

God’s Plan for Infectious Diseases

“Take Two of these Everyday, and Declare it to Everyone in the Morning”

Psalm 91

My Refuge and My Fortress

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

² I will say^[a] to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.”

³ For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler
and from the deadly **pestilence**

(an infectious disease - anything that destroys – ex. a plague, epidemic).

⁴ He will cover you with his pinions,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

⁵ You will not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,

⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

⁷ A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.

⁸ You will only look with your eyes
and see the recompense of the wicked.

⁹ Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place—
the Most High, who is my refuge^[b]—

¹⁰ no evil shall be allowed to befall you,
no plague come near your tent.

¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways.

¹² On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.

¹³ You will tread on the lion and the adder;
the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

¹⁴ “Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name.

¹⁵ When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.

¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.”

Fear is Not of God

1. “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” ~ Isaiah 41:10
2. “When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.” ~ Psalm 56:3
3. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” ~ Philippians 4:6-7
4. “Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid.” ~ John 14:27
5. “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” ~ 2 Timothy 1:7
6. “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” ~ 1 John 4:18

Proverbs 1:7

The **fear of the Lord** (God’s Word is Above Every other word) is the beginning of knowledge;
fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 9:10

The **fear of the Lord** is the beginning of wisdom,
and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

Illustration of “Fear” and the “Fear of God”:

Matthew 8:23-27

Jesus Calms a Storm

²³ And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴ And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. ²⁵ And they went and woke him, saying, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing.” ²⁶ And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. ²⁷ And the men marveled, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?”

Asking the Lord How to Pray regarding the current “Coronavirus” pandemic, He began to uncover for me the message that He is sending the World, using Wuhan, Chengdu, China, the origin of the “Coronavirus” and even more significant the origin of “a blueprint for dictators around the world” that China already plans to sell to Iran and other countries to eradicate Christianity from their country. These Christians have been living in an area of some of the most difficult persecution, with China becoming the focus this year because of its forced Re-education camps (one goal of Chinese prisons is to

reform prisoners into a “new man” who fully subscribes to Communist ideology.) and oppression that’s expected to spread and worsen. As well as the home of one of the most influential Christian House Church Movements in the World, with one of their story’s referenced below.

1 Corinthians 15:46

But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.

It is in this context that I believe the if we can understand the natural that the Lord can reveal to us the Spiritual message He is giving the Global Church and the World before it happens, not just China and the United States:

The purpose and the result of the “Coronavirus” is to speak first to the Global Church that Persecution is coming to you First, as is the case of the origin city of the virus, Wuhan City, where the Christian Church is seeing some of the most difficult persecution in the world, and because of the countries lack of the “Fear of the Lord” the Lord is giving them and the World a taste of the alternative for those that do not “Fear the Lord”, “Fear” itself.

This “Fear” is in the form of a pestilence, a virus, that is named for its shape, “a crown”, speaking of the author of the pestilence, God himself, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

The response to the “Fear” is cleaning, washing hands, surfaces, etc. as the prevention of the virus, which is symbolic of “Repentance”.

The Message is to the Church first, that we are to prepare our self, not in “Fear”, but rather the “Fear of the Lord”, by submitting to our King in “Repentance”, simply defined as, stop doing things our way and start doing things God’s way, and His promise will be that “³For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly **pestilence** (an infectious disease - anything that destroys – ex. a plague, epidemic) . . . ¹⁰no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent. ¹¹For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.” **Psalm 91** and “²And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God . . . ⁶Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out . . . ⁹**The Lord will establish you as a people holy to himself**, as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in his ways, **Deuteronomy 28:29**. On the other hand, for those of the Church who do not “Repent”:

