

## 2025 Third Quarter: Exodus

### Lesson #10: The Covenant *and the* Blueprint

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#### SABBATH

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Memory Text: “So Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words which the Lord has said we will do.” Exodus 24:3, NKJV

These descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, these rescued slaves, and the Egyptians who decided that the God of these slaves was all powerful and should be followed, walked safely through the sea. They viewed the walls of water on either side of their path as well as the sea floor. They then witnessed the entire Egyptian army drowned when the watery walls came crashing together. A cloud lead them and shielded them from the blazing desert sun by day and emitted fire that provided light by night. They knew that whoever this God was, He was leading and protecting them.

Now they saw the fiery mountain of Sinai, shielding them from this God’s very presence. Twice Moses had been invited by God to come up and speak with Him in this fire, and twice Moses returned 40 days later unharmed. He was glowing so brightly from being in God’s presence that seeing him was painful; the congregation begged him to shield his face when talking with them.

So, it’s no surprise that when Moses told them all that God had told him, they immediately agreed to do everything God had said. They promised God. They covenanted with God to do what they were asked to do. But even a cursory reading of the book of Exodus and the Bible demonstrates that what we *say* we will do and what we *actually* do too often are totally different.

This week, we will investigate how we learn to understand and love a Being we cannot see, feel or touch; a God whose actual presence usually operates outside of our senses. How do we love and obey an all-powerful God we dread and are so afraid of that we want to hide from Him? Adam and Eve hid from Him in the Garden of Eden. The Israelites designated Moses as their spokesman so they wouldn’t have to hear directly from God. And at the end of time, “The kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hide in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb? For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?’ Revelation 6:15-17 NIV The wrath of the Lamb is the perspective of the wicked when God comes to reclaim His Earth; whereas the righteous are bathed in God’s presence and are perfectly fine, as detailed in Isaiah 33:14-16

How do we connect with an invisible God, and keep our covenant, our promises with Him? How do we become the people who are described as saints, “who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12 NKJV?

In the first paragraph on Sabbath afternoon, the lesson talks about our “vertical relationship with God.” Haven’t we often envisioned God as being extremely far away, so that we direct our prayers toward a distant location when we try to talk with God? But listen to what God says, “I live in a high and holy place, BUT ALSO WITH HIM WHO IS CONTRITE AND LOWLY in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite”” Isaiah 57:15, NIV

Could it be that God is so close to us, He is so a part of us, that we can’t see Him outside of ourselves because He is living within us; occupying our minds with us?

## SUNDAY

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### The Book and the Blood

Exodus 24:1-11, NIV says, “Then he said to Moses, ‘come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance, but Moses alone is to approach the Lord; the people may not come up with him.’ When Moses went and told the people all the Lord’s words and laws, they responded with one voice, ‘Everything the Lord has said we will do.’ Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord. Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, ‘We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey.’ Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, ‘This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.’ Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.”

It’s interesting to note that among those who saw God, ate and drank, were Moses’ brother Aaron, and Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu. Remember, Aaron was the one who later assisted with the creation and worship of the Golden Calf while Moses was on the mountain with God, Exodus 32. Giving hope to us all, Aaron was later designated as a priest of God, Exodus 40: 12-15, as were his sons, Nadab and Abihu. Leviticus 10:1-5 documents that Nadab and Abihu’s lives were ended by fire from the presence of the Lord when they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, contrary to his command. Priests were to represent our priest and mediator Jesus Christ, and anything the priests did contrary to instructions would give the wrong message about our Ultimate Priest’s role.

We also, who call ourselves Christians and followers of Jesus, should think especially what the second commandment means when it says, “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.” Exodus 20:7 NIV. Do we truly represent Jesus, His life, His ministry, His love, His compassion, His forgiveness, His healing grace in the way we live our lives and interact with others?

The third paragraph says, “The ratification of the covenant at Sinai was to reinforce the special relationship that God wanted to have with His people. In the ceremony, the people twice shouted that they would obey God in everything that He required....They meant it, too, but they did not know their brokenness, fragility, and lack of power. The blood of the covenant was sprinkled on the people, indicating that only by Christ’s merits was Israel able to follow God’s instructions.”

We should ask ourselves how Christ’s merits enable us to follow God’s instructions. Does Jesus’ sacrifice just cover over who we really are, or does a replacement actually occur, where we receive what Jesus developed through His life, death and resurrection? What does it mean to actually have “the mind of Christ?” Do we understand it like David did when he plead for God to, “Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. THEN I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.” Psalm 50: 7-13 NIV

There is a hint of how we interact and are impacted by this invisible God in Isaiah 55, which includes, “Come all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David....Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord.... My word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace...”

These thoughts are mirrored in Revelation 3:17-21 NIV, which councils to the Church of Laodicea, “You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am: I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.”

Isaiah 53:4-6, NIV, sheds this light on how God feels about us and takes care of us, “Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, YET we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. BUT he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds, we are healed.”

Essentially, a covenant is a promise, an agreement between people or between people and God. Today, we more often might call our formal agreements a Contract. Trust is promoted when the covenant/contract is kept, while breaking of a covenant produces distrust, and broken relationships. God is all about relationships and healing, fixing our brokenness, enabling us to live in love, truth and true freedom.

