So too the truths that this altar communicated form the basis and center of all Christian worship. One could word an application lesson this way: Believers must ensure that the foundation and center of their worship is the altar, i.e., the sacrificial atonement.
linen, one hundred fifty feet long for one side, with twenty posts and their twenty bronze bases, with the hooks of the posts and their bands of silver. Likewise for its length on the north side, there are to be hangings for one hundred fifty feet, with twenty posts and their twenty bronze bases, with silver hooks and bands on the posts. The width of the court on the west side is to be seventy-five feet with hangings, with their ten posts and their ten bases. The width of the court on the east side, toward the sunrise, is to be seventy-five feet. The hangings on one side of the gate are to be twenty-two and a half feet long, with their three posts and their three bases. On the second side there are to be hangings twenty-two and a half feet long, with their three posts and their three bases. For the gate of the courtyard there is to be a curtain of thirty feet, of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twined linen, the work of an embroiderer, with four posts and their four bases. All the posts around the courtyard are to have silver bands; and the height of the fine twisted linen hangings is seven and a half feet, with their bronze bases. All the utensils of the tabernacle used in all its service, all its tent pegs, and all the tent pegs of the courtyard are to be made of bronze.

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1 sn The entire courtyard of 150 feet by 75 feet was to be enclosed by a curtain wall hung up with posts in bases. All these hangings were kept in place by a cord and tent pegs.
2 tn Heb “and.”
3 tn Heb “and thus.”
4 tn Here the phrase “there will be” has been supplied.
5 sn These bands have been thought by some to refer to the bands of their foreheads.
6 tn The word literally means “shoulder.” The next words, “of the gate,” have been supplied here and in v. 15. The east end would contain the courtyard’s entrance with a wall of curtains on each side of the entrance (see v. 16).
7 tn Here “will be” has been supplied.
8 tn Heb “shoulder.”
9 tn Here the phrase “there will be” has been supplied.
10 sn In the text uses the passive participle here: they are to be “filleted with silver” or “bound round” with silver.
11 tn Here the phrase “are to be” has been supplied.
12 tn Heb “a hundred cubits.”
13 tn Heb “fifty.” The text has “and the width fifty [cubits] with fifty.” This means that it is fifty cubits wide on the western end and fifty cubits wide on the eastern end.
14 tn Here “hangings” has been supplied.
15 tn Here the phrase “is to be” has been supplied.
16 sn For use of the preposition lamed (ל) to show inclusion (all belonging to) see GKC 458 §143.e.
17 tn Here “used” has been supplied.
18 sn The tabernacle is an important aspect of OT theology. The writer’s pattern so far has been: ark, table, lamp, and showbread (all belonging to) see GKC 458 §143.e.

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Offering the Oil

27:20 “You are to command the Israelites that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, so that the lamps will burn regularly.”
27:21 In the tent of meeting outside the curtain that is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons are to arrange it from evening to morning before the LORD. This is to be a lasting ordinance among the Israelites for generations to come.

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The Clothing of the Priests

28:1-27 “And you, bring near to you your brother Aaron and his sons with him from among the Israelites, so that they may minister as my priests – Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, appeared on the holy days, and they heard from God. It was sacred because God met them there; they left the ‘world’ (figuratively speaking) and came into the very presence of God...
Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron’s sons. 28:2 You must make holy garments1 for your brother Aaron, for glory and for beauty.2 28:3 You9 are to speak to all who are specially skilled,4 whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom,5 so that they may make6 Aaron’s garments to set him apart7 to minister as my priest. 28:4 Now these are the garments that they are to make: a breast-piece,8 an ephod,9 a robe, a fitted10 tunic, a tur-

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1 sn The genitive “holiness” is the attribute for “garments” – “garments of holiness.” The point of the word “holy” is that these garments would be distinctive from ordinary garments, for they set Aaron apart to sanctuary service and ministry.

2 tn The expression is תָּשְׁבֵּץ (ʾšēḇeṯ), “for glory and for beauty.” W. C. Kaiser (“Exodus,” EBC 2:465), quoting the NIV’s “to give him dignity and honor,” says that these clothes were to exalt the office of the high priest as well as beautify the worship of God (which explains more of what the text has than the NIV rendering). The meaning of the word “glory” has much to do with the importance of the office, to be sure, but in Exodus the word has been used also for the brilliance of the presence of Yahweh, and so the magnificence of these garments might indeed strike the worshiper with the sense of the exaltation of the service.

3 tn Heb “And you, you will speak to.”

4 tn Heb “wise of heart.” The word for “wise” (חַכָּמִי, khakhme, the plural construct form) is from the word group that is usually translated “wisdom, wise, be wise,” but it has as its basic meaning “skill” or “skillful.” This is the way it is used in 31:3, 6 and 35:10 etc. God gave these people “wisdom” so that they would know how to make these things. The “heart” for the Hebrews is the locus of understanding, the mind and the will. To be “wise of heart” or “wise in heart” means that they had the understanding to do skillful work, they were talented artisans and artists.

5 sn There is no necessity to take this as a reference to the Holy Spirit who produces wisdom in these people, although that is not totally impossible. A number of English versions (e.g., NAB, NIV, NCV, NRSV, TEV, CIV, NLT) do not even translate the word “spirit.” It probably refers to their attitude and ability. U. Cassuto has “to all the artisans skilled in the making of stately robes, in the heart [i.e., mind] of each of whom I have implanted sagacity in his craft so that he may do his craft successfully” (Exodus, 371).

6 tn The form is the perfect tense with the particle יִהְיֶה (yihyeh), “has been or will be” (cf. Ps 43:5). The reference is to the initial action of God, and this was of the same piece, it is unclear why this is singled out as “artistically woven.” Perhaps the word is from another root that just denotes “woven” than in English.

7 sn There is no necessity to take this as a reference to the Holy Spirit who produces wisdom in these people, although that is not totally impossible. A number of English versions (e.g., NAB, NIV, NCV, NRSV, TEV, CIV, NLT) do not even translate the word “spirit.” It probably refers to their attitude and ability. U. Cassuto has “to all the artisans skilled in the making of stately robes, in the heart [i.e., mind] of each of whom I have implanted sagacity in his craft so that he may do his craft successfully” (Exodus, 371).

8 sn This is the rendering of the word כּוֹדֵס (kodesh), cognate to the word translated “designer” in v. 6. Since the entire ephod was of the same material, and this was of the same piece, it is unclear why this is singled out as “artistically woven.” Perhaps the word is from another root that just describes the item as a “band.” Whatever the connection, this band was to be of the same material, and the same piece, as the ephod, but perhaps a different pattern (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 301). It is this sash that attaches the ephod to the priest’s body, that is, at the upper border of the ephod and clasped together at the back.

9 sn The word “ephod” is taken over directly from Hebrew, because no one knows how to translate it, nor is there agreement about its design. It refers here to a garment worn by the priests, but the word can also refer to some kind of image for a god (Judg 8:27).

10 sn The word נַשְׂבֵּץ (notshibhit), which describes the tunic and which appears only in this verse, is related to a verb (also rare) of the same root in 28:39 that describes making the tunic. Their meaning is uncertain (see the extended discussion in C. Houtman, Exodus, 3:473-75). A related noun describes gold fasteners and the “settings,” or “mountings,” for precious stones (28:11, 13, 14, 20, 25; 36:18; 39:6, 13, 16, 18; cf. Ps 45:14). The word “fitted” in 28:4 reflects the possibility that “the tunic is to be shaped by sewing, ... so that it will fit tightly around the body” (C. Houtman, Exodus, 3:475).
a memorial.\textsuperscript{1} 28:13 You are to make filigree settings of gold 28:14 and two braided chains of pure gold, like a cord, and attach the chains to the settings.

28:15 “You are to make a breastpiece for use in making decisions;\textsuperscript{2} the work of an artistic designer; you are to make it in the same fashion as the ephod; you are to make it of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twisted linen. 28:16 It is to be square\textsuperscript{3} when\textsuperscript{4} doubled, nine inches\textsuperscript{5} long and nine inches wide. 28:17 You are to set in it a setting for stones, four rows of stones, a row with a ruby, a topaz, and a beryl – the first row; 28:18 and the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald; 28:19 and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 28:20 and the fourth row, a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper.\textsuperscript{6} They are to be enclosed in gold in their filigree settings. 28:21 The stones are to be for the names of the sons of Israel, twelve, according to the number of their names. Each name according to the twelve tribes is to be like\textsuperscript{8} the engravings of a seal.

28:22 “You are to make for the breastpiece braided chains like cords of pure gold, 28:23 and you are to make for the breastpiece two gold rings and attach\textsuperscript{9} the two rings to the upper\textsuperscript{10} two ends of the breastpiece. 28:24 You are to attach the two gold chains to the two rings at the ends of the breastpiece; 28:25 the other\textsuperscript{11} two ends of the two chains you will attach to the two settings and then attach them\textsuperscript{12} to the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front of it. 28:26 You are to make two rings of gold and put them on the other\textsuperscript{13} two ends of the breastpiece, on its edge that is on the inner side of the ephod. 28:27 You are to make two more\textsuperscript{14} gold rings and attach them to the bottom of the two shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod, close to the juncture above the waistband of the ephod. 28:28 They are to tie the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod by blue cord, so that it may be above the waistband of the ephod, and so that the breastpiece will not be loose from the ephod. 28:29 Aaron will bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of decision over his heart\textsuperscript{15} when he goes into the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually.

28:30 “You are to put the Urim and the Thummim into the breastpiece of decision; and they are to be over Aaron’s heart when he goes into before the LORD. Aaron is to bear the decisions\textsuperscript{16} of the Israelites over his heart before the LORD continually.

28:31 “You are to make the robe\textsuperscript{17} of the ephod completely blue. 28:32 There is to be an opening\textsuperscript{19} in its top\textsuperscript{20} in the center of it, with an edge all around the opening, the work of a

\textsuperscript{1} sn This was to be a perpetual reminder that the priest ministers on behalf of the twelve tribes of Israel. Their names would always be borne by the priests.

\textsuperscript{2} tn Heb “a breastpiece of decision” (כֹּשֶׁן מִשְׁפָּט, khoshen mishpat; so NAB). The first word, rendered “breastpiece,” is of uncertain etymology. This item was made of material similar to the ephod. It had four rows of three gems on it, bearing the names of the tribes. In it were the urim and thummim. J. P. Hyatt refers to a similar object found in the Egyptian reliefs, including even the twisted gold chains used to hang it from the priest (Exodus [NCBC], 285).

\textsuperscript{3} tn Heb “four.”

\textsuperscript{4} tn “when” is added for clarification (U. Cassuto, Exodus, 375).

\textsuperscript{5} tn The word בְּנֵיהוֹן (benyōn) is half a cubit; it is often translated “span.”

\textsuperscript{6} sn U. Cassuto (Exodus, 375-76) points out that these are the same precious stones mentioned in Ezek 28:13 that were to be found in Eden, the garden of God. So the priest, when making atonement, was to wear the precious gems that were there and symbolized the garden of Eden when man was free from sin.

\textsuperscript{7} tn For clarity the words “the number of” have been supplied.

\textsuperscript{8} tn The phrase translated “the engravings of a seal” is an adverbial accusative of manner here.

\textsuperscript{9} tn Heb “give, put.”

\textsuperscript{10} tn Here “upper” has been supplied.

\textsuperscript{11} tn Here “the other” has been supplied.

\textsuperscript{12} tn Here “them” has been supplied.

\textsuperscript{13} tn Here “other” has been supplied.

\textsuperscript{14} tn Here “more” has been supplied.

\textsuperscript{15} sn So Aaron will have the names of the tribes on his shoulders (v. 12) which bear the weight and symbol of office (see Isa 9:6; 22:22), and over his heart (implying that they have a constant place in his thoughts [Deut 6:6]). Thus he was to enter the presence of God as the nation’s representative, ever mindful of the nation’s interests, and ever bringing the remembrance of it before God (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 306).

\textsuperscript{16} sn The Urim and the Thummim were two objects intended for determining the divine will. There is no clear evidence of their size or shape or the material of which they were made, but they seem to have been familiar items to Moses and the people. The best example of their use comes from 1 Sam 14:36-42. Some have suggested from the etymologies that they were light and dark objects respectively, perhaps stones or sticks or some other object. They seem to have fallen out of use after the Davidic period when the prophetic oracles became popular. It may be that the title “breastpiece of judgment” indicates that these objects were used for making “decisions” (J. P. Hyatt, Exodus [NCBC], 283-84). U. Cassuto has the most thorough treatment of the subject (Exodus, 378-82); he lists several very clear rules for their uses gathered from their instances in the Bible, including that they were a form of sacred lot, that priests or leaders of the people only could use them, and that they were used for discovering the divine will in areas that were beyond human knowledge.

\textsuperscript{17} tn Or “judgment” (KJV, ASV, NASB, NRSV). The term is בֵּית הָעִדים (beit haʿiddim), the same word that describes the breastpiece that held the two objects. Here it is translated “decisions” since the Urim and Thummim contained in the breastpiece represented the means by which the LORD made decisions for the Israelites. The high priest bore the responsibility of discerning the divine will on matters of national importance.

\textsuperscript{18} tn The נֵירָן (nirʿān), according to S. R. Driver (Exodus, 307), is a long robe worn over the ephod, perhaps open down the front, with sleeves. It is made of finer material than ordinary cloaks because it was to be worn by people in positions of rank.

\textsuperscript{19} tn Heb “mouth” or “opening” (נַחַל, ḫal; in construct).

\textsuperscript{20} tn The “mouth” of its head” probably means its neck; it may be rendered “the opening for the head,” except the prenominal suffix would have to refer to Aaron, and that is not immediately within the context.
weaver, like the opening of a collar, so that it cannot be torn. You are to make pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet all around its hem and bells of gold between them all around.