Deuteronomy 28:15-67, ¹⁵“But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you . . . ²⁰“The Lord will send on you curses, confusion, and frustration in all that you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and perish quickly on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken me. ²¹The Lord will make the pestilence stick to you until he has consumed you off the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ²²The Lord will strike you with wasting disease and with fever, inflammation and fiery heat, and with drought and with blight and with mildew. **They shall pursue you until you perish** . . . ²⁵“The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them. And you shall be a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth . . . ³⁶“The Lord will bring you and your king whom you set over you to a nation that neither you nor your fathers have known. And there you shall serve other gods of wood and stone . . . ⁴⁵“All these curses shall come upon you and pursue you and overtake you till you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that he commanded you. ⁴⁶They shall be a sign and a wonder against you and your offspring forever . . . ⁵⁸“If you are not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, the Lord your God, ⁵⁹then the Lord will bring on you and your offspring extraordinary afflictions, afflictions severe and lasting, and sicknesses grievous and lasting. ⁶⁰And he will bring upon you again all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. ⁶¹Every sickness also and every affliction that is not recorded in the book of this law, the Lord will bring upon you, until you are destroyed. ⁶²Whereas you were as numerous as the stars of heaven, you shall be left few in number, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God. ⁶³And as the Lord took delight in doing you good and multiplying you, so the Lord will take delight in bringing ruin upon you and destroying you . . . ⁶⁵And among these nations you shall find no respite, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot, but the Lord will give you there a trembling heart and failing eyes and a languishing soul. ⁶⁶Your life shall hang in doubt before you. Night and day you shall be in dread and have no assurance of your life. ⁶⁷In the morning you shall say, ‘If only it were evening!’ and at evening you shall say, ‘If only it were morning!’ because of the dread that your heart shall feel, and the sights that your eyes shall see.

1 Peter 4:17

*For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God:
and if it first begin at us, **what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?***

God is declaring in this Pandemic:

2 Peter 3:9

*The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you,
not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*

But for the Church, He is declaring to set ourselves apart from the World, Fear Not and Not to be Alarmed, but rather prepare yourselves for Persecution, Not being miss lead by false prophets, endure to the end, and finally, continue the TASK which has been at hand since Jesus’ Resurrection, proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the ends of the earth, and then the end will come:

Matthew 24:6-14

See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

⁹“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. ¹⁰And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹²And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.



YouTube › watch

China coronavirus: a look inside the sealed off city of Wuhan - YouTube

Jan 23, 2020 · ... leaving amid the coronavirus outbreak suspected to originate there. Since then, besides the Hubei's capital of Wuhan, ...

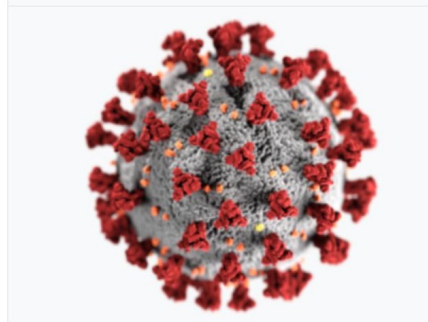


Illustration of the morphology of coronaviruses; the club-shaped viral spike peplomers, coloured red, create the look of a corona surrounding the

among known RNA viruses.^[7] The name coronavirus is derived from the Latin corona, meaning "crown" or "halo", which refers to the characteristic appearance reminiscent of a crown or a solar corona around the virions (virus particles) when viewed under two-dimensional transmission electron microscopy, due to the surface covering in club-shaped protein spikes.

A Church No Longer Afraid Story from China

The Voice of the Martyrs – March 2020

“How wonderful it would be if, because of this suffering, we might be able to give off the sweet fragrance of the gospel!”

Li Lingqiang, elder at Early Rain Covenant Church (China)

“The goal of obedience is not to change the world, but to testify about another world”

Pastor Wang Yi

Their attempt to intimidate the *Underground Church of China* and force them to close their doors were ineffective, however, because the church's leadership had already begun to prepare the congregation for suffering.

“We will not stop our gathering in the Lord, but we are prepared to bear all possible persecutions and costs for our Lord Jesus Christ – to go to jail or be sentenced or beaten or killed. We are willing to entrust ourselves to God.”

Chinese Christians to Re-education Camps

One goal of Chinese prisons is to reform prisoners into a “new man” who fully subscribes to Communist ideology.

Hours before his arrest, church elder Li Yingqing wrote a letter to the congregation: “*Thank the Lord!*” he wrote. “*Just as the year 2018 is about to end, God has given us a reward in the form of this large-scale persecution that arrived on December 9.*” He instructed the church to face persecution according to **1 Peter 4:12-14** (“*Rejoice insofar as you share Christ's suffering . . .*”) and concluded with a reminder of the church's mission statement: “*Christ is the Lord. Grace is the King. Bear the cross. Proclaim the gospel.*”

And yet, church members continued to view these attack and interrogations as opportunities to share the gospel.

They had been taught how to react under questioning. “By the grace and help of the Lord, try to turn the Lord, try to turn the interrogation process into a process of evangelism . . . Try . . . to turn the interrogation room into a new meeting of the church.”

