EDIFIED EDITION

Exodus

A modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures

40	1,213	Old	2
chapters	verses	Testament	book of 66

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Edified Edition (EDE): a modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures from the original Hebrew and Greek, in everyday British English. www.edifiededition.com

Numbered notes follow each chapter.

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Chapter 1

Exodus 1 tells how the family of Jacob, seventy people when they came to Egypt, grows into a great people after the death of Joseph. A new king who has not known Joseph fears their numbers and puts them to forced labour building store cities, but the harder they are oppressed, the more they increase. He orders the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, to kill the newborn boys, but they fear God and let them live, and God gives them families of their own. At last Pharaoh commands all his people to throw every newborn son into the Nile.

1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who
came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his
household:
2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah,
3 Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin,
4 Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher.
5 Those descended from Jacob[1] were seventy
people in all. Joseph was already in Egypt.
6 Then Joseph died, and all his brothers, and all
that generation.
7 But the Israelites were fruitful and swarmed;[2]
they increased and grew exceedingly strong, until
the land was full of them.
8 Then a new king rose to power over Egypt, one
who had not known Joseph.
9 He said to his people, “Look, the Israelite people
are more numerous and stronger than we are.
10 Come, we must deal shrewdly with them, or they
will go on increasing, and if war breaks out they
too will join our enemies, fight against us and go
up out of the land.”
11 So they set slave masters over them to wear
them down with forced labour, and they built store
cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Raamses.
12 But the more they oppressed them, the more
they increased and the further they spread, and
the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites.
13 So the Egyptians made the Israelites serve them
with harshness.[3]
14 They made their lives bitter with hard labour,
with mortar and bricks and every kind of work in
the fields; all the labour they forced on them was
harsh.
15 The king of Egypt also spoke to the Hebrew
midwives, one of whom was called Shiphrah and
the other Puah.
16 “When you help the Hebrew women to give
birth,” he said, “look at the birthstool.[4] If it is a
son, kill him; if it is a daughter, she may live.”
17 But the midwives feared God and did not do as
the king of Egypt had told them. They let the boys
live.
18 So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives
and said to them, “Why have you done this, and
let the boys live?”
19 The midwives told Pharaoh, “The Hebrew
women are not like the Egyptian women. They are
full of life, and they have given birth before the
midwife reaches them.”
20 So God dealt kindly with the midwives, and the
people multiplied and grew very strong.
21 And because the midwives feared God, He gave
them households of their own.
22 Then Pharaoh gave orders to all his people:
“Every son that is born[5] you must throw into the
Nile, but let every daughter live.”

1 Hebrew ‘who came out of Jacob’s thigh’, a way of speaking of a man’s descendants (Genesis 46:26).

2 The words of Genesis 1:20–28: ‘be fruitful’, ‘swarm’, ‘increase’, ‘fill the earth’. God’s blessing at creation is coming true in Israel.

3 Hebrew: בְּפָרֶךְ (befarech), ‘with crushing harshness’; again in verse 14 and in Leviticus 25:43, where Israel is forbidden to treat a fellow Israelite this way.

4 Hebrew: אָבְנָיִם (ovnayim), ‘the two stones’, on which a woman crouched to give birth.

5 The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Greek add ‘to the Hebrews’.

Chapter 2

Exodus 2 tells of the birth of Moses. A Levite woman hides her baby son for three months and then lays him in a basket among the reeds of the Nile, where Pharaoh's daughter finds him; through his sister, he is given back to his own mother to nurse, and Pharaoh's daughter adopts him and names him Moses. When he has grown up, Moses kills an Egyptian who is beating a Hebrew, and when the deed becomes known he flees to Midian. There he defends the daughters of Reuel the priest, marries Zipporah and has a son, Gershom. In Egypt the Israelites groan under their slavery, and God hears, remembers His covenant and takes notice of them.

1 Now a man from the house of Levi went and
married a daughter of Levi.
2 The woman conceived and bore a son, and when
she saw what a fine child he was,[1] she hid him for
three months.
3 When she could hide him no longer, she took a
basket[2] of papyrus for him and coated it with tar
and pitch. She put the child in it and set it among
the reeds at the edge of the Nile.
4 His sister stood at a distance to see what would
happen to him.
5 Then Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe at
the Nile, while her young women walked along the
riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds
and sent her slave girl to fetch it.
6 She opened it and saw the child, a baby boy,
crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one
of the Hebrews' children."
7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall
I go and call one of the Hebrew women to nurse
the child for you?"
8 "Go," Pharaoh's daughter told her. So the girl
went and called the child's mother.
9 Pharaoh's daughter told her, "Take this child
home and nurse him for me, and I will see that
you are paid." So the woman took the baby away
with her and nursed him.
10 Once the child had grown, she took him to
Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him as her own
son. She called him Moses,[3] "for," she said, "I
pulled him out of the water."
11 In those days, when Moses had grown up, he
went out to his own people and saw their forced
labour. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one
of his own people.
12 Glancing this way and that and seeing nobody,
he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the
sand.
13 The next day he went out again, and there were
two Hebrew men fighting. He said to the one in
the wrong, "Why are you striking your
neighbour?"
14 The man replied, "Who made you a ruler and
judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you
killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and
thought, "So the thing is known."
15 When Pharaoh heard about it, he tried to kill
Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to
live in the land of Midian, and he sat down by a
well.
16 The Midianite priest had seven daughters. They
came to the well to draw water and fill the
troughs, so that their father's flock could drink.
17 Some shepherds came and drove them away, but
Moses stood up, came to their rescue and watered
their flock.
18 When they came home to their father Reuel,[4] he
asked, "Why have you come back so soon today?"
19 "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds,"
they said. "He even drew water for us and
watered the flock."
20 "Then where is he?" he asked his daughters.
"Why did you leave the man there? Invite him to
share our bread."
21 Moses agreed to stay with the man, and he gave
Moses his daughter Zipporah in marriage.
22 She bore a son, and he named him Gershom,[5]
for he said, "I have become a foreigner in a land
not my own."
23 Many years later the king of Egypt died. The
Israelites groaned under their slavery and cried
out, and their cry for help because of their slavery
rose up to God.
24 And God heard their groans; God called to mind
His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with
Jacob.
25 God saw the Israelites, and God took notice of
them.[6]

1 Hebrew ‘that he was good’, the words said of creation in Genesis 1. Acts 7:20 and Hebrews 11:23 say ‘beautiful’.

2 Hebrew: תֵּבָה (tevah), the word used for Noah’s ark (Genesis 6:14) and nowhere else in the Bible. Once again a child is carried safely over waters of death.

3 Hebrew: מֹשֶׁה (Mosheh), which sounds like מָשָׁה (mashah), ‘to draw out’. It is also an Egyptian word for ‘son’, as in the names Rameses and Thutmose.

4 Reuel means ‘friend of God’. He is also called Jethro (3:1) and perhaps Hobab (Numbers 10:29; Judges 4:11).

5 Gershom sounds like Hebrew גֵּר שָׁם (ger sham), ‘a foreigner there’.

6 Hebrew ‘and God knew’: He knew their plight and cared.

Chapter 3

Exodus 3 tells how God calls Moses at the burning bush. While Moses is keeping Jethro’s flock near Horeb, the mountain of God, the angel of the LORD appears to him in a bush that burns without being consumed, and God speaks to him from it as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He has seen the suffering of His people and has come down to rescue them and bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey, and He is sending Moses to Pharaoh. When Moses asks His name, God answers, “I AM WHO I AM”, and gives His name, the LORD, for ever. He warns that Pharaoh will not let the people go until God strikes Egypt, and promises that Israel will not leave empty-handed.

1 Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. He drove the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb,[1] the mountain of God.

2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the middle of a bush.[2] He looked, and though the bush was blazing with fire, the bush was not burnt up.

3 So Moses said, “I must turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burning away.”

4 When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he answered, “Here I am.”

5 “Do not come any closer,” He said. “Take your sandals off, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”

6 He went on, “I am your father’s God, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this Moses hid his face, afraid to look at God.

7 The LORD said, “I have seen, I have truly seen the misery of My people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave masters, for I know what they are suffering.

8 I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the home of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.

9 And now the cry of the Israelites has come to Me, and I have also seen how the Egyptians are crushing them.

10 So now go: I am sending you to Pharaoh, to bring My people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.”

11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

12 “I will be with you,”[3] He said. “And this will be the sign for you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will serve[4] God on this mountain.”

13 Moses said to God, “Suppose 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?’ What shall I say to them?”

14 God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.”[5] And He said, “This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

15 God said further to Moses, “Tell the Israelites: ‘The LORD,[6] 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 for all time; by this name I am to be called to mind in every generation.

16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together and tell them, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me and said: I have surely come to your aid,[7] and I have seen what has been done to you in Egypt.

17 And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.'

18 They will listen to what you say, and then you and the elders of Israel are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now let us go, we ask you, three days' journey into the wilderness, to sacrifice to the LORD our God.'

19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go, not even under a mighty hand.[8]

20 So I will reach out My hand and strike Egypt with My wonders, all that I will do among them; and after that he will send you away.

21 I will give this people such favour with the Egyptians that when you go, you will not go empty-handed.

22 Every woman is to ask her neighbour, and any woman living in her house, for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, and you will put them on your sons and daughters. So you will plunder the Egyptians."

1 Horeb is another name for Mount Sinai (19:11; Deuteronomy 4:10–15).

2 Hebrew: סְנֶה (seneh), a thorn bush. The word sounds like Sinai.

3 Hebrew: אֶהְיֶה (ehyeh), 'I will be', the word God uses of Himself in verse 14.

4 Hebrew עָבַד (avad) means both to serve as a slave and to worship. Israel is taken from serving Pharaoh to serving God (4:23).

5 Hebrew: אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה (ehyeh asher ehyeh), or 'I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE'. אֶהְיֶה (ehyeh), 'I am' or 'I will be', comes from the same verb as God's name, YHWH (verse 15). Compare John 8:58.

6 Hebrew: יהוה (YHWH), probably 'He is' or 'He will be', the form of 'I AM' (verse 14) used when others speak of Him. Following Jewish custom, it is read 'Adonai' and written 'the LORD' in capitals; see the note on Genesis 2:4.

7 The promise Joseph made as he died, in the same words: 'God will surely come to your aid' (Genesis 50:24–25).

8 Or 'unless a mighty hand compels him'.

Chapter 4

Exodus 4 continues the call of Moses. To answer his fear that the people will not believe him, the LORD gives him three signs: his staff becomes a snake, his hand becomes diseased and is restored, and water from the Nile will turn to blood. When Moses protests that he is no speaker and begs God to send someone else, the LORD is angry but gives him his brother Aaron to speak for him. On the way back to Egypt the LORD confronts Moses at a lodging place, and Zipporah circumcises their son. Aaron meets Moses at the mountain of God, and when the elders of Israel hear the words and see the signs, they believe and worship.

1 Moses answered, "But what if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? What if they say, 'The LORD did not appear to you'?"

2 The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" "A staff," he said.

3 "Throw it down on the ground," He said. Moses threw it down, and it turned into a snake, and he fled from it.

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Put out your hand and take hold of it by the tail." So he put out his hand and caught hold of it, and it became a staff in his grip.

5 "This is to make them believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, did appear to you."

6 Then the LORD said to him, "Next, slip your hand into the fold of your cloak." He slipped his hand into his cloak and drew it out, and his hand was diseased,[1] as white as snow.

7 "Slip your hand back into your cloak," He said. So he slipped it back, and when he drew it out of his cloak this time, it was like the rest of his flesh again.

8 "If they do not believe you, and pay no attention to the first sign,[2] they may believe the second sign.

9 And if they will not believe even these two signs or listen to what you say, take some water from the Nile and pour it out on the dry ground, and the water you take from the Nile will turn to blood on the dry ground."

10 But Moses said to the LORD, “Please, my Lord, I have never been a man of words, not in the past and not since You began to speak to Your servant. I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”[3]

11 The LORD said to him, “Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?

12 Now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what to say.”

13 But Moses said, “Please, my Lord, send someone else, anyone You choose.”[4]

14 Then the LORD’s anger burned against Moses. “What about your brother Aaron, the Levite?” He said. “I know that he can speak well. Already he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you he will be glad in his heart.

15 You will talk to him and give him the words to say, and I will be with your mouth and his, and show you both what to do.

16 He will speak to the people for you. He will be a mouth for you, and you will be like God to him.[5]

17 And take this staff in your hand, for you will do the signs with it.”

18 Then Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro[6] and said to him, “Let me go back, please, to my own people in Egypt, to see whether they are still alive.” And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.”

19 The LORD said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, for all the men who wanted to kill you are dead.”

20 So Moses took his wife and his sons, put them on a donkey and set out for the land of Egypt. And Moses took the staff of God in his hand.

21 And the LORD said to Moses, “As you go back to Egypt, see to it that you perform in front of Pharaoh every wonder I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart,[7] so that he refuses to let the people go.

22 Then you are to say to Pharaoh, ‘This is what the LORD says: Israel is My son, My firstborn,

23 and I have told you, “Let My son go to serve Me,” but you would not let him go. So I am going to kill your son, your firstborn.’”

24 On the way, at a place where they stopped for the night, the LORD met Moses[8] and was about to put him to death.

25 But Zipporah took a flint, cut off her son’s foreskin and touched his feet[9] with it. “Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me,” she said.

26 So the LORD let him alone. It was because of the circumcision that she said then, “A bridegroom of blood.”

27 Meanwhile the LORD told Aaron, “Go out into the wilderness to meet Moses.” He went, and he met him at the mountain of God and kissed him.

28 Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had sent him to say, and all the signs He had commanded him to do.

29 Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered all the elders of the Israelites together.

30 Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses, and did the signs before the people’s eyes,

31 and the people believed. When they heard that the LORD had come to the aid of the Israelites and had seen their misery, they bowed low and worshipped.

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1 Hebrew: מְצֹרָעַת (metsora’at), traditionally ‘leprous’, a word for several skin diseases (Leviticus 13).

2 Hebrew ‘listen to the voice of the first sign’. A sign speaks; it is a message from God.

3 Hebrew ‘heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue’.

4 Hebrew ‘send, please, by the hand of whom You will send’.

5 That is, the one whose words he passes on, as a prophet passes on the words of God (7:1).

6 Hebrew ‘Jether’, another form of the name.

7 Hebrew: חָזַק (chazaq), ‘make strong, make firm’. Exodus uses three verbs for the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart; see the note on 7:14.

8 Hebrew ‘met him’. It is probably Moses whom the LORD seeks to kill, though it may be his son.

9 Probably Moses’ feet, though it may be the child’s; ‘feet’ may be a polite word for the private parts.

Chapter 5

Exodus 5 tells of the first meeting with Pharaoh. Moses and Aaron ask in the LORD's name that Israel be allowed to go and hold a festival in the wilderness, but Pharaoh answers that he does not know the LORD. Instead he orders that the people be given no more straw for their bricks, yet make as many as before, and when the Israelite foremen fall short they are beaten. The foremen turn on Moses and Aaron, and Moses brings his complaint to the LORD: since he spoke to Pharaoh, things have only got worse.

1 Afterwards Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh
and said, "This is what the LORD, the God of
Israel, says: 'Let My people go, so that they may
hold a festival to Me in the wilderness.'"

2 But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I
should do as He says and let Israel go? I do not
know the LORD, and in any case I will not let
Israel go."

3 "The God of the Hebrews has met with us," they
said. "Please let us go three days' journey into the
wilderness to sacrifice to the LORD our God, or
He may fall on us with plague or with the sword."

4 But the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and
Aaron, why are you drawing the people away from
their work? Get back to your labours!"

5 "Look how many the people of the land are now,"
Pharaoh said, "and you would have them stop
working!"

6 That same day Pharaoh gave orders to the slave
masters in charge of the people and to their
foremen:

7 "You are no longer to supply the people with
straw for making bricks, as you have done until
now. Let them go and gather straw for themselves.

8 But you are to require of them the same number
of bricks as before; do not let them make one
fewer. They are idle, and that is why they are
crying out, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.'

9 Make the work heavier for the men, so that they
are kept at it and take no notice of lies."

10 So the slave masters and foremen of the people
went out and told the people, "This is what
Pharaoh says: 'I am giving you no more straw.

11 Go and get your own straw wherever you can
find it, for not the least part of your work will be
reduced.'"

12 So the people scattered all over the land of
Egypt to gather stubble to use for straw.

13 The slave masters kept driving them on: "Finish
your work, each day's quota on its day, just as
when there was straw."

14 And the Israelite foremen, whom Pharaoh's
slave masters had put over them, were beaten.
"Why have you not completed your quota of
bricks, yesterday or today, as you did before?"
they were asked.

15 Then the Israelite foremen went and cried out to
Pharaoh, "Why do you treat your servants like
this?

16 No straw is given to your servants, and still we
are told, 'Make bricks!' Your servants are being
beaten, but the fault lies with your own people."[1]

17 But he said, "Idle, that is what you are, idle!
That is why you keep saying, 'Let us go and
sacrifice to the LORD.'

18 Now go and work. You will be given no straw,
but you must still turn out the full tally of bricks."

19 The Israelite foremen saw that they were in
trouble when they were told, "You are not to make
one brick fewer each day."

20 As they came away from Pharaoh, they found
Moses and Aaron standing there waiting for them,

21 and they said to them, "May the LORD look on
you and judge you! You have made us stink[2] in the
eyes of Pharaoh and his servants, and put a sword
in their hand to kill us."

22 Then Moses turned back to the LORD and said,
"My Lord, why have You done harm to this
people? Why did You ever send me?

23 Since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name,
he has done nothing but harm to this people, and
You have done nothing at all to rescue Your
people."

1 The Hebrew is difficult: literally 'and your people sin'.

2 Hebrew 'made our smell foul', the word used of the Nile in 7:18.

Chapter 6

Exodus 6 gives the LORD's answer to Moses' complaint. God declares that He is the LORD, who appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as God Almighty and made a covenant with them; now He has heard Israel's groaning, and He promises to bring them out, redeem them, take them as His own people and give them the land. But the Israelites, broken by their slavery, will not listen, and Moses doubts that Pharaoh will. The chapter then lists the families of Reuben, Simeon and Levi, tracing the line of Moses and Aaron, before the LORD sends Moses back to Pharaoh.

1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you will see
what I will do to Pharaoh. Under a mighty hand he
will let them go; under a mighty hand he will drive
them out of his land."

2 God spoke to Moses and told him, "I am the
LORD.

3 To Abraham, Isaac and Jacob I appeared as God
Almighty; but My name, the LORD, I did not make
known to them.[1]

4 I also made My covenant with them, to give them
the land of Canaan, the land where they lived as
foreigners.

5 And now I have heard the groaning of the
Israelites, whom the Egyptians are keeping in
slavery, and I have remembered My covenant.

6 So say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD. I will
bring you out from under the burdens of the
Egyptians, I will rescue you from slavery to them,
and I will redeem[2] you with an outstretched arm
and with great acts of judgement.

7 I will take you to be My own people, and I will be
your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD
your God, who brought you out from under the
burdens of the Egyptians.

8 And I will bring you to the land that I raised My
hand in oath to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
and I will give it to you to possess. I am the
LORD.'"

9 Moses told this to the Israelites, but they would
not listen to him; their spirit was crushed,[3] and
their slavery was cruel.

10 Then the LORD said to Moses,

11 "Go in and tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the
Israelites go out of his land."

12 But Moses answered the LORD, "If the Israelites
have not listened to me, why would Pharaoh listen
to me, when my lips are uncircumcised?"[4]

13 But the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and
gave them a charge, for the Israelites and for
Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the Israelites out
of the land of Egypt.

14 These are the heads of their fathers' houses. The
sons of Reuben, Israel's firstborn: Hanoch, Pallu,
Hezron and Carmi. These are the clans of Reuben.

15 The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad,
Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, whose mother was a
Canaanite. These are the clans of Simeon.

