**Scripture Reading: Exodus 21:1-17**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 21:1**

***Civil Laws***

Although we do not see the phrase, “The Law of Moses” until we get to the book of Joshua, what we read in Exodus 20, and what we will now be read in Exodus 21-23 were included as a part of that Law. The Law of Moses contained three parts. The moral law was given in Exodus 20 and the ceremonial law was not put in writing until the book of Leviticus. In between, in Exodus 21-23, we have the civil laws. God’s laws did not come into existence when God etched the first words of Exodus 20 in stone for Moses and the people of Israel. The word that is translated “judgments” in verse 1 is first found in the Bible in Genesis 18:19 where we are told that the laws of God were in Abraham’s heart long before they were ever held in Moses’ hands. The civil laws included many things. In the section that we read today provisions were made for the fair treatment of slaves and the protection for those whose actions had resulted in an accidental or unintentional death. Today’s verses contain the first reference to places that would later become known as “Cities of Refuge” in Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua. Verses 14-17 contain references to four crimes that required the death penalty. In God’s opinion, disrespect for parents was just as evil as murder.

**Pray**e**r Emphasis:**

* **Allow** God’s Laws to govern the way you treat others, especially those of your own household. **Remember** that we are incapable of honoring God’s civil laws if we do not first respect His moral laws. **Thank God** for His Word today and **remain faithful** in your commitment to read it daily.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 21:18-36**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 21:22-23 & 28-29**

***Two Important Points***

In verses 22-23 of today’s reading we see something that should be very important to us. God said that, if someone did something that resulted in the premature delivery of a baby, that person should be punished in accordance with the severity of the harm that was caused. If the action caused the baby to die, the person(s) who were guilty of the act(s) should be punished as a murderer. This is a clear indication that God considers an unborn fetus as a human being with a right to life. Then, a second important point is found in verses 28-29, where the “sin of negligence” is discussed. The illustration used is that of an ox goring and killing an individual. If that happened, the animal that killed the individual was to be killed. However, if the owner knew that the animal had a tendency to harm people, but did not take the necessary steps to prevent the animal from doing so, then the owner would be guilty of murder by negligence and was to be put to death with the animal. It may not be easy for us to identify with something that an ox might do, but when we replace the word “ox” with “pit bulldog” in this verse, we can get a much better understanding of what God is trying to teach us. It can be put yet another way. If we know that a car has no brakes, yet we ask someone to drive it and they are killed, then we are guilty of murder because of our negligence. These verses broaden the scope of the teaching of the sixth commandment.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Pray** for those who battle for the rights of the unborn. **Ask** God to strengthen them and to show us how we can be an encouragement to them. **Refuse** to be negligent when it comes to doing the right things. **Share** a word about God with someone today.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 22:1-15**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 22:1**

***More Civil Laws!***

The verses that we read today expand our understanding of the eighth commandment, “You shall not steal.” The laws discussed in this section cover several areas of life. *Laws regarding stealing* (verses 1-4): If a person stole a person’s animal and then killed it or sold it to someone else, the thief was to make retribution by replacing what he had stolen. The law specified for greater retribution for the thievery of work animals. *Laws regarding property damage* (verses 5-6): If someone allowed his animals to graze upon the field of another, the offender had to allow the offended person to feed his animals from his own field. If someone caused a loss to another individual as the result of a fire, the person who caused the fire had to make retribution. *Laws regarding safe deposits* (verses 7-13): If an individual accepted the responsibility of keeping another person’s animals or possessions for them, that person had to pay double for any personal items lost or stolen while under their care. *Laws regarding borrowing* (verses 14-15): When an individual borrowed another person’s animal, the borrower was to understand that they were now fully responsible for the animal’s safekeeping and had to cover the lending friend’s loss if something happened to the animal. However, if the friend was present and was simply helping his neighbor by doing something like plowing, the owner was still responsible for his own animal.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Be** a good neighbor and **refuse** to allow someone to suffer loss simply because they tried to help you. **Practice fairness** (the Golden Rule) in everything that you do and you will preach a lot of John 3:16 to those with whom you associate.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 22:16-31**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 22:18-20**

***Three Capital Offenses***

God was greatly concerned when people caused *physical* harm to His people or when their *physical* needs were neglected. However, our focus verses deal with three areas of sin and exploitation that brought *spiritual* harm to God’s people. The sins of sorcery, bestiality, and idolatry were violations of the first, second, and seventh commandments and all three of these offenses were punishable by death. Why God would give the death penalty to those guilty of these crimes has been a question asked by many. But, when we really think about it, we realize that *sorcery* is a challenge to the sovereignty of God by knowing and manipulating the future. Because of that, it is an attempt to usurp His sovereignty and providence over His people. *Bestiality* is a perversion of God’s plan for physical intimacy between one man and one woman and is, therefore, rebellion against God and His Word. God made man above the animals. This sin defies God’s designed distinction between man and beasts. *Idolatry* is a fundamental denial of our purpose for being. We exist to glorify God and idolatry robs God of His desired glory and distracts man from his purpose for being. Idolatry brings eternal damnation to many souls by blinding them from seeing the One, true God.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Recognize** sin for the destructive force that it is. Be morally and ethically strong and **stand** for the truth at all times and in all situations – no matter the personal costs. **Determine** to be a help and not a hindrance to the many lost souls around you.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 23:1-19**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 23:1**

***Truth and Trust***

The laws discussed in today’s verses expand the fourth and ninth commandments. The commands related to the ninth commandment are mentioned first in verses 1-9 and deal with speaking the *truth*. The basic purpose of these civil laws was to prevent impartial justice in lawsuits. People were to be honest witnesses in legal cases even if that meant that they stood alone for what they believed to be the truth. They were to show no partiality to anyone due to their financial or social status. They were not to allow their personal relationships to inhibit their ability to be true and honest witnesses even if it meant testifying on the behalf of someone who was an “enemy” (verse 4) or someone who hated them (verse 5). Verses 9-10 stress the importance of not allowing personal gain or prejudice to influence our willingness to speak the truth. The commands related to the fourth commandment are covered in verses 10-13 and deal with our learning to *trust*. In these verses special instructions for the sabbatical year and the Sabbath are given. The sabbatical year served to remind the people that God owned everything and that it was given to them as stewards. By observing the sabbatical year and the Sabbath Day, people were expressing their trust in God to provide their needs and recognizing Him as their source and supply. The Sabbath Day was to be a day of rest for the people, their servants, and even their animals.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Seek** to grow in your personal faith and trust in God. Express your trust in God by being willing to **speak** the truth in every situation.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 23:20-33**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 23:32-33**