The pattern is to be a gold bell and a pomegranate, a gold bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe. The robe is to be on Aaron as he ministers, and his sound will be heard when he enters the Holy Place before the Lord and when he leaves, so that he does not die.

You are to make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it the way a seal is engraved.

The engraving was a perpetual reminder of the holiness that was due the Lord (Heb. yahweh), that all the clothing, the furnishings, and the activities were to come under that description. This corresponded to the symbolism for the whole nation of binding the law between the eyes. It was to be a perpetual reminder of commitment.

The verse is the perfect tense with the vav (v) consecutive; it follows the same at the beginning of the verse. Since the first verb is equal to the imperfect of instruction, this could be as well, but it is more likely to be subordinated to express the purpose of the former.

You are to clothe them—your brother Aaron and his sons with him—and anoint them.

The text repeats the idea: "you will make for its hem…"

The construction "the iniquity of the holy things" is difficult. "Holy things" is explained in the passage by all the gifts the people bring to the sanctuary. But there will inevitably be iniquity involved.

The text repeats the idea: "you will make for its hem…"

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and ordain them and set them apart as holy, so that they may minister as my priests. 28:42 Make for them linen undergarments to cover their naked bodies; they must cover the waist to the thighs. 28:43 These must be on Aaron and his sons when they enter the tent of meeting, or when they approach the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they bear no iniquity and die. It is to be a perpetual ordinance for him and for his descendants after him.

The Consecration of Aaron and His Sons

29:1-10 “Now this is what you are to do for them to consecrate them so that they may minister as my priests. Take a young bull and two rams without blemish; bread made without yeast, and perforated cakes without yeast mixed with oil, and wafers without yeast spread with oil – you are to make them using fine wheat flour. 29:3 You are to put them in one basket and present them in the basket, along with the bull and the two rams. 29:4 “You are to wash Aaron and his sons at the entrance of the tent of meeting. You are to take the garments and clothe Aaron with the tunic. The robe...
of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastpiece; you are to fasten the ephod on him by using the skillfully woven waistband.  

29:6 You are to put the turban on his head and put the holy diadem on the turban.  

29:7 You are to take the anointing oil and pour it on his head and anoint him.  

29:8 You are to present his sons and clothe them with tunic 29:9 and wrap the sashes around Aaron and his sons 29:10 and put headbands on them, and so the ministry of priesthood will belong to them by a perpetual ordinance. Thus you are to consecrate Aaron and his sons.  

29:10 “You are to present the bull at the front of the tent of meeting, and Aaron and his sons are to put their hands on the head of the bull.  

29:11 You are to kill the bull before the Lord at the entrance to the tent of meeting 29:12 and take some of the blood of the bull and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger; all the rest of the blood you are to pour out at the base of the altar.  

29:13 You are to take all the fat that covers the entrails, and the lobe 29:14 that is above the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, and burn them on the altar.  

29:14 But the meat of the bull, its skin, and its dung you are to burn up outside the camp.  

29:15 “You are to take one ram, and Aaron and his sons are to lay their hands on the ram’s head,  

29:16 and you are to kill the ram and take its blood and splash it all around on the altar.  

29:17 Then you are to cut the ram into pieces and wash the entrails and its legs and put them on its pieces and on its head 29:18 and burn the whole ram on the altar. It is a burnt offering to the Lord, a soothing aroma; it is an offering made by fire to the Lord.  

29:19 “You are to take the second ram, and Aaron and his sons are to lay their hands on the ram’s head,  

29:20 and you are to kill the ram and take some of its blood and put it on the tip of
The right ear of Aaron, on the tip of the right ear of his sons, on the thumb of their right hand, and on the big toe of their right foot, and then splash the blood all around on the altar. 29:21 You are to take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil and sprinkle it²⁸ on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on his sons’ garments with him, so that he may be holy,³ he and his garments along with his sons and his sons’ garments.

29:22 "You are to take from the ram the fat, the fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the lobe⁴ of the liver, the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, and the right thigh — for it is the ram for consecration⁵ — 29:23 and one round flat cake of bread, one perforated cake of oiled bread, and one wafer from the basket of bread made without yeast that is before the LORD. 29:24 You are to put all these in Aaron’s hands⁶ and in his sons’ hands, and you are to wave them as a wave offering before the LORD. 29:25 Then you are to take them from their hands and burn⁷ them⁸ on the altar for a burnt offering, for a soothing aroma before the LORD. It is an offering made by fire to the LORD. 29:26 You are to take the breast of the ram of Aaron’s consecration; you are to wave it as a wave offering before the LORD, and it is to be your share. 29:27 You are to sanctify the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the contribution,¹¹ which were waved and lifted up as a contribution from the ram of consecration, from what belongs to Aaron and to his sons. 29:28 It is to belong to Aaron and to his sons from the Israelites, by a perpetual ordinance, for it is a contribution. It is to be a contribution from the Israelites from their peace offerings, their contribution to the LORD.

29:29 "The holy garments that belong to Aaron are to belong to his sons after him, so that they may be anointed²⁹ in them and consecrated²¹ in them. 29:30 The priest who succeeds him¹⁴ from his sons, when he first comes¹⁵ to the tent of meeting to minister in the Holy Place, is to wear them for seven days.¹⁶

29:31 "You are to take the ram of the consecration and cook its meat in a holy place.²⁸ 29:32 Aaron and his sons are to eat the meat of the ram and the bread that was in the basket at the entrance of the tent of meeting. 29:33 They are to eat those things by which atonement was made¹⁹ to consecrate and to set them apart, but no one else²⁰ may eat them, for they are holy. 29:34 If any of the meat from the consecration offerings²¹ or any of the bread is left over²² until

¹ sn By this ritual the priests were set apart completely to the service of God. The ear represented the organ of hearing (as in “ears you have dug” in Ps 40 or “awakens his ear” in Isa 50), and this had to be set apart to God so that they could hear the Word of God. The thumb and the hand represented the instrument to be used for all ministry, and so everything that they “put their hand to” had to be dedicated to God and appropriate for his service. The toe set the foot apart to God, meaning that the walk of the priest had to be consecrated — where he went, how he conducted himself, what life he lived, all belonged to God now.

² tn Here “it” has been supplied.

³ tn The verb in this instance is Qal and not Piel, “to be holy” rather than “sanctify.” The result of all this ritual is that Aaron and the sons will be set aside and distinct in their life and their service.

⁴ tn S. R. Driver suggests that this is the appendix or an appendix, both here and in v. 13 (Exodus, 320). “The surplus, the appendage of liver, found with cow, sheep, or goat, but not with humans: Lobotus caudatus” (HALOT 453 s.v. תַּקַּקָה).

⁵ tn Heb “filling.”

⁶ tn Heb “the whole” or “the all.”

⁷ tn Heb “palms.”

⁸ tn The “wave offering” is פָּרָשָׁה (Parashah); it is, of course, cognate with the verb, but an adverbial accusative rather than the direct object. In Lev 23 this seems to be a sacrificial gesture of things that are for the priests — but they present them first to Yahweh and then receive them back from him. So the waving is not side to side, but forward to Yahweh and then back to the priest. Here it is just an induction into that routine, since this is the ordination of the priests and the gifts are not yet theirs. So this will all be burned on the altar.

⁹ tn “turn to sweet smoke.”

¹⁰ tn “them” has been supplied.

¹¹ sn These are the two special priestly offerings: the wave offering (from the verb “to wave”) and the “presentation offering” (older English: heave offering; from a verb “to be high,” in Hiphil meaning “to lift up,” an item separated from the offering, a contribution). The two are then clarified with two corresponding relative clauses containing two Hophals: “which was waved and which was presented.” In making sacrifices, the breast and the thigh belong to the priests.

¹² tn The construction is an infinitive construct with a lamed (ה) preposition. The form simply means “for anointing,” but it serves to express the purpose or result of their inheriting the sacred garments.

¹³ tn This form is a Piel infinitive construct with a lamed (ה) preposition. It literally reads “for filling the hands,” the idiom used throughout this chapter for ordination or installation. Here too it has a parallel use of purpose or result.

¹⁴ tn Heb “after him”; NCV, NLT “after Aaron.”

¹⁵ tn The text just has the relative pronoun and the imperfect tense. It could be translated “who comes/enters.” But the context seems to indicate that this would be when he first comes to the tent to begin his tenure as High Priest, and so a temporal clause makes this clear. “First” has been supplied.

¹⁶ tn “Seven days” is an adversative accusative of time. The ritual of ordination is to be repeated for seven days, and so they are to remain there in the court in full dress.

¹⁷ tn Or “boil” (see Lev 8:31).

¹⁸ sn The “holy place” must be in the courtyard of the sanctuary. Lev 8:31 says it is to be cooked at the entrance of the tent of meeting. Here it says it will be eaten there as well. This, then, becomes a communion sacrifice, a peace offering which was a shared meal. Eating a communal meal in a holy place was meant to signify that the worshipers and the priests were at peace with God.

¹⁹ tn The clause is a relative clause modifying “those things,” the direct object of the verb “eat.” The relative clause has a resumptive pronoun: “which atonement was made by them” becomes “which atonement was made.” The verb is a Pual perfect of קִיפֶר (kipper, “to expiate, atone, pacify”).

²⁰ tn The Hebrew word is “stranger, alien” (גֵּר, zar). But in this context it means anyone who is not a priest (see S. R. Driver, Exodus, 324).

²¹ tn Or “ordination offerings” (Heb “fillings”).

²² tn The verb in the conditional clause is a Niphal imperfect of זָר (zar); this verb is repeated in the next clause (as a Niphal participle) as the direct object of the verb “you will burn” (a Qal perfect with a vav [t] consecutive to form the instruction).
morning, then you are to burn up\(^1\) what is left over. It must not be eaten,\(^2\) because it is holy.

29:35 “Thus you are to do for Aaron and for his sons, according to all that I have commanded you; you are to consecrate them\(^3\) for seven days.

29:36 Every day you are to prepare a bull for a purification offering\(^5\) for atonement.\(^6\) You are to purge\(^7\) the altar by making atonement\(^8\) for it, and you are to anoint it to set it apart as holy. 29:37 For seven days\(^9\) you are to make atonement for the altar and set it apart as holy. Then the altar will be most holy.\(^10\) Anything that touches the altar will be holy.\(^11\)

29:38 “Now this is what you are to prepare\(^2\) on the altar every day continually: two lambs a year old. 29:39 The first lamb you are to prepare in the morning, and the second lamb you are to prepare around sundown.\(^3\) 29:40 With the first lamb offer a tenth of an ephah\(^4\) of fine flour mixed with a fourth of a hin\(^9\) of oil from pressed olives, and a fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering.

29:41 The second lamb you are to offer around sundown; you are to prepare for it the same meal offering as for the morning and the same drink offering, for a soothing aroma, an offering made by fire to the Lord.

29:42 “This will be a regular burnt offering throughout your generations at the entrance of the tent of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet\(^7\) with you to speak to you there. 29:43 There I will meet\(^18\) with the Israelites, and it will be set apart as holy by my glory.\(^15\)

29:44 “So I will set apart as holy\(^2\) the tent of meeting and the altar, and I will set apart as holy Aaron and his sons, that they may minister as priests to me. 29:45 I will reside\(^2\) among the sons,” which the Talmud explains as the time between the sunset and the time the stars become visible. More technically, the first “evening” would be the time between sunset and the appearance of the crescent moon, and the second “evening” the next hour, or from the appearance of the crescent moon to full darkness (see Deut 16:6 – “at the going down of the sun”). Saadia, Rashii, and Kimchi say the first evening is when the sun begins to decline in the west and casts its shadows, and the second evening is the beginning of night.

(3) The view adopted by the Pharisees and the Talmudists (b. Pesahim 61a) is that the first evening is when the heat of the sun begins to decrease, and the second evening begins at sunset, or, roughly from 3:5 p.m. The Mishnah (m. Pesahim 61a) indicated the lambs was killed about 2:30 p.m. – anything before noon was not valid. S. R. Driver concludes from this survey that the first view is probably the best, although the last view was the traditionally accepted one (Exodus, 89-90). Late afternoon or early evening seems to be intended, the time of twilight perhaps.

29:46 The phrase “of an ephah” has been supplied for clarity (cf. Num 28:5). The ephah was a commonly used dry measure whose capacity is now uncertain: “Quotations given for the ephah vary from ca. 45 to 20 liters” (C. Houtman, Exodus, 2:340-41).

29:47 “Hin” is a transliterated Hebrew word that seems to have an Egyptian derivation. The amount of liquid measured by a hin is uncertain: “Its presumed capacity varies from about 3:5 liters to 7.5 liters” (C. Houtman, Exodus, 3:550).

29:48 The translation has begun with “and” instead of “continually,” because they will be preparing this twice a day.

29:49 The relative clause identifies the place in front of the Tent as the place that Yahweh would meet Moses. The main verb of the clause is נָשַׂא (nas’ā), a Niphal imperfect of the verb נָשֵׂא (nas’ē), the verb that is cognate to the name “tent of meeting” – hence the name. This clause leads into the next four verses.

29:50 The verb now is a Niphal perfect from the same root, with a yav (v) consecutive. It simply continues the preceding verb, announcing now that he would meet the people.

29:51 Or “will be sanctified by my glory” (KJV and ASV both similar).

29:52 The tabernacle, as well as the priests and the altar, will be sanctified by the power of Yahweh’s presence. The reference here is to when Yahweh enters the sanctuary in all his glory (see Exodus 40:34f.).

29:53 This verse affirms the same point as the last, but now with an active verb: “I will set apart as holy” (or “I will sanctify”). This verse, then, probably introduces the conclusion of the chapter: “So I will...”