16 These are the names of the sons of Levi,
generation by generation: Gershon, Kohath and
Merari. Levi lived a hundred and thirty-seven
years.

17 The sons of Gershon, clan by clan: Libni and
Shimei.

18 The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and
Uzziel. Kohath lived a hundred and thirty-three
years.

19 The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are
the clans of the Levites, generation by generation.

20 Amram took his father's sister Jochebed as his
wife, and she bore him Aaron and Moses. Amram
lived a hundred and thirty-seven years.

21 The sons of Izhar: Korah, Nepheg and Zichri.

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

23 Aaron took as his wife Elisheba, daughter of
Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, and she bore
him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

24 The sons of Korah: Assir, Elkanah and Abiasaph.
These are the clans of the Korahites.

25 Eleazar son of Aaron married one of Putiel's
daughters, who bore him Phinehas. Such were the
heads of the Levite families, clan by clan.

26 This is the Aaron and the Moses to whom the
LORD said, "Bring the Israelites out of the land of
Egypt, company by company."[5]

27 They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king
of Egypt about bringing the Israelites out of
Egypt: this Moses and this Aaron.

28 Now on the day the LORD spoke to Moses in the
land of Egypt,

29 the LORD said to Moses, "I am the LORD. Tell
Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I am telling you."

30 But Moses said to the LORD, “My lips are uncircumcised; why would Pharaoh listen to me?”

1 Abraham, Isaac and Jacob used the name (Genesis 15:7; 28:13), but had not yet seen what it means: the LORD who keeps His covenant and redeems His people (verses 4–8). Some take the words as a question: ‘did I not make Myself known to them?’

2 Hebrew: גָּאַל (ga’al), to act as the family redeemer (גֹּאֵל, go’el), the relative who buys back what was lost (Ruth 4:1–10).

3 Hebrew ‘shortness of spirit’, or ‘shortness of breath’.

4 That is, closed and unskilled, as an ear that will not hear is ‘uncircumcised’ (Jeremiah 6:10). Again in verse 30.

5 Hebrew: צִבְאֹתָם (tsiv’otam), ‘their armies’, the people marching out in ordered ranks (7:4; 12:17, 41, 51).

Chapter 7

Exodus 7 begins the contest with Pharaoh. The LORD tells Moses that He will make Pharaoh’s heart stubborn and multiply His signs, so that Egypt will know that He is the LORD. Before Pharaoh, Aaron’s staff becomes a serpent, and though the magicians of Egypt do the same, Aaron’s staff swallows theirs. Then comes the first plague: Aaron strikes the Nile, its water turns to blood, the fish die and the Egyptians cannot drink. When the magicians copy the sign, Pharaoh’s heart is hardened and he turns away.

1 The LORD said to Moses, “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet.[1]

2 You are to say all that I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his land.

3 But I will make Pharaoh’s heart stubborn,[2] and though I multiply My signs and wonders in the land of Egypt,

4 Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies, My people the Israelites, out of the land of Egypt with great acts of judgement.

5 And the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out from among them.”

6 Moses and Aaron did so; they did just as the LORD commanded them.

7 At the time they spoke to Pharaoh, Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three.

8 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

9 “When Pharaoh says to you, ‘Show us a wonder,’ tell Aaron, ‘Take your staff and throw it down in front of Pharaoh,’ and it will become a serpent.”[3]

10 So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and did as the LORD had commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent.

11 Then Pharaoh in turn called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and the magicians of Egypt[4] also did the same by their secret arts.

12 Each man threw down his staff, and they became serpents. But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs.

13 Yet Pharaoh’s heart was hardened,[5] and he would not listen to them, just as the LORD had said.

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is heavy;[6] he refuses to let the people go.

15 Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water. Stand on the bank of the Nile to meet him, and take in your hand the staff that turned into a snake.

16 Then say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to tell you: Let My people go, so that they may serve Me in the wilderness. Up to now you have not listened.

17 So this is what the LORD says: By this you will know that I am the LORD. With the staff in my hand I am about to strike the water of the Nile, and it will turn to blood.

18 The fish in the Nile will die, the river will stink, and the Egyptians will find themselves unable to drink its water.’”

19 The LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their channels, their pools and every place where water is stored, and they will turn to blood.’ There will be blood all over the land of Egypt, even in the vessels of wood and stone.”

20 Moses and Aaron did exactly as the LORD had commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, Aaron lifted up the staff and struck the

water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned to blood.

21 The fish in the Nile died, and the river stank so badly that the Egyptians could not drink water from it. There was blood throughout the land of Egypt.

22 But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts, and Pharaoh's heart was hardened; he would not listen to them, just as the LORD had said.

23 Pharaoh turned his back and went into his palace, without taking even this to heart.

24 All the Egyptians dug round the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the river.

25 Seven full days passed after the LORD had struck the Nile.

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1 As a prophet speaks the words of God, Aaron will speak the words of Moses (4:16).

2 Hebrew: אַקְשֶׁה (aqsheh), 'I will make hard'. See the note on verse 14.

3 Hebrew: תַּנִּין (tannin), a great reptile or sea creature (Genesis 1:21), perhaps a crocodile; not the word for 'snake' in 4:3.

4 Hebrew: חַרְטֻמִּים (chartummim), Egyptian priests learned in sacred writings and spells (Genesis 41:8).

5 Hebrew: וַיֶּחֱזַק (vayyechezaq), 'was made strong'.

6 Hebrew: כָּבֵד (kaved), 'heavy': dull and unmoved. Exodus speaks of Pharaoh's heart in three ways: it is 'made strong' (חָזַק, chazaq, 4:21; 7:13), 'made heavy' (כָּבֵד, kaved, 7:14; 8:15) and 'made hard' (קָשָׁה, qashah, 7:3). Sometimes God hardens it, sometimes Pharaoh hardens it himself, and sometimes it is simply 'hardened'. The same word kaved gives כָּבוֹד (kavod), 'glory': God will 'get glory' over Pharaoh (14:4).

Chapter 8

Exodus 8 tells of the second, third and fourth plagues. Frogs come up from the Nile into every house; the magicians copy the sign, but it is Moses whom Pharaoh begs to pray, and when the frogs die, Pharaoh hardens his heart. Then Aaron strikes the dust and it becomes gnats; this the magicians cannot do, and they tell Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." Next come swarms of flies, but now the LORD sets Goshen, where His people live, apart from the rest of Egypt. Pharaoh offers to let Israel sacrifice in Egypt, then not far away, but once the flies are gone he again refuses to let the people go.

1 Then the LORD said to Moses,[1] "Go in to Pharaoh and tell him, 'This is what the LORD says: Let My people go, so that they may serve Me.

2 If you refuse to let them go, I will strike all your territory with frogs.

3 The Nile will swarm with frogs. They will come up and get into your palace and your bedroom and onto your bed, into the houses of your servants and among your people, into your ovens and your kneading bowls.

4 The frogs will climb up on you, on your people and on all your servants.'"

5 And the LORD said to Moses,[2] "Tell Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, the channels and the pools, and bring the frogs up over the land of Egypt.'"

6 Aaron held out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and up came the frogs and covered the land of Egypt.

7 But the magicians did the same by their secret arts, and they too brought frogs up over the land of Egypt.

8 Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, "Pray to the LORD to take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the LORD."

9 Moses said to Pharaoh, "The honour is yours:[3] tell me when I am to pray for you and your servants and your people, so that the frogs will be taken away from you and your houses and be left only in the Nile."

10 "Tomorrow," he said. Moses replied, "It shall be as you say, so that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God.

11 The frogs will leave you and your houses, your servants and your people, and they will be left only in the Nile."

12 Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried out to the LORD about the frogs He

had brought on Pharaoh.

13 And the LORD did as Moses asked. The frogs
died in the houses, in the courtyards and in the
fields.

14 They heaped them up in piles, pile upon pile,
and the land stank.

15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he
made his heart heavy and would not listen to
them, just as the LORD had said.

16 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron,
‘Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the
earth, so that it becomes gnats[4] throughout the
land of Egypt.’”

17 They did so. Aaron stretched out his hand with
his staff and struck the dust of the earth, and
gnats came on people and on animals. All the dust
of the earth became gnats throughout the land of
Egypt.

18 The magicians tried by their secret arts to bring
out gnats, but they could not. The gnats stayed on
people and animals,

19 and the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the
finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s heart was hardened,
and he would not listen to them, just as the LORD
had said.

20 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Rise early in the
morning and present yourself before Pharaoh as
he goes out to the water, and say to him, ‘This is
what the LORD says: Let My people go, so that
they may serve Me.

21 If you will not let My people go, I will send
swarms of flies[5] on you and your servants, your
people and your houses. The houses of the
Egyptians will be full of the swarms, and so will
the very ground they stand on.

22 But on that day I will set apart the land of
Goshen, where My people live, so that no swarms
will be there. Then you will know that I, the LORD,
am here in the midst of the land.

23 I will put a ransom[6] between My people and
your people. Tomorrow this sign will take place.’”

24 The LORD did just that. Dense swarms of flies
poured into Pharaoh’s palace and the houses of
his servants; throughout Egypt the land was being
ruined by them.

25 Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. “Go and
offer your sacrifices to your God,” he said, “but
here, inside the country.”

26 But Moses said, “It would not be right to do
that. What we sacrifice to the LORD our God is
detestable to the Egyptians.[7] If we sacrifice what
the Egyptians find detestable before their very
eyes, will they not stone us?

27 Three days’ journey into the wilderness we must
go, to sacrifice there to the LORD our God, as He
commands us.”

28 Pharaoh said, “I will let you go to sacrifice to the
LORD your God in the wilderness; only you must
not go very far. Now pray for me.”

29 Moses said, “As soon as I leave you I will pray to
the LORD, and tomorrow the swarms will leave
Pharaoh, his servants and his people. Only,
Pharaoh must not deceive us again by refusing to
let the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.”

30 So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to
the LORD,

31 and the LORD did as Moses asked. He took the
swarms away from Pharaoh, from his servants and
from his people; not one was left.

32 But this time also Pharaoh made his heart heavy,
and he would not let the people go.

1 In Hebrew, 8:1–4 are 7:26–29.

2 In Hebrew, 8:5–32 are 8:1–28.

3 Hebrew ‘Glorify yourself over me’, a courteous way of letting Pharaoh name the time.

4 Hebrew: כִּנִּים (kinnim), small biting insects: gnats, lice or mosquitoes.

5 Hebrew: עָרֹב (arov), ‘swarm’ or ‘mixture’, usually taken to be flies.

6 Hebrew: פְּדֻת (pedut), ‘redemption’ or ‘ransom’: God will mark His people out and save them. The Greek reads ‘a distinction’.

7 Perhaps because the animals Israel would sacrifice were sacred in Egypt, or because Egyptians regarded shepherds and their flocks with disgust (Genesis 46:34).

Chapter 9

Exodus 9 tells of the fifth, sixth and seventh plagues. A severe disease kills the livestock of Egypt, but not one animal belonging to Israel dies. Soot thrown into the air becomes boils on people and animals, so that even the magicians cannot stand before Moses. Then the LORD warns Pharaoh that He has let him stand only to show His power and make His name known in all the earth, and sends the worst hailstorm Egypt has ever seen, with fire running along the ground; those of Pharaoh's servants who fear the word of the LORD bring their slaves and animals indoors. Pharaoh admits that he has sinned, but when Moses prays and the storm stops, he hardens his heart again.

1 The LORD told Moses, "Go in and speak to
Pharaoh: 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews,
says this: Let My people go, so that they may
serve Me.
2 For if you refuse to let them go and still hold on
to them,
3 the hand of the LORD will come with a very
severe plague on your livestock in the fields: on
the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the cattle and
the flocks.
4 But the LORD will set the livestock of Israel apart
from the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing that
belongs to the Israelites will die.'"
5 The LORD fixed a time: "Tomorrow the LORD will
do this in the land."
6 And the next day the LORD did it. All the
livestock of Egypt died, but of the Israelites'
livestock not one died.
7 Pharaoh sent to find out, and not a single animal
of Israel's livestock had died. But Pharaoh's heart
was heavy, and he would not let the people go.
8 Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take
handfuls of soot from a kiln, and let Moses toss it
into the air in Pharaoh's sight.
9 It will become fine dust over all the land of
Egypt, and it will cause boils breaking out in sores
on people and on animals throughout the land of
Egypt."
10 So they took soot from a kiln and stood before
Pharaoh, and Moses tossed it into the air, and it
caused boils that broke out in sores on people and
on animals.
11 Because of the boils the magicians could not
even stand in Moses' presence, for the boils had
broken out on them and on every Egyptian.
12 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he
would not listen to them, just as the LORD had
said to Moses.
13 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the
morning, present yourself before Pharaoh and tell
him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of the
Hebrews, says: Let My people go, so that they
may serve Me.
14 For this time I will send all My plagues on you
yourself,[1] on your servants and on your people, so
that you may know that there is none like Me in
all the earth.
15 By now I could have stretched out My hand and
struck you and your people with plague, and you
would have been wiped off the earth.
16 But it is for this very purpose that I have let you
stand:[2] to show you My power, and so that My
name may be proclaimed in all the earth.
17 You are still lording it over My people and will
not let them go.
18 So at this time tomorrow I will send down a hail
so heavy that there has been nothing like it in
Egypt from the day it was founded until now.
19 Now send word to bring your livestock and
everything you have in the fields to safety. Every
person and every animal that is in the fields and
has not been brought indoors will die when the
hail comes down on them.'"
20 Those of Pharaoh's servants who feared the
word of the LORD hurried their slaves and their
livestock into shelter,
21 but those who paid no heed to the word of the
LORD left their slaves and their livestock out in
the fields.
22 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your
hand towards the heavens, so that there may be
hail in all the land of Egypt, on people and on
animals and on every plant of the field in the land
of Egypt."
23 Moses stretched out his staff towards the
heavens, and the LORD sent thunder[3] and hail,
and fire ran down to the earth. So the LORD
rained hail on the land of Egypt.
24 There was hail, and fire flashing in the midst of
the hail, so heavy that there had been nothing like

it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

25 Throughout the land of Egypt the hail struck down everything that was in the fields, both people and animals. The hail beat down every plant of the field and shattered every tree of the field.

26 The land of Goshen alone, where the Israelites lived, had no hail.

27 Then Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron and said to them, “This time I have sinned. The LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong.

28 Pray to the LORD, for there has been enough of God’s thunder and hail. I will let you go; you need stay no longer.”

29 Moses answered, “When I have left the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD in prayer. The thunder will cease and the hail will be no more, and you will know that the earth belongs to the LORD.

30 But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the LORD God.”

31 (The flax and the barley were ruined, as the barley had come into ear and the flax was in bud.

32 But the wheat and the spelt were not struck down, for they come up later.)

33 So Moses went out of the city, away from Pharaoh, and spread out his hands to the LORD, and the thunder and hail stopped, and the rain no longer poured down on the earth.

34 But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned yet again: he made his heart heavy, he and his servants.

35 So Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the LORD had said through Moses.

1 Hebrew ‘on your heart’.

2 Hebrew: הֶעֱמַדְתִּיךָ (he’emadticha), ‘I have made you stand’, that is, kept you alive and in power. Paul quotes this verse in Romans 9:17: ‘I raised you up’.

3 Hebrew: קֹלֹת (qolot), ‘voices’: the thunder is the voice of God (verse 28; Psalm 29:3).

Chapter 10

Exodus 10 tells of the eighth and ninth plagues. The LORD has made Pharaoh’s heart heavy so that Israel may tell its children what He has done in Egypt. Pharaoh’s own servants beg him to let the people go, and he offers to let the men go, but not the children. Then an east wind brings locusts that cover the land and eat everything the hail has left, and Pharaoh confesses his sin, until a west wind carries them into the Red Sea. Next a darkness that can be felt covers Egypt for three days, though the Israelites have light where they live. Pharaoh will let everyone go except the flocks and herds, but Moses will not leave a hoof behind, and Pharaoh drives him out, warning him that if he sees his face again he will die.

1 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh, for I have made his heart heavy, and the hearts of his servants, so that I may set these signs of Mine among them,

2 and so that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I did among them, and that you may know that I am the LORD.”

3 Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh and told him, “The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says this: ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, so that they may serve Me.

4 For if you refuse to let My people go, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory.

5 They will cover the face of the land, so that no one can see the ground. They will eat what is left to you of what escaped the hail, and they will eat every tree of yours that grows in the fields.

6 They will fill your houses and the houses of all your servants and of all the Egyptians, something neither your fathers nor your fathers’ fathers have seen from the day they came into the world until this day.’” Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

7 Pharaoh’s servants said to him, “How long is this man to be a snare to us? Let the men go, so that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?”

8 So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, “Go, serve the

LORD your God. But who exactly are the ones who will go?”

9 Moses said, “We will go with our young and our old; we will go with our sons and our daughters, and with our flocks and our herds, for we must hold a festival to the LORD.”

10 He said to them, “May the LORD be with you, if I ever let you go with your little ones! Look, you have evil in mind.[1]

11 No! Go, you men, and serve the LORD, since that is what you are asking for.” And they were driven out of Pharaoh’s presence.

12 The LORD said to Moses, “Hold out your hand over the land of Egypt, so that the locusts swarm over it and devour every plant growing there, everything that survived the hail.”

13 So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD drove an east wind across the land all that day and all that night. When morning came, the east wind had brought the locusts.

14 The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled in every part of its territory, in great numbers. Never before had there been so many locusts, and never again will there be.

15 They covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened, and they ate every plant in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Not a green thing was left, neither tree nor plant of the field, in all the land of Egypt.

16 Pharaoh hastily summoned Moses and Aaron. “I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you,” he said.

17 “Now forgive my sin, I beg you, just this once, and pray to the LORD your God only to take this death away from me.”

18 So he went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD,

19 and the LORD turned the wind into a very strong west wind,[2] which lifted the locusts and swept them into the Red Sea.[3] Not one locust was left in all the territory of Egypt.

20 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let the Israelites go.

21 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand towards the heavens, so that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness that can be felt.”

22 Moses held his hand out towards the heavens, and for three days deep darkness lay over all the land of Egypt.

23 People could not see one another, and no one rose from where he was for three days. But all the Israelites had light where they lived.

24 Then Pharaoh called Moses and said, “Go, serve the LORD. Only your flocks and herds must stay behind; even your little ones may go with you.”

25 But Moses said, “You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings to offer to the LORD our God.

26 Our livestock too must go with us; not a hoof is to be left behind, for we must take from them to serve the LORD our God, and until we get there we will not know what we must offer in serving the LORD.”

27 Yet the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not agree to let them go.

28 Pharaoh said to him, “Get away from me! Take care that you never see my face again, for on the day you see my face you will die.”

29 “You have said it,” Moses replied. “I will never see your face again.”

1 Or ‘evil is in front of you’, perhaps a play on the name of the Egyptian god Ra: ‘Ra is against you’.

2 Hebrew ‘sea wind’, a wind from the Mediterranean.

3 Hebrew: יַם־סוּף (yam suf), ‘the Sea of Reeds’. The Greek translators called it ‘the Red Sea’, as do the New Testament (Acts 7:36; Hebrews 11:29) and English tradition.

Chapter 11

Exodus 11 announces the last plague. The LORD tells Moses that after one more blow Pharaoh will not just let Israel go but drive them out, and the people are to ask their Egyptian neighbours for silver and gold, for the LORD has given them favour and Moses is held in great honour in Egypt. Moses warns Pharaoh that at midnight every firstborn in Egypt will die, from Pharaoh’s son to the son of the slave girl at the mill, while among the Israelites not even a dog will growl. Then he leaves Pharaoh in hot anger, and the chapter closes by recalling that the LORD has hardened Pharaoh’s heart.