***Nine “I Wills” for One “You Shall”***

I think I know a good trade when I see one, and I clearly see one in today’s Scripture reading! Take a moment and circle the “I will” promises found in today’s verses. You should be able to find 10 of these important promises whether you are reading from the NKJV, KJV, or NIV. Take a moment to consider each one of these “I will” promises that God made to His people and try to determine if it is a promise of God’s presence, power, or provision. Then, after considering all of these precious promises from God, read today’s focus verses and see what God requests in return for these wonderful blessings. He simply asks that His people not enter into covenants (treaties) with ungodly people or worship their gods. God warned that establishing close knit relationships with the wrong people could lead to His people being led into sin. Israel’s later history proved this statement to be true and the warning justified. God desires the same from His people today. He desires that we serve Him and only Him. The word “snare” in verse 33 comes from a Hebrew word that describes a trap for catching animals that closed on its unsuspecting prey suddenly and without warning.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Always** know that we get the best end of the deal when we do business with God! **Trust** God to do all that He promises and make every effort to **be** the kind of Christian that He can trust to do all that He requests in return.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 24:1-18**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 24:7**

***Promises***

Our focus verse contains a very important promise that God’s people made after Moses read to them from the Book of the Covenant. After hearing what God’s Word had to say to them, the people responded with a promise to God by saying, “All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.” It is good that the people made such a noble promise to God, but it should be noted that they did so in response to the way that God had kept the promises that He made to them. Back in Exodus 6:6-8, God promised three things to His people. First, He promised to bring them out from under Egypt’s bondage and rescue from captivity. We watched God fulfill that promise in Exodus 1-18. Second, He promised to take them as His people. We read about that in Exodus 19-24. Then, God promised to be their God, and to do so in an indisputable way. We are going to read about God fulfilling that promise in Exodus 24-40 as we see Him come and dwell among His people on the mountain and then in the tabernacle. The remaining chapters of Exodus will focus mainly on the design and construction of the Tabernacle where God’s promise of presence was manifested to them.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Claim** God’s promise of presence as your own and **honor** your promises that you have made to Him. **Thank** God for His unfailing love and faithfulness towards us. **Believe** that God will always keep His promises to His people.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 25:1-22**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 25:8-9**

***The Tabernacle***

More time and attention (chapters and verses) are devoted to the Tabernacle than any other object in the Bible. The thought that only two chapters are given to record the creation of the world causes us to stand in awe as we read the 13, very detailed, chapters that record the construction of the Tabernacle and its furnishings. We are told that the Tabernacle and all of its furnishings were made according to a “pattern.” The word that is translated “pattern” here is found only three times in Exodus with all of three of those times being here in Exodus 25. According to verse nine, this pattern was something that God was to “show” Moses. In other words, the Tabernacle was not something conceived in the mind of Moses. It was not his idea and it was not his design. God showed Moses exactly what He wanted built and how He wanted it built – down to every detail! Verse eight records God’s statement that He wanted this sanctuary built so that He could “dwell among them.” The word translated “dwell” here is a word that means “to abide” or “to inhabit.” Although this building was a portable dwelling place, it was nonetheless a permanent place for the God of Israel. Each part of this building, and each piece of its furniture, told a part of the story of how fallen man was to be fully restored to full fellowship with a holy God. The Ark of the Covenant was the first piece of furniture described in the Tabernacle. It was covered within and without in “pure gold.” The word translated “pure” here is used in Exodus more than in any other book of the Bible with all of those usages found in chapters 25-29. This word was never used again until Solomon built the Temple (1 Kings 6). There are many precious and valuable truths to be learned from these remaining chapters in Exodus!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Ask** God to “show” you the Gospel story through the story of the Tabernacle. Take some time to **thank** Him for His presence today. **Praise** Him for the truth that He has chosen to reveal to you so that you can live victoriously for Him.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 25:23-40**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 25:23 & 31**

***The Table and the Lampstand***

As we read through the book of Genesis, we often saw where God “walked” with His people. He walked with Adam and Eve (3:8), Enoch (5:22-24), and Noah (6:9) just to mention a few. Now, in Exodus, God uses the imagery of the Tabernacle to allow us to see how He now “dwells” with His people. Through the powerful word pictures of the Tabernacle, we see that God is not only “with” us but that He is now “within” us. Today’s verses describe two of the three pieces of furniture that were kept in the Holy Place just outside the Holy of Holies where the Ark and Mercy Seat were stationed. These two furnishings were known as the Table of Showbread and the Gold Lampstand. The Table of Showbread was made of wood that was completely covered in gold with the wood representing the humanity of Christ while the gold represented His deity. Among other things, this table was to “picture” Christ as the coming Bread of Life who took upon Himself a robe of humanity so that He could come and die for our sins (John 6:35). The Lampstand or Candlestick was made of approximately 75 pounds of pure gold. This stand held seven lamps that held oil and were kept burning continuously. It is important to note that there were no windows in the Tabernacle. Because of this, the only light available to those who entered it was this Golden Lampstand. As such, it represented the One, True Light that was to come into the world (John 1:9).

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Ask** God to reveal Himself to you as you read and study about the Tabernacle. **Look** for images of Him in every chapter and verse that describes this Holy Place and its furnishings.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 26:1-19**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 26:1**

***The Curtains***

Today’s focus verse describes the ten curtains of fine linen that served as the ceiling of the Holy Place. The word that is translated “linen” here is found in only 37 verses in the Old Testament, with 30 of those verses being in Exodus 25-39! This linen is said to be “fine” linen and it represents the righteousness of Jesus Christ. In Revelation 19:8 the Bride of Christ is said to be “arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” These ten curtains bore images of cherubim upon them that were woven into the curtains with blue, purple, and scarlet threads. The word translated “threads” (or “twine” in some translations) is found only in Exodus and only in the chapters that describe the Tabernacle. Each of the colors used in the designs of the cherubim told part of the story of Christ. The blue stood for Heaven, His place of origin. Purple stood for royalty. It was by no coincidence that, after the soldiers scourged Jesus and placed the crown of thorns upon His brow, “they put on Him a purple robe” (John 19:2). Scarlet was the color of blood and it represented the sufferings of Christ as He died for the sins of the world.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Worship** the royal and righteous One who came to die in our place today. **Thank** Him for wearing a crown of thorns and a bloodied, purple robe so that we can one day wear a Crown of Life and be robed in righteousness!