Wang Ye wrote in his Declaration, “*to lead them through a wilderness of spiritual disillusionment and through this to make them know Jesus, if through this He continues disciplining and building up His church, then I am joyfully willing to submit to God's plans, for His plans are always benevolent and good.*”

If, however, China is entering a second period of extreme persecution such as followed the *Cultural Revolution* (China's most violent periods to those who were considered counterrevolutionary, which include the Christian Church – 1966-1976), when pastors were jailed for decades and government sought to completely eliminate Christianity, this time the church is prepared. *“Christians in China are better prepared for persecution today because more believers have their own copy of God's Word,” . . . “and also because they have seen the fruit of their predecessor' faithfulness in enduring persecution.”*

Having already endured difficulty persecution before this most recent crackdown, many large urban churches had made plans to divide into smaller groups if necessary.

This new era of persecution may be a period of refinement for the maturing Chinese church. Although some have left the faith or chosen to stay home, many are firmly committed to following Christ despite persecution.

“but we rejoice that the gospel can be spread. We don't simply believe persecution itself can make the gospel spread. God uses this way to make his people realize there is a treasure in the clay. So as the church cherishes more holding the gospel dear, so they can continue growing.”

From: Springs of Living Water
Sent: Sunday, March 8, 2020, 05:55:31 PM MDT
Subject: The Reward of Persecution - Springs of Living Water Weekly Email

Since Monday and Tuesday (3/9-3/10) is the appointed time for the Feast of Purim (the feast celebrating the deliverance of the Jewish people as told in the story of Esther), Ryan shared stories at our Sabbath worship from the latest monthly report from Voice of the Martyrs about Chinese brothers and sisters in the faith facing extreme persecution. Their boldness, strength, and faith is astounding. One of the reasons for this is that the pastors and leaders of the churches have been diligently preparing their flocks for persecution - it is expected, a "when" argument, not an "if" argument. Because of this, people are encouraged, spirits lifted, hearts remain hopeful, even joy accompanies the persecution when it breaks through their doors, because they are reminded regularly to rejoice in their sufferings just as Jesus suffered and died for us. They are even told, *“By the grace and help of the Lord, try to turn the interrogation process into a process of evangelism.”* One such church that has endured much tribulation at the hands of the government and authorities is the Early Rain Covenant Church in the city of Chengdu. On September 1, 2018, at great risk to all of the leaders and members of the church, the pastors and leaders published "A Declaration for the Sake of the Christian Faith," concluding with this bold statement: *“For the sake of the Gospel, we are prepared to bear all losses, even the loss of our freedom and our lives.”*

Christians see 'alarming' trend worldwide as China builds 'blueprint of persecution'

By Caleb Parke | Fox News

Religious persecution grows in China and around the world

Lauren Green reports on the disturbing trend of rising religious persecution in governments around the world.

Shortly before President Trump signed phase one of the historic trade deal with China, a Chinese pastor described the fear and intimidation believers are enduring under the Communist government.

"The Chinese government has now placed severe restrictions and policies on the house churches asking neighbors to spy on one another, pressuring school teachers and college professors to betray and sign a statement to denounce their own faith as well to do the same to students," Pastor Jian Zhu said.

Zhu described the Chinese government's alarming actions as Christian persecution has continued to spread around the world.

CHINA IMPOSES HARSH NEW RULES GOVERNING RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN 2020

Some 260 million Christians have been living in areas of high persecution -- that's one in eight believers worldwide -- an increase of 10 percent compared to last year, according to the watchdog group Open Doors USA's 2020 World Watch List.

"The drivers of persecution are still very significantly entrenched. Islamic extremism is spreading in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia," David Curry, the president and CEO of Open Doors USA, told Fox News. "Then you add this rise of surveillance technology and strategy by China."

HINDU HARDLINERS PROTEST MASSIVE JESUS STATUE IN INDIA AS PERSECUTION AGAINST CHRISTIANS PERSISTS

Every year, Open Doors USA, a bipartisan grassroots organization, has released a list of the 50 most dangerous countries for Christians. North Korea topped the list for the 19th year in a row, but China became the focus this year because of its forced labor camps and oppression of Uighur Muslims that's expected to spread and worsen.