1 The LORD said to Moses, “One more blow[1] I will
bring on Pharaoh and on Egypt; after that he will
let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will
drive you out completely.
2 Speak now to the people, and let every man ask
his neighbour and every woman her neighbour for
articles of silver and articles of gold.”
3 And the LORD gave the people favour in the eyes
of the Egyptians. What is more, the man Moses
was held in great honour in the land of Egypt, by
Pharaoh’s servants and by the people.
4 Then Moses said, “This is what the LORD says:
‘About midnight I will go out through the midst of
Egypt,
5 and every firstborn in the land of Egypt will die,
from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his
throne to the firstborn of the slave girl who grinds
at the millstones, and every firstborn of the
livestock.
6 Then there will be a great cry throughout the
land of Egypt, such as there has never been and
never will be again.
7 But against any of the Israelites, man or beast,
not a dog will so much as growl, so that you may
know that the LORD makes a distinction between
Egypt and Israel.’
8 All these servants of yours will come down to me
and bow low before me, saying, ‘Go, you and all
the people who follow you!’ And after that I will
go.” And he went out from Pharaoh burning with
anger.
9 The LORD had said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not
listen to you, so that My wonders may be
multiplied in the land of Egypt.”
10 Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before
Pharaoh, but the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart,
and he would not let the Israelites go out of his
land.

1 Hebrew: נֶגַע (nega), ‘a stroke’ or ‘a touch’.

Chapter 12

Exodus 12 tells of the first Passover and the night Israel leaves Egypt. The LORD gives Moses and Aaron the rules: on the tenth of the first month each household is to choose a year-old male lamb without defect, kill it at twilight on the fourteenth, put its blood on the doorposts and eat it roasted, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, dressed for the journey. When the LORD strikes Egypt, He will see the blood and pass over those houses, and Israel is to keep this day, with the seven days of unleavened bread, for ever. At midnight the LORD strikes down every firstborn in Egypt, and Pharaoh sends the people away that night; after 430 years the armies of the LORD go out, about six hundred thousand men, with a mixed crowd and great flocks. The chapter ends with the rule that no uncircumcised person may eat the Passover.

1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of
Egypt,
2 “This month is to be for you the first of months; it
is to be the first month of your year.[1]
3 Tell the whole community of Israel that on the
tenth day of this month every man is to take a
lamb[2] for his family, one lamb for each household.
4 If the household is too small for a whole lamb, he
and the neighbour nearest his house are to take
one between them, according to the number of
people; you are to share out the lamb by how
much each one can eat.
5 The animal you choose must be a year-old male
with no defect, and it may come from the sheep or
from the goats.
6 Keep it until the fourteenth day of this month,
and then the whole assembly of the community of
Israel is to kill their lambs at twilight.[3]
7 They are to take some of the blood and put it on
the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses
in which they eat it.
8 That night they are to eat the meat, roasted over
the fire; they are to eat it with unleavened bread
and bitter herbs.
9 Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but
roasted over the fire, its head with its legs and its
inner parts.
10 Do not leave any of it until morning; whatever is
left of it until morning, you must burn in the fire.
11 This is how you are to eat it: with your belt
fastened, your sandals on your feet and your staff
in your hand. You are to eat it in haste. It is the
LORD’s Passover.[4]

12 On this night I will pass through the land of
Egypt and strike down every firstborn in the land
of Egypt, both people and animals, and on all the
gods of Egypt I will carry out judgements. I am
the LORD.
13 The blood will be a sign for you on the houses
where you are: when I see the blood, I will pass
over you, and no plague will fall on you to destroy
you when I strike the land of Egypt.
14 This day is to be a day of remembrance for you,
and you are to keep it as a festival to the LORD.
Throughout your generations you are to keep it as
a statute for ever.
15 For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread.
On the very first day you must clear the yeast out
of your houses, for whoever eats anything
leavened from the first day to the seventh, that
person will be cut off from Israel.
16 On the first day you are to hold a holy assembly,
and on the seventh day a holy assembly. No work
is to be done on those days, except what everyone
must eat; that alone may be prepared by you.
17 Keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this
very day I brought your armies out of the land of
Egypt. So keep this day throughout your
generations as a statute for ever.
18 In the first month, from the evening of the
fourteenth day of the month until the evening of
the twenty-first day, you are to eat unleavened
bread.
19 For seven days no yeast is to be found in your
houses. Whoever eats anything leavened, that
person will be cut off from the community of
Israel, whether a foreigner or one born in the
land.
20 You are to eat nothing leavened. Wherever you
live, you are to eat unleavened bread."
21 Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and
said to them, "Go and pick out lambs for
yourselves, one for each family, and kill the
Passover lamb.
22 Take a bunch of hyssop,[5] dip it in the blood in
the basin, and touch the lintel and the two
doorposts with the blood in the basin. Not one of
you is to go out of the door of his house until
morning.
23 For the LORD will pass through to strike Egypt,
and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on
the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the
door and will not let the destroyer come into your
houses to strike you.
24 You are to keep this as a statute for you and
your children for ever.
25 And when you come to the land that the LORD
will give you, as He has promised, you are to keep
this service.
26 And when your children say to you, 'What does
this service of yours mean?'
27 you are to say, 'It is the sacrifice of the LORD's
Passover, for He passed over the houses of the
Israelites in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians,
but spared our houses.'" And the people bowed
low and worshipped.
28 Then the Israelites went and did so; they did just
as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.
29 In the middle of the night the LORD struck down
all the firstborn in Egypt, from Pharaoh's
firstborn, heir to his throne, to the firstborn of the
prisoner in the dungeon, and the firstborn of every
animal as well.
30 That night Pharaoh got up, with all his servants
and all the Egyptians, and loud wailing rose
throughout Egypt, because in every house
someone lay dead.
31 He called Moses and Aaron in the night and
said, "Up, get out from among my people, both
you and the Israelites! Go, serve the LORD as you
have said.
32 Take your sheep and cattle too, just as you
asked, and go. And ask a blessing for me as well."
33 The Egyptians urged the people on, hurrying to
send them out of the land, for they said, "We are
all dead men."
34 So the people took their dough before it was
leavened, with their kneading bowls bound up in
their cloaks on their shoulders.
35 The Israelites had done as Moses said and asked
the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold, and
for clothing,
36 and the LORD had given the people favour in
the eyes of the Egyptians, so that they let them
have what they asked. So they plundered the
Egyptians.
37 The Israelites set out from Rameses for Succoth,
about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides
the little ones.
38 A mixed crowd[6] also went up with them, and
flocks and herds, a great mass of livestock.

39 With the dough they had brought out of Egypt they baked cakes of unleavened bread. It was not leavened, for they had been driven out of Egypt and could not wait, and they had not prepared any food for themselves.

40 The time that the Israelites had lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years.[7]

41 At the end of the four hundred and thirty years, on that very day, all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

42 It was a night of keeping watch by the LORD, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; this same night is a night of keeping watch to the LORD for all the Israelites throughout their generations.

43 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner is to eat of it.

44 But any slave who has been bought for money may eat of it once you have circumcised him.

45 A temporary resident or a hired worker is not to eat of it.

46 It is to be eaten in one house; you are not to take any of the meat outside the house, and you must not break any of its bones.[8]

47 The whole community of Israel is to keep it.

48 If a foreigner living among you wants to keep the LORD's Passover, all his males must be circumcised; then he may come near and keep it, and he will be like one born in the land. But no uncircumcised person is to eat of it.

49 There is to be one law for the one born in the land and for the foreigner who lives among you."

50 All the Israelites did so; they did just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.

51 And on that very day the LORD brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, company by company.

1 The month of Abib (13:4), March to April, later called Nisan (Esther 3:7).

2 Hebrew: שֶׂה (seh), a young animal of the flock, a lamb or a kid (verse 5).

3 Hebrew 'between the two evenings', the time between sunset and dark.

4 Hebrew: פֶּסַח (pesach), from the verb פָּסַח (pasach), 'to pass over' or 'to spare' (verses 13, 23, 27).

5 A small bushy plant with hairy leaves that hold liquid well, used for sprinkling (Leviticus 14:4; Psalm 51:7; John 19:29).

6 People of other nations, perhaps slaves or poor Egyptians, who joined Israel (Numbers 11:4).

7 The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Greek read 'in Egypt and in Canaan', counting from Abraham, as Paul does in Galatians 3:17. Genesis 15:13 and Acts 7:6 give the round number four hundred.

8 Quoted of Jesus on the cross in John 19:36: 'Not one of His bones will be broken'.

Chapter 13

Exodus 13 gives the laws that remember the exodus. The LORD claims every firstborn in Israel as His own, and Moses tells the people to keep the seven days of unleavened bread when they come to the promised land, and to give every firstborn male to the LORD, redeeming their sons and their donkeys, so that their children will ask and be told how the LORD brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand. God does not lead the people by the short road through the land of the Philistines but round by the wilderness towards the Red Sea. Moses takes Joseph's bones with him, and the LORD goes before the people in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 "Consecrate to Me every firstborn: the first to open the womb among the Israelites, whether of people or of animals, is Mine."

3 Then Moses said to the people, "Remember this day, the day you came out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for with a strong hand the LORD brought you out from here. Nothing leavened is to be eaten.

4 Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out.

5 When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you are to keep this service in this month.

6 For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there is to be a festival to the LORD.

7 Unleavened bread is to be eaten for the seven days; nothing leavened is to be seen among you, and no yeast is to be seen anywhere in your territory.

8 On that day you are to tell your son, ‘It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.’

9 It will be for you as a sign on your hand and a reminder between your eyes, so that the law of the LORD may be on your lips, for with a strong hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt.

10 You are to keep this statute at its appointed time, year after year.

11 When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and to your fathers, and gives it to you,

12 you are to set apart for the LORD all that first opens the womb. Every firstborn male that your animals bear belongs to the LORD.

13 Every firstborn of a donkey you are to redeem with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, you must break its neck. And every firstborn son among your children you are to redeem.

14 And when in time to come your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ you are to tell him, ‘With a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

15 When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of people and the firstborn of animals. That is why I sacrifice to the LORD every male that first opens the womb, but every firstborn of my sons I redeem.’

16 It will be as a sign on your hand and as a band[1] between your eyes, for with a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt.”

17 When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by the road through the land of the Philistines, though it was nearer. For God said, “If they face war, the people may change their minds and go back to Egypt.”

18 So God led the people round by the way of the wilderness towards the Red Sea. And the Israelites went up out of the land of Egypt ready for battle.[2]

19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel swear an oath: “God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from here with you.”[3]

20 They set out from Succoth and camped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness.

21 By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to light their path, so that they could journey day and night.

22 The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not leave its place in front of the people.

1 Hebrew: טוֹטָפֹת (totafot), a band or emblem on the forehead. Later Jewish practice wears these words in small boxes on the arm and forehead (tefillin; compare Deuteronomy 6:8 and Matthew 23:5).

2 Hebrew: חֲמֻשִׁים (chamushim), perhaps ‘in ranks of fifty’ or ‘in battle array’.

3 Genesis 50:25.

Chapter 14

Exodus 14 tells how the LORD brings Israel through the sea. He leads the people to camp by the sea, and Pharaoh, his heart hardened again, pursues them with all his chariots. When the Israelites see the Egyptians behind them, they cry out in terror and turn on Moses, but he tells them to stand firm and see the LORD’s salvation: “The LORD will fight for you.” The angel of God and the pillar of cloud move between the two camps, and when Moses stretches out his hand, the LORD drives the sea back with a strong east wind all night, so that Israel crosses on dry ground with the waters as a wall on either side. The Egyptians follow, and at dawn the sea returns and covers them. Israel sees the great power of the LORD, fears Him and believes in Him and in His servant Moses.

1 Then the LORD said to Moses,

2 “Tell the Israelites to turn back and camp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. You are to camp facing Baal-zephon, by the sea.

3 Pharaoh will say of the Israelites, ‘They are wandering about in the land, lost; the wilderness has shut them in.’

4 And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them, and I will gain glory[1] over Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.” And they did so.

5 When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants changed their minds about the people. “What have we done?” they said. “We have let Israel go from serving us!”

6 So he had his chariot harnessed and took his army with him.

7 He took six hundred picked chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt, with officers over all of them.

8 The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the Israelites, as the Israelites were going out with hands held high.[2]

9 The Egyptians gave chase, all Pharaoh’s chariot horses, his horsemen and his army, and they overtook them where they were camped by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, facing Baal-zephon.

10 As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians marching after them. They were terrified, and the Israelites cried out to the LORD.

11 They said to Moses, “Were there no graves in Egypt, that you have brought us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt?

12 Didn’t we say this to you back in Egypt? ‘Let us be; we will serve the Egyptians.’ Better to be slaves to the Egyptians than to die out here in the wilderness.”

13 But Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand your ground, and see the salvation[3] the LORD will work for you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again.

14 The LORD will fight for you; you must simply keep quiet.”

15 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the Israelites to move on.

16 And you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and split it apart, so that the Israelites may go into the middle of the sea on dry ground.

17 And I, see, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they go in after them, and I will gain glory over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots and his horsemen.

18 The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I have gained glory over Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen.”

19 Then the angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them. The pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its stand behind them,

20 coming between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel. There was the cloud and the darkness, and it lit up the night,[4] and the one did not come near the other all night.

21 Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and made the sea dry land. The waters were split apart,

22 and the Israelites went into the middle of the sea on dry ground, with the waters a wall to them on their right and on their left.

23 The Egyptians chased after them, and all Pharaoh’s horses, chariots and horsemen followed them right into the middle of the sea.

24 In the morning watch[5] the LORD looked down on the Egyptian army from the pillar of fire and cloud and threw the Egyptian army into confusion.

25 He made the wheels of their chariots come off,[6] so that they drove them with difficulty. Then the Egyptians said, “Let us flee from Israel, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt!”

26 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and their horsemen.”

27 So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and as morning broke the sea went back to its full flow. The Egyptians fled straight into it, and the LORD shook the Egyptians off into the middle of the sea.

28 The waters came back and covered the chariots and the horsemen, the whole army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea. Not one of them was left.

29 But the Israelites had walked on dry ground through the middle of the sea, with the waters a wall to them on their right and on their left.

30 So on that day the LORD saved Israel from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.

31 When Israel saw the great power[7] that the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses.

1 Hebrew: אִכָּבְדָה (ikkavedah), from the same root as ‘heavy’ in the note on 7:14. Pharaoh has made his heart heavy; God will make Himself ‘heavy’, glorious, over him. Again in verses 17–18.

2 That is, boldly and in triumph.

3 Hebrew: יְשׁוּעָה (yeshu’ah), ‘salvation’ or ‘rescue’, from the same root as the names Joshua and Jesus.

4 The Hebrew is brief: the cloud was darkness to the Egyptians and gave light by night to Israel. The Greek reads ‘and the night passed’.

5 The last part of the night, before dawn.

6 So the Hebrew; the Greek and the Samaritan Pentateuch read ‘He clogged the wheels’.

7 Hebrew ‘the great hand’.

Chapter 15

Exodus 15 gives the song Moses and the Israelites sing after the crossing. They praise the LORD as a warrior who has thrown horse and rider into the sea; the enemy boasted that he would pursue and plunder, but at the breath of God the waters piled up and the Egyptians sank like lead. None among the gods is like the LORD, who in His loyal kindness leads the people He has redeemed to His holy dwelling, while the nations tremble; the LORD will reign for ever. Miriam the prophetess leads the women with tambourines and dancing. Then, after three days without water in the wilderness of Shur, the people grumble at the bitter water of Marah, until the LORD shows Moses a piece of wood that makes it sweet and promises to be the LORD who heals them. They come to Elim, with its twelve springs and seventy palm trees.

1 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD, saying, “I will sing to the LORD, for He has risen up in triumph; horse and rider He has hurled into the sea.

2 The LORD[1] is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will give Him praise; my father’s God, and I will lift Him high.

3 The LORD is a warrior; His name is the LORD.

4 Pharaoh’s chariots and his army He has cast into the sea, and his chosen officers are drowned in the Red Sea.

5 The deep waters closed over them; down to the depths they sank like a stone.

6 Your right hand, O LORD, is majestic in power; Your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy.

7 In the greatness of Your majesty You throw down those who rise against You; You send out Your fury, and it consumes them like stubble.

8 At the blast of Your nostrils the waters piled up; the streams stood up like a heap, and the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.

9 The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the plunder; my appetite shall have its fill of them. I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them.’

10 But You blew with Your breath, and the sea closed over them; like lead they sank in the mighty waters.

11 Who among the gods is like You, O LORD? Who is like You, splendid in holiness, to be feared in praises, a worker of wonders?

12 You held out Your right hand, and the earth engulfed them.

13 In Your loyal kindness You have led the people You redeemed; in Your strength You have guided them to Your holy dwelling.

14 The peoples have heard; they tremble. Pangs have seized those who live in Philistia.

15 Now the chiefs of Edom are dismayed; trembling seizes the leaders of Moab; all who live in Canaan have melted away.

16 Terror and dread fall upon them; at the greatness of Your arm they are still as a stone, till Your people pass by, O LORD, till the people You have bought[2] pass by.

17 You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of Your inheritance, the place, O LORD, that You have made for Your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, that Your hands have established.

18 The LORD will reign for ever and ever.”

19 For when Pharaoh’s horses with his chariots and his horsemen went into the sea, the LORD brought the waters of the sea back over them, but the Israelites walked on dry ground through the middle of the sea.

20 Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took up a tambourine, and all the women followed her out, with tambourines and dances.

21 And Miriam sang to them in answer: "Sing to the LORD, for He has risen up in triumph; horse and rider He has hurled into the sea."

22 Then Moses led Israel on from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur. For three days they travelled in the wilderness and found no water.

23 When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah, because it was bitter. That is why it was called Marah.[3]

24 So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?"

25 He cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the LORD made a statute and a rule for them, and there He tested them.

26 He said, "If you listen closely to the voice of the LORD your God, doing what is right in His sight, paying attention to His commandments and keeping all His statutes, then not one of the diseases I laid on the Egyptians will I lay on you, for I am the LORD who heals you."[4]

27 Next they reached Elim, a place with twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they made camp there beside the water.

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1 Hebrew: יָהּ (Yah), a short form of God's name, as in Hallelu-jah, 'Praise the LORD'.

2 Or 'created'. Hebrew קָנָה (qanah) is used of both (Genesis 14:19).

3 Marah means 'bitter' (Ruth 1:20).

4 Hebrew: יְהוָה רֹפְאֶךָ (YHWH rof'echa), 'the LORD your healer'.

Chapter 16

Exodus 16 tells how the LORD feeds His people in the wilderness. In the wilderness of Sin the whole community grumbles against Moses and Aaron, wishing they had died in Egypt beside the pots of meat, and the LORD promises to rain down bread from heaven to test whether they will walk in His law. The glory of the LORD appears in the cloud; in the evening quails cover the camp, and in the morning fine flakes lie on the ground, which the people call manna. Each gathers what he needs, no more and no less; what is kept overnight goes bad, but on the sixth day they gather twice as much and it keeps through the Sabbath, the day of rest the LORD has given them. A jar of manna is kept before the LORD for later generations, and Israel eats manna for forty years.

1 They set out from Elim, and the whole community of the Israelites came to the wilderness of Sin, which lies between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had left the land of Egypt.

2 And in the wilderness the whole community of the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron.

3 The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and ate bread until we were full! But you have brought us out into this wilderness to starve this whole assembly to death."

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you.[1] The people are to go out and gather each day's portion on its day, so that I may test them, to see whether they will walk in My law or not.

5 On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days."

6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "This evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt,

7 and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because He has heard your grumbling against the LORD. For what are we, that you grumble against us?"

8 And Moses said, "It will be when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and bread to the full in the morning, because the LORD has heard the grumbling you are raising against Him. What are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the LORD."

9 Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole community of the Israelites, 'Come near before

the LORD, for He has heard your grumbling.’”

10 And as Aaron spoke to the whole community of the Israelites, they turned towards the wilderness, and there the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

11 The LORD said to Moses,

12 “I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Speak to them and say, ‘At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.’”

13 In the evening quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew all round the camp.

14 When the layer of dew had lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was something fine and flaky, fine as frost on the ground.

15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?”[2] For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat.