At creation, two institutions were established, marriage as well as the Sabbath. Marriage was created for the connection and bond between husband and wife, and Sabbath was to enhance the relationship and bond between the Creator and His creatures. The Ten Commandments are divided between how we show love for God in the first four, and love for others in the last six.

## MONDAY

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### Seeing God

The second paragraph points out that in the Middle East during biblical times (and to a certain extent today), eating together was a high experience, great honor, and privilege. It offered forgiveness and formed a bond of friendship. It implied being there for each other and staying together in times of crisis and problems. By eating together, they promised each other, without words, that if something should happen to one party the other would be obliged to come and help. To be invited to a meal was a special treat that was not extended to everyone.

Paragraph 4 emphasizes the tragedy of some who ate before the Lord (as we talked about earlier) who were not transformed or converted by that experience, and what a powerful lesson about how possession of truth and sacred privileges does not automatically mean conversion. Having experienced what they did, these men should have been the last ones to have done what they would later tragically do.

This might serve as a warning if we believe that once you say that you believe in Jesus, you are saved, no matter what you do or how you live later. Seeing God, even believing in Him, does not mean automatic salvation. “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that – and shudder.”

Consider from the Old Testament, Ezekiel 18: 21-24, 30-32 NIV, “But if a wicked man turns away from all the sins he has committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die. None of the offenses he has committed will be remembered against him. Because of the righteous things he has done, he will live. Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? Declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live? But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked man does, will he live? None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness he is guilty of and because of the sins he has committed, he will die....Therefore...Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit.

Why will you die...For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!”

Or these from Paul in the New Testament, Romans 11:20-22, NIV, “But they [Israel] were broken off because of unbelief, and you [Gentiles] stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.” And “...I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.” 1 Corinthians 9:27, NIV

## **TUESDAY**

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### Power to Obey

We are self-centered helpless hostages of Satan, the once powerful ark angel of God, Lucifer (“Light-bearer”) who walked among the fiery stones of God’s very presence? How can we keep our promises, our covenants, with God? How do we actually DO what God wants us to do, so that we can be healed, saved and rescued from ourselves and this evil-filled planet, which I call the prisoner of war camp of the universe?

The only ability we have is the power of choice. We can choose to align ourselves with our evil captor, who wants to ruin and destroy us and everything we love or have (see the book of Job), or we can choose to align ourselves with our creator, who designed us and gave us life. The Bible is very clear about how to exercise our power of choice so that we are healed of our lethal condition of deception and selfishness, and enabled to live in truth, love and freedom.

Look at these steps from the NIV:

1) CHOOSE - Luke 9:23-25, “Then he (Jesus) said to them all: ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?’”

2) SEEK – Matthew 6:33-34, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

3) LINK TO GOD – Matthew 11:28-30, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and LEARN FROM ME, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

4) ASK and KNOCK – Matthew 7: 7-12, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For EVERYONE who asks receives; he who seeks finds;

and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”

5) TALK WITH GOD – Matthew 6:6-14, “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then our Father, who sees what is done in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.’ For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

6) TAKE NOURISHMENT – Isaiah 55:1-3, “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live.” Matthew 26:26-28 says, “While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’ What happens when you eat and drink? The ingredients become part of you, they sustain and energize you. These symbols were used by Jesus to explain how the Holy Spirit and the mind of Jesus becomes part of us. We think about his words, we drink of his never-failing spring of a pure life. As we daily take into ourselves the perfectly unselfish, perfect nature he created through his life, death and resurrection as a human, we are changed. It’s like my stem cell transplant recipients, who get rid of their own damaged cells that are killing them, and get fresh, undamaged cells that enable them to live.

7) LOVE – John 12:1,3-5, 13-17, “It was before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love...Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him....’You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them’.”

8) SHARE – Psalm 50:10-13, “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. THEN I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.”

We choose to let the Holy Spirit of God in, and He fixes and enables us. If we could fix ourselves, we wouldn’t need a savior. That’s why Satan works so hard to get our attention and trust away from God, so we don’t stick with God, but go our own way and do our own works and pleasures.

## **WEDNESDAY**

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### **In the Midst of His People**

How do you explain to people something they don’t understand? How many of you have tried the fruit called Rambutan, which is red and has soft spikes in every direction, but inside is a smooth, oblong fruit with a seed in the middle? I would likely explain that this fruit tastes like a combination of a grape and pear. But it is unique to all other fruits. We use something we know to help understand what we don’t know.

Likewise, God showed He dwelled in the middle of His people and explained the spiritual process of salvation through the teaching tool of the sanctuary, and the yearly feasts. You might compare it to a play, with actors, costumes, activities, processes and a script, that Christians call the Scriptures. Thinking back on some of my days of teaching case management, I could also compare this process to a workflow.