29:54 The verb has the root פָּשַׁן (pashān), from which came the word for the dwelling place, or sanctuary, itself פָּשָׁן (mishkan, mishkān). It is also used for the description of “the Shekinah glory.” God is affirming that he will reside in the midst of his people.
Israelites, and I will be their God, 29:46 and they will know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out from the land of Egypt, so that I may reside among them. I am the Lord their God.

The Altar of Incense

30:1 “You are to make an altar for burning incense, 2 you are to make it of acacia wood. 30:2 Its length is to be a foot and a half and its width a foot and a half; it will be square. Its height is to be three feet, 9 with its horns of one piece with it. 30:3 You are to overlay it with pure gold—its top, 9 its four walls, 9 and its horns—and make a surrounding border of gold for it. 30:4 You are to make two gold rings for it under its border, on its two flanks; you are to make them on its two sides. 32 The rings will be places for poles to carry it with. 30:5 You are to make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.

30:6 “You are to put it in front of the curtain that is before the ark of the testimony (before the atonement lid that is over the testimony), where I will meet you. 30:7 Aaron is to burn sweet incense 14 on it morning by morning; when he att 15 ends to the lamps he is to burn incense. 30:8 When Aaron sets up the lamps around sun down he is to burn incense on it; it is to be a regular incense offering before the Lord throughout your generations. 30:9 You must not offer strange incense on it, nor burnt offering, nor meal offering, and you must not pour out a drink offering on it. 30:10 Aaron is to make atonement on its horns once in the year with some of the blood of the sin offering for atonement; 17 once in the year 18 he is to make atonement on it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the Lord. 19

The Ransom Money

30:11 20 The Lord spoke to Moses: 21 30:12 “When you take a census 22 of the Israelites according to their number, 23 then each man is to

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1 sn Why this section has been held until now is a mystery. One would have expected to find it with the instructions for the other furnishings. The widespread contemporary view that it was composed later does not answer the question, it merely moves the issue to the work of an editor rather than the author. N. M. Sarna notes concerning the items in chapter 30 that “all the materials for these final items were anticipated in the list of invited donations in 25:3-6” and that they were not needed for installing Aaron and his sons (Exodus [JPSITC], 193). Verses 1-10 can be divided into three sections: the instructions for building the incense altar (1-5), its placement (6), and its proper use (7-10).

2 tn The expression is מִיתָר מִיתָר (mizbeakh mitqar q’toret), either “an altar, namely an altar of incense,” or “an altar, [for] burning incense.” The second noun is “altar of incense,” although some suggest it is an active noun meaning “burning.” If the former, then it is in apposition to the word for “altar” (which is not in construct). The last noun is “incense” or “sweet smoke.” It either qualifies the “altar of incense” or serves as the object of the active noun. B. Jacob says that in order to designate that this altar be used only for incense, the Torah prepared the second word for this passage alone. It specifies the kind of altar this is (Exodus, 828).

3 tn This is an adversative accusative explaining the material used in building the altar.


5 tn Heb “a cubit.”

6 tn Heb “two cubits.”

7 tn Heb “its horns from it.”

8 tn Heb “roof.”

9 tn Heb “its horns around.”

10 tn Heb “and make for it border gold around.” The verb is a consecutive perfect. See Exod 25:11, where the ark also has such a molding.

11 sn Since it was a small altar, it needed only two rings, one on either side, in order to be carried. The second clause clarifies that the rings should be on the sides, the right and the left, as you approach the altar.

12 sn Heads refers to the rings collectively in their placement on the box, and so the word “rings” has been used to clarify the referent for the modern reader.

13 tn Heb “for houses.”

14 tn The text uses a cognate accusative (“incense”) with the verb “to burn” or “to make into incense/sweet smoke.” Then, the noun “sweet spices” is added in apposition to clarify the incense as sweet.

15 tn The Hebrew is בְּהֵיטִיבו (b’hetive), a Hiphil infinitive construction serving in a temporal clause. The Hebrew verb means “to make good” and so in this context “to fix” or “to dress.” This refers to cleansing and trimming the lamps.

16 sn The point of the little golden altar of incense is normally for intercessory prayer, and then at the Day of Atonement for blood applied atonement. The instructions for making it show that God wanted his people to have a means for prayer. The instructions for its use show that God expects that the requests of his people will be pleasing to him.

17 tn The word “atones” (plural in Hebrew) is a genitive showing the result or product of the sacrifice made.

18 sn This ruling presupposes that the instruction for the Day of Atonement has been given, or at the very least, is to be given shortly. That is the one day in the year that all sin and all ritual impurity would be removed.

19 sn The phrase “most holy to the Lord” means that the altar cannot be used for any other purpose than what is stated here.

20 sn This brief section has been interpreted a number of ways by biblical scholars (for a good survey and discussion, see B. Jacob, Exodus, 829-35). In this context the danger of erecting and carrying a sanctuary outside the land. A census would be taken to count the losses and to cover the danger of coming into such proximity with the holy place; payment was made to ransom the lives of the people numbered so that they would not die. The money collected would then be used for the care of the sanctuary. The principle was fairly straightforward: Those numbered among the redeemed once in the year 17 to 18 he is to make atonement on it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the Lord.

21 sn This refers to the rings collectively in their placement on the box, and so the word “rings” has been used to clarify the referent for the modern reader.

22 sn Since it was a small altar, it needed only two rings, one on either side, in order to be carried. The second clause clarifies that the rings should be on the sides, the right and the left, as you approach the altar.

23 sn The form is רַפְּעָל (lifedachem, “according to those that are numbered of/by them”) from the verb רָפָע (r非洲, “to visit”). But the idea of this word seems more to be that of changing or determining the destiny, and so “appoint” and “number” become clear categories of meaning for the word.
pay a ransom⁴ for his life to the Lord when you number them,² so that there will be no plague among them when you number them. 30:13 Everyone who crosses over to those who are numbered⁵ is to pay this: a half shekel⁶ according to the shekel of the sanctuary⁦ (a shekel weighs twenty gerahs). The half shekel is to be an offering⁧ to the Lord. 30:14 Everyone who crosses over to those numbered, from twenty years old and up, is to pay an offering to the Lord. 30:15 The rich are not to increase it,⁹ and the poor are not to pay less than the half shekel when giving⁩ the offering of the Lord, to make atonement⁩ for your lives. 30:16 You are to receive the atonement money²⁰ from the Israelites and give it for the service²¹ of the tent of meeting. It will be a memorial²² for the Israelites before the Lord, to make atonement²³ for your lives.”

The Bronze Laver

30:17⁴ The Lord spoke to Moses:⁵ 30:18 “You are also to make a large bronze basin with a bronze stand²⁷ for washing. You are to put it between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it.¹⁸ 30:19 and Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and their feet from it.¹⁹ 30:20 When they enter⁲⁰ the tent of meeting, they must wash with water so that they do not die.²² Also, when they approach²³ the altar to minister by burning incense²⁴ as an offering made by fire²⁵ to the Lord, 30:21 they must wash²⁶ their hands and their feet so that they do not die. And this²⁷ will be a perpetual ordinance

Here it simply refers to the census, but when this word is used for a census it often involves mustering an army for a military purpose. Here there is no indication of a war, but it may be laying down the principle that when they should do this, here is the price. B. Jacob (Exodus, 835) uses Num 31 as a good illustration, showing that the warrior was essentially a munificent donor who killed anyone in battle. For this reason his blood was forfeit; if he survived he must pay a בְּכַפֵּר (kofer) because every human life possesses value and must be atoned for. The payment during the census represented a “presumptive ransom” so that they could not be faulted for what they might do in war.

¹ In The “ransom” is בְּכַפֵּר (kofer), a word related to words translated “atonement” and “atoning.” Here the noun refers to what is paid for the life. The idea is that of delivering or redeeming by a substitute – here the substitute is the money. If they paid the amount, their lives would be safe (W. C. Kaiser, Jr., “Exodus,” EBC 2:473).
² In The temporal clause uses a preposition, an infinitive construct, and then an accusative. The subject is supplied: “in numbering them” means “when [you] number them.” The verb could also be rendered “when you must them.”
³ sn Each man was to pass in front of the counting officer and join those already counted on the other side.
⁴ sn The half shekel weight of silver would be about one-fifth of an ounce (6 grams).
⁵ sn It appears that some standard is in view for the amount of a shekel weight. The sanctuary shekel is sometimes considered the value of the ordinary shekel. The “gerah,” also of uncertain meaning, was mentioned as a reference point for the ancient reader to understand the value of the required payment. It may also be that the expression meant “a sacred shekel” and looked at the purpose more – a shekel for sanctuary dues. This would mean that the standard of the shekel weight was set because it was the traditional amount of sacred dues (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 333). “Though there is no certainty, the shekel is said to weigh about 11.5 grams... Whether an official standard is meant [by ‘sanctuary shekel’] or whether the sanctuary shekel had a different weight than the ‘ordinary’ shekel is not known” (C. Houtman, Exodus, 3:181).
⁶ In Or “contribution” (תרנامة, ’r’numah).
⁷ In Or “pay more.”
⁸ In The form is בְּכַפֵּר (l tat), the Qal infinitive construct with the lamed preposition. The infinitive here is explaining the preceding verbs. They are not to increase or diminish the amount “in paying the offering.” The construction approximates a temporal clause.
⁹ In This infinitive construct (בְּכַפֵּר, ‘r’kipper) provides the purpose of the giving the offering – to atone.
¹⁰ In Heb “the silver of the atonements.” The genitive here is the result (as in “sheep of slaughter”) telling what the money will be used for (see R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 11, §44).
for them and for their descendants throughout their generations.\(^2\)

**Oil and Incense**

**30:22** The Lord spoke to Moses: **30:23** "Take choice spices: twelve and a half pounds of sweet-smelling myrrh, half that – about six and a quarter pounds – of aromatic spices, six and a quarter pounds of sweet-smelling cane, all weighed according to the sanctuary shekel, and four quarts of olive oil. **30:25** You are to make this into a sacred anointing oil, a perfumed compound, the work of a perfumer. It will be sacred anointing oil.

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1 tn Heb "for his seed." 2 tn Or "for generations to come"; it literally is "to their generations." 3 sn The symbolic meaning of washing has been taught throughout the ages. This was a practical matter of cleaning hands and feet, but it was also symbolic of purification before Yahweh. It was an outward sign of inner spiritual cleansing, or forgiveness. Jesus washed the disciples feet (Jn 13) to show this same teaching; he asked the disciples if they knew what he had done (so it was more than washing feet). In this passage the theological points for the outline would be these: I. God provides the means of cleansing; II. Cleansing is a prerequisite for participating in the worship, and III. (Believers) priests must regularly appropriate God's provision of cleansing.

5 sn The chapter ends with these two sections. The oil (22-33) is the mark of consecration, and the incense (34-38) is a mark of pleasing service, especially in prayer. So the essence of the message of the chapter is that the servants of God must be set apart by the Spirit for ministry and must be pleasing to God in the ministry.

6 tn Heb "spices head." This must mean the chief spices, or perhaps the top spice, meaning fine spices or choice spices. See Song 4:14; Ezek 27:22.

7 tn Or "500 shekels." Verse 24 specifies that the sanctuary shekel was the unit for weighing the spices, and then this could refer to anything else.

8 sn Myrrh is an aromatic substance that flows from the inner slime of the gum tree. It has a pungent odor when burnt.

9 sn The construction uses the imperative "take," but before it is the independent pronoun to add emphasis to it. After the imperative is the ethical dative (lit. "to you") to stress the task to Moses as a personal responsibility: "and you, take to yourself." 10 tn Heb "spices head." This must mean the chief spices, or perhaps the top spice, meaning fine spices or choice spices. See Song 4:14; Ezek 27:22.

11 tn Or "a hin." A hin of oil is estimated at around one gallon (Josh 18:12).

12 tn The word "oil" is an adverbial accusative, indicating the product that results from the verb (R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, §52).

13 tn The somewhat rare words rendered "a perfumed compound" are both associated with a verbal root having to do with mixing spices and other ingredients to make fragrant ointments. They are used with the next phrase, "the work of a perfumer," to describe the finished oil as a special mixture of aromatic spices and one requiring the knowledge and skills of an experienced maker.

14 tn The verb is a Piél perfect with waw (thetic) consecutive; in this verse it is summarizing or explaining what the anointing has accomplished. This is the effect of the anointing (see Exod 29:36).

15 tn This is the superlative genitive again, Heb "holy of holies." 16 tn See Exod 29:37; as before, this could refer to anything or anyone touching the sanctified items.

17 tn The perfect tense with waw (thetic) consecutive follows the imperfect of instruction; it may be equal to the instruction, but more likely shows the purpose or result of the act.

18 tn Without an expressed subject, the verb may be treated as a passive. Any common use, as in personal hygiene, would be a complete desecration.

19 tn Heb "a stranger," meaning someone not ordained a priest.

20 sn The rabbinic interpretation of this is that it is a penalty imposed by heaven, that the life will be cut short and the person could die childless.

21 tn The construction is "take to you," which could be left in that literal sense, but more likely the suffix is an ethi cal dative, stressing the subject of the imperative.

22 sn This is from a word that means "to drip"; the spice is a balsam that drips from a resinous tree.

23 sn This may be a plant, or it may be from a species of mollusks; it is mentioned in Ugaritic and Akkadian; it gives a pungent odor when burnt.

24 sn This is a gum from plants of the genus *Ferula*; it has an unpleasant odor, but when mixed with others is pleasant.

25 tn The word "spice" is repeated here, suggesting that the first three formed half of the ingredient and this spice the other half – but this is conjecture (U. Cassuto, Exodus, 400).

26 tn Heb "of each part there will be an equal part."

27 tn This is an accusative of result or product.

28 sn The word is in apposition to "incense," further defining the kind of incense that is to be made.