16 This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Gather as much of it as each of you can eat, an omer[3] a head, according to the number of people in his tent.’”

17 The Israelites did so, and some gathered more and some less.

18 But when they measured it by the omer, whoever had gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever had gathered little had no lack.[4] Each had gathered as much as he could eat.

19 Moses said to them, “No one is to leave any of it over until morning.”

20 But they did not listen to Moses; some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.

21 Morning by morning they gathered it, each as much as he could eat, and when the sun grew hot, it melted.

22 When the sixth day came they gathered double the amount of bread, two omers each, and the leaders of the community all came and reported it to Moses.

23 He said to them, “This is what the LORD has said: ‘Tomorrow is a day of complete rest, a holy Sabbath[5] to the LORD. Bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil, and set aside whatever is left over to be kept until morning.’”

24 So they set it aside until morning, as Moses had commanded, and it did not stink, and there were no worms in it.

25 Moses said, “Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find any in the field.

26 For six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.”

27 All the same, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather it, and found nothing.

28 Then the LORD said to Moses, “How long will you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?

29 See, the LORD has given you the Sabbath; that is why on the sixth day He gives you bread for two days. Each of you is to stay where he is; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day.”

30 So the people kept the seventh day as a day of rest.

31 The house of Israel called it manna. It was like coriander seed, white, and it tasted like wafers made with honey.

32 Moses said, “This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Let an omer of it be kept for your generations, so that they may see the bread I fed you with in the wilderness when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.’”

33 And Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar and put a full omer of manna in it, and set it before the LORD to be kept for your generations.”

34 As the LORD had commanded Moses, Aaron set it before the testimony,[6] to be kept.

35 The Israelites ate the manna for forty years, until they came to a land where people lived; they ate the manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

36 (An omer is a tenth of an ephah.)[7]

1 Compare Psalm 78:24 and John 6:31–35, where Jesus calls Himself the true bread from heaven.

2 Hebrew: מָן הוּא (man hu), ‘What is it?’, which gives the name ‘manna’ (verse 31).

3 An omer was about 2 litres (verse 36).

4 Quoted by Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:15.

5 Hebrew: שַׁבָּת (shabbat), from שָׁבַת (shavat), ‘to stop, to rest’ (Genesis 2:2–3).

6 The tablets of the law, later kept in the ark (25:16; Hebrews 9:4).

7 An ephah was about 22 litres.

Chapter 17

Exodus 17 tells of two events at Rephidim. With no water to drink, the people quarrel with Moses and are ready to stone him, and the LORD tells him to strike the rock at Horeb with his staff; water comes out of it, and the place is named Massah and Meribah because Israel tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?” Then Amalek attacks. Joshua leads Israel into battle while Moses stands on the hilltop with the staff of God, and as long as his hands are raised Israel prevails; when they grow heavy, Aaron and Hur hold them up until sunset, and Joshua defeats Amalek. The LORD vows to blot out the memory of Amalek, and Moses builds an altar called “The LORD Is My Banner”.

1 The whole community of the Israelites set out from the wilderness of Sin, travelling in stages as the LORD commanded, and camped at Rephidim. But there was no water for the people to drink.

2 The people quarrelled with Moses. “Give us water to drink,” they demanded. “Why are you quarrelling with me?” Moses replied. “Why are you testing the LORD?”

3 But the people were thirsty there for water, and they grumbled against Moses. “Why did you ever bring us up out of Egypt,” they said, “to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”

4 Then Moses cried out to the LORD, “What am I to do with this people? A little more and they will stone me.”

5 The LORD said to Moses, “Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you. Take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go.

6 I will stand there before you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

7 He called the place Massah and Meribah,[1] because the Israelites quarrelled and because they tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

8 Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim.

9 Moses told Joshua, “Pick some men and go out to fight Amalek. Tomorrow I will take my stand on the hilltop with the staff of God in my hand.”

10 Joshua did what Moses said and went to fight Amalek, and Moses, Aaron and Hur climbed to the top of the hill.

11 Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed.

12 When Moses’ hands grew heavy, they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on each side. So his hands stayed steady[2] until the sun went down.

13 And Joshua overpowered Amalek and his people with the sword.

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this as a reminder in a book, and say it in Joshua’s hearing: I will blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.”

15 And Moses built an altar and called it The LORD Is My Banner,[3]

16 saying, “A hand upon the banner of the LORD![4] The LORD will be at war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

1 Massah means ‘testing’ and Meribah ‘quarrelling’ (Psalm 95:8; Hebrews 3:8–9). Compare 1 Corinthians 10:4: ‘the rock was Christ’.

2 Hebrew: אֱמוּנָה (emunah), ‘firmness, faithfulness’, the word later used for ‘faith’.

3 Hebrew: יְהוָה נִסִּי (YHWH nissi). A banner is the standard raised on a pole for an army to rally to.

4 The Hebrew is difficult: ‘a hand on the throne of Yah’. ‘Banner’ (נֵס, nes) is read by many for ‘throne’ (כֵּס, kes).

Chapter 18

Exodus 18 tells of Jethro’s visit to Moses at the mountain of God. Jethro, the priest of Midian, brings Moses’ wife Zipporah and his two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, and when Moses tells him all that the LORD has done for Israel, Jethro rejoices, blesses the LORD as greater than all gods and offers sacrifices, and he eats with Aaron and the elders before God. The next day he sees Moses judging the people alone from morning to evening and warns him that he will wear himself out. He advises him to teach the people God’s laws and to appoint capable, God-fearing, trustworthy men over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens to judge the smaller cases, bringing only the hard ones to Moses. Moses does as he says, and Jethro goes home.

1 Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law and priest of Midian, came to hear of everything God had done for Moses and for His people Israel: how the LORD had led Israel out of Egypt.

2 Now Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, had taken in Zipporah, Moses’ wife, after he had sent her back,

3 and her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom, for Moses had said, “I have become a foreigner in a land not my own,”

4 and the name of the other was Eliezer,[1] because “the God of my father was my helper and saved me from Pharaoh’s sword.”

5 So Jethro came out to Moses in the wilderness, bringing Moses’ sons and wife, to the place where he was camped by the mountain of God.

6 He sent word to Moses, “I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you, with your wife and her two sons.”

7 So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. He bowed low and kissed him, and each asked how the other was, and they went into the tent.

8 Moses recounted to his father-in-law everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and Egypt on Israel’s behalf, all the hardships they had met along the way, and how the LORD had delivered them.

9 Jethro rejoiced over all the good the LORD had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians.

10 “Blessed be the LORD,” Jethro said, “who has rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and the hand of Pharaoh, who has rescued the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.

11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods, for He did this when they dealt arrogantly with the people.”[2]

12 Then Jethro brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God, and Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to share a meal with Moses’ father-in-law in God’s presence.

13 The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from morning until evening.

14 When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, with all the people standing about you from morning until evening?”

15 “It is because the people come to me to ask God for guidance,” Moses answered.

16 “Whenever they have a dispute, they come to me, and I judge between one person and another, and I make known God’s statutes and His laws.”

17 Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not good.

18 You will only wear yourself out, and this people with you too, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.

19 Now listen to me; I will give you advice, and may God be with you. You stand for the people before God, and bring their cases to God.

20 Teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way they are to walk and the things they are to do.

21 But look among all the people for capable men,[3] who fear God, men you can trust, who hate a

bribe, and set them over the people as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

22 Let them judge the people at all times. Every major case they are to bring to you, but every minor case they can judge themselves. So it will be lighter for you, and they will bear the load with you.

23 If you do this, and God so commands you, you will be able to hold out, and all these people too will go home in peace."

24 Moses took his father-in-law's advice and did everything he suggested.

25 Moses chose capable men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

26 They judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to Moses, but every minor case they judged themselves.

27 Then Moses let his father-in-law go, and he went back to his own land.

1 Eliezer means 'my God is help'.

2 The Hebrew is brief: 'for in the thing in which they acted proudly against them'.

3 Hebrew: אַנְשֵׁי־חַיִל (anshe chayil), 'men of worth', able and of good character (Ruth 3:11; Proverbs 31:10).

Chapter 19

Exodus 19 tells how Israel comes to Mount Sinai and the LORD offers His covenant. Three months after leaving Egypt the people camp before the mountain, and the LORD calls to Moses: He carried them on eagles' wings and brought them to Himself, and if they obey His voice and keep His covenant they will be His treasured possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. The people answer that they will do all the LORD has said. They are to consecrate themselves for two days and wash their clothes, and a boundary is set round the mountain that no one may cross. On the third day there is thunder and lightning, a thick cloud and a very loud trumpet blast; the LORD comes down on Sinai in fire, the whole mountain smokes and quakes, and the LORD calls Moses up to the top and sends him back to warn the people not to break through to look.

1 On the very day that began the third month since the Israelites left the land of Egypt,[1] they arrived in the wilderness of Sinai.

2 They had set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they camped in the wilderness. Israel camped there in front of the mountain,

3 and Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him from the mountain: "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and tell the Israelites:

4 'You have seen with your own eyes what I did to Egypt, and how I bore you up on eagles' wings and brought you here to Myself.

5 Now if you will truly listen to My voice and keep My covenant, you will be My own treasure[2] out of all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;

6 and you will be a kingdom of priests to Me, and a holy nation.' Speak these words to the Israelites."

7 So Moses came and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him.

8 All the people answered as one, "Everything the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses took the people's words back to the LORD.

9 The LORD said to Moses, "See, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also trust you for ever." Then Moses told the LORD the words of the people.

10 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Let them wash their clothes

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.

12 Set a boundary for the people all round, and say, 'Take care not to go up the mountain or even touch its edge. Whoever touches the mountain must be put to death.

13 No hand is to touch him; he must be stoned or shot through with arrows.[3] Whether animal or human, he must not live.' Only when the ram's horn[4] sounds a long blast may they go up to the mountain."

14 Moses came down from the mountain to the people and consecrated them, and they washed their garments.

15 He said to the people, "Be ready for the third day. Do not go near a woman."

16 On the morning of the third day there was
thunder and lightning, and a heavy cloud on the
mountain, and a very loud blast of the trumpet,[5]
and all the people in the camp trembled.
17 Then Moses brought the people out of the camp
to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot
of the mountain.
18 Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the
LORD had come down on it in fire. Its smoke went
up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole
mountain shook violently.
19 The sound of the trumpet grew steadily louder;
Moses would speak, and God would answer him in
thunder.[6]
20 When the LORD had come down on the summit
of Mount Sinai, He summoned Moses to the
summit, and Moses went up.
21 The LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn
the people not to break through to the LORD to
look, or many of them will perish.
22 Even the priests who come near to the LORD
must consecrate themselves, or the LORD will
break out against them."
23 Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot
come up Mount Sinai, for You Yourself warned us,
'Set a boundary round the mountain and treat it
as holy.'"
24 The LORD said to him, "Go down, and then
come up, you and Aaron with you. But the priests
and the people must not break through to come up
to the LORD, or He will break out against them."
25 Then Moses went down and spoke to the people.

1 Probably the first day of the month (2 Chronicles 31:7 uses the word 'month' in the same way).

2 Hebrew: סְגֻלָּה (segullah), a king's personal treasure (1 Chronicles 29:3). Compare Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9.

3 Quoted in Hebrews 12:20.

4 Hebrew: יֹבֵל (yovel), a ram's horn; the same word gives the name of the year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:10).

5 Hebrew: שׁוֹפָר (shofar), a ram's horn trumpet.

6 Or 'with a voice'. Hebrew קוֹל (qol) means both 'voice' and 'thunder' (9:23).

Chapter 20

Exodus 20 gives the Ten Commandments, the words God speaks to all Israel from the mountain. He who brought them out of slavery forbids other gods and carved images, the misuse of His name, and work on the Sabbath, which He blessed when He rested from creating; He commands honour for father and mother, and forbids murder, adultery, theft, false witness and coveting. The people, terrified by the thunder, lightning, trumpet and smoke, stand far off and beg Moses to speak to them instead, and Moses tells them that God has come to test them, so that the fear of Him may keep them from sin. The chapter ends with the first laws: no gods of silver or gold, and an altar of earth or uncut stone, wherever the LORD causes His name to be remembered.

1 And God spoke all these words:
2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out
of the land of Egypt, where you lived as slaves.[1]
3 You shall have no gods other than Me.[2]
4 You shall not make yourself a carved image, nor a
likeness of any form in the heavens above, on the
earth below, or in the waters beneath the earth.
5 You shall not bow down before them or serve
them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous
God: I hold the children answerable for their
fathers' wrongdoing, to the third and fourth
generation of those who hate Me,
6 but I keep loyal kindness for thousands[3], those
who love Me and obey My commandments.
7 You shall not take up the name of the LORD your
God for an empty purpose,[4] for the LORD will not
hold guiltless anyone who takes up His name for
an empty purpose.
8 Remember the day of the Sabbath and make it
holy.
9 You have six days to labour and do all your work,
10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath for the LORD
your God. Do no work on it: not you, your son or
your daughter, your male or female slave, your
livestock, or the foreigner within your gates.
11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and
the earth and the sea and everything in them, and
on the seventh day He rested; so the LORD
blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

12 Honour your father and your mother, so that you
may enjoy long life in the land that the LORD your
God is giving you.[5]

13 You shall not murder.[6]

14 You shall not commit adultery.

15 You shall not steal.

16 You shall not testify falsely against your
neighbour.

17 You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You
shall not covet his wife, his male or female slave,
his ox, his donkey, or anything else your neighbour
owns."

18 When all the people saw the thunder and the
flashes of lightning, and heard the sound of the
trumpet and saw the mountain smoking, the
people shook with fear and stood far off.

19 They said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we
will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we
will die."

20 Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid, for
God has come to test you, so that the fear of Him
may be before your eyes and keep you from
sinning."

21 So the people stood far off, while Moses drew
near to the thick darkness where God was.

22 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say this to the
Israelites: 'You have seen for yourselves that I
have spoken with you from heaven.

23 You shall not make gods of silver to be with Me,
nor shall you make for yourselves gods of gold.

24 Build Me an altar of earth and offer on it your
burnt offerings and peace offerings, from your
flocks and your herds. Wherever I cause My name
to be remembered, I will come to you and bless
you.

25 If you make Me an altar of stones, do not build it
of cut stones, for if you use a chisel on it, you will
make it unholy.

26 And you shall not go up to My altar by steps, so
that your nakedness is not exposed on it.'

1 Hebrew 'out of the house of slaves' (13:3, 14).

2 Hebrew 'before My face': besides Me, or in My presence.

3 Or 'to a thousand generations' (Deuteronomy 7:9).

4 Hebrew 'lift up the name … for emptiness': using God's name falsely, in a lying oath or for what is worthless.

5 Quoted in Ephesians 6:2–3, 'the first commandment to carry a promise'.

6 Hebrew: רָצַח (ratsach), to kill unlawfully. It is not the word used for killing in war or for the sentence of a court.

Chapter 21

Exodus 21 begins the laws that the LORD gives Moses to set before Israel, often called the Book of the Covenant (24:7). A Hebrew slave is to go free in the seventh year, unless he chooses to stay with his master for life, and a daughter sold as a slave-wife keeps her rights. Whoever kills a person deliberately is to die, though a place of refuge is provided for one who kills by accident; striking or cursing a parent and kidnapping are also capital crimes. Further laws deal with injuries in a fight, harm to a pregnant woman, the principle of life for life and eye for eye, slaves who are injured, an ox that gores, and an animal that falls into an open pit.

1 These are the rules you are to set before them.

2 When you buy a Hebrew slave, he is to serve for
six years, and in the seventh he is to go free,
without paying anything.

3 If he came in alone, he is to go out alone; if he
had a wife, his wife is to go out with him.

4 If his master provides him with a wife and she
bears him sons or daughters, she and her children
remain the master's, and he leaves on his own.

5 But if the slave declares, 'I love my master, my
wife and my children; I will not go free,'

6 then his master is to bring him to God;[1] he is to
bring him to the door or the doorpost, and his
master is to pierce his ear with an awl, and he will
serve him for life.

7 If a man sells his daughter as a slave, she is not
to go free as male slaves do.

8 If she does not please her master, who had
designated her for himself,[2] he must let her be
redeemed. He has no right to sell her to a foreign
people, since he has broken faith with her.

9 If he designates her for his son, he is to treat her
as a daughter.

10 If he takes another wife, he must not reduce the first one's food, her clothing or her marital rights.

11 If he does not do these three things for her, she is to go free, without any payment of money.

12 Whoever strikes a man so that he dies is to be put to death.

13 But if he did not lie in wait for him, and God let him fall into his hand, I will appoint for you a place to which he may flee.[3]

14 But if a man schemes against his neighbour and kills him by cunning, you are to take him even from My altar to be put to death.

15 Whoever strikes his father or his mother is to be put to death.

16 Whoever kidnaps a man is to be put to death, whether he has sold him or he is still found in his possession.

17 Whoever speaks evil of his father or his mother is to be put to death.[4]

18 When men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or his fist, and he does not die but is laid up in bed,

19 then if he gets up and walks about outside with his stick, the one who struck him is to go unpunished; he has only to pay for the time he lost and see that he is fully healed.

20 When a man strikes his male or female slave with a rod and the slave dies under his hand, he must be avenged.

21 But if the slave survives a day or two, he is not to be avenged, for the slave is his money.

22 When men are fighting and hit a pregnant woman, so that her child comes out[5] but there is no further harm, the one responsible is to be fined whatever the woman's husband lays on him, and he is to pay as the judges determine.

23 But if there is harm, you are to give life for life,

24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth,[6] hand for hand, foot for foot,

25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

26 When a man strikes the eye of his male or female slave and destroys it, he is to let the slave go free on account of the eye.

27 If he knocks out the tooth of his male or female slave, he is to let the slave go free on account of the tooth.

28 When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox is to be stoned, and its meat is not to be eaten, but the owner of the ox goes unpunished.

29 But if the ox has been in the habit of goring in the past, and its owner has been warned but has not kept it in, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox is to be stoned, and its owner too is to be put to death.

30 If a ransom is laid on him instead, he is to pay for the redemption of his life whatever is laid on him.

31 If it gores a son or a daughter, he is to be dealt with by this same rule.

32 If the ox gores a male or female slave, the owner is to pay thirty shekels[7] of silver to the slave's master, and the ox is to be stoned.

33 When a man opens a pit, or digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls into it,

34 the owner of the pit is to make it good. He is to pay money to its owner, and the dead animal will be his.

35 When one man's ox injures his neighbour's ox and it dies, they are to sell the live ox and divide the money, and they are to divide the dead one as well.

36 Or if it was known that the ox had been in the habit of goring in the past, and its owner did not keep it in, he must pay ox for ox, and the dead animal will be his.

1 Or 'to the judges', who decided cases in God's name; again in 22:8–9.

2 So the traditional reading (qere); the written text (ketiv) has 'so that he does not designate her'.

3 The cities of refuge (Numbers 35:9–34; Deuteronomy 19:1–13).

4 Hebrew 'curses'; quoted by Jesus in Matthew 15:4 and Mark 7:10.

5 Hebrew 'her children come out': a premature birth, or perhaps a miscarriage.

6 Quoted by Jesus in Matthew 5:38. The law set a limit to punishment, as the judges' rule of fair compensation (Leviticus 24:19–20; Deuteronomy 19:21).

7 A shekel was about 11.5 grams of silver. Thirty pieces of silver were the price paid for Jesus (Zechariah 11:12–13; Matthew 26:15).

Chapter 22

Exodus 22 continues the laws of the covenant. A thief must repay what he has taken, two, four or five times over, or be sold to pay for it; a householder who kills a burglar at night is not guilty, but by day he is. Further laws cover damage done by grazing animals and by fire, goods and animals left in a neighbour's keeping, and a man who seduces a virgin. Sorcery, lying with an animal and sacrifice to other gods are condemned. Israel is not to wrong the foreigner, for they were foreigners in Egypt, or to oppress the widow and orphan, for God hears their cry; loans to the poor are to be free of interest, and a cloak taken in pledge is to be returned by sunset. God and the rulers are not to be cursed, the firstborn and first fruits are to be given to Him, and Israel is to be a holy people.