Watchdog organization Open Doors USA released its annual "World Watch List" on Christian persecution, which is largely concentrated in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. (Open Doors USA)

While the communist country ranked 23rd on the list, roughly 100 million Christians have been affected by what Curry called **"a blueprint for dictators around the world"** *that China already planned to sell to Iran and other countries.*

"China is resurrecting the 'god as the government state,' and we're all threatened by it -- atheists, Jews, Christians -- everyone," Curry said.

Christians in China have been under constant surveillance, not just on the streets, but also in their churches which have been torn down, holy books confiscated. China last year sentenced Pastor Wang Yi to nine years in jail for speaking out against the state.

While the list's top 10 countries were Muslim-majority nations, the focus on China highlighted three trends:

1. Governments using artificial intelligence systems to monitor citizens and keep them in line.
2. A rise in Islamic extremism including last year's Easter bombing in Sri Lanka and the spike in violent attacks in Burkina Faso.
3. The increased pressure from dictators including Kim Jong Un of North Korea.

"Burkina Faso in Africa jumped from off the list to quite high on the list. It is 28 on the list," Curry warned. "The ISIS-affiliated group in Boko Haran in Nigeria is crossing borders: Cameroon, Chad, Niger and now Burkina Faso. If civil authorities don't protect Christian communities, as with ISIS, there could be another caliphate... It's very troubling."

And, similar to last year, Christian women continued to be raped and sexually harassed at alarming rates, an average of 23 per day.

"We cannot let this stand," Curry declared. "People are speaking out. They're crying out and have an obligation to take action."

Curry said the free world "must do more" to highlight the plight of persecuted Christians. But, he did add that "continued dialogue" in the wake of a phase-two trade deal with China could be seen as a pathway for better treatment of the faithful.

<https://www.foxnews.com/faith-values/christian-china-persecution-2020-watchlist>

Wang Yi (pastor)

Wang Yi (Chinese: 王怡; born June 1, 1973), pen name **Wang Shuya** (Chinese: 王书亚; pinyin: *Wáng Shūyà*), is the founding pastor of the Early Rain Covenant Church (Chinese: 秋雨圣约教会; pinyin: *Qiūyǔ Shèngyuē Jiàohuì*), a Calvinist house church in Chengdu. He is also a productive writer, editor, and social activist, and was a legal scholar at Chengdu University before he resigned to take up the pastorate.^[1]

Biography[edit]

In 2004, he was included in the list of "**50 Most Influential Public Intellectuals of China**" by *Southern People Weekly* [zh] (Chinese: 南方人物周刊). In 2005, he was converted, baptized, and started to serve in the house church. He was among the few pioneering Christian human-rights attorneys in China.^[2]

Wang Yi met with President George W. Bush at the White House in 2006, with other Chinese human rights attorneys, to discuss religious freedom in China.^{[3][4]} He returned to Washington, D.C. in 2008, to attend the Conference for Global Christians in Law and was awarded "**Prize for the Contribution to Promoting Religious Freedom**."

In 2008, he founded and started to serve the Chengdu Early Rain Reformed Church (Chinese: 秋雨之福归正教会; pinyin: *Qiūyǔ Zhǐfú Guīzhèng Jiàohuì*) (later renamed as the **Early Rain Covenant Church**). In October 2011, he was ordained and became the senior pastor of the church.^[5] The church now had a membership of about 700 before it was closed down in late 2018.^[6]

Wang Yi was one of China's best-known pastors in the West. He and Early Rain have been profiled in *The Atlantic* and *New York Times*,^{[7][8]} and the subject of a number of journalist and academic works.^{[9][10]} A review by the editorial board of the *Washington Post* called Wang "a paragon of the noble aspiration that people be allowed to think, speak, worship and assemble freely".^[11]

On 9 December 2018, he and over 100 other members of the church were arrested by Chinese authorities,^[12] who simultaneously banned any reporting of the crackdown.^[13] This action is being objected to by the US Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom.^[14] After he had been detained for 48 hours, the Early Rain Covenant Church released Wang's "My Declaration of Faithful Disobedience" written two months earlier in anticipation of his arrest.^[15]

On 30 December 2019, Wang was given a prison sentence of nine years by Chengdu Intermediate People's Court for "inciting subversion of state power and illegal business operations." The sentence also included the stripping of his political rights for three years and the confiscation of his personal assets of RMB 50,000 (US\$ 7,000).^{[16][17]}

On 31 December 2019, U.S. State Department called China for Wang's immediate and unconditional release in a statement, saying "This is yet another example of Beijing's intensification of repression of Chinese Christians and members of other religious groups".^[18]