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 26:20-37**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 26:33**

***The Veil***

God is so detailed in His description and design of the Tabernacle that even the boards used to construct it play a significant part in the story that it tells. But these were no ordinary boards! They were overlaid in gold and held together by golden bars that rested in silver sockets. All of this was to remind us of both the humanity and deity of Christ. Without these boards there would have been no place in which to house the furniture that served to picture sinful man’s way to a relationship with a Holy God. Once inside the framework of the Tabernacle, the priests were confronted by the veil. The purpose of the veil is disclosed in our focus verse. It created a separation between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. No one was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies except the high priest, and that was only at God’s discretion. Just as here in the Tabernacle, the Temple also had a veil that created a separation between people and the Mercy Seat. However, immediately after Christ died on the cross “the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (Matthew 27:51) signifying that the separation between God and man had been fully resolved. The fact that the veil was ripped from “top to bottom” reveals that God is the One that opened the way for us to approach Him.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Approach** God humbly but with the confidence that He desires that we enter into His presence on a regular basis. When you enter your church sanctuary to worship, **praise God** that there is no veil of separation to be found!

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 27:1-21**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 27:1**

***The Brazen Altar***

Today’s chapter is divided into two sections with the first section (verses 1-8) describing the Brazen Altar and the second section (verses 9-21) describing the Outer Court in which the altar was situated. The Brazen Altar was the largest of the seven pieces of furniture found in the Tabernacle. It was made from “acacia” (shittim) wood for a special purpose. This particular wood was darker and harder than oak and was impervious to wood eating insects. We will later read that this same altar was referred to as “The altar of burnt offering” (30:28). The acacia wood was symbolic of the sinless Christ Who would become the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of all who desired to approach God. Even the priests had to first pass this altar before they could enter and minister in the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. This was the first piece of furniture that was encountered upon entering into the Tabernacle proper. Unlike the other furniture discussed thus far, this furnishing was adorned in brass and all of the implements used in its service were also made of brass. Gold and silver was easily transformed by the heat of fire, so this altar, the one that represented the judgment fire of God upon the sins of man, was covered in a material that could withstand fire. It is only at the cross, which is typified in this altar, that we can find a protective barrier from the judgment fires of God’s wrath against sin.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Thank God** for the cross and for the Sinless One Who went there in our place and took upon Himself the judgment for our sins. **Realize** that no one could approach God without first being confronted with this altar. **Make sure** that you have made your personal visit to the cross!

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 28:1-14**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 28:9-11**

***The Priesthood***

In today’s reading, God interrupts the description of the Tabernacle and its furnishings to teach us about the ones that were to serve Him there as representatives of His people. The priesthood was limited to those of the tribe of Levi with the first persons to serve in this capacity being Aaron and his four sons. Our focus verses indicate that these men were there to represent *all* of the people as they approached their service with the names of *every* tribe written upon the adornments of their clothing. They were provided to serve God in the name of His people. These men were not *above* others, but their lives were to be *about* others. They were not to be worshipped but were appointed to lead all of God’s people in worship. Never forget that they, too, had to first encounter the Brazen Altar before they could enter into their place of service before God. They were challenged with a great responsibility and were treated with the greatest of respect, not for their *person*, but for their *purpose*. Later (Leviticus 10:1-2) we will read of two of Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, who provoked God to wrath because they attempted to serve Him in their own way and not the way that was prescribed by God.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Recognize** that God’s servants must strive diligently to represent all of the people – the Body of Christ (the church) as a whole and not any select group. **Pray** for those who are faced with this great challenge and **ask** God to give them wisdom in the great work that they are called to perform.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 28:15-29**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 28:15**

***The Breastplate***

By comparing the description of the priest’s ephod and breastplate with what we read about the curtains that served as the ceiling for the Tabernacle (26:7), we see that the garments of these servants were made with the same colors and materials. This was to symbolize their connection to the purpose of the Tabernacle and would serve to remind these appointed and anointed men that their business was to be that of Heaven and not that of their own desire or design. The breastplate was adorned with 12 stones that bore the names of the 12 tribes of Israel (verse 21). These garments also served to remind these men that they were there for the people and not for themselves. Verse 29 tells us that they bore the names of the people and verse 29 emphasizes that these names were worn “over his heart.” We read that these names were with the priests as he went about his duties on more than one occasion. Because of that, we must remind ourselves that all of our service to the Lord must be about helping His people to learn to walk in a right relationship with Him. If these men needed to be reminded of this heavenly calling on more than one occasion, then it would serve us well to be constantly reminding ourselves that this is not about *us,* but about God and all of those who He has called into a covenant relationship with Him!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Approach** God’s heavenly throne with the name of someone who is on your heart today! **Pray** for them and **ask God** to use you in some way to **help them** succeed in their spiritual life and walk. **Let them know** that you love them and that you have prayed for them today. **Offer** your services to them and be available to them if they have a need.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 28:30-43**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 28:30**

***The Urim and Thummin***

A careful reading of the Bible will reveal that the duties of the priesthood were varied. In addition to their responsibilities within the Tabernacle, these men were to preside over civil cases (Numbers 5:5-32 and Leviticus 19: 17 and 21:5); instruct the people in the Law (Deuteronomy 17:9 & 11); and to provide encouragement to the people in times of war (Deuteronomy 20:2-4). In other words, their work was not over when the Tabernacle services were concluded! Today’s focus verse allows us to see that the work of the priesthood included not only *variations,* but *limitations* as well. In spite of their intense desire to serve God and His people, they were sometimes going to be confronted with circumstances and situations that were beyond their human capacity to discern the will of God for His followers. For that purpose, God provided these dedicated men with the Urim and Thummin. There is much speculation about exactly what these objects were, but there is little speculation as to what they were for! This helps us to understand why the breastplate was referred to as “the breastplate of judgment” (decision) in 28:15. The breastplate had but one pocket and in that pocket the priest kept the Urim and Thummin. One represented “yes” and the other represented “no.” When a decision was above that of the knowledge of the priest, then God would provide His answer to the question or need by the use of these objects.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Remind** yourself that you have human limitations and that only God has all of the answers. **Ask** God to show you how to allow Him to preside over your service to Him and His people by providing the appropriate guidance at the appropriate time.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 29:1-14**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 29:1**