29 tn The word מְמֻלָּח (m‘mullakh), a passive participle, is usually taken to mean "salted." Since there is no meaning like that for the Pual form, the word probably should be taken as "mixed," as in Rashi and Tg. Onq. Seasoning with salt would work if it were food, but since it is not food, it means "salted" it would be a symbol of what was sound and whole for the covenant. Some have thought that it would have helped the incense burn quickly with more smoke.
pure and sacred. 30:36 You are to beat some of it very fine and put some of it before the ark of the testimony in the tent of meeting where I will meet with you; it is to be most holy to you. 30:37 And the incense that you are to make, you must not make for yourselves using the same recipe; it is to be most holy to you, belonging to the LORD. 30:38 Whoever makes anything like it, to use as perfume, will be cut off from his people.”

Willing Artisans

31:2 The Lord spoke to Moses: 31:2 “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 31:3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God in skill, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, 31:4 to make artistic designs for work with gold, with silver, and with bronze, 31:5 and with cutting and setting stone, and with cutting wood, to work in all kinds of craftsmanship. 31:6 Moreover, I have also given him Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, and I have given ability to all the specially skilled, 10 that they may make everything I have commanded you: 31:7 the tent of meeting, the ark of the testimony, the atonement lid that is on it, all the furnishings of the tent, 31:8 the table with its utensils, the pure lampstand with all its utensils, the altar of incense, 31:9 the altar for the burnt offering with all its utensils, the large basin with its base, 31:10 the woven garments, the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons, to minister as priests, 31:11 the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the Holy Place. They will make all these things just as I have commanded you.”

Sabbath Observance

31:12 The Lord said to Moses, 31:13 “Tell the Israelites, ‘Surely you must keep my Sabbaths, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you. 31:14 So you must keep the Sabbath, for it is holy for you. Everyone who defiles it must surely be put to death; indeed, if anyone does work on it, then that person was specifically chosen for some important task (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 342). See the expression with Cyrus in Isa 45:3-4.

31:15 The verse means that there were a good number of very skilled and trained artisans that could come to do the work that God wanted done. But God’s Spirit further endowed them with additional wisdom and skill for the work that had to be done.

31:16 The form is a perfect with vav (ך) consecutive. The form at this place shows the purpose or the result of what has gone before, and so it is rendered “that they may make.”

31:17 In Heb “all the vessels of the tent.”

31:18 There are some questions about the arrangement of the book. The placement of this section here, however, should come as no surprise. After the instructions and preparation for work, a Sabbath day when work could not be done had to be legislated. In all that they were going to do, they must not violate the Sabbath.

31:19 In Heb “and Yahweh said (ךְּפָא, umar) to Moses, saying.”

31:20 In Heb “called by name.” This expression means that the person was specifically chosen for some important task (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 342). See the expression with Cyrus in Isa 45:3-4.

31:21 sn The expression in the Bible means that the individual was given special, supernatural ability to do what God wanted done. It usually is said of someone with exceptional power or ability. The image of “filling” usually means under the control of the Spirit, so that the Spirit is the dominant force in the life.

31:22 sn The following qualities are the ways in which the Spirit’s enablement will be displayed. “Skill” is the ability to produce something valuable to God and the community, “understanding” is the ability to distinguish between things, to perceive the best way to follow, and “knowledge” is the experiential awareness of how things are done.

31:23 sn In this clause is all from one word, a Piel plural participle with a third, feminine suffix: מְחַלְלֵיהָ (m̄khalleha, “defilers of it”). This form serves as the subject of the sentence. The verb הָלַל (halal) is the antonym of שָׁלוֹם (shalom, “to be holy”). It means “common, profane,” and in the Piel stem “make common, profane” or “defile.” Treating the Sabbath like an ordinary day would profane it, make it common.

31:24 sn This is the asserative use of קָדַשׁ (qadash) meaning “surely, indeed,” for it restates the point just made (see R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 73, §449).

31:25 sn In Heb “the one who does.”

31:26 tn “any” has been supplied.
person will be cut off from among his people. 31:15 Six days work may be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to the LORD; anyone who does work on the Sabbath day must surely be put to death. 31:16 The Israelites must keep the Sabbath by observing the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. 31:17 It is a sign between me and the Israelites forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed. 31:18 He gave Moses two tablets of testimony when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, tablets of stone written by the finger of God.

The Sin of the Golden Calf

32:1 When the people saw that Moses delayed in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said to him, “Get up, make us gods that will go before us. As for this fellow Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him!”

32:2 So Aaron said to them, “Break off the gold earrings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.”

8 sn This narrative is an unhappy interlude in the flow of the argument of the book. After the giving of the Law and the instructions for the tabernacle, the people get into idolatry. So this section tells what the people were doing when Moses was on the mountain. Here is an instant violation of the covenant that they had just agreed to uphold. But through it all Moses shines as the great intercessor for the people. So the subject matter is the sin of idolatry, its effects and its remedy. Because of the similarities to Jeroboam’s setting up the calves in Dan and Bethel, modern critics have often said this passage was written at that time. U. Cassuto shows how the language of this chapter would not fit an Iron Age setting in Dan. Rather, he argues, this story was well known enough for Jeroboam to imitate the practice (Exodus, 407-10). This chapter can be divided into four parts for an easier exposition: idolatry (32:1-6), intercession (32:7-14), judgment (32:15-29), intercession again (32:30-33:6). Of course, these sections are far more complex than this, but this gives an overview. Four summary statements for expository points might be: I. Impatience often leads to foolish violations of the faith, II. Violations of the covenant require intercession to escape condemnation, III. Those spared of God’s wrath must purge evil from their midst, and IV. Those who purge evil from their midst will find reinstatement through intercession. Several important studies are available for this. See, among others, D. R. Davis, “Rebellion, Presence, and Covenant: A Study in Exodus 32-34,” WTW 44 (1982): 71-87; M. Greenberg, “Moses’ Intercessory Prayer,” Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Studies (1978): 21-35; R. A. Hamer, “The New Covenant of Moses,” Judaism 27 (1978): 345-50; R. L. Honeycutt, Jr., “Aaron, the Priesthood, and the Golden Calf,” RevQ 74 (1977): 523-35; J. N. Oswalt, “The Golden Calves and the Egyptian Concept of Deity,” EQ 45 (1973): 13-20. 9 tn The meaning of this verb is properly “caused shame,” meaning cause disappointment because he was not coming back (see also Jud 5:28 for the delay of Sisera’s chariots [S. Driver, Exodus, 304]), the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him!”

2 sn This narrative is an unhappy interlude in the flow of the argument of the book. After the giving of the Law and the instructions for the tabernacle, the people get into idolatry. So this section tells what the people were doing when Moses was on the mountain. Here is an instant violation of the covenant that they had just agreed to uphold. But through it all Moses shines as the great intercessor for the people. So the subject matter is the sin of idolatry, its effects and its remedy. Because of the similarities to Jeroboam’s setting up the calves in Dan and Bethel, modern critics have often said this passage was written at that time. U. Cassuto shows how the language of this chapter would not fit an Iron Age setting in Dan. Rather, he argues, this story was well known enough for Jeroboam to imitate the practice (Exodus, 407-10). This chapter can be divided into four parts for an easier exposition: idolatry (32:1-6), intercession (32:7-14), judgment (32:15-29), intercession again (32:30-33:6). Of course, these sections are far more complex than this, but this gives an overview. Four summary statements for expository points might be: I. Impatience often leads to foolish violations of the faith, II. Violations of the covenant require intercession to escape condemnation, III. Those spared of God’s wrath must purge evil from their midst, and IV. Those who purge evil from their midst will find reinstatement through intercession. Several important studies are available for this. See, among others, D. R. Davis, “Rebellion, Presence, and Covenant: A Study in Exodus 32-34,” WTW 44 (1982): 71-87; M. Greenberg, “Moses’ Intercessory Prayer,” Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Studies (1978): 21-35; R. A. Hamer, “The New Covenant of Moses,” Judaism 27 (1978): 345-50; R. L. Honeycutt, Jr., “Aaron, the Priesthood, and the Golden Calf,” RevQ 74 (1977): 523-35; J. N. Oswalt, “The Golden Calves and the Egyptian Concept of Deity,” EQ 45 (1973): 13-20.

9 tn The meaning of this verb is properly “caused shame,” meaning cause disappointment because he was not coming back (see also Jud 5:28 for the delay of Sisera’s chariots [S. Driver, Exodus, 304]). 10 tn The infinitive construct with the lamed (־) preposition is used here epelexgetically, explaining the delay of Moses.

11 tn Heb “the people.”

12 tn The imperative means “arise.” It could be serving here as an interjection, getting Aaron’s attention. But it might also have the force of prompting him to get busy.

13 tn The plural translation is required here (although the form itself could be singular in meaning) because the verb that follows in the relative clause is a plural verb—that they go before us.

14 tn The text has “this Moses.” But this instance may find the demonstrative used in an earlier deictic sense, especially since there is no article with it.

15 tn The interrogative is used in an indirect question (see GKC 443-44 §137). 16 sn B. Jacob (Exodus, 937-38) argues that Aaron simply did not have the resolution that Moses did, and wanting to keep peace he gave in to the crowd. He also tries to explain that Aaron was wanting to show their folly through the deed. U. Cassuto also says that Aaron’s request for the gold was a form of procrastination, but that the people quickly did it and so he had no alternative but to go through with it (Exodus, 412). These may be right, since Aaron fully understood what was wrong with this, and what the program was all about. The text gives no strong indication to support these ideas,
32:3 So all the people broke off the gold earrings that were on their ears and brought them to Aaron. 32:4 He accepted the gold from them, fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molten calf. Then they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.” 32:5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it, and Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow will be a feast to the LORD.” 32:6 So they got up early on the next day and offered up burnt offerings and brought peace offerings, and the people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play. 

but there are enough hints from the way Aaron does things to warrant such a conclusion. 

1 tn This “all” is a natural hyperbole in the narrative, for it means the large majority of the people. 2 tn Here “the gold” has been supplied. 3 tn Heb “from their hand.” 4 tn The verb looks similar to הָעָשָׂר (haytsar), “to form, fashion” by a plan or a design. That is the verb used in Gen 2:7 for Yahweh God forming the man from the dust of the ground. If it is here, it is the reverse, a human – the dust of the ground – trying to form a god or gods. The active participle of this verb in Hebrew is “the potter.” A related noun is the word יֵצֶּר (yatsar), “to form, fashion” (as in 1 Kgs 7:15). 5 sn The word means a “young bull” and need not be translated as “calf” (although “calf” has become the traditional rendering in English). The word could describe an animal three years old. Aaron probably made an inner structure of wood and then, after melting down the gold, plated it. The verb “molten” does not need to imply that the image was solid gold; the word is used in Isa 30:22 for gold plating. So it is a young bull calf that was overlaid with gold, and the gold was fashioned with the stylus. 6 tn The word could be singular here and earlier; here it would be “this your god, O Israel.” However, the use of “these” indicates more than one god was meant by the image. But their statement and their statue, although they do not use the holy name, violate the first two commandments. 7 tn The preterite with the vav (א) consecutive is subordinated as a temporal clause to the next preterite. 8 tn The word “this” has been supplied. 9 tn Before it means before the deity in the form before it (see GKC 340 §113.e). 10 tn Heb “called.” 11 sn The word is קָר (karg), the pilgrim’s festival. This was the word used by Moses for their pilgrimage into the wilderness. Aaron seems here to be trying to do what Moses had in mind. They do, make a feast to Yahweh at Sinai, but his efforts will not compete with the idol. As B. Jacob says, Aaron saw all this happening and tried to rescue the true belief (Exod. 491). 12 tn The second infinitive is an infinitive absolute. The first is an infinitive construct with a lamed (ו) preposition, expressing the purpose of their sitting down. The infinitive absolute that follows cannot take the preposition, but with the conjunction follows the form of the form before it (see GKC 340 §113.e). 13 tn The form is יָצַר (yatsar), a Piel infinitive construct, giving the purpose of their rising up after the feasting meal. On the surface it would seem that with the festival there would be singing and dancing, so that the people were celebrating even though they did not know the reason. W. C. Kaiser says the word means “drunken immoral orgies and sexual play” (“Exodus,” EBC 2:478). That is quite an assumption for this word, but is reflected in some recent English versions (e.g., NCV “got up and sinned sexually”; TEV “an orgy of drinking and sex”). The word means “to play, trifle.” It can have other meanings, depending on its contexts. It is used of Lot when he warned his sons-in-law and appeared as one who “mocked” them (Gen 19:12); it is used also of Ishmael “playing” with Isaac, which Paul interprets as mocking; it is used of Isaac “playing” with his wife in a manner that revealed to Abimelech that they were not brother and sister, and it is used by Potiphar’s wife to say that her husband brought this slave Joseph in to “mock” them. The most that can be gathered from these is that it is playful teasing, serious mocking, or playful caresses. It might fit with wild orgies, but there is no indication of that in this message, and the word does not mean that they were festive and playing before an idol was sufficient. 14 tn The two imperatives could also express one idea: “get down there.” In other words, “Make haste to get down.” 15 sn By giving the people to Moses in this way, God is saying that they have no longer any right to claim him as their God, since they have shared his honor with another. This is God’s talionic response to their “These are your gods who brought you up.” The use of these pronoun changes also would form an appeal to Moses to respond, since Moses knew that God had brought them up from Egypt. 16 tn The verb is a perfect tense, reflecting the present perfect nuance: “they have turned aside” and are still disobedi- ent. But the verb is modified with the adverb “quickly” (actual- ly a Piel infinitive absolute). It has been only a matter of weeks since they heard the voice of God, and now they do not even respect the God they had been so insulated from. 17 sn This is a bold anthropomorphism; it is as if God has had a chance to get to know these people and has dis- covered how rebellious they are. The point of the figure is that there has been discernible evidence of their nature. 18 tn Heb “and behold” or “and look.” The expression di- rects attention in order to persuade the hearer. 19 sn B. Jacob says the image is that of the people walk- ing before God, and when he called them to the directions, they would not bend their neck to listen; they were resolute in doing what they intended to do (Exod. 943). The figure de- scribes them as refusing to submit, but resisting in pride. 20 tn The imperative, from the word “to rest” (לָרָך, nuakh), has the sense of “leave me alone, let me be.” It is a directive for Moses not to intercede for the people. B. S. Childs (Exod. [OTL], 946) reflects the Jewish interpretation that there is a profound paradox in God’s words. He vows the severest punishment but then suddenly conditions it on Moses’ agreement. “Let me alone that I may consume them” is the state- ment, but the effect is that he has left the door open for inter- cession. He allows himself to be persuaded – that is what a mediator is for. God could have slammed the door (as when Moses wanted to go into the promised land), Moreover, by al- luding to the promise to Abraham God gave Moses the stron- gest reason to intercede. 21 sn Then the Lord said to Moses: “Go quickly, descend, because your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have acted cor- ruptly. They have quickly turned aside from the way that I commanded them – they have made for themselves a molten calf and have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt.’” 22 sn Then the Lord said to Moses: “I have seen this people. Look, what a stiff-necked people they are! So now, leave me alone, so that my anger can burn against them...
and I can destroy them, and I will make from you a great nation."