1 When a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he is to repay five cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.[1]

2 If a thief is caught breaking in[2] and is struck so that he dies, there is no bloodguilt for him.

3 But if the sun has risen on him, there is bloodguilt for him. The thief must make full restitution; if he has nothing, he is to be sold for his theft.

4 If what he stole is actually found alive in his possession, whether ox or donkey or sheep, he is to repay double.

5 When a man lets a field or vineyard be grazed bare, letting his animals loose to graze in another man's field, he is to make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard.

6 When a fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacked grain or standing grain or a whole field is consumed, the one who lit the fire must make full restitution.

7 When a man gives his neighbour money or goods to keep for him, and they are stolen from the man's house, then if the thief is found, he is to repay double.

8 If the thief is not found, the owner of the house is to come before God, to see whether he has not laid his own hand on his neighbour's property.

9 In every case of wrongdoing, whether it concerns an ox, a donkey, a sheep, a cloak or anything lost, of which someone says, 'This is it,' the case of both parties is to come before God. The one whom God declares guilty[3] is to repay double to his neighbour.

10 Suppose a man entrusts a donkey, an ox, a sheep or any other animal to his neighbour's care, and it dies, is maimed or is carried off while nobody is watching.

11 Then an oath before the LORD is to settle it between them, that he has not laid his hand on his neighbour's property. Its owner is to accept this, and he need not make restitution.

12 But if it was stolen from him, he is to make restitution to its owner.

13 If it was torn by wild animals, let him bring it as evidence; he need not make good what was torn.

14 When a man borrows an animal from his neighbour and it is injured or dies while its owner is not with it, he must make full restitution.

15 If its owner was with it, he need not make restitution. If it was hired, it came for the hire charge.

16 When a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged to be married and lies with her, he must pay the bride-price for her and make her his wife.

17 If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he is to pay money equal to the bride-price for virgins.

18 You are not to let a sorceress live.

19 Whoever lies with an animal is to be put to death.

20 Whoever sacrifices to any god other than the LORD alone is to be devoted to destruction.[4]

21 You are not to wrong a foreigner or oppress him, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

22 You are not to mistreat any widow or orphan.

23 If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to Me, I will surely hear their cry,

24 and My anger will burn, and I will kill you with the sword; then your wives will be widows and your children orphans.

25 If you lend money to any of My people who is poor among you, you are not to be like a moneylender to him; you are not to charge him interest.

26 If you ever take your neighbour's cloak in pledge, you are to give it back to him before the sun goes down,

27 for it is his only covering, the cloak for his body. What else is he to sleep in? And if he cries out to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious.

28 You shall not treat God with contempt,[5] nor curse a ruler of your people.[6]

29 You are not to hold back the offering from the fullness of your harvest and the overflow of your presses.[7] The firstborn of your sons you are to give to Me.

30 You are to do the same with your cattle and your sheep. Seven days it is to stay with its mother; on the eighth day you are to give it to Me.

31 You are to be holy men to Me. You are not to eat meat torn by wild animals in the field; throw it to the dogs.

1 In Hebrew this verse is 21:37.

2 In Hebrew, 22:2–31 are 22:1–30.

3 Or 'the judges declare guilty'; the verb is plural.

4 Hebrew: יָחֳרָם (yochoram), from חֵרֶם (cherem), something given over to God by being destroyed.

5 Or 'the judges' (Hebrew אֱלֹהִים, elohim).

6 Quoted by Paul in Acts 23:5: 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'

7 The Hebrew is brief: 'your fullness and your juice', probably grain and wine or oil.

Chapter 23

Exodus 23 completes the laws of the covenant. Witnesses and judges are not to spread false reports, follow the crowd, favour either rich or poor, or take bribes, and an enemy's straying animal is to be returned and his fallen donkey helped up. Every seventh year the land is to rest so that the poor may eat from it, and every seventh day the household is to rest. Three times a year Israel is to keep a festival to the LORD: Unleavened Bread, Harvest and Ingathering. Then the LORD promises to send His angel before them, in whom His name is, to bring them into the land; He will drive out its peoples little by little, and Israel must make no covenant with them or their gods.

1 You are not to spread a false report. Do not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness.

2 You are not to follow the crowd in doing evil, nor give testimony in a case that sides with the crowd to twist justice;

3 nor are you to favour a poor man in his case.

4 When you come upon your enemy's ox or donkey going astray, you are to take it back to him.

5 When you see the donkey of someone who hates you lying down under its load, you are not to leave him to it; you are to help him with it.[1]

6 You are not to twist justice for the poor among you in his case.

7 Keep far from a false charge, and do not put to death the innocent and the righteous, for I will not declare the wicked righteous.

8 You are not to take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and twists the words of the righteous.

9 You are not to oppress a foreigner. You know how a foreigner feels,[2] for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

10 For six years you are to sow your land and gather in its produce,

11 but in the seventh year you are to let it rest and lie fallow, so that the poor among your people may eat, and what they leave the wild animals may eat. You are to do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove.

12 Six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you are to rest, so that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your female slave and the foreigner may be refreshed.

13 Pay attention to everything I have said to you. Do not call on the names of other gods; let them not be heard on your lips.

14 Three times in the year you are to keep a festival to Me.

15 You are to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. No one is to appear before Me empty-handed.

16 Keep also the Feast of Harvest,[3] with the first fruits of the crops you have sown in the field, and the Feast of Ingathering[4] at the turn of the year,

when you bring in from the field what you have worked for.

17 Three times in the year all your males are to appear before the Lord, the LORD.

18 You are not to offer the blood of My sacrifice with anything leavened, nor is the fat of My festival offering to remain until morning.

19 The best of the first fruits of your ground you are to bring to the house of the LORD your God. You are not to boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

20 See, I am sending an angel before you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared.

21 Take heed of him and listen to his voice. Do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your wrongdoing, because My name is in him.

22 But if you listen carefully to his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and a foe to your foes.

23 When My angel goes before you and brings you to the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, and I wipe them out,

24 you are not to bow down to their gods or serve them, or do as they do. You are to tear them down and smash their sacred pillars to pieces.

25 Serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your food and your drink, and I will remove sickness from your midst.

26 No woman in your land will miscarry or be barren; I will give you the full number of your days.

27 I will send My dread ahead of you and throw every people you come to into panic; I will make all your enemies turn and run from you.

28 I will send the hornet[5] before you to drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites and the Hittites from before you.

29 I will not drive them out before you in a single year, or the land would become desolate and the wild animals would multiply against you.

30 Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have grown in number and can take possession of the land.

31 I will fix your frontiers from the Red Sea to the Philistine sea,[6] and from the wilderness as far as the River;[7] for I will hand over the people living in the land to you, and you will drive them out ahead of you.

32 You are to make no covenant with them or with their gods.

33 Do not let them live in your land, or they will lead you into sin against Me; serving their gods would surely become a trap for you."

1 The Hebrew is difficult; literally 'you shall refrain from leaving it to him; you shall surely loose it with him'.

2 Hebrew 'you know the soul (נֶפֶשׁ, nephesh) of the foreigner'.

3 Also called the Feast of Weeks (34:22), and in Greek, Pentecost (Acts 2:1).

4 Also called the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:34; John 7:2).

5 Or 'panic' or 'discouragement'; the meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain (Deuteronomy 7:20; Joshua 24:12).

6 The Mediterranean.

7 The Euphrates (Genesis 15:18).

Chapter 24

Exodus 24 tells how the covenant is sealed. Moses tells the people all the LORD's words and rules, and they answer with one voice that they will do everything the LORD has said. He writes them down, builds an altar with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes, and has burnt offerings and peace offerings made; he throws half the blood against the altar, reads the Book of the Covenant, and sprinkles the rest on the people as "the blood of the covenant". Then Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and seventy elders go up and see the God of Israel, with something like a pavement of sapphire under His feet, and they eat and drink in His presence. The LORD calls Moses up to receive the stone tablets, and the glory of the LORD settles on Sinai like a consuming fire; Moses goes into the cloud and stays on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

1 And to Moses He said, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, with seventy of Israel's elders, and worship from far off.

2 Moses alone is to come near to the LORD; the others are not to come near, and the people are not to come up with him."

3 Moses came and recounted to the people every
word of the LORD and every rule, and the whole
people answered together, “Everything the LORD
has said, we will do.”
4 And Moses wrote down all the words of the
LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an
altar at the foot of the mountain, with twelve
pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.
5 He sent young men of the Israelites, and they
offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls
as peace offerings to the LORD.
6 Half of the blood Moses poured into basins, and
the other half he dashed against the altar.
7 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read
it aloud to the people, and they said, “All that the
LORD has spoken we will do, and we will obey.”
8 Then Moses took the blood and threw it over the
people, and said, “This is the blood of the
covenant[1] that the LORD has made with you on
the basis of all these words.”
9 So up they went, Moses and Aaron, Nadab and
Abihu, and seventy of Israel’s elders,
10 and they saw the God of Israel. Under His feet
was something like a pavement of sapphire,[2] as
clear as the sky itself.
11 But He did not lay His hand on these chief men
of the Israelites; they beheld God, and they ate
and drank.
12 The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to Me on
the mountain and wait there, and I will give you
the tablets of stone, with the law and the
commandment that I have written for their
instruction.”
13 So Moses rose with Joshua his assistant, and
Moses went up the mountain of God.
14 He told the elders, “Stay here for us until we
return to you. You have Aaron and Hur with you;
anyone with a case to settle can take it to them.”
15 As Moses went up the mountain, the cloud
covered it.
16 The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai,
and the cloud covered it for six days. On the
seventh day He called to Moses from within the
cloud.
17 In the eyes of the Israelites the glory of the
LORD looked like a consuming fire on the top of
the mountain.[3]
18 Moses went into the cloud and climbed the
mountain, and he was on the mountain forty days
and forty nights.

1 Quoted in Hebrews 9:20. Jesus says at the Last Supper, ‘This is My blood of the covenant’ (Mark 14:24).
2 Or ‘lapis lazuli’, a deep blue stone (Ezekiel 1:26).
3 Compare Hebrews 12:18–29: ‘our God is a consuming fire’.

Chapter 25

Exodus 25 begins the LORD’s instructions for the tabernacle, the sanctuary where He will dwell among His people. The Israelites are to bring an offering from willing hearts: gold, silver and bronze, coloured yarns, fine linen, skins, acacia wood, oil, spices and precious stones. The LORD then gives the pattern for the ark of acacia wood overlaid with gold, which will hold the testimony, with its gold cover, the place of atonement, where two cherubim spread their wings and where God will meet with Moses. Next come the table for the bread of the Presence and the lampstand of pure gold with its seven lamps, all to be made after the pattern shown to Moses on the mountain.

1 The LORD said to Moses,
2 “Tell the Israelites to take an offering[1] for Me.
From everyone whose heart moves him to give,
you are to take My offering.
3 This is the offering you are to take from them:
gold, silver and bronze;
4 blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and fine linen;
goats’ hair;
5 rams’ skins dyed red, fine leather,[2] and acacia
wood;
6 olive oil for the lamps, and spices for the
anointing oil and the sweet incense;
7 onyx stones, and stones for setting in the ephod
and in the breastpiece.
8 They are to make Me a holy place, and I will
dwell in their midst.
9 Exactly as I show you, after the pattern of the
tabernacle[3] and the pattern of all its furnishings,
so you are to make it.

10 They are to make an ark of acacia wood, two
and a half cubits[4] long, a cubit and a half wide and
a cubit and a half high.

11 You are to overlay it with pure gold, inside and
out, and make a gold moulding all round it.

12 Cast four gold rings for it and fix them to its four
feet, two rings on one side and two rings on the
other.

13 Make poles of acacia wood and overlay them
with gold,

14 and slide the poles through the rings on the
ark's sides, so that it can be carried by them.

15 The poles are to stay in the rings of the ark; they
are not to be taken out of it.

16 And you are to put into the ark the testimony[5]
that I will give you.

17 You are to make a place of atonement[6] of pure
gold, two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a
half wide.

18 And make two cherubim of gold; make them of
hammered work at the two ends of the place of
atonement.

19 Make one cherub at one end and one cherub at
the other; make the cherubim of one piece with
the place of atonement, at its two ends.

20 The cherubim are to spread out their wings
above, overshadowing the place of atonement with
their wings, facing each other; the faces of the
cherubim are to be turned towards the place of
atonement.

21 Put the place of atonement on top of the ark,
and in the ark put the testimony that I will give
you.

22 There I will meet with you, and from above the
place of atonement, from between the two
cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I
will speak with you about all that I will command
you for the Israelites.

23 You are to make a table of acacia wood, two
cubits long, a cubit wide and a cubit and a half
high.

24 Overlay it with pure gold and make a gold
moulding all round it.

25 Make a rim a handbreadth wide all round it, and
a gold moulding round its rim.

26 Make four gold rings for it and fix the rings at
the four corners, where its four legs are.

27 The rings are to be close to the rim, as holders
for the poles to carry the table.

28 Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them
with gold, and the table is to be carried with them.

29 And make its plates and dishes, its jugs and
bowls for pouring drink offerings; make them of
pure gold.

30 On the table you are to set the bread of the
Presence[7] before Me always.

31 You are to make a lampstand of pure gold. The
lampstand is to be made of hammered work, its
base and its shaft; its cups, its knobs and its
flowers are to be of one piece with it.

32 Six branches are to come out from its sides,
three branches of the lampstand from one side
and three branches from the other.

33 On one branch there are to be three cups
shaped like almond blossoms, each with a knob
and a flower, and three cups shaped like almond
blossoms on the next branch, each with a knob
and a flower; so for all six branches coming out
from the lampstand.

34 On the lampstand itself there are to be four cups
shaped like almond blossoms, with their knobs
and flowers,

35 and a knob under each pair of branches coming
out from it, for all six branches coming out from
the lampstand.

36 Their knobs and branches are to be of one piece
with it, the whole of it a single piece of hammered
work of pure gold.

37 Make its seven lamps, and set the lamps up so
that they give light in front of it.

38 Its wick-trimmers and its trays are to be of pure
gold.

39 It is to be made, with all these utensils, from a
talent[8] of pure gold.

40 And see that you make them after their pattern,
which you are being shown on the mountain.[9]

1 Hebrew: תְּרוּמָה (terumah), something ‘lifted off’ and set apart as a gift.

2 Hebrew: תְּחָשִׁים (techashim), perhaps the skins of sea cows or dolphins, or a fine dyed leather; the meaning is uncertain.

3 Hebrew: מִשְׁכָּן (mishkan), ‘dwelling place’, from שָׁכַן (shachan), ‘to dwell’ (verse 8). Compare John 1:14: ‘the Word became flesh and pitched His tent among us’.

4 A cubit, the length from elbow to fingertip, was about 45 centimetres (18 inches). The ark was about 1.1 metres long and 70 centimetres wide and high.

5 The two tablets of stone (31:18), the witness to the covenant.

6 Hebrew: כַּפֹּרֶת (kapporet), the gold cover of the ark, from כָּפַר (kipper), ‘to atone’; traditionally ‘the mercy seat’. Here the blood was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:14–15). Paul calls Christ the ‘place of atonement’ (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9:5).

7 Hebrew ‘bread of the face’: twelve loaves set out before the LORD each Sabbath (Leviticus 24:5–9; Matthew 12:4).

8 A talent was about 34 kilograms (75 pounds).

9 Quoted in Hebrews 8:5: the tabernacle was a copy and shadow of the heavenly things.

Chapter 26

Exodus 26 gives the plan of the tabernacle itself. Its inner covering is ten curtains of fine linen and coloured yarns with cherubim worked into them, joined with gold clasps; over this goes a tent of eleven curtains of goats’ hair, and over that coverings of rams’ skins and fine leather. The structure is a framework of acacia wood overlaid with gold, set in silver bases and held together by bars. A veil of the same coloured yarns and linen, with cherubim, is to divide the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, where the ark with its place of atonement will stand; the table and lampstand are to stand outside the veil, and an embroidered screen is to cover the entrance of the tent.

1 You are to make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim worked into them by a skilled designer.

2 Each curtain is to be twenty-eight cubits long and four cubits wide; all the curtains are to be the same size.

3 Five of the curtains are to be joined to one another, and the other five curtains are to be joined to one another.

4 Make loops of blue on the edge of the outermost curtain of the first set, and do the same on the edge of the outermost curtain of the second set.

5 Make fifty loops on the one curtain, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain in the second set, with the loops opposite one another.

6 And make fifty clasps of gold, and join the curtains to one another with the clasps, so that the tabernacle is one whole.

7 You are also to make curtains of goats’ hair for a tent over the tabernacle; make eleven curtains.

8 Each curtain is to be thirty cubits long and four cubits wide; the eleven curtains are to be the same size.

9 Join five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves, and fold the sixth curtain double at the front of the tent.

10 Make fifty loops on the edge of the outermost curtain of the one set, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain of the second set.

11 Make fifty clasps of bronze, put the clasps into the loops and join the tent together, so that it is one whole.

12 As for the part that hangs over, the extra length of the tent curtains, the half curtain that is left over is to hang down at the back of the tabernacle.

13 And the cubit on either side, left over in the length of the tent curtains, is to hang down over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side and that, to cover it.

14 Make a covering for the tent of rams’ skins dyed red, and over that a covering of fine leather.

15 You are to make upright frames of acacia wood for the tabernacle.

16 Each frame is to be ten cubits long and a cubit and a half wide,

17 with two pegs[1] in each frame for joining them to one another. Make all the frames of the tabernacle in this way.

18 Make the frames for the tabernacle: twenty frames for the south side,

19 and make forty bases of silver under the twenty
frames, two bases under one frame for its two
pegs, and two bases under the next frame for its
two pegs.
20 For the second side of the tabernacle, the north
side, there are to be twenty frames,
21 with their forty bases of silver, two bases under
one frame and two bases under the next.
22 For the back of the tabernacle, towards the
west, make six frames,
23 and make two frames for the corners of the
tabernacle at the back.
24 They are to be double at the bottom and joined
together at the top, at the first ring; so it is to be
with both of them, which will form the two
corners.
25 So there will be eight frames, with their bases of
silver, sixteen bases: two bases under one frame
and two bases under the next.
26 Make crossbars, too, of acacia wood: five for the
frames along one side of the tabernacle,
27 five bars for the frames of the other side of the
tabernacle, and five bars for the frames of the side
of the tabernacle at the back, towards the west.
28 The middle bar, halfway up the frames, is to run
from end to end.
29 Overlay the frames with gold, and make their
rings of gold as holders for the bars, and overlay
the bars with gold.
30 Then you are to set up the tabernacle according
to the plan of it that you were shown on the
mountain.
31 You are to make a veil[2] of blue, purple and
scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen, with cherubim
worked into it by a skilled designer.
32 Hang it on four pillars of acacia wood overlaid
with gold, with hooks of gold, set on four bases of
silver.
33 Hang the veil under the clasps, and bring the
ark of the testimony in there, behind the veil. The
veil will divide for you the Holy Place from the
Most Holy Place.
34 Put the place of atonement on the ark of the
testimony in the Most Holy Place.
35 Set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand
opposite the table on the south side of the
tabernacle; put the table on the north side.
36 For the entrance of the tent you are to make a
screen of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine
twisted linen, the work of an embroiderer.
37 And make for the screen five pillars of acacia
wood and overlay them with gold. Their hooks are
to be of gold, and you are to cast five bases of
bronze for them.

1 Hebrew ‘hands’: tenons at the foot of each frame, fitting into the bases (verse 19).

2 Hebrew: פָּרֹכֶת (parochet), the curtain before the Most Holy Place, torn in two when Jesus died (Matthew 27:51; Hebrews 10:19–20).