***The Consecration of the Priests***

Today’s focus verse reveals at least three wonderful things about those who are to be set apart for God’s service. First they are *named*. The “them” refers to Aaron and his four sons who were the first to serve God in this capacity. Second, our verse reveals something about the priest’s *nature*. These are to be men who have a paramount and consuming desire to be “ministering” to God and His people. The first time that this word for “minister” is found in the Bible is in Exodus and all of its usages in that book are limited to chapters 28-40. Several translations of the Bible use the term “the priest’s office” in this verse. But, we must continually remind ourselves that the work of God’s servant is more about an *obligation* than an *office* and that even Christ “did not come to be served, but to serve” (Matthew 20:28). The first qualification for anyone who desires to serve God’s people is a heart for ministry and the willingness to be a servant to the church. Those who are in ministry should be constantly mindful that they are called to *represent* God’s people and not to *rule* over them. That is our first purpose and it should always be our first priority. The third thing that this verse reveals about these men is their *need*. They, just like everyone else, were to come before God with an offering and sacrifice. Before their lives could ever be of personal use to the people it had to be personally dedicated to the Lord.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Strive** to be a person who not only knows about Christ by being a person who knows Christ as his own personal Savior. **Never forget** that you are made worthy for service only by the blood of Jesus!

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 29:15-30**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 29:27-28**

***The Provision for the Priests***

The Bible clearly states that a part of certain sacrificial animals was to be set aside as food for the priests and their families. You can read more about that in Leviticus 10:12-14 if you would like to dig a little deeper. Remember that the tribe of Levi was not given an allocation of land in the disbursement of Canaan to the people because their lives were to be about a heavenly home and not one to be found in this world. Since they were to dedicate themselves to the service of God’s people, the people, in turn, were to remember to dedicate part of all that God had given them to maintain the tribe of Levi and, especially, those who served as priests. Doing this would allow the priests to focus their attention on their *service* and not their *sustenance*. The proper attitude toward this allowance was to see that everyone had a part in the priesthood and the service that it provided. This practice would also provide the priests with a great appreciation for the people that they served and help to establish a loving connection between the priesthood and the people.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Thank** God for those who forsake their own aspirations and ambitions to serve God and His people through the work of the ministry. **Recognize** the humility that such service requires and do all that you can to help support and encourage those who answer this call.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 29:31-46**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 29:44-46**

***Some Great “I Will” Promises***

Although the Bible is filled with “exceedingly great and precious promises” (2 Peter 1:4), today’s focus verses contain some beautiful “I will” promises from the Lord. Space will not allow us to discuss all of them in great detail, but it will be worth our time to consider each of them briefly. In verse 44 we find the first of these promises and see that they have to do with a *place*. God said, “I will consecrate (sanctify) the tabernacle.” The word “sanctify” means to “set apart for special service.” The second promise is also found in verse 44 and it has to do with the *priests*. There we see that God not only promised to sanctify the priests, but that He also promised to sanctify the *people* who served Him there by promising to consecrate “Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests.” The third promise has to do with *permanence*. His promise to “dwell” (verse 45) among His people contains a word that means to “settle down” or “remain.” God intended for His people to know theirs was no temporary relationship. He was fully committed to them. The fourth promise has to do with *presence*. Notice that God’s promise was to dwell “among the children of Israel.” Wherever they were He was to be with them. Verses 45 and 46 both contain God’s fifth great “I will” promise to His people. This promise has to do with *personal relationship*. In verse 45 He stated that He would be “their God” and verse 46 twice includes the phrase “I am the LORD *their* God.” When God starts repeating Himself we are always wise to listen!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Claim** the great and precious promises of the Bible and **enjoy** His wonderful presence today. **Check** out Hebrews 13:5 and mark this precious “I will” promise from God: “I will never leave you nor forsake you!” Now that sounds like something to shout about!

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 30:1-16**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 30:1**

***The Altar of Incense***

There were two altars that were included in the furnishings of the Tabernacle. Both were to be made of acacia wood but one was to be covered with bronze and the other covered with gold. It was because of these distinctive covering with which they were overlaid that the first was later referred to as “the bronze altar” (38:30) and the latter (the one about which we have read today) “the gold altar” (39:38). The first was located outside the Tabernacle proper in the outer court while this one was located inside the Holy Place. This same altar was also referred to as “the altar of incense” (30:27). The purpose of this altar is clearly stated in our focus verse. However, it is important that we fully understand the significance of this purpose. Unlike the manner in which the other furnishings have been described to us, God speaks of this altar’s purpose before He ever described its covering, dimensions, or position in the Tabernacle. As surely as we saw Christ as our sacrifice through the function of the Brazen Altar, we now see Him and the Holy Spirit as our intercessor in the Altar of Incense. In Romans 8:27 we are told that “He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” In the first altar we see Christ dying for us and in this second altar we see Him praying for us.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Pray** for someone you know who lives without Christ today. **Share** your own salvation experience with them and share what a blessing it is to have Jesus praying for you!

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 30:17-38**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 30:17**

***The Laver***

Our focus verse speaks of a “laver of bronze” which was the seventh, and final, piece of furnishing designed for the Tabernacle. It was located in the Outer Court past the Brazen Altar and before the door to the Holy Place. It was probably shaped like a large basin and was used by the priests for the purpose of washing their hands and feet before entering into the Holy Place. It was a symbol of purification and cleansing. However, washing at the Laver was not symbolic of *salvation* because that was symbolized at the Brazen Altar when the blood sacrifice was made. The Laver symbolized the need for cleansing for *service*. However short the walk from the Altar to the door of the Holy Place might have been, it was long enough to dirty the feet of those who walked it. The water in the Laver represented the Word of God and the washing of the hands and feet of the priests represented the need to be constantly cleansing our heart and mind with the Word so that we would be cleansed from all that we encounter and experience in our daily walk. Unlike any of the other furnishings, no dimensions are given for the laver. Any attempt to describe its exact size or shape would be pure conjecture. However, in my opinion, the lack of a description of this vessel’s size was not an oversight for there is a wonderful spiritual lesson to be learned from the fact that no measurements are given for it. From this we can readily accept the great truth that the cleansing power of the Word of God is sufficient for all who will *apply* it to their lives and *employ* it in their daily walk.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Thank** God for the truth of 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Read Ephesians 5:24-26 and meditate on what it says about being “washed” by the Word of God.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 31:1-18**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 31:1-2**