32:11 But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God and said, "O Lord, why does your anger burn against your people, whom you have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 32:12 Why should the Egyptians say, "For evil led them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth"? Turn from your burning anger, and relent of this evil against your people. 32:13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel your servants, to whom you swore by yourself and told them, 'I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken about I will give to your descendants, and they will inherit it forever.'"

32:14 Then the Lord relented over the evil that he had said he would do to his people.

32:15 Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hands. The tablets were written on both sides— they were written on the front and on the back. 32:16 Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets. 32:17 When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "It is the sound of war in the camp!"

32:18 Moses said, "It is not the sound of those who shout for victory, nor is it the sound of those who cry because they are overcome, but the sound of singing I hear." 32:19 When he approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses became extremely angry. 32:20 He took the calf they had made and burned it in the fire, ground it to powder, poured it out on the water, and made the Israelites drink it.

32:21 Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you, that you have brought them so great a sin?" 32:22 Aaron said, "Do not let your anger burn hot, my lord; you know these people, that they tend to evil. 32:23 They said to me, 'Make us gods that will go before us, for as for this fellow Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him.' 32:24 So I said to them, 'Whoever has gold, break it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and this calf came out." 32:25 Moses saw that the people were running wild, for Aaron had let them get com-

1 sn S. R. Driver (Exodus, 351) draws on Arabic to show that the meaning of this verb (כָּלָה, kalah) was properly "make sweet the face" or "stroke the face"; so here "to entreat, seek to conciliate." In this prayer, Driver adds, Moses urges four motives for mercy: 1) Israel is Yahweh’s people, 2) Israel’s deliverance has demanded great power, 3) the Egyptians would mock if the people now perished, and 4) the oath God made to conciliate. In this prayer, Driver adds, Moses urges four motives for mercy: 1) Israel is Yahweh’s people, 2) Israel’s deliverance has demanded great power, 3) the Egyptians would mock if the people now perished, and 4) the oath God made to conciliate.

2 tn The question is rhetorical; it really forms an affirmation that is used here as a reason for the request (see GKC 474 §150.e).

3 tn Heb "speak, saying." This is redundant in English and has been simplified in the translation.

4 tn The word "evil" means any kind of life-threatening or fatal calamity. "Evil" is that which hinders life, interrupts life, causes pain to life, or destroys it. The Egyptians would conclude that such a God would have no good intent in taking his people to the desert if now he destroyed them.

5 tn The form is a Piel infinitive construct from כָּלָה (kalah, "to complete, finish") but in this stem, "bring to an end, destroy." As a purpose infinitive this expresses what the Egyptians would have thought of God’s motive.

6 tn The verb "repet, relent" when used of God is certainly an anthropomorphism. It expresses the deep pain that one would have over a situation. Earlier God repented that he had made humans (Gen 6:6). Here Moses is asking God to repent/re lent over the judgment he was about to bring, meaning that he should be moved by such compassion that there would be no judgment like that. J. P. Hyatt observes that the Bible uses so many anthropomorphisms because the Israelites conceived of God as a dynamic and living person in a vital relationship with people, responding to their needs and attitudes and actions (Exodus [NCBC], 307). See H. V. D. Parkauk, "A Semantic Survey of NHM," Bib 56 (1975): 512-32.

7 tn Heb "your seed."

8 tn "about it" has been supplied.

9 tn Heb "seed."

10 tn The disjunctive vav (’) serves here as a circumstantial clause indicator.
32:26 So Moses stood at the entrance of the camp and said, “Whoever is for the LORD, come here.” All the Levites gathered around him, 32:27 and he said to them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Each man fasten his sword on his side, and go back and forth from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and each one kill his brother, his friend, and his neighbor.’”

32:28 The Levites did what Moses ordered, and that day about three thousand men of the people died. 32:29 Moses said, “You have been consecrated today for the LORD, for each of you was against his son or against his brother, so he has given a blessing to you today.”

32:30 The next day Moses said to the people, “You have committed a very serious sin, but now I will go up to the LORD—perhaps I can make atonement on behalf of your sin.”

32:31 So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Alas, this people has committed a very serious sin, and they have made for themselves gods of gold. 32:32 But now, if you will forgive their sin, 15 but if not, wipe me out of your book. 32:33 The LORD said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me—that person I will wipe out of my book. 32:34 So now go, lead the people to the place I have spoken to you about. See, my angel will go before you. But on the day that I punish, I will indeed punish them for their sin.”

32:35 And the LORD sent a plague on the people because they had made the calf the one Aaron made.

33:1 The LORD said to Moses, “Go up22 from here, you and the people whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’

33:2 I will send an angel before you, and I will...
drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 3:3 Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey. But 3 I will not go up among you, for you are a stiff-necked people, and I might destroy you on the way.”

33:4 When the people heard this troubling word they mourned, no one put on his ornaments. 33:5 For the Lord had said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites, ‘You are a stiff-necked people. If I went up among you for a moment, I might destroy you. Now take off your ornaments,’ that I may know what I should do to you.” 33:6 So the Israelites stripped off their ornaments by Mount Horeb.

The Presence of the Lord

33:7-22 Moses took the tent and pitched it outside the camp, at a good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. Anyone seeking the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting that was outside the camp.

33:8 And when Moses went out to the tent, all the people would get up and stand at the entrance to their tents and watch Moses until he entered the tent. 33:9 And whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses. 33:10 When all the people would see the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people, each one at the entrance of his own tent, would rise and worship. 33:11 The Lord
would speak to Moses face to face,4 the way a person speaks5 to a friend. Then Moses6 would return to the camp, but his servant, Joshua son of Nun, a young man, did not leave the tent.4

33:12 Moses said to the Lord, “See, you have been saying to me, ‘Bring this people up,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. But you said, ‘I know you by name, and also you have found favor in my sight.’” 33:13 Now if I have found favor in your sight, show me your way, that I may know you,7 that I may continue to find favor in your sight. And see8 that this nation is your people.”

33:14 And the Lord said, “My presence9 will go with you,13 and I will give you rest.”14

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4 tn "Face to face" is circumstantial to the action of the verb, explaining how they spoke (see GKC 489-90 §156.c). The point of this note of friendly relationship with Moses is that Moses was “at home” in this tent speaking with God. Moses would derive courage from this when he interceded for the people (B. Jacob, Exodus, 966).

5 tn The verb in this clause is a progressive imperfect.

6 tn Heb “he”; the referent (Moses) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

7 tn Moses did not live in the tent. But Joshua remained there most of the time to guard the tent, it seems, lest any of the people approach it out of curiosity.

8 tn The Hiphil imperative is from the same verb that has been used before for bringing the people up from Egypt and leading them to Canaan.

9 tn That is, “chosen you.”

10 tn The prayer uses the Hiphil imperative of the verb “to know.” “Cause me to know” is “show me, reveal to me, teach or inform me.” Moses wanted to know more of God’s dealings with people, especially after all that has happened in the preceding chapter. The Hiphil imperative is from the same verb that has been used before for bringing the people up from Egypt and leading them to Canaan.

11 tn The imperfect tense of the verb “to know” with the vav follows the imperative of this root, and so this indicates the purpose clause (final imperfict): “in order that I may know you.” S. R. Driver summarizes it this way: that I may understand what your nature and character is, and shape my petitions accordingly, so that I may find grace in your sight, and may receive your answer, 46:1-3 (1970).

12 sn Moses now wanted to see the glory of Yahweh, more than what he had already seen and experienced. He wanted to see God’s majesty, might, and glory, as manifested in nature, in his providence, his laws, and his judgments. He adds that this glory should and would be made visible to man – that was its purpose.

13 tn The purpose clause simply uses the imperfect, “that I may find.” But since he already has found favor in God’s eyes, he is clearly praying that it be so in the future as well as now.

14 tn The verb “see” (an imperative) is a request for God to acknowledge Israel as his people by providing the divine leading needed. So his main appeal will be for the people and not for himself. To underscore this, he repeats “see” the way the section opened.

15 tn Heb “and he said”; the referent (the Lord) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

16 sn Hebrew “my face.” This represents the presence of Yahweh going with the people (see 2 Sam 17:11 for an illustration). The “presence” probably refers to the angel of the presence or some similar manifestation of God’s leading and care for his people.

17 tn The phrase “with you” is not in the Hebrew text, but is implied.

18 sn The expression certainly refers to the peace of mind and security of knowing that God was with them. But the expression came to mean “settle them in the land of promise” and give them rest and peace from their enemies. U. Cassuto (Exodus, 434) observes how in 32:10 God had told Moses, “Leave me alone” (“give me rest”), but now he promises to give them rest. The parallelism underscores the great transition through intercession.

19 33:15 And Moses15 said to him, “If your presence does not go16 with us,12 do not take us up from here.18 33:16 For how will it be known then that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not by your going with us, so that we will be distinguished, I and your people, from all the people who are on the face of the earth?”19

33:17 The Lord said to Moses, “I will do this thing also that you have requested, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know20 you by name.”

33:18 And Moses21 said, “Show me your glory.”22

33:19 And the Lord23 said, “I will make all my goodness24 pass before your face, and I will proclaim the Lord by name25 before you; I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy.”26

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21 sn Moses now wanted to see the glory of Yahweh, more than what he had already seen and experienced. He wanted to see God’s majesty, might, and glory, as manifested in nature, in his providence, his laws, and his judgments. He adds that this glory should and would be made visible to man – that was its purpose.

22 sn The word “goodness” refers to the divine appearance in summary fashion.

23 tn The expression “make proclamation in the name of Yahweh” (here a perfect tense with vav [ו] consecutive for future) means to declare, reveal, or otherwise make proclamation of who Yahweh is. The “name of Yahweh” (rendered “the name of the Lord” throughout) refers to his divine attributes revealed to his people, either in word or deed. What will be focused on first will be his grace and compassion.

24 sn God declares his mercy and grace in similar terms to his earlier self-revelation (“I am that I am”): “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.” In other words, the grace and mercy of God are bound up in his own will. Obviously, in this passage the recipients of that favor are the penitent Israelites who were forgiven through Moses’ intercession. The two words are at the heart of God’s dealings with people. The
33:20 But he added, “You cannot see my face, for no one can see me and live.” 2 The Lord said, “Here is a place by me; you will station yourself on a rock. 33:22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and will cover you with my hand while I pass by. 33:23 Then I will take away my hand, and you will see my back but my face must not be seen.”

The New Tablets of the Covenant

34:10 The Lord said to Moses, “Cut out two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you smashed. 34:2 Be prepared in the morning, and go up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and station yourself for me there on the top of the mountain. 34:3 No one is to come up with you; do not let anyone be seen anywhere on the mountain; not even the flocks or the herds may graze in front of that mountain.” 34:4 So Moses cut out two tablets of stone like the first, early in the morning he went up to Mount Sinai, just as the Lord had commanded him, and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone.
34:5 The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the Lord by name.  
34:6 The Lord passed by before him and proclaimed:  "The Lord, the Lord, a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding in loyal love and faithfulness, keeping loyal love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. But he be by no means leaves the guilty unpunished, responding to the transgression of fathers by dealing with children and children’s children, to the third and fourth generation."

34:8 Moses quickly bowed to the ground and worshiped and said, “If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, let my Lord go among us, for we are a stiff-necked people; pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.”

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3tn Some commentators wish to make Moses the subject of the second and the third verbs, the first because he was told to stand there and this verb suggests he did it, and the last because it sounds like he was worshiping Yahweh (cf. NASB). But it is clear from v. 6 that Yahweh was the subject of the last clause of v. 5 – v. 6 tells how he did it. So if Yahweh is the subject of the first and last clauses of v. 5, it seems simpler that he also be the subject of the second. Moses took his stand there, but God stood by his side. Jacob, Exodus, 981; U. Cassuto, Exodus, 439). There is no reason to make Moses the subject in any of the verbs of v. 5.

2sn Here is one of the clearest examples of what it means “to call on the name of the Lord,” as that clause has been translated traditionally (הנה יקראו את שמו, vayyiqra v’shem y’hovah). It seems more likely that it means “to make proclamation of Yahweh by name.” Yahweh came down and made a proclamation – and the next verses give the content of what he said. This cannot be prayer or praise; it is a proclamation of Yahweh by name. Yahweh came down and made a proclamation – and the next verses give the content of what he said. This cannot be prayer or praise; it is a proclamation of Yahweh by name.