Chapter 27

Exodus 27 gives the plan of the altar and the courtyard. The altar is to be a hollow box of acacia wood overlaid with bronze, five cubits square and three high, with a horn at each corner, a bronze grating and bronze utensils, carried on poles. Round the tabernacle is to be a courtyard a hundred cubits by fifty, enclosed by hangings of fine linen on pillars set in bronze bases, with an embroidered screen twenty cubits wide for its gate on the east. The Israelites are to bring pure olive oil so that Aaron and his sons can keep the lamp burning before the LORD from evening to morning, a statute for all time.

1 Build the altar of acacia wood, square in shape,
five cubits each way and three cubits in height.
2 Make horns[1] for it on its four corners, its horns of
one piece with it, and overlay it with bronze.
3 Make its pots for clearing away the ashes, and its
shovels, its basins, its forks and its fire pans; make
all its utensils of bronze.
4 Make a grating for it, a network of bronze, and
on the network make four bronze rings at its four
corners.
5 Set it under the ledge of the altar, below, so that
the network comes halfway up the altar.
6 For carrying the altar, make acacia-wood poles
covered with bronze.

7 The poles are to be put through the rings, so that the poles are on the two sides of the altar when it is carried.

8 Make it hollow, of boards. As you were shown on the mountain, so they are to make it.

9 You are to make the courtyard of the tabernacle. On the south side the courtyard is to have hangings of fine twisted linen, a hundred cubits long for that side,

10 with twenty pillars and their twenty bases of bronze; the hooks of the pillars and their bands are to be of silver.

11 In the same way, along the north side there are to be hangings a hundred cubits long, with twenty pillars and their twenty bases of bronze, and the hooks of the pillars and their bands of silver.

12 Across the width of the courtyard on the west side there are to be hangings of fifty cubits, with ten pillars and ten bases.

13 The width of the courtyard on the front, the east side, is to be fifty cubits.

14 The hangings for one side of the gate are to be fifteen cubits, with three pillars and three bases,

15 and for the other side, hangings of fifteen cubits, with three pillars and three bases.

16 For the gate of the courtyard there is to be a screen twenty cubits long, of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen, the work of an embroiderer, with four pillars and four bases.

17 All the pillars round the courtyard are to be banded with silver; their hooks are to be of silver and their bases of bronze.

18 The courtyard is to be a hundred cubits long and fifty wide all along, and five cubits high, with hangings of fine twisted linen and bases of bronze.

19 All the utensils of the tabernacle for all its service, and all its tent pegs and all the pegs of the courtyard, are to be of bronze.

20 You are to command the Israelites to bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, so that a lamp may be kept burning continually.

21 In the tent of meeting, outside the veil that is in front of the testimony, Aaron and his sons are to tend it before the LORD from evening until morning. It is to be a statute for ever for the Israelites throughout their generations.

1 The blood of atonement was put on the horns (29:12; Leviticus 4:7), and one in danger could take hold of them to claim sanctuary (1 Kings 1:50).

Chapter 28

> *Exodus 28 describes the holy garments of the priests, made by skilled craftsmen whom God has filled with wisdom, for glory and beauty. Aaron is to wear an ephod of gold, coloured yarns and fine linen, with two onyx stones on its shoulders engraved with the names of the twelve sons of Israel, and over it the breastpiece of judgement, set with twelve precious stones engraved with the names of the tribes, holding the Urim and Thummim; so he will bear Israel's names over his heart before the LORD. Under these goes a robe of blue with pomegranates and gold bells round its hem, and on his turban a gold plate engraved "Holy to the LORD". Aaron's sons are to have tunics, sashes and caps, and all the priests linen undergarments, when they are anointed, ordained and consecrated.*

1 Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the Israelites, to serve Me as priests: Aaron, and Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

2 You are to make holy garments for your brother Aaron, for glory and for beauty.

3 Speak to all who are skilled, whom I have filled with a spirit of wisdom, so that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him to serve Me as priest.

4 These are the garments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod,[1] a robe, a tunic of chequered work, a turban and a sash. They are to make holy garments for your brother Aaron and his sons, to serve Me as priests.

5 They are to use gold, blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and fine linen.

6 They are to make the ephod of gold, of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of fine twisted linen, the work of a skilled designer.

7 It is to have two shoulder pieces joined to it at its two edges, so that it is held together.

8 The woven band on it is to be of the same workmanship and of one piece with it, of gold, of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of fine twisted linen.

9 Then take two onyx stones and cut into them the
names of Israel's sons,
10 six names on each stone, in the order in which
they were born.
11 As a jeweller engraves a seal, so you are to
engrave the two stones with the names of the sons
of Israel; set them in settings of gold filigree.
12 Put the two stones on the shoulder pieces of the
ephod as stones of remembrance for the sons of
Israel. Aaron is to bear their names before the
LORD on his two shoulders as a reminder.
13 Make settings of gold filigree,
14 and two chains of pure gold, twisted like cords,
and fix the corded chains to the settings.
15 You are to make a breastpiece of judgement,[2]
the work of a skilled designer. Make it like the
work of the ephod: of gold, of blue, purple and
scarlet yarn, and of fine twisted linen.
16 It is to be square and folded double, a span[3] long
and a span wide.
17 Set in it four rows of stones.[4] The first row is to
be a carnelian, a topaz and an emerald;
18 the second row a turquoise, a sapphire and a
diamond;
19 the third row a jacinth, an agate and an
amethyst;
20 and the fourth row a beryl, an onyx and a jasper.
They are to be mounted in gold filigree.
21 There are to be twelve stones with the names of
the sons of Israel, each engraved like a seal with
its name, for the twelve tribes.
22 On the breastpiece make chains of pure gold,
twisted like cords.
23 Make two gold rings on the breastpiece, and fix
the two rings to its two upper corners.
24 Fasten the two gold cords to the two rings at the
corners of the breastpiece,
25 and the two other ends of the two cords fasten
to the two settings, putting them on the shoulder
pieces of the ephod at the front.
26 Make two gold rings and put them at the two
lower corners of the breastpiece, on its inside
edge next to the ephod.
27 And make two more gold rings and fix them low
on the two shoulder pieces of the ephod, at the
front, close to its seam, above the woven band of
the ephod.
28 The breastpiece is to be bound by its rings to the
rings of the ephod with a cord of blue, so that it
lies on the woven band of the ephod and does not
come loose from the ephod.
29 So Aaron will bear the names of the sons of
Israel on the breastpiece of judgement over his
heart when he goes into the Holy Place, as a
continual reminder before the LORD.
30 And in the breastpiece of judgement you are to
put the Urim and the Thummim,[5] and they will be
over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the
LORD. Thus Aaron will bear the judgement of the
Israelites over his heart before the LORD
continually.
31 The robe that goes under the ephod is to be
woven entirely of blue.
32 There is to be an opening for the head in the
middle of it, with a woven binding round the
opening, like the collar of a coat of mail,[6] so that it
will not tear.
33 On its hem make pomegranates of blue, purple
and scarlet yarn, all round its hem, with bells of
gold between them all round:
34 a gold bell and a pomegranate, a gold bell and a
pomegranate, all round the hem of the robe.
35 Aaron is to wear it when he ministers, and its
sound will be heard when he goes into the Holy
Place before the LORD and when he comes out, so
that he does not die.
36 You are to make a plate of pure gold and
engrave on it, as a seal is engraved, 'Holy to the
LORD'.
37 Fasten it with a cord of blue to the turban; it is
to be on the front of the turban.
38 It is to be on Aaron's forehead, and Aaron will
bear the guilt connected with the holy things that
the Israelites consecrate, all their holy gifts. It is
to be on his forehead continually, so that they may
be accepted before the LORD.
39 You are to weave the tunic in chequered work of
fine linen, make a turban of fine linen, and make a
sash, the work of an embroiderer.
40 For Aaron's sons you are to make tunics, sashes
and caps, for glory and for beauty.
41 Put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons
with him, and anoint them, ordain them[7] and
consecrate them, so that they may serve Me as
priests.

42 And make them linen undergarments to cover
their naked flesh; they are to reach from the waist
to the thighs.

43 Aaron and his sons are to wear them when they
go into the tent of meeting or come near the altar
to minister in the Holy Place, so that they do not
incur guilt and die. It is to be a statute for ever for
him and for his descendants after him.

1 A priestly garment worn over the robe like an apron, held by two shoulder pieces and a band at the waist (verses 6–8).

2 It held the Urim and Thummim, by which God's judgement was sought (verse 30).

3 A span, from thumb to little finger, was about 23 centimetres (9 inches).

4 Several of these gems cannot be identified with certainty; compare Revelation 21:19–20.

5 Perhaps 'Lights and Perfections'. They were probably two stones or lots used to learn God's will (Numbers 27:21; 1 Samuel 14:41).

6 The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain.

7 Hebrew 'fill their hand', the idiom for installing a priest in office (29:9, 33, 35).

Chapter 29

Exodus 29 gives the rite by which Aaron and his sons are to be ordained as priests. They are to be washed at the entrance of the tent of meeting, dressed in the holy garments, and Aaron anointed with oil. A bull is to be offered as a sin offering, one ram as a burnt offering, and a second ram as the ram of ordination, whose blood is put on the right ear, thumb and big toe of each priest and sprinkled with oil on them and their garments; parts of it, with the unleavened bread, are waved before the LORD, and the priests eat the rest. The ordination lasts seven days, with daily atonement for the altar. Then a lamb is to be offered every morning and every evening at the tent of meeting, where the LORD will meet with Israel, consecrate the tent by His glory, and dwell among them as their God.

1 This is what you are to do to consecrate them to
serve Me as priests. Take a young bull and two
rams without defect,

2 together with bread made without yeast: loaves,
cakes kneaded with oil, and thin wafers brushed
with oil, all baked from fine wheat flour.

3 Bring them in a single basket, and present the
basket with the bull and the two rams.

4 Bring Aaron and his sons to the doorway of the
tent of meeting and have them washed.

5 Take the garments and put on Aaron the tunic,
the robe of the ephod, the ephod and the
breastpiece, and tie the ephod on him with its
woven band.

6 Place the turban on his head and fix the holy
crown[1] to it.

7 Then pour the anointing oil over his head, and so
anoint him.

8 Next bring his sons and put tunics on them.

9 Gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and
bind caps on them. The priesthood will be theirs
by a statute for ever. So you are to ordain Aaron
and his sons.

10 Lead the bull up to the front of the tent of
meeting, where Aaron and his sons are to place
their hands on its head.

11 Then slaughter the bull before the LORD at the
entrance of the tent of meeting.

12 Take some of the bull's blood and put it on the
horns of the altar with your finger, and pour out
all the rest of the blood at the foot of the altar.

13 Take all the fat that covers the entrails, the long
lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys with the fat
that is on them, and burn them on the altar.

14 The bull's meat, hide and dung, however, must
be burnt outside the camp, for it is a sin offering.[2]

15 Then take one of the rams, and Aaron and his
sons are to lay their hands on the ram's head.

16 Slaughter the ram, take its blood and throw it
against the altar on all sides.

17 Cut the ram up, wash the entrails and the legs,
and lay them with the other pieces and the head.

18 Then burn the whole ram on the altar. It is a
burnt offering to the LORD, a soothing aroma, a
fire offering[3] to the LORD.

19 Take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons are
to lay their hands on the ram's head.

20 Slaughter the ram, take some of its blood and
put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and the
lobes of his sons' right ears, on the thumbs of

their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet, and throw the rest of the blood against the altar on all sides.

21 Then take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and his garments, and on his sons and their garments with him. So he and his garments will be holy, and his sons and their garments with him.

22 Take from the ram the fat, the fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the long lobe of the liver, the two kidneys with the fat on them, and the right thigh, for it is a ram of ordination;

23 and one round loaf of bread, one cake of bread made with oil and one wafer from the basket of unleavened bread that is before the LORD.

24 Place all of it in the hands of Aaron and his sons, and have them wave it as a wave offering[4] before the LORD.

25 Then take them from their hands and burn them on the altar on top of the burnt offering, as a soothing aroma before the LORD. It is a fire offering to the LORD.

26 Take the breast of Aaron's ram of ordination and wave it as a wave offering before the LORD; it will be your portion.

27 You are to consecrate the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the contribution, the parts that were waved and lifted up from the ram of ordination, from what belonged to Aaron and to his sons.

28 They are to belong to Aaron and his sons as a lasting due from the Israelites, for it is a contribution; it is to be a contribution from the Israelites out of their peace offerings, their contribution to the LORD.

29 The holy garments of Aaron are to pass to his sons after him, so that they may be anointed and ordained in them.

30 The son who becomes priest in his place, and comes into the tent of meeting to minister in the Holy Place, is to wear them for seven days.

31 You are to take the ram of ordination and boil its flesh in a holy place.

32 At the doorway of the tent of meeting Aaron and his sons are to eat the ram's meat, together with the bread left in the basket.

33 They are to eat the things by which atonement was made at their ordination and consecration, but no outsider[5] may eat them, for they are holy.

34 If any of the flesh of the ordination or of the bread is left over until morning, you are to burn what is left in the fire. It is not to be eaten, for it is holy.

35 This is how you are to deal with Aaron and his sons, just as I have commanded you. For seven days you are to ordain them,

36 and every day you are to offer a bull as a sin offering for atonement. You are to purify the altar by making atonement for it, and anoint it to consecrate it.

37 For seven days you are to make atonement for the altar and consecrate it, and the altar will be most holy; whatever touches the altar will become holy.

38 This is what you are to offer on the altar: two lambs a year old, day by day, continually.

39 The one lamb you are to offer in the morning, and the other lamb you are to offer at twilight;

40 and with the first lamb a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a quarter of a hin[6] of beaten oil, and a quarter of a hin of wine as a drink offering.

41 The other lamb you are to offer at twilight, and offer with it a grain offering and a drink offering as in the morning, as a soothing aroma, a fire offering to the LORD.

42 It is to be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the entrance of the tent of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet with you to speak to you there.

43 There I will meet with the Israelites, and it will be made holy by My glory.

44 I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; and Aaron and his sons I will consecrate to serve Me as priests.

45 I will dwell among the Israelites and will be their God.

46 They will come to know that I am the LORD their God, who led them out of Egypt in order to dwell in their midst. I am the LORD their God.

1 The gold plate of 28:36, ‘Holy to the LORD’.

2 Compare Hebrews 13:11–13: Jesus suffered outside the gate.

3 Hebrew: אִשֶּׁה (ishsheh), an offering given to the LORD by burning; perhaps ‘a gift’.

4 Offerings ‘waved’ or lifted towards the altar were given to the LORD and then handed back for the priests to eat (verses 26–28).

5 That is, anyone not of a priestly family.

6 A hin was about 4 litres; so a quarter of a hin was about a litre.

Chapter 30

Exodus 30 completes the LORD’s instructions for the sanctuary. A small altar of acacia wood overlaid with gold is to stand before the veil, where Aaron will burn fragrant incense every morning and evening, and once a year make atonement on its horns. When Israel is counted, each man of twenty and over is to give half a shekel as a ransom for his life, the same for rich and poor, to pay for the service of the tent of meeting. A bronze basin is to stand between the tent and the altar, where the priests must wash their hands and feet before they serve. Last come the recipes for the holy anointing oil, with which the tent, its furnishings and the priests are to be anointed, and for the holy incense; neither is ever to be made for ordinary use.

1 You are to make an altar for burning incense;
make it of acacia wood.

2 It is to be a cubit long and a cubit wide, square,
and two cubits high, its horns of one piece with it.

3 Overlay it with pure gold, its top, its sides all
round and its horns, and make a gold moulding all
round it.

4 Make two gold rings for it under its moulding;
make them on its two sides, on opposite sides, as
holders for the poles with which to carry it.

5 Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them
with gold.

6 Put it in front of the veil that is before the ark of
the testimony, in front of the place of atonement
that is over the testimony, where I will meet with
you.

7 Aaron is to burn fragrant incense on it. Every
morning, when he tends the lamps, he is to burn
it,

8 and when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he is
to burn it, a regular incense before the LORD
throughout your generations.[1]

9 You are not to offer on it any unauthorised
incense, or a burnt offering or a grain offering,
and you are not to pour a drink offering on it.

10 Once a year Aaron is to make atonement on its
horns. With the blood of the sin offering of
atonement he is to make atonement for it once a
year throughout your generations. It is most holy
to the LORD.”

11 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

12 “When you take a census of the Israelites to
count them, each man is to give the LORD a
ransom for his life when he is counted, so that no
plague will strike them when you count them.[2]

13 Everyone who passes over to those who are
counted is to give this: half a shekel by the
sanctuary shekel (the shekel is twenty gerahs),[3]
half a shekel as an offering to the LORD.

14 Every man of twenty years or more who is
entered in the count is to give the offering to the
LORD.

15 The rich are not to give more, and the poor are
not to give less, than half a shekel, when you give
the LORD’s offering to make atonement for your
lives.

16 You are to take the atonement money from the
Israelites and give it for the service of the tent of
meeting. It will be a reminder of the Israelites
before the LORD, to make atonement for your
lives.”

17 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

18 “You are also to make a basin of bronze, with its
stand of bronze, for washing. Put it between the
tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it,

19 and Aaron and his sons are to wash their hands
and their feet from it.

20 When they go into the tent of meeting, they are
to wash with water, so that they do not die; and
when they come near the altar to minister, to burn
a fire offering to the LORD,

21 they are to wash their hands and their feet, so
that they do not die. It is to be a statute for ever

for them, for him and his descendants throughout their generations.”

22 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

23 “Take for yourself the finest spices: five hundred shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much, that is, two hundred and fifty, of sweet-smelling cinnamon, two hundred and fifty of aromatic cane,

24 five hundred of cassia, by the sanctuary shekel, and a hin of olive oil.

25 Make of these a holy anointing oil, a fragrant blend, the work of a perfumer; it is to be a holy anointing oil.

26 With it you are to anoint the tent of meeting, the ark of the testimony,

27 the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, the altar of incense,

28 the altar of burnt offering and everything that goes with it, and the basin and its stand.

29 You are to consecrate them, so that they will be most holy; whatever touches them will become holy.

30 And you are to anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate them to serve Me as priests.

31 Say to the Israelites, ‘This is to be My holy anointing oil throughout your generations.

32 It is not to be poured on anyone’s body, and you are not to make any like it with the same recipe. It is holy, and it is to be holy to you.

33 Whoever blends any like it, or puts any of it on an outsider, will be cut off from his people.’”

34 The LORD said to Moses, “Take sweet spices, stacte, onycha and galbanum,[4] sweet spices with pure frankincense, of each an equal part,

35 and make of them incense, a fragrant blend, the work of a perfumer, seasoned with salt, pure and holy.

36 Grind some of it very fine and put some of it in front of the testimony in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with you. It is to be most holy to you.

37 And the incense that you make, you are not to make any by its recipe for yourselves; it is to be holy to you for the LORD.

38 Whoever makes any like it to enjoy its fragrance will be cut off from his people.”

1 Compare Luke 1:8–11 and Revelation 8:3–4, where incense goes up with the prayers of God’s people.

2 Compare 2 Samuel 24, where David’s census brings a plague.

3 A gerah was about 0.6 grams. Jesus pays this tax in Matthew 17:24–27.

4 Gum resins and a spice from a shellfish; the exact identities are uncertain.

Chapter 31

Exodus 31 closes the LORD’s words to Moses on the mountain. He has called Bezalel son of Uri, of the tribe of Judah, by name and filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, understanding and knowledge for every craft, and has given him Oholiab of the tribe of Dan as his helper, together with all the skilled workers, to make everything He has commanded. Then He tells Israel to keep His Sabbaths as a sign between Him and them for ever, that He is the LORD who makes them holy; whoever profanes the Sabbath is to be put to death. When He has finished speaking, He gives Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone written by the finger of God.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 “Look, I have singled out by name Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, from the tribe of Judah,

3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, understanding and knowledge in every kind of craft,

4 to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver and bronze,

5 in cutting stones for setting and in carving wood, to work in every craft.