***“The Builders”***

Acts 7:22 reveals to us that “Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.” But the wisdom of this world was not sufficient for the work to which God had now called Moses. God was the *architect* of the Tabernacle and the *author* of the Story that is told to those who worshipped within it. In Exodus 25:9, God showed Moses “the pattern of *the tabernacle* and the pattern of *all its furnishings.*” He did not show Moses “a” pattern but “the” pattern and told Moses to make the building and its furnishings, “just so.” And, just as the plan for the Tabernacle was not *born* in Moses’ heart, so it was not to be *built* with his hands. After explaining exactly *what* He wanted built, and *how* He wanted it built, God then told Moses *who* He wanted to build it. It is important to note the word “called” in verse 2. It is the same word that is used in Genesis 1:5 to say that, after bringing light into existence, “God called the light Day.” Throughout the creation story we see God first *creating* and then *calling.* Hence we get the understanding that things that *exist* due to the hand of God are things that are designed to be *employed* by His hand. Just as surely as this world, and all that is in it, was created by God for a specific purpose, so it is with each one of us. In this case, God put the “pattern” for the Tabernacle in the *heart of Moses* and then told him to trust the building of it to the *hands of others.*  No one values and appreciates people more than God!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Avoid** the folly of thinking that it all depends on you. **Allow** others to come along side you and perform the tasks that God has especially equipped them to do in the Body. **Read** the last part of verse 11 once more and see the importance of each person performing the work for which he was created. **Thank** someone today for the work that they do for the Lord.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 32:1-16**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 32:1**

***“The People”***

If the first part of Exodus 31 taught us that God is conscious of people and desires to use them for His purposes, then the first part of Exodus 32 teaches us that Satan is also greatly interested in people and he desires to use them for *his* purposes. A careful examination of Exodus 32:1 will show you that this verse is all about “the people” and that the people were all about the people! You will find the phrase “the people” twice in this verse. First “the people” became impatient when Moses remained on Mount Sinai meeting with God longer than they thought that he should. Then “the people” went to Aaron and convinced them to lead them in creating a false God. Take a moment and circle the pronouns contained in the words of “the people” as they are quoted in this verse of Scripture: “Come, make **us** gods that shall go before **us**; for as for this Moses, the man who brought **us** up out of the land of Egypt, **we** do not know what has become of him.” How insulting it must have been for God to hear His own people, so soon delivered from Egypt and so soon to give credit for their deliverance to Moses in place of Him! When we, as God’s people, make it about “us” we begin to “fuss” and we can become more interested in the “we” than we are in the “He”!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Refuse** to become annoyed with God when He does not operate on your schedule! **Trust** Him in every situation and **remain faithful** to Him even if others become distracted by the things of this world.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 32:17-35**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 32:25**

***The Sons of Levi***

When Moses returned from Mount Sinai with the Law of God in his hands, he found “the people” already violating the first, foundational command of the Law. After destroying their idol, he “ground to powder” the golden calf and scattered it upon the people’s drinking water. (And, yes, there was water there in the desert! Compare Deuteronomy 9:21 to today’s passage and you will clearly see it!) Moses, “then…stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, ‘Whoever is on the Lord's side--come to me!’” In response, the “Sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him.” Since God commanded that the Levites “not be numbered” in the census taken in Numbers 1, it is impossible to know how many people there were that actually stood with Moses that day. However, when we take the total of the census of the 12 tribes from the census of men who were “twenty years old and above” and “able to go to war” (Numbers 1:3), we see that the average number of fighting men from each tribe was about 50,000! Since there were 603,550 fighting men included in that census, we see the Levites here “gathering” together to stand against odds that numbered at least 12 to 1! These “sons of Levi did according to the words of Moses” (verse 26) and stood against friends and family because of their faith in God. We will later see that this action led to their being assigned the awesome responsibility of caring for, and protecting, the Tabernacle!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Thank God** for those who stand for God and His Word! **Pray** for someone who has been that kind of witness to you and let them know that you have prayed for them. **Pray** for an opportunity to be that kind of witness to someone you encounter today.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 33:1-23**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 33:1**

***“Up,” “Out,” and “To”***

Just a few, short weeks after promising to do all of that which God commanded them (19:8 and 24:7), Israel broke their promise and violated their covenant with God. Having dealt with the sin of the people, God instructed Moses to “depart and go *up* from here, you and the people whom you have brought *out* of the land of Egypt, *to* the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (verse 1). We see the word “up” again in verse 3 where God told Moses to take the people “up to a land flowing with milk and honey.” How wonderful is the thought that those who were just forced to drink water contaminated with the dust of their destroyed idol have been set back on a path towards better things! Only the grace of God can be so kind and generous. By going “up” from this moral low point in their lives, Israel would continue their journey “out” of Egypt. The experience with the golden calf was just one of many that would remind the people that it was much easier to get “out of Egypt” than it was to get “Egypt out of them”! The way “out” of that place which represented their past slavery to a sinful world required that the people now set their sights on that place “to” which God desired to lead them. Only God’s grace allows us to move from the *agony* associated with past sin to the *anticipation* that is associated with our present pursuit of His will!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Commit** yourself to getting “up” every time you fall so that you can return to the business of getting “out” of the old way of life and “to” the kind of life that God has promised His people! **Refuse** to settle for anything less than God’s best plan for your life.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 34:1-17**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 34:8**

***Be “Quick” and “Quiet”***

Having been commanded by God to “be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain” (verse 2), “Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him” (verse 4). Moses was indeed a man of quick action! After having been assigned the daunting task of numbering the people of Israel on “the first day of the second month” (Numbers 1:1) we find God’s servant doing exactly that on that very same day (Numbers 1:18)! When it came to doing the things that God commanded, Moses was *quick* to get about it! However, these *hands* that were so *quick to work* were undoubtedly influenced by a *heart* that was *quick to worship*. When in the presence of God, we are told that “Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped” (verse 8). But we learn more about the way that Moses approached God in worship not only by what he did in “haste” but also by what he did with his “head.” Bowing his head before God meant that he had no words to express what was in his heart. It was a humble, *quiet* way of making the statement that he felt unworthy to be in the presence of God. When we consider that “Abram fell on his face” when the LORD had earlier appeared to him (Genesis 17:3) and that Joshua did the same when he later met with God (Joshua 5:14), we get an idea that worship sometimes involves our being silent before God so that He might speak very loudly, directly, and clearly to us!