3tn This is literally “long of anger.” His anger prolongs itself, for the verb is repeated in v. 5. Rather you must destroy their altars, smash their images, and cut down their Asherah poles. For you must not worship any nation. Be careful not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, for when you prostitute yourselves and sacrifice and invite and you eat.” The sequence lays out an entire scenario. If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, let my Lord go among us, for we are a stiff-necked people; pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.”

4tn See Exod 33:19.

5sn This is literally “long of anger.” His anger prolongs itself, allowing for people to repent before punishment is inflicted. Again, this is the verb here is ר znal (‘adonay, “to create”). The choice of this verb is to stress that these wondrous would be super-naturally performed, for the verb is used only with God as the subject.

6sn The verb here is נ  (nu’ah, “to create”). The choice of this verb is to stress that these wondrous would be super-naturally performed, for the verb is used only with God as the subject.

7tn The sentence begins simply “lest you make a covenant” with a subject and verb form. Rather you must destroy their altars, smash their images, and cut down their Asherah poles. These were to be burned or cut down (Deut 12:3; 16:21; Judg 6:25, 28, 30; 2 Kgs 18:4).

8tn Heb “bow down.”

9tn See Exod 20:3 it was “gods.”

10sn Here, too, the emphasis on God’s being a jealous God is repeated (see Exod 20:5). The use of “name” here is to stress that this is his nature, his character.

11sn The sentence begins simply “lest you make a covenant”; it is undoubtedly a continuation of the imperative introduced earlier, and so that is supplied here. The verb is a perfect with a vav consecutive. In the literal form of the sentence, this clause tells what might happen if the people made a covenant with the inhabitants of the land: “Take heed...lest you make a covenant...and then they prostitute themselves...and sacrifice...and you eat.” The sequence lays out an entire scenario.

12tn Here again is a use of the futur instans participle; the deictic particle plus the pronoun precedes the participle, showing what is about to happen.

13tn The verb here is נ  (nu’ah, “to create”). The choice of this verb is to stress that these wondrous would be super-naturally performed, for the verb is used only with God as the subject.

14sn The idea is that God will be doing awesome things in dealing with them, i.e., to fulfill his program.

15tn The covenant duties begin with this command to “keep well” what is being commanded. The Hebrew expression is “keep for you” the preparation and the suffix form the ethical dative, adding strength to the imperative.

16tn Again, this is the futur instans use of the participle.

17tn The exact expression is “take heed to yourself lest you make.” It is the second use of this verb in the duties, now in the Niphal stem. To take heed to yourself means to watch yourself, be sure not to do something. Here, if they failed to do this, they would end up making entangling treaties.

18sn A snare would be a trap, an allurement to ruin. See Exod 23:33.

19sn Or “images of Asherah”; ASV, NASB “their Asherah”; NCV “their Asherah idols.”

20sn An Asherah was a leading deity of the Canaanite pantheon, wife/sister of El and goddess of fertility. She was commonly worshiped at shrines in or near groves of evergreen trees, or, failing that, at markers on roadsides or near wooden poles. These were to be burned or cut down (Deut 12:3; 16:21; Judg 6:25, 28, 30; 2 Kgs 18:4).

21tn Heb “bow down.”

22tn In Exod 20:3 it was “gods.”

23tn Here, too, the emphasis on God’s being a jealous God is repeated (see Exod 20:5). The use of “name” here is to stress that this is his nature, his character.

24tn The verb is a perfect with a vav consecutive. In the literal form of the sentence, this clause tells what might happen if the people made a covenant with the inhabitants of the land: “Take heed...lest you make a covenant...and then they prostitute themselves...and sacrifice...and you eat.” The sequence lays out an entire scenario.

25tn The verb נ  (nuah) means “to play the prostitute; to prostitute themselves.” It is probably a mistranslation, a corruption of נ  (nuah) meaning “to play.” The noun א  (‘ada) is the third person masculine singular pronoun here in agreement with the noun “people.”
and sacrifice to their gods, and someone invites you,5 you will eat from his sacrifice; 34:16 and you then take6 his daughters for your sons, and when his daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will make your sons prostitute themselves to their gods as well. 34:17 You must not make yourselves molten gods.

34:18 “You must keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days7 you must eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you; do this8 at the appointed time of the month Abib, for in the month Abib you came out of Egypt.

34:19 “Every firstborn of the womb5 belongs to me, even every firstborn9 of your cattle that is a male,7 whether ox or sheep. 34:20 Now the firstling10 of a donkey you may redeem with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, then break its neck.9 You must redeem all the firstborn of your sons.

“No one will appear before me empty-handed.10

34:21 “On six days11 you may labor, but on the seventh day you must rest;12 even at the time of plowing and of harvest13 you are to rest.14

34:22 “You must observe15 the Feast of Weeks – the firstfruits of the harvest of wheat – and the Feast of Ingathering at the end16 of the year. 34:23 At three times17 in the year all your men18 must appear before the Lord God.19 the

there actually was sexual immorality at the Canaanite altars and poles.

1 tn There is no subject for the verb. It could be rendered “and one invites you,“ or it could be made a passive.
2 tn In the construction this verb would follow as a possible outcome of the last event, and so remain in the verbal sequence. If the people participate in the festivals of the land, then they will intermarry, and that could lead to further involvement with idolatry.
3 tn This is an adverbial accusative of time.
4 tn The words “do this” have been supplied.
5 tn Heb “everything that opens the womb.”
6 tn Here too: everything that “opens [the womb].”
7 tn The verb basically means “that drops a male.” The verb is feminine, referring to the donkey.
8 tn Heb “and the one that opens [the womb of] the donkey.”
10 tn The form is the adverb “empty.”
11 tn This is an adverbial accusative of time.
12 tn Or “cease” (i.e., from the labors).
14 tn The imperfect tense expresses injunction or instruction.
15 tn The imperfect tense means “you will do”; it is followed by the preposition with a suffix to express the ethical dative to stress the subject.
16 tn The expression is “the turn of the year,” which is parallel to “the going out of the year,” and means the end of the agricultural season.
17 tn “Three times” is an adverbial accusative.
18 tn Heb “all your males.”
19 sn Here the divine name reads in Hebrew יהוה צוותא (ha‘adon y’hovah), which if rendered according to the traditional scheme of “Lords” for “Yahweh” would result in “Lord Lord.” A number of English versions therefore render this phrase “Lord God,“ and that convention has been followed here.
20 sn The title “Lord” is included here before the divine name (translated “Go“ here; see Exod 23:17), perhaps to form a contrast with Baal (which means “lord“ as well) and to show

God of Israel. 34:24 For I will drive out20 the nations before you and enlarge your borders; no one will covet22 your land when you go up22 to appear before the Lord your God three times23 in the year.

34:25 “You must not offer the blood of my sacrifice with yeast; the sacrifice from the feast of Passover must not remain until the following morning.24

34:26 “The first of the firstfruits of your soil you must bring to the house of the Lord your God. You must not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.”25

34:27 The Lord said to Moses, “Write down26 these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.”

34:28 So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights;27 he did not eat bread, and he did not drink water. He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.28

the sovereignty of Yahweh. But the distinct designation “the God of Israel” is certainly the point of the renewed covenant relationship.

20 tn The verb is a Hiphil imperfect of לוהי (yarah), which means “to possess.” In the causative stem it can mean “dispossess” or “drive out.”
21 sn The verb “covet” means more than desire; it means that some action will be taken to try to acquire the land that is being coveted. It is one thing to envy someone for their land; it is another to be consumed by the desire that stops at nothing to get it (i.e., something like it).
22 tn The construction uses the infinitive construct with a preposition and a suffixed subject to form the temporal clause.
23 tn The expression “three times” is an adverbial accusative of time.
25 sn See the note on this same command in 23:19.
26 tn Once again the preposition with the suffix follows the imperative, adding some emphasis to the subject of the verb.
27 tn These too are adverbial in relation to the main clause, telling how long Moses was with Yahweh on the mountain.
28 tn Heb “the ten words,” though “commandments” is traditional.
The Radiant Face of Moses

34:29 Now when Moses came down2 from Mount Sinai with3 the two tablets of the testimony in his hand4 – when he came down5 from the mountain, Moses6 did not know that the skin of his face shone7 while he talked with him. 34:30 When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face shone;8 and they were afraid to approach him. 34:31 But Moses called to them, so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and Moses spoke to them. 34:32 After this all the Israelites approached, and he commanded them all that the Lord had spoken to him on Mount Sinai. 34:33 When Moses finished9 speaking10 with them, he would11 put a veil on his face. 34:34 But when Moses went in12 before the Lord to speak with him, he would remove the veil until he came out.13 Then he would come out and tell the Israelites what he had been commanded.14 34:35 When the Israelites would see15 the face of Moses, that16 the skin of Moses’ face shone, Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with the Lord.17

Sabbath Regulations

35:1 Moses assembled the whole community of the Israelites and said to them, “These are the things that the Lord has commanded you to do.18 35:2 In six days19 work may be done, but on the seventh day there must be a holy day20 for you, a Sabbath of complete rest to the Lord.21 Anyone who does work on it will be put to death. 35:3 You must not kindle a fire22 in any of your homes23 on the Sabbath day.”24

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2 sn Now, at the culmination of the renewing of the covenant, comes the account of Moses’ shining face. It is important to read this in its context first, holding off on the connection to Paul’s discussion in 2 Corinthians. There is a delicate authentication of the message must be used cautiously with the weak substantival genitive (“Moses”). The section again can be subdivided into three points that develop the whole idea: 1. The one word is derived. Some have tried to defend this, saying that if Moses had horns, the primary meaning of the word from which this was formed may be taken as a substitute for “holy day.” 3. The presence of these three verses in this place has raised all kinds of questions. It may be that after the renewal of the covenant the people needed a reminder to obey God, and obeying the sign of the covenant was the starting point. It may be that after the renewal they would see more than they could handle. The subject matter in the OT, then, is how to keep the covenant. 23 sn This clause is introduced by the deictic particle הִנֵּה (hinneh) that has the force of pointing to something surprising or sudden.

3 sn The second clause begins with “and now”; it is a circumstantial clause explaining that the tablets were in his hand. It repeats the temporal clause at the end.

4 sn Heb “in the hand of Moses.”

5 sn The temporal clause parallels the first temporal clause; it uses the same infinitive construct, but now with a suffix referring to Moses.

6 sn Heb “and Moses.”

7 tn The word כַּרְעָן (qaran) is derived from the noun כַּרְע (qeren) in the sense of a “ray of light” (see Hab 3:4). Something of the divine glory remained with Moses. The Greek translation of Aquila and the Latin Vulgate convey the idea that he had horns, the primary meaning of the word from which this word is derived. Some have tried to defend this, saying that the glory appeared like horns or that Moses covered his face with a mask adorned with horns. But in the text the subject of the verb is the skin of Moses’ face (see U. Cassuto, Exodus, 449).

8 sn This clause is introduced by the deictic particle ה֖וּר (hnuw): it has the force of pointing to some surprising or sudden.

9 sn Heb “and Moses finished”; the clause is subordinated as a temporal clause to the next clause.

10 tn The Piel infinitive construct is the object of the preposition; the whole phrase serves as the direct object of the verb “finished.”

11 tn Throughout this section the actions of Moses and the people are frequentative. The text tells what happened regularly.

12 tn The construction uses an infinitive construct for the temporal clause; it is prefixed with the temporal preposition: “and in the going in of Moses.”

13 sn The temporal clause begins with the temporal preposition “until,” followed by an infinitive construct with the suffixed subjective genitive.

14 sn The form is the Pual imperfect, but since the context demands a past tense here, in fact a past perfect tense, this is probably an old preterite form without a vav consecutive.

15 sn Now the perfect tense with vav consecutive is subordinated to the next clause, “Moses returned the veil….”

16 sn Verbs of seeing often take two accusatives. Here, the second is the noun clause explaining what it was about the face that they saw.

17 sn Heb “with him”; the referent (the Lord) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

18 sn Heb “to do them”; this is somewhat redundant in English and has been simplified in the translation.

19 sn This is an adverbial accusative of time.

20 sn The word is יִפְקָד (ypqah, “holiness”). S. R. Driver suggests that the word was transposed, and the line should read: “sabbath of entire rest, holy to Jehovah” (Exodus, 379). But the word may simply be taken as a substitution for “holy day.”


22 sn Kindling a fire receives special attention here because the people thought that kindling a fire was not work, but only a preparation for some kind of work. The Law makes sure that this too was not done. But see also G. Robinson, “The Prohibition of Strange Fire in Ancient Israel: A Look at the Case of Gathering Wood and Kindling Fire on the Sabbath,” VT 28 (1978): 303-17.

23 sn Heb “dwelling places”; KJV, ASV “habitations.”

24 sn The presence of these three verses in this place has raised all kinds of questions. It may be that after the renewal of the covenant the people needed a reminder to obey God, and obeying the sign of the covenant was the starting point. But there is more to it than this; it is part of the narrative design of the book. It is the artistic design that puts the filling of the Spirit section (31:1-11) prior to the Sabbath laws (31:12-18) before the idolatry section, and then after the renewal there is the Sabbath reminder (35:1-3) before the filling of the Spirit material (35:4-36:7).
EXODUS 35:4

Willing Workers

35:4 Moses spoke to the whole community of the Israelites, “This is the word that the Lord has commanded: 35:5 ‘Take an offering for the Lord. Let everyone who has a willing heart bring an offering to the Lord: gold, silver, bronze, blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, fine linen, goat’s hair, ram skins dyed red, fine leather, acacia wood, olive oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, onyx stones, and other stones for making the breastpiece.