6 And I have appointed with him Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. In the hearts of all who are skilled I have put skill, so that they may make all that I have commanded you:

7 the tent of meeting, the ark of the testimony and the place of atonement that is on it, and all the furnishings of the tent;

8 the table and its utensils, the pure lampstand with all its utensils, the altar of incense,

9 the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the basin with its stand;

10 the finely woven garments,[1] the holy garments
for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons
for serving as priests;
11 and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense
for the Holy Place. They are to do just as I have
commanded you."
12 The LORD said to Moses,
13 "Speak to the Israelites and say, 'Above all you
are to keep My Sabbaths, for this is a sign
between Me and you throughout your generations,
so that you may know that I am the LORD who
makes you holy.
14 You are to keep the Sabbath, for it is holy to you.
Whoever profanes it is to be put to death; whoever
does any work on it, that person will be cut off
from among his people.
15 Six days work may be done, but the seventh day
is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to the LORD.
Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day is to
be put to death.
16 The Israelites are to keep the Sabbath,
observing the Sabbath throughout their
generations as a covenant for ever.
17 It is a sign for ever between Me and the
Israelites, for in six days the LORD made the
heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He
rested and was refreshed.'"[2]
18 When He had finished speaking with Moses on
Mount Sinai, He gave him the two tablets of the
testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of
God.[3]

1 The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain; perhaps 'garments for ministering'.

2 Hebrew וַיִּנָּפַשׁ (vayyinnafash), 'took breath', from the same root as נֶפֶשׁ (nephesh).

3 Compare Luke 11:20 and 2 Corinthians 3:3.

Chapter 32

Exodus 32 tells of the golden calf. When Moses is long in coming down from the mountain, the people demand that Aaron make them gods, and he makes a calf from their gold earrings; they say, "These are your gods, O Israel", and celebrate a feast with offerings, eating, drinking and revelry. The LORD tells Moses that the people have corrupted themselves and says He will destroy them, but Moses pleads for them, reminding Him of His oath to Abraham, Isaac and Israel, and the LORD relents. Coming down with the tablets, Moses sees the dancing and breaks the tablets at the foot of the mountain; he burns the calf, grinds it to powder and makes the people drink it, and confronts Aaron. The Levites rally to Moses and kill about three thousand men. Then Moses goes back to the LORD to ask forgiveness for the people, offering to be blotted out of God's book himself, and the LORD sends a plague.

1 When the people saw that Moses was long in
coming down from the mountain, they crowded
round Aaron and said to him, "Come, make us
gods[1] to go ahead of us. This Moses, the man who
led us up out of Egypt, we have no idea what has
happened to him."
2 Aaron answered them, "Pull off the gold rings
from the ears of your wives, sons and daughters,
and bring them here to me."
3 So the whole people pulled off the gold rings
from their ears and brought them to Aaron.
4 He took the gold from their hands, shaped it with
a graving tool[2] and made it into a cast image of a
calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel,
who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"
5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it
and made a proclamation: "Tomorrow there will
be a festival to the LORD."
6 The next morning they were up early, offering
burnt offerings and bringing peace offerings; and
the people sat down to eat and drink and got up to
play.[3]
7 The LORD said to Moses, "Go down at once, for
your people, whom you brought up out of the land
of Egypt, have acted corruptly.
8 They have quickly turned aside from the way I
commanded them. They have made for themselves
a cast image of a calf, and have bowed down to it
and sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your
gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land
of Egypt!'"
9 And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this
people, and they are a stiff-necked people.
10 Now leave Me alone, so that My anger may burn
against them and I may consume them. Then I will
make a great nation of you."

11 But Moses sought the favour of the LORD his God.[4] “O LORD,” he said, “why should Your anger blaze against Your own people, whom You brought out of Egypt by great power and a mighty hand?

12 Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that He brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and wipe them off the face of the earth’? Turn from Your fierce anger, and relent from this harm to Your people.

13 Remember Your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, and the oath You swore to them by Your own self: ‘I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars in the sky, and I will give your offspring all this land I have promised, and it shall be their inheritance for ever.’”

14 And the LORD relented from the harm He had said He would do to His people.[5]

15 Moses turned and went down the mountain, carrying the two tablets of the testimony, tablets inscribed on both faces, front and back.

16 These tablets were God’s own work, and the writing engraved on them was God’s own writing.

17 Joshua heard the uproar of the people shouting and said to Moses, “That is the noise of battle in the camp.”

18 But Moses said, “It is not the sound of victors shouting, nor the sound of the defeated crying; it is the sound of singing that I hear.”

19 As soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses’ anger burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.

20 He took the calf they had made and burned it in the fire; he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.

21 “What did these people do to you,” Moses asked Aaron, “that you have led them into so great a sin?”

22 Aaron said, “Do not let my lord’s anger burn. You know the people, how set they are on evil.

23 They said to me, ‘Make us gods to go ahead of us. This Moses, the man who led us up out of Egypt, we have no idea what has happened to him.’

24 I told them, ‘Anyone with gold, strip it off.’ So they handed it to me; I threw it in the fire, and this calf came out!”

25 Moses saw that the people had broken loose, for Aaron had let them get out of control, to be a laughing stock to their enemies.

26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, “Whoever is for the LORD, come to me!” And all the sons of Levi gathered round him.

27 He said to them, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Every man of you put his sword at his side and go back and forth from gate to gate through the camp, and each kill his brother, his friend and his neighbour.’”

28 The sons of Levi did as Moses said, and about three thousand of the people fell that day.

29 Then Moses said, “Today you have been ordained[6] for the LORD, each at the cost of his own son and brother, so that He may give you a blessing today.”

30 On the following day Moses told the people, “You have sinned greatly. Now I will go up to the LORD; it may be that I can make atonement for your sin.”

31 So Moses went back to the LORD and said, “Alas, this people has committed a great sin; they have made themselves gods of gold.

32 But now, if You will forgive their sin… But if not, blot me out, I pray, from Your book that You have written.”[7]

33 But the LORD said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against Me, him I will blot out of My book.

34 Now go, lead the people to the place I have told you about. See, My angel will go before you. Yet on the day I punish, I will punish them for their sin.”

35 And the LORD struck the people with a plague, because they made the calf, the one Aaron made.

1 Or ‘a god’; Hebrew אֱלֹהִים (elohim) can mean either. Again in verses 4, 8, 23 and 31.

2 Or ‘cast it in a mould’.

3 Hebrew: לְצַחֵק (letsacheq), ‘to laugh, make merry’, perhaps with a sexual sense (Genesis 26:8). Quoted in 1 Corinthians 10:7.

4 Hebrew ‘softened the face of the LORD his God’.

5 Hebrew: וַיִּנָּחֶם (vayyinnachem), ‘changed His mind’ or ‘had compassion’. God does not change in His character, but He answers the prayers of His people (Jeremiah 18:7–10; Jonah 3:10).

6 Hebrew ‘fill your hand’, the word for ordaining priests (28:41). The Levites are set apart for the LORD’s service (Numbers 3; Deuteronomy 33:8–11).

7 Compare Psalm 69:28, Romans 9:3 and Revelation 3:5.

Chapter 33

Exodus 33 tells how Moses pleads for God’s presence after the golden calf. The LORD tells him to lead the people on to the land He promised, with an angel to go before them, but says He Himself will not go among them, for they are stiff-necked and He might consume them on the way; the people mourn and strip off their ornaments. Moses pitches a tent outside the camp, the tent of meeting, where the pillar of cloud comes down and the LORD speaks with him face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Moses asks to know God’s ways and begs Him to go with His people, for only His presence sets them apart, and the LORD agrees. When Moses asks to see His glory, the LORD promises to make His goodness pass before him and proclaim His name, but no one can see His face and live: He will shelter Moses in a cleft of the rock and let him see His back.

1 The LORD said to Moses, “Go, set out from here, you and the people you brought up out of the land of Egypt, for the land I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, saying, ‘To your offspring I will give it.’

2 I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.

3 Go on up to a land flowing with milk and honey. But I Myself will not go up in your midst, or I might destroy you on the journey, stiff-necked people that you are.”

4 When the people heard this grim word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments.

5 For the LORD had said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘You are a stiff-necked people. If for a single moment I went up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, and I will decide what to do with you.’”

6 So the Israelites stripped themselves of their ornaments from Mount Horeb onwards.

7 It was Moses’ practice to take the tent and set it up at a distance, outside the camp, calling it the tent of meeting.[1] Anyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp.

8 Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent.

9 And whenever Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses.

10 When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, they would all rise and bow down, each at the entrance of his tent.

11 So the LORD used to speak with Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his assistant, the young man Joshua son of Nun, did not leave the tent.

12 Moses said to the LORD, “See, You tell me, ‘Lead this people up,’ but You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have found favour in My eyes.’

13 Now if I have found favour in Your eyes, please show me Your ways, so that I may know You and go on finding favour in Your eyes. And remember that this nation is Your people.”

14 The LORD answered, “My presence[2] will go with you, and I will bring you to rest.”

15 Moses said to Him, “If Your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.

16 For how will it ever be known that I have found
favour in Your eyes, I and Your people, unless You
go with us? It is this that sets us apart, I and Your
people, from every other people on the face of the
earth."
17 The LORD said to Moses, "This very thing that
you have asked, I will do, for you have found
favour in My eyes, and I know you by name."
18 Then Moses said, "Please, show me Your glory."
19 He said, "I will make all My goodness pass
before you, and I will proclaim before you My
name, 'the LORD'. I will be gracious to whom I
will be gracious, and I will show compassion to
whom I will show compassion."[3]
20 But, He said, "You cannot see My face, for no
one may see Me and live."[4]
21 And the LORD said, "There is a place beside Me
where you are to stand on the rock.
22 As My glory goes by, I will set you in a crevice of
the rock and shield you with My hand until I am
past.
23 Then I will withdraw My hand, and you will see
Me from behind; but My face is not to be seen."

1 Not yet the tabernacle of chapters 25–31, which was built later (chapters 36–40), but a tent where God met Moses.
2 Hebrew 'My face'; again in verse 15.
3 Quoted in Romans 9:15.
4 Compare John 1:18: 'No one has ever seen God; the only begotten God, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known.'

Chapter 34

Exodus 34 tells how the covenant is renewed. The LORD tells Moses to cut two new tablets of stone and come up Sinai alone, and there He comes down in the cloud and passes before him, proclaiming His name: the LORD, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, rich in loyal kindness and faithfulness, forgiving wrongdoing yet not leaving the guilty unpunished. Moses bows down and asks Him to go with His people and pardon them, and the LORD makes a covenant, promising wonders and warning Israel against covenants with the peoples of the land, their gods and their marriages; He repeats the laws of the festivals, the firstborn and the Sabbath. Moses stays forty days and nights without food and writes the Ten Words on the tablets. When he comes down, the skin of his face is shining, so that the people are afraid, and from then on he veils his face except when he speaks with the LORD.

1 The LORD said to Moses, "Shape two stone
tablets like the first pair, and I will write on them
the same words that were on the tablets you
broke.
2 Be prepared by the morning; then climb Mount
Sinai and present yourself to Me there, on the
summit.
3 No one is to come up with you, and no one is to
be seen anywhere on the mountain; not even the
flocks or the herds may graze in front of that
mountain."
4 So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first
ones. Early in the morning he rose and went up
Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him,
taking the two tablets of stone in his hand.
5 The LORD came down in the cloud and stood
with him there, and proclaimed His name, 'the
LORD'.
6 The LORD passed before him and proclaimed,
"The LORD, the LORD, a God compassionate and
gracious, slow to anger, and rich in loyal kindness
and faithfulness,[1]
7 keeping loyal kindness for thousands, forgiving
wrongdoing and rebellion and sin; yet He will not
pretend that the guilty are innocent, but brings
the wrongdoing of fathers on their children and
their children's children, to the third and fourth
generation."
8 Moses quickly bowed his head to the ground and
worshipped.
9 "If I have found favour in Your eyes, my Lord," he
said, "let my Lord go among us. Though this is a
stiff-necked people, pardon our wrongdoing and
our sin, and take us as Your own inheritance."
10 He said, "See, I am making a covenant. Before
all your people I will do wonders such as have
never been done in all the earth or in any nation,
and all the people among whom you live will see
the work of the LORD, for what I am going to do
with you is awesome.

11 Keep what I command you today. See, I am
driving out before you the Amorites, the
Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites
and the Jebusites.
12 Take care not to make a covenant with the
inhabitants of the land you are going into, or it
will become a snare among you.
13 Rather, you are to tear down their altars, smash
their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherah
poles.[2]
14 For you are not to bow down to any other god,
for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous
God.
15 Do not make a covenant with the inhabitants of
the land, for when they prostitute themselves to
their gods and sacrifice to their gods, someone
will invite you and you will eat of his sacrifice,
16 and you will take some of their daughters for
your sons, and their daughters will prostitute
themselves to their gods and make your sons
prostitute themselves to their gods too.
17 You are not to make yourselves gods of cast
metal.
18 Keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, eating
bread made without yeast for seven days, as I
commanded you, at the appointed time in the
month of Abib, for in the month of Abib you came
out of Egypt.
19 All that first opens the womb is Mine, all your
male livestock, the firstborn of cattle and sheep.
20 The firstborn of a donkey you are to redeem
with a lamb, and if you do not redeem it, you must
break its neck. All the firstborn of your sons you
are to redeem. No one is to appear before Me
empty-handed.
21 Six days you are to work, but on the seventh day
you are to rest; even at ploughing time and at
harvest you are to rest.
22 You are to keep the Feast of Weeks, with the
first fruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of
Ingathering at the turn of the year.
23 Three times a year all your males are to appear
before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel.[3]
24 For I will drive out nations before you and
enlarge your borders, and no one will covet your
land when you go up three times a year to appear
before the LORD your God.
25 You are not to offer the blood of My sacrifice
with anything leavened, and the sacrifice of the
Feast of the Passover is not to be left until
morning.
26 The best of the first fruits of your ground you
are to bring to the house of the LORD your God.
You are not to boil a young goat in its mother's
milk."
27 And the LORD said to Moses, "Write down these
words, for on the terms of these words I have
made a covenant with you and with Israel."
28 Moses stayed there with the LORD for forty days
and forty nights, without eating bread or drinking
water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of
the covenant, the Ten Words.[4]
29 As Moses came down from Mount Sinai,
carrying the two tablets of the testimony, he was
unaware that the skin of his face was shining[5]
because he had been speaking with God.
30 Aaron and all the Israelites looked at Moses, and
the skin of his face was shining, and they were
afraid to come near him.
31 But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the
leaders of the community came back to him, and
Moses spoke with them.
32 Afterwards all the Israelites came near, and he
gave them all the commands that the LORD had
spoken to him on Mount Sinai.
33 When Moses had finished speaking with them,
he put a veil over his face.
34 Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to
speak with Him, he would take off the veil until he
came out; and when he came out and told the
Israelites what he had been commanded,
35 the Israelites would see that the skin of Moses'
face was shining. Then Moses would put the veil
back over his face until he went in to speak with
Him.[6]

1 This description of God is repeated throughout the Old Testament (Numbers 14:18; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 103:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2). Compare John 1:14: ‘full of grace and truth’.

2 Wooden poles or trees standing for the goddess Asherah.

3 Hebrew ‘the Lord, the LORD’.

4 Hebrew עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרִים (aseret haddevarim), ‘the ten words’, the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4). In verse 1 it is the LORD who writes them.

5 Hebrew קָרַן (qaran), ‘sent out rays’, from קֶרֶן (qeren), ‘horn’. The Latin Bible read ‘was horned’, which is why Moses is shown with horns in some old paintings and statues.

6 Paul reflects on this veil in 2 Corinthians 3:7–18.

Chapter 35

Exodus 35 begins the account of how the tabernacle is made. Moses gathers the whole community and first repeats the command of the Sabbath, on which no fire is to be lit. Then he asks everyone whose heart is willing to bring an offering to the LORD of the materials for the work, and calls all who are skilled to come and make everything the LORD has commanded. The people go out and come back, men and women alike, bringing gold jewellery, yarns, linen, skins, silver, bronze and wood; the women spin yarn and goats’ hair, and the leaders bring the precious stones, spices and oil. Moses tells Israel that the LORD has chosen Bezalel and filled him with His Spirit for every craft, and given him and Oholiab the gift of teaching others.

1 Moses gathered the whole community of the Israelites together and said to them, “These are the things the LORD has commanded you to do.

2 Six days work may be done, but the seventh day is to be holy for you, a Sabbath of complete rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it is to be put to death.

3 You are not to light a fire in any of your homes on the Sabbath day.”[1]

4 Moses said to the whole community of the Israelites, “This is what the LORD has commanded:

5 Take from among you an offering to the LORD. Let everyone whose heart is willing bring it, the LORD’s offering: gold, silver and bronze;

6 blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and fine linen; goats’ hair;

7 rams’ skins dyed red, fine leather, and acacia wood;

8 olive oil for the lamps, and spices for the anointing oil and the sweet incense;

9 onyx stones and stones for setting in the ephod and the breastpiece.

10 Let all who are skilled among you come and make all that the LORD has commanded:

11 the tabernacle with its tent and covering, clasps, frames, crossbars, pillars and bases;

12 the ark with its poles, the place of atonement and the veil of the screen;

13 the table with its poles and all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence;

14 the lampstand for the light, with its utensils and its lamps, and the oil for the light;

15 the altar of incense with its poles, the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the doorway at the entrance of the tabernacle;

16 the altar of burnt offering with its bronze grating, its poles and all its utensils, the basin with its stand;

17 the hangings of the courtyard, its pillars and their bases, and the screen for the gate of the courtyard;

18 the pegs of the tabernacle and the pegs of the courtyard, and their cords;

19 and the woven garments worn for ministering in the Holy Place: the sacred clothing for Aaron the priest, and for his sons when they serve as priests.”

20 Then the whole community of the Israelites went out from Moses’ presence.

21 And everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, came and brought the LORD’s offering for the work of the tent of meeting, for all its service and for the holy garments.

22 They came, men and women alike, all who had a willing heart, and brought brooches and earrings, rings and necklaces, all kinds of gold jewellery;

every man who presented an offering of gold to the LORD.

23 And everyone who had blue, purple or scarlet yarn, or fine linen, or goats' hair, or rams' skins dyed red, or fine leather, brought them.

24 Everyone who could make an offering of silver or bronze brought it as the LORD's offering, and everyone who had acacia wood for any part of the work brought it.

25 Every skilled woman spun with her hands and brought what she had spun, blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen,

26 and all the women whose hearts stirred them in their skill spun the goats' hair.

27 The leaders brought onyx stones and stones for setting in the ephod and the breastpiece,

28 and the spices and olive oil for the lamps, the anointing oil and the sweet incense.

29 All the men and women of Israel whose hearts moved them to bring anything for all the work that the LORD had commanded through Moses to be done brought it as a freewill offering to the LORD.

30 Then Moses said to the Israelites, "See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah,

31 and has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, understanding and knowledge in every kind of craft,

32 to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver and bronze,

33 in cutting stones for setting and in carving wood, to work in every skilled craft.

34 And He has given him the ability to teach, both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan.

35 He has filled them with skill to do every kind of work done by a craftsman, a designer, an embroiderer in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and a weaver: every kind of craftsman and designer.

1 Even the work of the tabernacle was to stop for the Sabbath (31:12–17). Compare Numbers 15:32–36.

Chapter 36

Exodus 36 tells how the work on the tabernacle begins. Moses calls Bezalel, Oholiab and every skilled worker whose heart moves him, and gives them the offerings the Israelites have brought; but morning after morning the people bring more, until the craftsmen tell Moses there is more than enough, and he orders the giving to stop. The skilled workers then make the inner curtains of linen with cherubim, joined with gold clasps, the tent of goats' hair joined with bronze clasps, and the coverings of rams' skins and fine leather, just as the LORD had commanded. They make the framework of acacia wood with its silver bases and gold-covered bars, the veil with its four pillars, and the embroidered screen for the entrance of the tent.