**Prayer Emphasis**

* **Pray** faithfully. As the song says, “Have a little talk with Jesus. **Tell** Him all about your troubles.” But, **realize** that true prayer is not a one-way conversation. **Be careful** to allow God time to speak with you. **Listen** for His voice and you will surely hear it!

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 34:18-35**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 34:27**

***Write These Words***

If Moses had received an agenda when he entered this very important meeting with God, I suppose that the section now under consideration would have fallen under the “Miscellaneous” category because God now provides him with some very specific instructions regarding no less than seven areas of work and worship. From this we learn that God is too good to tell Moses that “When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall *serve* (Me) on this mountain” (Exodus 3:12) without, upon their arrival, then telling them exactly what it meant to “serve” Him. From where was Moses to learn these detailed instructions regarding God’s required service? From the written Word of God! God’s way with Moses is also His way with us. If we are going to “serve” God, then we must pay careful, prayerful attention to what He has said to us in His Word. Those who wait for direction or instruction that is *beyond* God’s written Word are most likely doomed to perform *below* God’s standard of excellence. When it comes to God’s will and work, the Word does not tell us *what* we are to do without then providing us with detailed instructions regarding the *way* that God would have it done.

**Prayer Emphasis**

* **Remember** that, after Paul asked, “Lord, what do you want me to do?” God was faithful to reply, “Arise and go…and you will be told what you must do" (Acts 9:6). Amen!

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 35:1-19**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 35:1-2**

***The Sabbath***

Since chapters 35-40 will deal primarily with the Tabernacle and its furnishings, and their contents are very similar to the information found in chapters 25-31, we will focus our attention on the teaching on the Sabbath Day that is included in the first part of today’s Scripture reading. The first three verses of this chapter contain the last teachings on the Sabbath Day that are found in the book of Exodus. Although we have read about several things that were prohibited on the Sabbath Day, today’s verses add a new activity to the list. In verse three the Israelites were told, “You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day.” This statement goes beyond the avoidance of manual labor or extensive travel on the Sabbath and teaches that even activities that are centered in our own creature comforts are to be avoided as well. Many years after the Exodus, Isaiah tried to help God’s people to see that the Sabbath Day was more about *worship* that it was about the cessation of *work*. He taught Israel that the Sabbath Day was a day when God’s people “shall honor Him, *not doing your own ways*, *nor finding your own pleasure*, nor speaking your own words” and that, when they learned to treat the Sabbath in that way, they would not dread its restrictions “but delight yourself in the Lord” (Isaiah 58:13-14).

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* Jesus said “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath**”** (Mark 2:27). **Remember** that God is always working for our good and that we should always be working for His glory. **Honor** His desire to grant you time to rest and spend time in relationship with Him.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 35:20-35**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 35:21**

***Offerings for the Tabernacle***

It is interesting that this teaching on giving follows a teaching on the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath, more than anything else, was about trust. Could, or would, the people trust God enough to believe that He could provide for them in only six days if they would honor His command to rest on the seventh? When we learn to trust that God will always provide for our needs, we will also learn that there will always be enough for us to give some of what we have to Him and to others in need. The giving that we are reading about here was in response to the request that God made back in 25:1-2 where “the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering.” It is clear that the Tabernacle was to be built with materials that came from voluntary offerings from God’s people whose “heart was stirred, and…whose spirit was willing.” If you were to take the time to circle the words “all,” “everyone,” and “every man” when they appear in this passage, you would be overwhelmed with the response that came forth from these people who lived in tents and had no home of their own! Also notice that the people donated their time and talents as well as their treasures. Generosity is a character trait that is an outgrowth of learning to trust God to meet our needs.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Learn** to trust God in all things! **Seek** to grow in your faith and you will soon be growing in your giving to the work of the Lord and to others who are less fortunate or in a time of need. **Express** your love, appreciation, and respect for all that God has done for you by finding a work of service that you can perform for Him and His church.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 36:1-19**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 36:1**

***Workers!***

Yesterday we read how God’s people rose up as one and provided the *means* (money and materials) to build the Tabernacle. Today we will read a little more about the *men* that God used to lead them in this great task. We first read about Bezalel and Aholiab back in Exodus 31 where God provided much more information about these two men. There, God said, “I have called by name Bezalel…of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship” (31:2). God also introduced Aholiab to us in that same chapter, saying, “I have appointed with him Aholiab of the tribe of Dan; and I have put wisdom in the hearts of all who are gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you” (31:6). From those verses, along with what we have read today, we learn several things about these two men, and all of the workers that joined with them in the building of the Tabernacle. Most importantly, we see that they were appointed and anointed by God to a certain area of service. However, since Judah was the tribe that went first in order as Israel marched, with Dan marching as the last tribe in the line, then we see that these men are clearly representative of all of God’s people and their calling helps us to see that Israel, and the church, is about God’s people contributing and cooperating together to see that God’s will is accomplished.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Thank God** for some group of church workers today and express your love and appreciation to them. Prayerfully consider assuming a role of service within one of the church ministries. Ask God to show you where you are most gifted to serve.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 36:20-38**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 36:34**

***Details!***

As you can see from today’s verses, God’s instructions to Moses concerning the building of the Tabernacle were very detailed. If you recall, the boards that were to be used for the construction of the Tabernacle were discussed earlier in chapter 26. The outer walls of the Tabernacle area were made of curtains, but boards were used to construct the walls of the actual Tabernacle building - the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Since the Tabernacle was a type (picture) of Christ, then we should expect to see Him in even the smallest details. The information that God provided Moses regarding the building of the Tabernacle has proven sufficient to allow people to reproduce this structure for centuries since and there are several places where you can go and tour actual sized Tabernacle buildings, minus all of the silver and gold, of course! Our focus verse reminds us that “He overlaid the boards with gold, made their rings of gold to be holders for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.” Since the actual building represents Christ, then it would make sense that the boards, which represented the humanity of Christ, would be overlaid with gold, which represented His purity. Notice how the purity (sinless nature) of Christ is emphasized in just the boards and their fixtures. As you read the verse once more, notice that you see, “gold…gold…gold!”