35:10 Every skilled person among you is to come and make all that the Lord has commanded: 35:11 the tabernacle with its tent, its covering, its clasps, its frames, its crossbars, its posts, and its bases; 35:12 the ark, with its poles, the atonement lid, and the special curtain that conceals it; 35:13 the table with its poles and all its vessels, and the Bread of the Presence; 35:14 the lampstand for the light and its accessories, its lamps, and oil for the light; 35:15 and the altar of incense with its poles, the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense; the hanging for the door at the entrance of the tabernacle; 35:16 the altar for the burnt offering with its bronze grating that is on it, its poles, and all its utensils; the large basin and its pedestal; 35:17 the hangings of the courtyard, its posts and its bases, and the curtain for the gateway to the courtyard; 35:18 tent pegs for the tabernacle and tent pegs for the courtyard and their ropes; 35:19 the woven garments for serving in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments for his sons to minister as priests.”

35:20 So the whole community of the Israelites went out from the presence of Moses. 35:21 Everyone whose heart stirred him to action and everyone whose spirit was willing came and brought the offering for the Lord for the work of the tent of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments. 35:22 They came, men and women alike, all who had willing hearts. They brought brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments, all kinds of gold jewelry and everyone came who waved a wave offering of gold to the Lord.

35:23 Everyone who had blue, purple, or scarlet yarn, fine linen, goats’ hair, ram skins dyed red, or fine leather brought them. 35:24 Everyone making an offering of silver or bronze brought it as an offering to the Lord, and everyone who had acacia wood brought it for any work of the service brought it. 35:25 Every woman who was skilled spun with her hands and brought what she had spun, blue, purple, or scarlet yarn, or fine linen.

12 tn Heb “man.”
13 tn The verb means “lift up, bear, carry.” Here the subject is “heart” or will, and so the expression describes one moved within to act.
14 tn Heb “his spirit made him willing.” The verb is used in Scripture for the freewill offering that people brought (Lev 7).
15 tn Literally “the garments of holiness,” the genitive is the attributive genitive, marking out what type of garments these were.
16 tn The expression in Hebrew is “men on/after the women,” meaning men with women, to ensure that it was clear that the preceding verse did not mean only men. B. Jacob takes it further, saying that the men came after the women because the latter had taken the initiative (Exodus, 1017).
17 tn Heb “all gold utensils.”
18 tn The verb could be translated “offered,” but it is cognate with the following noun that is the wave offering. This sentence underscores the freewill nature of the offerings people made. The word “came” is supplied from v. 21 and v. 22.
19 tn The text uses a relative clause with a resumptive pronoun for this: “who was found with him,” meaning “with whom was found.”
20 tn The conjunction in this verse is translated “or” because the sentence does not intend to say that each person had all these things. They brought what they had.
21 tn See the note on this phrase in Exod 25:5.
22 tn Here “them” has been supplied.
23 tn This translation takes “offering” as an adverbial accusative explaining the form or purpose of their bringing things. It could also be rendered as the direct object, but that would seem to repeat without much difference what had just been said.
24 sn U. Cassuto notes that the expression “with whom was found” does not rule out the idea that these folks went out and cut down acacia trees (Exodus, 458). It is unlikely that they had much wood in their tents.
25 tn Here “it” has been supplied.
26 tn Heb “wisdom of heart,” which means that they were skilled and could make all the right choices about the work.
heart stirred them to action and who were skilled² to spin goats’ hair.

35:27 The leaders brought onyx stones and other gems to be mounted² for the ephod and the breastpiece, 35:28 and spices and olive oil for the light, for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense.

35:29 The Israelites brought a freewill offering to the Lord, every man and woman whose heart was willing to bring materials for all the work that the Lord through³ Moses had commanded them⁴ to do.

35:30 Moses said to the Israelites, “See, the Lord has chosen² Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 35:31 He has filled him with the Spirit of God – with skill, with understanding, with knowledge, and in all kinds of work, 35:32 to design artistic designs, to work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, 35:33 and in cutting stones for their setting, and in cutting wood, to do work in every artistic craft.³ 35:34 And he has put it in his heart⁶ to teach, he and Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. 35:35 He has filled them with skill⁹ to do all kinds of work¹° as craftsmen, as designers, as embroiderers in blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and in fine linen, and as weavers. They are¹¹ craftmen in all the work¹² and artistic designers.¹³ 36:1 So Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person¹⁴ in whom the Lord has put skill¹⁵ and ability¹⁶ to know how to do all the work for the service¹⁸ of the sanctuary are to do the work¹⁹ according to all that the Lord has commanded.”

36:2 Moses summoned²⁰ Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person in whom²¹ the Lord had put skill – everyone whose heart stirred him²² to volunteer²³ to do the work, 36:3 and they received from Moses all the offerings the Israelites had brought to do²⁴ the work for the service of the sanctuary, and they still continued to bring him a freewill offering each morning.²⁵ 36:4 So all the skilled people who were doing all the work on the sanctuary came from the work²⁶ they were doing 36:5 and told Moses, “The people are bringing much more than²⁷ is needed for the completion²⁸ of the work which the Lord commanded us to do!”²⁹ 36:6 Moses instructed them to take³⁰ his message³¹ throughout the camp, saying, “Let no man or woman do any more work for the offering for the sanctuary.” So the people were restrained from bringing any more.³² 36:7 Now the materials were more than enough³³ for them to do all the work.³⁴

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² tn The text simply uses a prepositional phrase, “with/in wisdom.” It seems to be qualifying “the women” as the relative clause is.
³ tn “in every work of thought,” meaning, every work that required the implementation of design or plan.
⁴ sn The expression means that God has given them the ability and the desire to teach others how to do the work. The infinitive construct “to teach” is related to the word Torah, “instruction, guide, law.” They will be able to direct others in the work.
⁵ tn The expression “wisdom of heart,” or “wisdom in heart,” means artistic skill. The decisions and plans they make are skilled. The expression forms a second accusative after the verb of filling.
⁶ tn The expression “all the work” means “all kinds of work.”
⁷ tn Here “They are” has been supplied.
⁸ tn “wise of [in] heart.”
⁹ tn “doers of all work.”
¹⁰ tn “designers of designs.”
¹¹ tn “wisdom.”
¹² tn “understanding, discernment.”
¹³ tn “The relative clause includes this infinitive clause that expresses either the purpose or the result of God’s giving wisdom and understanding to these folk.
¹⁴ tn This noun is usually given an interpretive translation. B. Jacob renders the bound relationship as “the holy task” or “the sacred task” (Exodus, 1019). The NIV makes it “constructing,” so read “the work of constructing the sanctuary.”
¹⁵ tn The first word of the verse is a perfect tense with vav ( ) consecutive; it is singular because it agrees with the first of the compound subject. The sentence is a little cumbersome because of the extended relative clause in the middle.
¹⁶ tn The verb תְּנַשֶּׁה (qara’) plus the preposition “to” – “to call to” someone means “to summon” that person.
¹⁷ tn Here there is a slight change: “in whose heart Yahweh had put skill.”
¹⁸ tn Or “whose heart was willing.”
¹⁹ tn The verb means more than “approach” or “draw near,” qəḇər (qarav) is the word used for drawing near the altar as in bringing an offering. Here they offer themselves, their talents and their time.
²⁰ tn In the Hebrew text the infinitive “to do it” comes after “sanctuary”; it makes a smoother rendering in English to move it forward, rather than reading “brought for the work.”
²¹ tn “in the morning, in the morning.”
²² tn “a man, a man from his work”; or “each one from his work.”
²³ tn “the construction uses the verbal hendiadys: בִּשְׁלָמִים (marshim Phali) is the Hiphil participle followed (after the subject) by the Hiphil infinitive construct. It would read, “they multiply...to bring,” meaning, “they bring more” than is needed.
²⁴ tn “for the service” (so KJV, ASV).
²⁵ tn “the last clause is merely the infinitive with an object – ‘to do it.’ It clearly means the skilled workers are to do it.
²⁶ tn The verse simply reads, “and Moses commanded and they caused [a voice] to cross over in the camp.” The second preterite with the vav may be subordinated to the first clause, giving the intent (purpose or result).
²⁷ tn “voice.”
²⁸ tn “the verse ends with the infinitive serving as the object of the preposition: ‘from bringing.’
²⁹ tn This part of the sentence comes from the final verb, the Hiphil infinitive – leave over, meaning, have more than enough (see BDB 451 s.v. תָּן).

EXODUS 36:8  

The Building of the Tabernacle

36:8 All the skilled among those who were doing the work made the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet; they were made with cherubim that were the work of an artistic designer. 36:9 The length of one curtain was forty-two feet, and the width of one curtain was six feet—the same size for each of the curtains. 36:10 He joined five of the curtains to one another, and the other two five curtains he joined to one another. 36:11 He made loops of blue material along the edge of the end curtain in the first set; he did the same along the edge of the end curtain in the second set. 36:12 He made fifty loops on the first curtain, and he made fifty loops on the end curtain that was in the second set, with the loops opposite one another. 36:13 He made fifty gold clasps and joined the curtains together to one another with the clasps, so that the tabernacle was a unit.³

36:14 He made curtains of goats’ hair for a tent over the tabernacle; he made eleven curtains.⁴ 36:15 The length of one curtain was forty-five feet, and the width of one curtain was six feet—one size for all eleven curtains. 36:16 He joined five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves. 36:17 He made fifty loops along the edge of the end curtain in the first set and fifty loops along the edge of the curtain that joined the second set. 36:18 He made fifty bronze clasps to join the tent together so that it might be a unit.⁵ 36:19 He made a covering for the tent out of ram skins dyed red and over that a covering of fine linen.⁶

36:20 He made the frames⁷ for the tabernacle of acacia wood⁸ as uprights.⁹ 36:21 The length of each frame was fifteen feet, the width of each frame was two and a quarter feet, 36:22 with two projections per frame parallel one to another.¹² He made all the frames of the tabernacle in this way. 36:23 So he made frames for the tabernacle: twenty frames for the south side. 36:24 He made forty silver bases under the twenty frames—two bases under the first frame for its two projections, and likewise two bases under the next frame for its two projections, 36:25 and for the second side of the tabernacle, the north side, he made twenty frames 36:26 and their forty silver bases, two bases under the first frame and two bases under the next frame. 36:27 And for the back of the tabernacle on the west he made six frames. 36:28 He made two frames for the corners of the tabernacle on the back. 36:29 At the two corners they were doubled at the lower end and finished together at the top in one ring. So he did for both. 36:30 So there were eight frames and their silver bases, sixteen bases, two bases under each frame.

36:31 He made bars of acacia wood, five for the frames on one side of the tabernacle 36:32 and five bars for the frames on the second side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames of the tabernacle for the back side on the west. 36:33 He made the middle bar to reach from end to end in the center of the frames. 36:34 He overlaid the frames with gold and made their rings of gold to provide places for the bars, and he overlaid the bars with gold.

36:35 He made the special curtain of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen; he made it with cherubim, the work of an artistic designer. 36:36 He made for it four posts of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold, with gold hooks, and he cast for them four silver bases.
36:37 He made a hanging for the entrance of the tent of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen, the work of an embroiderer. 36:38 and its five posts and their hooks. He overlaid their tops and their bands with gold, but their five bases were bronze. 2

The Making of the Ark

37:1 Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood; its length was three feet nine inches, its width two feet three inches, and its height two feet three inches. 37:2 He overlaid it with pure gold, inside and out, and he made a surrounding border of gold for it. 37:3 He cast four gold rings for it that he put on its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other side. 37:4 He made poles of acacia wood, overlaid them with gold, 37:5 and put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark in order to carry the ark.

37:6 He made an atonement lid of pure gold; its length was three feet nine inches, and its width was two feet three inches. 37:7 He made two cherubim of gold; he made them of hammered metal on the two ends of the atonement lid, 37:8 one cherub on one end and one cherub on the other end. He made the cherubim from the atonement lid on its two ends. 37:9 The cherubim were spreading their wings upward, overshadowing the atonement lid. They stood on the cherubim looking toward the atonement lid. 12

The Making of the Table

37:10 He made the table of acacia wood; its length was three feet, its width one foot six inches, and its height two feet three inches. 37:11 He overlaid it with pure gold, and he made a surrounding border of gold for it. 37:12 He made a surrounding frame for it about three inches wide, and he made a surrounding border of gold for its frame. 37:13 He cast four gold rings for it and attached the rings at the four corners where its four legs were. 37:14 The rings were close to the frame to provide places for the poles to carry the table. 37:15 He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold, to carry the table.

37:16 He made the vessels which were on the table out of pure gold, its 13 plates, its ladles, its pitchers, and its bowls, to be used in pouring out offerings.

The Making of the Altar of Incense

37:17 He made the lampstand of pure gold. He made the lampstand of hammered metal; its base and its shaft, its cups, its buds, and its blossoms were from the same piece. 37:18 Six branches were extending from its sides, three branches of the lampstand from one side of it, and three branches of the lampstand from the other side of it. 37:19 Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms were on the first branch, and three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms were on the next branch, and the same for the six branches that were extending from the lampstand. 37:20 On the lampstand there were four cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms, 37:21 with a bud under the first two branches from it, and a bud under the next two branches from it, and a bud under the third two branches from it; according to the six branches that extended from it. 37:22 Their buds and their branches were of one piece; 18 all of it was one hammered piece of pure gold. 37:23 He made its seven lamps, its trimmers, and its trays of pure gold. 37:24 He made the lampstand and all its accessories with seventy-five pounds of pure gold.

The Making of the Incense Altar

37:25 He made the incense altar of acacia wood. Its length was a foot and a half and its width a foot and a half – a square – and its height was three feet. Its horns were of one piece.

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2 tn The word is “their heads”; technically it would be “their capitals” (so ASV, NAB, NRSV). The bands were bands of metal surrounding these capitals just beneath them. These are not mentioned in Exod 26:37, and it sounds like the poles are to be covered with gold. But the gradation of metals is what is intended: the poles at the entrance to the Most Holy Place are all of gold; the posts at the entrance to the tent are overlaid with gold at the top; and the posts at the entrance to the courtyard are overlaid with silver at the top (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 387, citing Dillmann without reference).