1 Bezalel and Oholiab, then, and every craftsman to whom the LORD has given the skill and understanding to carry out the work of building the sanctuary, are to do it exactly as the LORD has commanded."

2 Then Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person into whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, everyone whose heart stirred him to come and do the work.

3 They received from Moses all the offering the Israelites had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary. But the people kept bringing him freewill offerings morning after morning,

4 so that all the skilled craftsmen who were doing the work on the sanctuary came, each from the task he was doing,

5 and said to Moses, "The people are bringing much more than is needed to carry out the work the LORD has commanded to be done."

6 So Moses gave an order, and word was sent throughout the camp: "No man or woman is to make anything more as an offering for the sanctuary." And the people were held back from bringing any more,

7 for what they had was enough for all the work to be done, and more.

8 All the skilled men among the workers made the tabernacle[1] with ten curtains of fine twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim worked into them by a skilled designer.

9 The length of each curtain was twenty-eight cubits and its width four cubits; all the curtains were the same size.

10 He joined five of the curtains to one another, and
joined the other five to one another.
11 He made loops of blue on the edge of the
outermost curtain of the first set, and did the
same on the edge of the outermost curtain of the
second set.
12 He made fifty loops on the one curtain and fifty
loops on the edge of the curtain in the second set,
with the loops opposite one another.
13 With fifty gold clasps that he made, he fastened
the curtains together, and the tabernacle became
a single whole.
14 He also made curtains of goats' hair for a tent
over the tabernacle; he made eleven of them.
15 Each curtain was thirty cubits long and four
cubits wide; the eleven curtains were the same
size.
16 He joined five of the curtains by themselves and
six by themselves.
17 He made fifty loops on the edge of the outermost
curtain of the one set, and fifty loops on the edge
of the curtain of the second set.
18 And he made fifty clasps of bronze to join the
tent together, so that it was one whole.
19 He made a covering for the tent of rams' skins
dyed red, and over that a covering of fine leather.
20 He made the upright frames for the tabernacle
of acacia wood.
21 Each frame was ten cubits long and a cubit and
a half wide,
22 with two pegs in each frame for joining them to
one another; he made all the frames of the
tabernacle in this way.
23 He made the frames for the tabernacle: twenty
frames for the south side,
24 and he made forty bases of silver under the
twenty frames, two bases under one frame for its
two pegs, and two bases under the next frame for
its two pegs.
25 Along the other side, to the north, he set twenty
frames,
26 with their forty bases of silver, two bases under
one frame and two under the next.
27 For the back of the tabernacle, towards the
west, he made six frames,
28 and he made two frames for the corners of the
tabernacle at the back.
29 They were double at the bottom and joined
together at the top, at the first ring; he made both
of them in this way for the two corners.
30 So there were eight frames with their bases of
silver, sixteen bases, two under each frame.
31 Next he made crossbars of acacia wood, five for
the frames along one side of the tabernacle,
32 five bars for the frames of the other side of the
tabernacle, and five bars for the frames of the
tabernacle at the back, towards the west.
33 He made the middle bar to run halfway up the
frames from end to end.
34 The frames he covered with gold; he made gold
rings on them to hold the crossbars, and covered
the crossbars with gold as well.
35 He made the veil of blue, purple and scarlet
yarn and fine twisted linen, with cherubim worked
into it by a skilled designer.
36 He hung it on four gold-covered pillars of acacia
wood with gold hooks, and cast four silver bases
for them.
37 For the entrance of the tent he made a screen of
blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine twisted
linen, the work of an embroiderer,
38 and its five pillars with their hooks. He overlaid
their tops and their bands with gold, and their five
bases were of bronze.

1 Chapters 36–39 repeat the instructions of chapters 25–31 almost word for word, to show that everything was made exactly as the LORD commanded. 'He' in what follows is Bezalel (37:1).

Chapter 37

> *Exodus 37 tells how Bezalel makes the furnishings of the sanctuary, just as the LORD had shown Moses on the mountain. He makes the ark of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold, with its rings and poles, and the place of atonement of pure gold with two cherubim of hammered gold, their wings spread over it and their faces turned towards it. He makes the table for the bread of the Presence with its gold vessels, the lampstand of pure gold with its six branches, almond-blossom cups and seven lamps, made from a talent of gold, and the gold-covered altar of incense. Last he makes the holy anointing oil and the pure fragrant incense.*

1 Bezalel[1] made the ark of acacia wood, two and a
half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide and a
cubit and a half high.
2 He overlaid it with pure gold inside and out, and
made a gold moulding all round it.
3 He cast four gold rings for it, for its four feet, two
rings on one side and two rings on the other.
4 Carrying poles of acacia wood he covered with
gold,
5 and slid them through the rings along the ark's
sides, so that it could be carried.
6 He made the place of atonement of pure gold,
two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half
wide.
7 He made two cherubim of gold; he made them of
hammered work at the two ends of the place of
atonement,
8 a cherub at each end, forming them out of the
same piece of gold as the place of atonement
itself.
9 The cherubim spread out their wings above,
overshadowing the place of atonement with their
wings, facing each other; the faces of the
cherubim were turned towards the place of
atonement.
10 He made the table of acacia wood, two cubits
long, a cubit wide and a cubit and a half high.
11 He overlaid it with pure gold and made a gold
moulding all round it.
12 He made a rim a handbreadth wide all round it,
and a gold moulding round its rim.
13 He cast four gold rings for it and fixed the rings
at the four corners, where its four legs were.
14 The rings were close to the rim, as holders for
the poles to carry the table.
15 He made the poles of acacia wood to carry the
table, and overlaid them with gold.
16 And he made the vessels for the table, its plates
and its dishes, its bowls and its jugs for pouring
drink offerings, of pure gold.
17 He made the lampstand of pure gold. He made
the lampstand of hammered work, its base and its
shaft; its cups, its knobs and its flowers were of
one piece with it.
18 Six branches came out from its sides, three
branches of the lampstand from one side and
three branches from the other.
19 There were three cups shaped like almond
blossoms on one branch, each with a knob and a
flower, and three cups shaped like almond
blossoms on the next branch, each with a knob
and a flower; so for all six branches coming out
from the lampstand.
20 On the lampstand itself there were four cups
shaped like almond blossoms, with their knobs
and flowers,
21 and a knob under each pair of branches coming
out from it, for all six branches coming out from it.
22 Their knobs and branches were of one piece
with it, the whole of it a single piece of hammered
work of pure gold.
23 He made its seven lamps, its wick-trimmers and
its trays of pure gold.
24 He made it and all its utensils from a talent of
pure gold.
25 He made the altar of incense of acacia wood, a
cubit long and a cubit wide, square, and two
cubits high; its horns were of one piece with it.
26 He overlaid it with pure gold, its top, its sides all
round and its horns, and made a gold moulding all
round it.
27 He made two gold rings for it under its
moulding, on its two sides, on opposite sides, as
holders for the poles with which to carry it.
28 Its poles, too, were of acacia wood covered with
gold.
29 He also made the holy anointing oil and the pure
fragrant incense, the work of a perfumer.

1 His name means 'in the shadow of God'.

Chapter 38

Exodus 38 tells how the altar and the courtyard are made, and how much metal is used. Bezalel makes the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood overlaid with bronze, with its horns, grating, utensils and poles, and the bronze basin and stand from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting. He makes the courtyard with its linen hangings, its pillars with silver hooks and bands on bronze bases, and its embroidered gate. Then comes the record, kept by the Levites under Ithamar: the gold given for the sanctuary came to over twenty-nine talents; the silver, half a shekel from each of the 603,550 men counted, came to a hundred talents and more, for the bases of the sanctuary and the hooks of the pillars; and the bronze to seventy talents, for the altar, the bases and the pegs.

1 He made the altar of burnt offering of acacia
wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide,
square, and three cubits high.

2 He made horns for it on its four corners, its horns
of one piece with it, and overlaid it with bronze.

3 All the altar's equipment he made of bronze: its
pots and shovels, basins, forks and fire pans.

4 He made for the altar a grating, a network of
bronze, under its ledge, reaching halfway down.

5 He cast four rings for the four corners of the
bronze grating, as holders for the poles.

6 Its poles were of acacia wood covered with
bronze,

7 and put the poles through the rings on the sides
of the altar, to carry it by them. He made it hollow,
of boards.

8 He made the basin of bronze and its stand of
bronze from the mirrors of the women who
served[1] at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

9 He made the courtyard. On the south side the
hangings of the courtyard were of fine twisted
linen, a hundred cubits long,

10 with their twenty pillars and their twenty bases
of bronze; the hooks of the pillars and their bands
were of silver.

11 On the north side there were a hundred cubits,
with their twenty pillars and their twenty bases of
bronze; the hooks of the pillars and their bands
were of silver.

12 On the west side there were hangings of fifty
cubits, with their ten pillars and their ten bases;
the hooks of the pillars and their bands were of
silver.

13 And on the front, the east side, fifty cubits:

14 the hangings for one side of the gate were
fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and their
three bases,

15 and for the other side, on either side of the gate
of the courtyard, hangings of fifteen cubits, with
their three pillars and their three bases.

16 All the hangings round the courtyard were of
fine twisted linen.

17 The bases for the pillars were of bronze, the
hooks of the pillars and their bands were of silver,
and their tops were overlaid with silver; all the
pillars of the courtyard were banded with silver.

18 The screen for the gate of the courtyard was the
work of an embroiderer, of blue, purple and
scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen. It was twenty
cubits long, and its height, like its width, was five
cubits, matching the hangings of the courtyard.

19 Its four pillars and their four bases were of
bronze, their hooks were of silver, and their tops
and their bands were overlaid with silver.

20 All the pegs of the tabernacle and of the
courtyard all round were of bronze.

21 This is the account of the tabernacle, the
tabernacle of the testimony, drawn up at Moses'
command, the work of the Levites under the
direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.

22 Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of
Judah, made everything that the LORD had
commanded Moses,

23 and with him was Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of
the tribe of Dan, a craftsman and designer, and an
embroiderer in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and
fine linen.

24 The gold given as a wave offering and used for
the whole work of the sanctuary weighed twenty-
nine talents and 730 shekels, by the sanctuary
standard.[2]

25 The silver paid by those of the community who
were counted weighed a hundred talents and
1,775 shekels, by the sanctuary standard:[3]

26 one beka[4] each, half a shekel by the sanctuary
standard, from every man of twenty years or more
who was entered in the count, 603,550 men in all.

27 The hundred talents of silver were used to cast
the bases of the sanctuary and the bases of the
veil, a hundred bases from the hundred talents, a
talent to a base.
28 The remaining 1,775 shekels he used for the
hooks of the pillars, for covering their tops and for
their bands.
29 The bronze presented as a wave offering came
to seventy talents and 2,400 shekels.[5]
30 With it he made the bases for the entrance of
the tent of meeting, the bronze altar with its
bronze grating and all the utensils of the altar,
31 the bases all round the courtyard and the bases
for the gate of the courtyard, and all the pegs of
the tabernacle and all the pegs round the
courtyard.

1 Hebrew: הַצֹּבְאֹת (hatstsov'ot), from the same root as 'armies': women who served in ordered companies (1 Samuel 2:22). Mirrors were made of polished bronze.
2 About a tonne. A talent was 3,000 shekels.
3 About three and a half tonnes.
4 About 5.7 grams.
5 About two and a half tonnes.

Chapter 39

Exodus 39 tells how the priests' garments are made, each "as the LORD had commanded Moses". The craftsmen beat gold into thin sheets and cut it into threads to weave into the ephod, set the onyx stones engraved with the names of Israel's sons on its shoulders, and make the breastpiece with its four rows of precious stones; then the blue robe with its pomegranates and bells, the linen tunics, turban, caps and undergarments, the embroidered sash, and the gold plate engraved "Holy to the LORD". So all the work of the tabernacle is finished, and the Israelites bring everything to Moses: the tent and its furnishings, the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the basin, the courtyard and the garments. Moses sees that they have done it all just as the LORD commanded, and he blesses them.

1 From the blue, purple and scarlet yarn they made
finely woven garments for ministering in the Holy
Place. They made the holy garments for Aaron, as
the LORD had commanded Moses.
2 He made the ephod of gold, of blue, purple and
scarlet yarn, and of fine twisted linen.
3 They hammered out the gold into thin sheets and
cut it into threads, to work them into the blue,
purple and scarlet yarn and the fine linen, the
work of a skilled designer.
4 They made shoulder pieces for it, joined at its
two edges, so that it was held together.
5 The woven band on it was of the same
workmanship and of one piece with it, of gold, of
blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of fine twisted
linen, as the LORD had commanded Moses.
6 They worked the onyx stones, mounted in
settings of gold filigree and engraved like a seal
with the names of the sons of Israel,
7 and set them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod
as stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel,
as the LORD had commanded Moses.
8 He made the breastpiece, the work of a skilled
designer, like the work of the ephod: of gold, of
blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of fine twisted
linen.
9 It was square; they made the breastpiece folded
double, a span long and a span wide when folded.
10 They set in it four rows of stones. The first row
was a carnelian, a topaz and an emerald;
11 the second row a turquoise, a sapphire and a
diamond;
12 the third row a jacinth, an agate and an
amethyst;
13 and the fourth row a beryl, an onyx and a jasper.
They were mounted in settings of gold filigree.
14 There were twelve stones with the names of the
sons of Israel, each engraved like a seal with its
name, for the twelve tribes.
15 On the breastpiece they made chains of pure
gold, twisted like cords.
16 They made two settings of gold filigree and two
gold rings, and fixed the two rings to the two
upper corners of the breastpiece.

17 They fastened the two gold cords to the two
rings at the corners of the breastpiece,
18 and fastened the two other ends of the two
cords to the two settings, putting them on the
shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front.
19 They made two gold rings and put them at the
two lower corners of the breastpiece, on its inside
edge next to the ephod.
20 And they made two more gold rings and fixed
them low on the two shoulder pieces of the ephod,
at the front, close to its seam, above the woven
band of the ephod.
21 They bound the breastpiece by its rings to the
rings of the ephod with a cord of blue, so that it
lay on the woven band of the ephod and did not
come loose from the ephod, as the LORD had
commanded Moses.
22 He made the robe of the ephod, woven all of
blue,
23 with an opening in the middle of the robe like
the collar of a coat of mail, with a binding round
the opening so that it would not tear.
24 On the hem of the robe they made
pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet yarn,
twisted.
25 Between these pomegranates, right round the
hem of the robe, they hung bells made of pure
gold,
26 a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a
pomegranate, all round the hem of the robe, for
ministering, as the LORD had commanded Moses.
27 For Aaron and his sons they wove tunics of fine
linen,
28 the turban of fine linen, the decorated caps of
fine linen, and the linen undergarments of fine
twisted linen,
29 and the sash of fine twisted linen and blue,
purple and scarlet yarn, the work of an
embroiderer, as the LORD had commanded Moses.
30 They made the plate, the holy crown, of pure
gold, and wrote on it, as a seal is engraved, ‘Holy
to the LORD’.
31 They fastened a cord of blue to it to fix it on the
turban above, as the LORD had commanded
Moses.
32 So all the work of the tabernacle, the tent of
meeting, was completed. The Israelites did
everything just as the LORD had commanded
Moses; so they did.
33 Then they brought the tabernacle to Moses: the
tent with all its furnishings, its clasps, its frames,
its bars, its pillars and its bases;
34 the covering of rams’ skins dyed red, the
covering of fine leather, and the veil of the screen;
35 the ark of the testimony with its poles, and the
place of atonement;
36 the table with all its utensils, and the bread of
the Presence;
37 the pure lampstand with its lamps set in order,
all its utensils, and the oil for the light;
38 the gold altar, the anointing oil, the fragrant
incense, and the screen for the entrance of the
tent;
39 the bronze altar with its bronze grating, its
poles and all its utensils, the basin with its stand;
40 the hangings of the courtyard, its pillars and its
bases, the screen for the gate of the courtyard, its
cords and its pegs, and all the utensils for the
service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting;
41 and the woven garments worn for ministering in
the Holy Place: the sacred clothing for Aaron the
priest, and for his sons when they serve as priests.
42 The Israelites had done all the work just as the
LORD had commanded Moses.
43 Moses looked over all the work, and they had
done it; as the LORD had commanded, so they had
done it. And Moses blessed them.[1]

1 The words echo the end of creation: God saw all that He had made, finished His work and blessed it (Genesis 1:31–2:3). Compare 40:33.

Chapter 40

Exodus 40 brings the book to its close. The LORD tells Moses to set up the tabernacle on the first day of the first month, to put the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars and the basin in their places, to anoint the tabernacle and all its furnishings, and to wash, clothe and anoint Aaron and his sons for a priesthood that will last for ever. Moses does everything as the LORD commanded, a year after the exodus: he raises the frames, spreads the tent, puts the testimony in the ark and the ark behind the veil, arranges the bread, lights the lamps, burns incense and offers sacrifice, and sets up the courtyard. When the work is finished, the cloud covers the tent of meeting and the glory of the LORD fills the tabernacle, so that even Moses cannot enter, and from then on Israel sets out on each stage of its journeys whenever the cloud lifts.

1 Then the LORD said to Moses,

2 “On the first day of the first month you are to set up the tabernacle, the tent of meeting.

3 Place the ark of the testimony inside, and hang the veil to shield it.

4 Bring in the table and set out its arrangement; bring in the lampstand and light its lamps.

5 Put the gold altar for incense in front of the ark of the testimony, and hang the screen at the entrance of the tabernacle.

6 Put the altar of burnt offering in front of the entrance of the tabernacle, the tent of meeting.

7 Put the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it.

8 Set up the courtyard all round, and hang the screen at the gate of the courtyard.

9 Then take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and everything in it, and consecrate it and all its furnishings, so that it will be holy.

10 Anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar, so that the altar will be most holy.

11 Anoint the basin and its stand, and consecrate it.

12 Bring Aaron and his sons to the doorway of the tent of meeting and have them washed.

13 Clothe Aaron in the holy garments, anoint him and consecrate him, so that he may serve Me as priest.

14 Bring his sons as well and clothe them in tunics,

15 and anoint them as you anointed their father, so that they may serve Me as priests. Their anointing will make them a priesthood for ever, throughout their generations.”

16 Moses did so; he did just as the LORD had commanded him.

17 And so on the first day of the first month, in the second year, the tabernacle was raised.

18 Moses set up the tabernacle. He laid its bases, put up its frames, inserted its bars and raised its pillars.

19 He spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

20 He took the testimony and put it into the ark, set the poles on the ark, and put the place of atonement on top of the ark.

21 He brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung the veil of the screen and screened off the ark of the testimony, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

22 The table he placed inside the tent of meeting, along the north side of the tabernacle, in front of the veil,

23 and arranged the bread on it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

24 The lampstand he placed in the tent of meeting across from the table, along the south side of the tabernacle,

25 and lit the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

26 He put the gold altar in the tent of meeting in front of the veil,

27 and burned fragrant incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

28 He hung the screen at the entrance of the tabernacle.

29 By the doorway of the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, he set the altar of burnt offering, and on it he offered up the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

30 He put the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing,

31 from which Moses, Aaron and Aaron’s sons would wash their hands and feet.

32 Whenever they went into the tent of meeting and whenever they came near the altar, they

washed, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

33 He set up the courtyard round the tabernacle
and the altar, and hung the screen at the gate of
the courtyard. So Moses finished the work.

34 Then the cloud came over the tent of meeting,
and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

35 Moses could not go into the tent of meeting,
because the cloud had settled on it and the glory
of the LORD filled the tabernacle.[1]

36 Throughout all their journeys, whenever the
cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the
Israelites would set out;

37 but if the cloud was not taken up, they did not
set out until the day it was taken up.

38 For by day the LORD's cloud rested over the
tabernacle, and by night there was fire in the
cloud, before the eyes of the whole house of
Israel, at every stage of their journeys.

1 Compare 1 Kings 8:10–11, when the glory fills Solomon's temple, and John 1:14: 'we beheld His glory'.