So, God told Moses how to create a sanctuary for Him in the very center of the tribes of Israel. Surrounding the sanctuary on every side, were the tribe of Levi. Beyond them, 3 tribes camped on each of the four sides. Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well, “You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.” John 4:22 NIV

If you wanted to come to Israel’s God, you would first have to travel through the tribes, learn what direction to go to find Him, and hear about what He had done and was still doing for this huge group of people. If what they told you intrigued you to get closer to this God, you would move forward to the sanctuary to see and understand the process of how God saves His people.

The ONLY thing the members of the tribes did at the sanctuary was to bring to the entrance an offering, something they owned of which they were willing to be deprived; a financial loss. If the offering was to be a certain animal, it had to be a living perfect animal, and the man slaughtered it as a sacrifice to make atonement for himself and his family for the wrong done. The priests, Aaron and his descendents, did EVERYTHING ELSE in the process of taking the rest of the steps toward being united with God.

As a quick overview of the process once the priests took over, the priests washed in the water of the basin, placed the blood of the sacrifice wherever instructed on the altar of burnt offering, then went

into the Holy Place and replaced the bread weekly then ate the bread, kept the lamps burning with olive oil, used specially formulated incense and offered prayers at the altar of gold.

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, to cleanse the sanctuary of the accumulated sins of the people, Levites and priests, the high priest put on the breastplate with a different precious stone for each tribe and two stones for determining God's yes or no answers. The High Priest offered a bull as a sacrifice for himself and his family, then took the blood from that sacrifice and from the sacrifice of the people, burning coals from the altar and incense through the curtain and into the presence of God in front of the Ark of the Testimony. He would then throw incense on the coals to create smoke that would conceal the atonement cover above the Testimony and keep him from dying in the presence of God. In the Ark was the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 10:3-5), a bowl of manna (Exodus 16:31-35), and Aaron's rod that budded, flowered and fruited with almonds overnight (Numbers 17:1-10). Afterward, lots were cast between two goats. The goat for the Lord was sacrificed for the sins of the people, while the priest placed his hands on the head of other goat, the scapegoat, and confessed all the wickedness and rebellion of the people over it. It was then released live out to the desert and left there, reminiscent of the Millennium that Satan spends on a desolate planet earth after the wicked are dead and the righteous are in heaven. Time to think, which sadly doesn't change his mind about God at all.

There are too many more details about this whole enactment than we have time to go through today, but essentially, God wanted us to see that the human Jesus, born of a sinful human mother, lived an unselfish, perfectly loving and obedient human life. He brought this perfect sacrifice of himself and laid down his life to accomplish the healing perfection that he could offer to us to replace the selfish, unloving and disobedient people of the human race. Then as our priest, He does the washing away of our filthiness, the taking of the sacrifice of our sin-filled bloody selves into the sanctuary, where He feeds us of the bread of His word, shows us truth through the light of the Holy Spirit, offers our prayers to God, and after tearing down the curtain between the Holy and Most Holy places, provides the way we can enter the very presence of God without dying.

Isaiah 26:12 NIV explains, "Lord, you establish peace for us; ALL that we have accomplished YOU HAVE DONE FOR US."

## **THURSDAY**

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### Filled With the Spirit of God

To make the sanctuary, God told Moses exactly who was to do the craftsmanship. They were men who had been especially equipped by God with the needed special capabilities. We don't often think about how our individual capabilities are fostered by our creator for the purposes He has in mind for us. He can use every capability we have in ministry to His service.

"The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what



we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and CANNOT understand them because they are discerned ONLY through the Spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, ‘Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.” 1 Corinthians 2:10-16 NIV

God’s banner of the seventh-day Sabbath was a blessing given to us at creation, to keep us wholly connected to Him, to keep us rested and balanced, and especially to help us understand the character of the One who used His power to create this earth and everything on it.

Whose banner do we stand under in this spiritual war between God and Satan?

- 1) The powerful God who creates everything and weaves His laws into our entire and universal existence then leaves us free to ponder His abilities and our relationship with Him, understanding that breaking His laws carries their own inherent punishment, (ie. Breathing under water breaks the law of respiration and causes death, or the spiritual law of “by beholding we become changed” which turns us into whatever we think about, good or bad, and if bad, cuts us off from the life-giving presence of God and prevents us from being saved, etc.)

OR

- 2) Satan who cannot create and wants us to believe that God’s laws can be changed and manipulated, so that we must be punished by God for breaking them. (ie. Arbitrary fines for exceeding the arbitrary speed limit, etc.)

## FRIDAY

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### Further Thought

“The law of God, enshrined within the ark, was the great rule of righteousness and judgment. That law pronounced death upon the transgressor; but above the law was the mercy seat, upon which the presence of God was revealed, and from which, by virtue of the atonement, pardon was granted to the repentant sinner. Thus in the work of Christ for our redemption, symbolized by the sanctuary service, ‘mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.’ Psalm 85:10.” Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p 349

Remember, the Ten Commandments, housed in the Ark and in the Bible are like an MRI, which shows us what is wrong, how we are damaged and damaging others, but cannot fix us. Only the healing provided by our heavenly savior and physician make us whole again and save us. “This is what the Lord says: ‘Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the Lord.” Jeremiah 9:23, 24 NIV