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Strive** to be the kind of Christian that pays attention to the details! **Seek** to be a witness of what Christ can do in the heart and life of a believer that seeks His will and obeys His commands.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 37:1-16**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 37:1**

***Bezalel “Made” the Ark***

People often ask why there are two accounts of the Tabernacle’s construction given in Exodus. God gave the first description of this building to Moses during a 40-day visit on the mountain. In the first account we have a record of what God desired Moses and the people to build for Him. This second account was given to provide a history of the actual building process. No one should think that our works are not important to God. We know that we are not *saved* by works, but we also know that the purposes of God are *served* through our works. Take some time and count the word “made” as it appears in today’s reading. The word that is translated “made” here is the same Hebrew word that is translated “made” in the Genesis 1 record of God’s first six days of creative work. That word, in the Hebrew form, is found no less than 10 times in Genesis 1. That same word is found 12 times in the few verses that we have read today. It is a word that means, “to fashion, produce, or make.” So, Bezalel led the people of God as they took the many gifts that were given for the Tabernacle and “made” or “fashioned” them into the Tabernacle. Bezalel, whose name means “in the shadow of God,” was truly providing us a “shadow” of things to come, including the work that Christ was to come to this earth to perform for the Father.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Discover** your own spiritual gifting and then intentionally involve yourself in the business of putting it to use for God and His glory! **“Make”** something of the many blessings that God has given you!

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 37:17-29**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 37:17**

***Pure Gold***

The few words contained in today’s brief devotional were born from a considerable amount of time researching the Scriptures. Upon close examination, we see that the world “gold” is found 43 times in the chapters that contain the description of the Tabernacle and 48 times in the later chapters that describe its construction. However, there are just 12 times *in each of these accounts* (24 times total) that the word “pure” is used to describe the gold that was to be used! Of the 12 times that the adjective “pure” is used to more clearly describe the gold, nine of those times are associated with the gold that was used to make the candlestick! In fact, *every time* that the word “gold” is used in the description and the construction of this piece of Tabernacle furniture, it is preceded by the word “pure”! We are told that the candlestick, along with its branches and bowls, were made “of the same piece” (verse 17). The entire candlestick was to be made of one solid piece of pure gold. Since the candlestick, in both the Old and New Testaments, is associated with “witness.” it is clear that the candlestick teaches us that God’s witness *to* us, *through* Christ, is a “pure” witness. There is no deception or self-serving motives to be found in His message to us. Because of this we can rest assured that everything that Christ has said to us, and done for us, is a “pure” witness of God’s great love, mercy, and grace!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Believe** that God has provided us with a “pure” vision of Christ and **seek** to be a “pure” and unselfish witness of Him to those with whom you associate today. **Ask** God to cleanse your heart of any selfish desire or motivation that might blur the image of Christ in your life.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 38:1-20**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 38:9**

***The Court***

Until we come to the Scripture dealing with the Tabernacle, we only find the word translated “court” in our focus verse two times in Genesis and early Exodus. On both of those occasions, the word is used to reference enclosed places (“towns” or “villages”) where people lived. The Court of the Tabernacle was exactly that. It was an enclosure fenced on all sides by curtains that were eight feet tall. The Court was rectangular in shape and its dimensions were 150 feet by 75 feet and its gate was always to the east. The important thing to note ab0ut this part of the Tabernacle is that it was the only place where the majority of the people could visit. Any Israelite could enter the courts but only the priestly tribe could go beyond it and enter the Tabernacle. Only the high priest could go beyond still into the holy of holies once per year on The Day of Atonement. As the people approached the Tabernacle, they were confronted with a wall of white that symbolized God’s holiness and purity. The only part of the Court that was not white was the entrance gate, which was made of white linen with blue, purple, and red thread woven into it. Since this was the one and only way to enter the Tabernacle, it is wonderful to see that God designed this entrance in an ornate and beautiful way that was clearly marked and distinguishable to all who approached it.

**Prayer Emphasis**

* **Praise God** that He has clearly marked our “One Way” to approach Him and that He has made our entrance into His presence accessible to all who will but come to Him. **Invite** someone to enter the safety of God’s Courts today.

 **Scripture Reading: Exodus 38:21-31**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 38:21**

***The Tabernacle of the Testimony***

Exodus is the first place that we see the word “testimony” in the English Bible and it is the first place that the Hebrew word that is translated that way is found in all of the Scripture. Some translations use the word “witness” instead of “testimony” here. There are at least four places in the Old Testament where this same word is also translated “witness.” In Numbers 17:7-8 the Tabernacle is twice referred to as the “Tabernacle of Witness” and translated that way from this same Hebrew word. However it is translated, it is interesting to note that *every* time that this word is used in Exodus it is used in relation to the Tabernacle and the “testimony” or “witness” that it presented to all who visited it. The entire structure was carefully designed to tell a story and to be a “testimony” or “witness” to mankind so that sinful man would know how to approach God. Every piece of material and every piece of furniture played a role in this great “Word Picture” and “Living Story” of man’s need and how God planned to meet it. The New Testament also refers to the “Tabernacle of Witness” or “Testimony” (depending upon the translation) in Acts 7:44. The Tabernacle was a part of the lives of God’s people for approximately 450 years and remained in use until the Temple was finally constructed.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Thank God** for His faithful, constant witness to us and to all people everywhere. **Strive** to be that kind of witness (faithful and constant) to those among whom you live and associate with on a daily basis.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 39:1-14**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 39:1**

***Garments of Ministry***

The word that is translated “garments” in our focus verse is yet another word that, at least in Exodus, is used only in relation to the Tabernacle and its service. The word that is translated “ministry” in that same verse is only found in Exodus and only in relation to the clothing that the priests were to wear as they ministered in the Tabernacle. When we look back at one of the ways that these garments were described in chapter 28, we see that they were “for glory and for honor” (28:2). Some translations read “glory and beauty.” The most literal meaning of the word that is translated “glory” there is “to be weighty.” It implies that the priests were to be symbolized as people that carried a lot of weight - both *with* God and *to* God - as they approached Him with sin offerings and prayers for the people. The word that is translated “honor” or “beauty” in 28:2 is another word that is used only in association with the Tabernacle and then only relative to the garments that the priests were to wear when they ministered there. The literal meaning of this word has to do with ornamental beauty. From the verses that we have read today, it is not difficult to see that these “garments of ministry” were colorful and appealing to the eye. There were seven pieces to the priest’s wardrobe and some of those pieces of clothing are mentioned exactly seven times in the Bible.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Ask God** to help you “dress for success” and to be a witness that draws attention to the “glory and honor” that belongs to the Lord. **Seek** ways that you can help to bear the burdens of others and **pray** for their needs on a regular basis.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 39:15-31**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 39:21**