3 tn Or “molding.”

4 tn “that he put” has been supplied.

5 tn This is taken as a circumstantial clause; the clause begins with the conjunction vav.

6 tn Heb “and he made.”

7 tn Heb “from/at [the] end, from this.”

8 tn The repetition of the expression indicates it has the distributive sense.

9 tn The construction is a participle in construct followed by the genitive “wings” — “spreading wings.”

10 tn “The cherubim” has been placed here instead of in the second clause to produce a smoother translation.

11 tn Heb “and their faces a man to his brother.”

12 tn Heb “to the atonement lid were the faces of the cherubim.”

13 tn The suffixes on these could also indicate the indirect object (see Exod 25:29).

14 tn Heb “from it”; the referent ("the same piece" of wrought metal) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

15 tn Heb “the one branch.” But the repetition of “one… one” means here one after another, or the “first” and then the “next.”

16 tn Heb “thus for six branches….”

17 tn As in Exod 26:35, the translation of “first” and “next” and “third” is interpretive, because the text simply says “under two branches” in each of three places.

18 tn Heb “were from it.”

19 tn Heb “it”; the referent (the lampstand) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
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with it.\(^1\) 37:26 He overlaid it with pure gold – its top,\(^2\) its four walls,\(^3\) and its horns and he made a surrounding border of gold for it.\(^4\) 37:27 He also made\(^5\) two gold rings for it under its border, on its two sides, on opposite sides,\(^6\) as places\(^7\) for poles to carry it with. 37:28 He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold.

37:29 He made the sacred anointing oil and the pure fragrant incense, the work of a perfumer.

The Making of the Altar for the Burnt Offering

38:1 He made the altar for the burnt offering of acacia wood seven feet six inches long and seven feet six inches wide – it was square – and its height was four feet six inches. 38:2 He made its horns on its four corners; its horns were part of it.\(^8\) and he overlaid it with bronze. 38:3 He made all the utensils of the altar – the pots, the shovels, the towing bowls, the meat hooks, and the fire pans – he made all its utensils of bronze. 38:4 He made a grating for the altar, a network of bronze under its ledge, halfway up from the bottom. 38:5 He cast four rings for the four corners of the bronze grating, to provide places for the poles. 38:6 He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with bronze. 38:7 He put the poles into the rings on the sides of the altar, with which to carry it. He made the altar\(^9\) hollow, out of boards.

38:8 He made the large basin of bronze and its pedestal of bronze from the mirrors of the women who served\(^10\) at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

The Construction of the Courtyard

38:9 He made the courtyard. For the south side\(^11\) the hangings of the courtyard were of fine twisted linen, one hundred fifty feet long,
The Materials of the Construction

38:21 This is the inventory of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, which was counted by the order of Moses, being the work of the Levites under the direction of Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest. 38:22 Now Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made everything that the Lord had commanded Moses; 38:23 and with him was Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an artisan, a designer, and an embroiderer in blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine linen.

38:24 All the gold that was used for the work, in all the work of the sanctuary (namely, the gold of the wave offering) was twenty-nine talents and 730 shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel.

38:25 The silver of those who were numbered of the community was one hundred talents and 1,775 shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel, 38:26 one beka per person, that is, a half shekel, according to the sanctuary shekel, for everyone who crossed over to those numbered, from twenty years old or older, in all. 38:27 The one hundred talents of silver were used for casting the bases of the sanctuary and the bases of the special curtain — one hundred bases for one hundred talents, one talent per base. 38:28 From the remaining 1,775 shekels he made hooks for the posts, overlaid their tops, and made bands for them.

38:29 The bronze of the wave offering was seventy talents and 2,400 shekels. 38:30 With it he made the bases for the door of the tent of meeting, the bronze altar, the bronze grating for it, and all the utensils of the altar, 38:31 the bases for the courtyard all around, the bases for the gate of the courtyard, all the tent pegs of the tabernacle, and all the tent pegs of the courtyard all around. The Making of the Priestly Garments

39:1 From the blue, purple, and scarlet yarn they made woven garments for serving in the sanctuary; they made holy garments that were for Aaron, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

The Ephod

39:2 He made the ephod of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twisted linen. 39:3 They hammered the gold into thin sheets and cut it into narrow strips to weave them into the blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and into the fine linen, the work of an artistic designer. 39:4 They made shoulder pieces for it, attached to two of its corners, so it could be joined together. 39:5 The artistically woven waistband of the ephod that was on it was like it, of one piece with it, of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

39:6 They set the onyx stones in gold filigree settings, engraved as with the engravings of a seal with the names of the sons of Israel. 39:7 He put them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as stones of memorial for the Israelites, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

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1 tn The Hebrew word is פְּקוּדֵי (p‘qude‘), which in a slavishly literal way would be “visitation of” the tabernacle. But the word often has the idea of “numbering” or “appointing” as well. Here it is an accounting or enumeration of the materials that people brought, so the contemporary term “inventory” is a close approximation. By using this Hebrew word there is also a sense of “numbering” or “appointing” as well.

2 tn Heb “by the hand of.”

3 tn The noun is “work” or “service.” S. R. Driver explains that the reckonings were not made for the Levites, but that they were the work of the Levites, done by them under the direction of Ithamar (Exodus 39:3).

4 tn These words form the casus pendens, or independent nominative absolute, followed by the apodosis beginning with the vav; see U. Cassuto, Exodus, 469).

5 tn Heb “and it was.”

6 tn There were 3000 shekels in a talent, and so the total weight here in shekels would be 87,730 shekels of gold. If the sanctuary shekel was 224 g., then this was about 40,940 oz. This is estimated to be a little over a ton (cf. NCV “over 2,000 pounds”; TEV “a thousand kilograms”; CEV “two thousand two hundred nine pounds”; NLT “about 2,200 pounds”); although other widely diverging estimates are also given.

7 tn Heb “from it” or the same.

8 sn The weight would be about half an ounce.

9 tn “from it” or the same.

10 sn Or “as seals are engraved.”

11 tn He put them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as stones of memorial for the Israelites, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.
The Breastpiece of Decision

39:8 He made the breastpiece, the work of an artistic designer, in the same fashion as the ephod, of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twisted linen. 39:9 It was square — they made the breastpiece doubled, nine inches long and nine inches wide when doubled. 39:10 They set on it four rows of stones: a row with a ruby, a topaz, and a beryl — the first row; 39:11 and the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald; 39:12 and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 39:13 and the fourth row, a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper. They were enclosed in gold filigree settings. 39:14 The stones were for the names of the sons of Israel, twelve, corresponding to the number of their names. Each name corresponding to one of the twelve tribes was like the engravings of a seal.

39:15 They made for the breastpiece braid ed chains like cords of pure gold, 39:16 and they made two gold filigree settings and two gold rings, and they attached the two rings to the upper ends of the breastpiece. 39:17 They attached the two gold chains to the two rings at the ends of the breastpiece; 39:18 the other two ends of the two chains they attached to the two settings, and they attached them to the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front of it. 39:19 They made two rings of gold and put them on the other two ends of the breastpiece on its edge, which is on the inner side of the ephod. 39:20 They made two more gold rings and attached them to the bottom of the two shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod, close to the junction above the waistband of the ephod. 39:21 They tied the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod by blue cord, so that it was above the waistband of the ephod, so that the breastpiece would not be loose from the ephod, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

The Other Garments

39:22 He made the robe of the ephod completely blue, the work of a weaver. 39:23 There was an opening in the center of the robe, like the opening of a collar, with an edge all around the opening so that it could not be torn. 39:24 They made pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and twisted linen around the hem of the robe.

39:25 They made bells of pure gold and attached the bells between the pomegranates around the hem of the robe between the pomegranates. 39:26 There was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe, to be used in ministering, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

39:27 They made tunics of fine linen — the work of a weaver, for Aaron and for his sons — and the turban of fine linen, the headbands of fine linen, and the undergarments of fine twisted linen. 39:28 The sash was of fine twisted linen and blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, the work of an embroiderer, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. 39:30 They made a plate, the holy diadem, of pure gold and wrote on it an inscription, as on the engravings of a seal, “Holiness to the Lord.” 39:31 They attached to it a blue cord, to attach it to the turban above, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

Moses Inspects the Sanctuary

39:32-41 So all the work of the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, was completed, and the Israelites did according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses — they did it exactly so. 39:33 They brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its furnishings, clasps, frames, bars, posts, and bases; 39:34 and the coverings of ram skins dyed red, the covering of fine leather, and the protecting curtain; 39:35 the ark of the testimony and its poles, and the atonement lid; 39:36 the table, all its utensils, and the Bread of the Presence; 39:37 the pure lampstand, its lamps, with the lamps set in order, and all its accessories, and oil for the light; 39:38 and the gold altar, and the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense; and the curtain for the entrance to the tent; 39:39 the bronze altar and its bronze grating, its poles, and all its utensils; the large basin with its pedestal; 39:40 the hangings of the courtyard, its posts and its bases, and the curtain for the gateway of the courtyard, its ropes and its tent pegs, and all the furnishings for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; 39:41 the woven garments for serving in the sanctuary, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments for his sons to minister as priests.

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1 tn That is, they set in mountings.
2 tn The phrase “the number of” has been supplied.
3 tn Here “upper” has been supplied.
4 tn Here “other” has been supplied.
5 tn Here “other” has been supplied.
6 tn Heb “homeward side.”
7 tn Here “more” has been supplied.
8 tn The word is simply “twined” or “twisted.” It may refer to the twisted linen that so frequently is found in these lists; or, it may refer to the yarn twisted. The LXX reads “fine twisted linen.” This is not found in the text of Exod 28:33, except in Smr and LXX.
9 tn The words “there was” are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.
10 tn The words “there was” are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.
11 sn The infinitive “to minister” is present; “to be used” is supplied from the context.
12 tn See the note on this phrase in Exod 25:5.
13 tn Or “shieling” (NIV); NASB “the screening veil.”
14 tn Possibly meaning “pure gold lampstand.”
15 tn Heb “utensils, vessels.”
16 tn The form is the infinitive construct; it means the clothes to be used “to minister” in the holy place.
39:42 The Israelites did all the work according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses. 39:43 Moses inspected all the work—and they had done it just as the LORD had commanded—they had done it exactly—and Moses blessed them.

Setting Up the Sanctuary

40:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses: 40:2 “On the first day of the first month you are to set up the tabernacle, the tent of meeting. 40:3 You are to place the ark of the testimony in it and shield the ark with the special curtain. 40:4 You are to bring in the table and set out the things that belong on it; then you are to bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. 40:5 You are to put the gold altar for incense in front of the ark of the testimony and put the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle. 40:6 You are to put the altar for the burnt offering in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting. 40:7 You are to put the large basin between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it. 40:8 You are to set up the courtyard around it and put the curtain at the gate of the courtyard. 40:9 And take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and sanctify it and all its furnishings, and it will be holy. 40:10 Then you are to anoint the altar for the burnt offering with all its utensils; you are to sanctify the altar, and it will be the most holy altar. 40:11 You must also anoint the large basin and its pedestal, and you are to sanctify it.

40:12 “You are to bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and wash them with water. 40:13 Then you are to clothe Aaron with the holy garments and anoint him and sanctify him so that he may minister as my priest. 40:14 You are to bring his sons and clothe them with tunics and anoint them just as you anointed your father, so that they may minister as my priests; their anointing will make them a priesthood that will continue throughout their generations.” 40:16 This is what Moses did, according to all the LORD had commanded him—so he did.

40:17 So the tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month, in the second year. 40:18 When Moses set up the tabernacle and put its bases in place, he set up its frames, attached its bars, and set up its posts. 40:19 Then he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent over it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 40:20 He took the testimony and put it in the ark, attached the poles to the ark, and then put the atonement lid on the ark. 40:21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung the protecting curtain, and shielded the ark of the testimony from view, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.
40:22 And he put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the curtain. 40:23 And he set the bread in order on it before the Lord, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

40:24 And he put the lampstand in the tent of meeting opposite the table, on the south side of the tabernacle. 40:25 Then he set up the lamps before the Lord, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

40:26 And he put the gold altar in the tent of meeting in front of the curtain, 40:27 and he burned fragrant incense on it, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

40:28 Then he put the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle. 40:29 He also put the altar for the burnt offering by the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the meal offering, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

40:30 Then he put the large basin between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it for washing. 40:31 Moses and Aaron and his sons would wash their hands and their feet from it. 40:32 Whenever they entered the tent of meeting, and whenever they approached the altar, they would wash, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

40:33 And he set up the courtyard around the tabernacle and the altar, and put the curtain at the gate of the courtyard. So Moses finished the work.

40:34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 40:35 Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 40:36 But when the cloud was lifted up from the tabernacle, the Israelites would set out on all their journeys; 40:37 but if the cloud was not lifted up, then they would not journey further until the day it was lifted up.

40:38 For the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, but fire would be on it at night, in plain view of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

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1 tn Heb uses a cognate accusative construction, “he arranged the arrangement.”
2 tn Heb “there.”
3 tn The construction is the infinitive construct with the temporal preposition and the suffixed subjective genitive. This temporal clause indicates that the verb in the preceding verse was frequentative.
4 tn This is another infinitive construct in a temporal clause.
5 tn In this explanatory verse the verb is a customary imperfect.
6 tn The construction uses the Niphal infinitive construct to form the temporal clause.
7 tn The imperfect tense in this context describes a customary action.
8 tn The clause uses the Niphal infinitive construct in the temporal clause: “until the day of its being taken up.”
9 tn Here is another imperfect tense of the customary nuance.
10 tn Heb “to the eyes of all”; KJV, ASV, NASB “in the sight of all”; NRSV “before the eyes of all.”