***As the LORD Commanded Moses***

The conclusion of Exodus 39 also marks the conclusion of the construction of the Tabernacle. Although verse 21 of today’s reading is not the first to contain the phrase, “as the LORD commanded Moses”, it is the first time that we have been able to write about it. This wonderful phrase is found seven times in chapter 39. Added to that, we find the phrase, “And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses” in verse 32 and another two very similar statements concerning the complete obedience of God’s people in verses 42 and 43. As we read this chapter, it seems that the Holy Spirit can simply not say enough about God’s people and how they responded to God’s detailed instructions regarding the provision for and the construction of the Tabernacle. It was be possible to do so, but to present a complete list of all of the materials required to build this portable building would be a daunting task. However, the people of God were careful to make sure that every piece, whether large or small, was provided and that every part of the work was completed. While it is true that Israel often troubled God’s heart by being everything from ungrateful to idolatrous, when it came to giving and building, they seemed to always make God proud!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Listen** carefully and prayerfully to the commands of God as you read through your Bible. **Seek** to be obedient to God in all things, especially in the things that pertain to worship and personal adoration. If you have a part in His service, then **thank** Him. If not, then **seek** one today.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 39:32-43**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 39:32**

***Finished***

The word that is translated “finished” in verse 32 is first found in the Bible in Genesis 2:1-2. There we are told that “were finished” and that “on the seventh day God ‘ended’ the work which He had done.” Outside its association with the work on the Tabernacle, this word is found only once in Exodus, and that is in the early part of the book. In Exodus 5:13-14 where we are told, “And the taskmasters forced them to hurry, saying, *Fulfill* your work, your daily quota, as when there was straw. Also the officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, Why have you not *fulfilled* your task in making brick both yesterday and today, as before?" These verses help us to understand that the Israelites had not simply come to a “quitting point” and that they had actually “fulfilled” all of the tasks and assignments that God had given them. This is a word that can have either a positive or negative meaning, as in, something can be added to until it is completely full or something can be taken from until it is completely empty. In the sense that it is used here, it indicates that the total task was complete and that the people had given and worked until the job was done.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Live** like you know that God is watching! **Take** His commands to heart and **be** as obedient as humanly possible. **Understand** that many of God’s promises contain provisions concerning obedience on the part of His people. (I did not change the emphasis from Day 37 of our last devotional by one word!)

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 40:1-12**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 40:1**

***The Tent of Meeting***

Our focus verse contains the phrase “the tent of the meeting.” That same phrase is found four times in the first 12 verses of this final chapter of Exodus and several more times in the remaining verses. In most translations this phrase reads exactly as I just quoted it. But, in a couple of translations the word that is translated “meeting” is translated “congregation” or “assembly.” All of those translations are accurate in the sense that God was referring to the Tabernacle as the place where His people were to meet, congregate, or assemble. However, by examining some of its first usages in the Bible, we can see that the meaning of this word goes even deeper than that. The second and third times that this word for “meeting” is found in the Bible is in Genesis 17:21 & 18:14, where, concerning Sarah and the birth of Isaac, we are told “But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you *at this set time* next year” and “At the *appointed time* I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." So, we can clearly see that the Tabernacle was built for the purpose of congregating or assembling before God at *set* or *appointed* times. From this we see that God was very specific about *where* and *when* His people were to gather in worship.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Surrender** your schedule to God and allow Him to be your Worship Leader! **Refuse** to be the kind of Christian that serves God out of convenience and on a “when I can” basis. **Commit** to regular and faithful attendance of Bible Study and Worship services.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 40:13-25**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 40:17**

***Happy New Year!***

We are first told that the Tabernacle was “raised up” on “in the first month of the second year, *on the first day of the month*.” A quick look back to Exodus 12 will remind us why this date is significant. After the plagues and just before the Passover and Exodus, God spoke to Moses saying, “This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the *first month* of the year to you.” Now, just one year afterwards, God’s people have gone from building temples and shrines for pharaoh to erecting a worship center for their God! The Jewish calendar found its beginning at the Passover! And how appropriate is that? Passover represents the acceptance of the slain Lamb for protection and salvation. Passover represents the new birth! How neat is it to see a group of one-year-old “Christians” giving and building for God the way that we have witnessed here? Seven times in this chapter we are reminded that everything concerning the wonderful feats of these people was done “as the Lord had commanded Moses.” Seven is a number closely associated with spiritual perfection and completion in the Scripture. Because God’s people learned the value of spiritual obedience and growth early on they were now enjoying this special day about which we are reading.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Spend** some time recalling your own salvation experience and thank God for your new birth. Commit to being the kind of Christian about whom it can be said, “They did *as the LORD commanded*.”

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 40:26-38**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 40:34-35**

***A Promise Kept!***

Back in Exodus 29:45 God promised, “I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God.” That wonderful promise was fulfilled when “the glory of the LORD filled the (newly erected) Tabernacle.” If there is anything that can be said about God’s presence, it is that it most often is to show His approval. Consider the times that God made His presence known by speaking aloud in the Gospels. It was when He was voicing His approval of His Son at the time of His baptism and transfiguration! Later, when we are reading about the construction of the Temple, we will see the glory of the LORD fill that building as well (2 Chronicles 5:13-14). However, during the time of King Zedekiah, the glory departed and neither God’s presence or approval rested upon His people (Ezekiel 11:22-23). However, when the LORD returns and the millennial reign of Christ has begun, the temple will be rebuilt and God will once again dwell physically among His people. For those of us who jealously await that day, I remind you that God has promised us that, “The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former” (Haggai 2:9). I can only tell you that the best is yet to come!

**Prayer** **Emphasis:**

* Thankyou for walking through Exodus with us. Our prayer is that you have been able to associate your own life experience with that of these people who God delivered from slavery, empowered for service, and established as a nation unto Him. But, most importantly, He brought them into a covenant relationship with Him. If you lack a personal relationship with God, contact us by email today and learn how you can have a personal relationship with our Almighty God!