On 1 January 2020, the embassy of the Netherlands in Beijing posted a message on Chinese social network Sina Weibo, which emphasized the importance of freedom of religion, with a screenshot of the Chinese court document about the sentence of Wang Yi.^[19]

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wang_Yi_\(pastor\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wang_Yi_(pastor))

Proclamation on the National Day of Prayer for all Americans Affected by the Coronavirus Pandemic and for our National Response Efforts

Issued on: March 14, 2020

In our times of greatest need, Americans have always turned to prayer to help guide us through trials and periods of uncertainty. As we continue to face the unique challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, millions of Americans are unable to gather in their churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, and other houses of worship. But in this time we must not cease asking God for added wisdom, comfort, and strength, and we must especially pray for those who have suffered harm or who have lost loved ones. I ask you to join me in a day of prayer for all people who have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic and to pray for God's healing hand to be placed on the people of our Nation.

As your President, I ask you to pray for the health and well-being of your fellow Americans and to remember that no problem is too big for God to handle. We should all take to heart the holy words found in 1 Peter 5:7: "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you." Let us pray that all those affected by the virus will feel the presence of our Lord's protection and love during this time. With God's help, we will overcome this threat. On Friday, I declared a national emergency and took other bold actions to help deploy the full power of the Federal Government to assist with efforts to combat the coronavirus pandemic. I now encourage all Americans to pray for those on the front lines of the response, especially our Nation's outstanding medical professionals and public health officials who are working tirelessly to protect all of us from the coronavirus and treat patients who are infected; all of our courageous first responders, National Guard, and dedicated individuals who are working to ensure the health and safety of our communities; and our Federal, State, and local leaders. We are confident that He will provide them with the wisdom they need to make difficult decisions and take decisive actions to protect Americans all across the country. As we come to our Father in prayer, we remember the words found in Psalm 91: "He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust."

As we unite in prayer, we are reminded that there is no burden too heavy for God to lift or for this country to bear with His help. Luke 1:37 promises that “For with God nothing shall be impossible,” and those words are just as true today as they have ever been. As one Nation under God, we are greater than the hardships we face, and through prayer and acts of compassion and love, we will rise to this challenge and emerge stronger and more united than ever before. May God bless each of you, and may God bless the United States of America.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 15, 2020, as a National Day of Prayer for All Americans Affected by the Coronavirus Pandemic and for our National Response Efforts. I urge Americans of all faiths and religious traditions and backgrounds to offer prayers for all those affected, including people who have suffered harm or lost loved ones.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-fourth.

DONALD J. TRUMP

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-national-day-prayer-americans-affected-coronavirus-pandemic-national-response-efforts/>

Theme of the Message Today:

Forgiveness

Luke 17:1-10

Temptations to Sin

¹ And he said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin^[a] are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! ² It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.^[b] ³ Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴ and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”

Increase Our Faith

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” ⁶ And the Lord said, “If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.

Unworthy Servants

⁷ “Will any one of you who has a servant^[c] plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? ⁸ Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly,^[d] and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? ⁹ Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants;^[e] we have only done what was our duty.’”

Week 21 - KI TISA (When You Take) - Exodus 30:11–34:35; 1 Kings 18:1–39; Matthew 17:1–13

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘When you take a census of the Israelites to count them, each one must pay the Lord a ransom for his life at the time he is counted. Then no plague will come on them when you number them.’” Exodus 30:11–12

Our last two Torah studies, Terumah and Tetzaveh, have focused on the design of the wilderness Tabernacle, furnishings, and priestly garments. This Shabbat continues with God’s instructions to Moses on the mountain.

(Messianic Bible | Bibles For Israel)

Timeline of Exodus 30:11-34:35

On 7 Sivan (May-June), Moses went up onto the mountain . . . On 17 Tammuz (June-July), the tablets were broken. On the 18th, he burned the [Golden] Calf and judged the transgressors. On the 19th, he went up for forty days and pleaded for mercy. On 1 Elul (August-September), he went up to receive the second tablets, and was there for forty days. On 10 Tishrei (September-October), G-d restored His goodwill with the Jewish people gladly and wholeheartedly, saying to Moses, “I have forgiven, as you ask,” and gave him the Second Tablets.

*Rashi, [Exodus 32:1](#) and [33:11](#)
https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/2508/jewish/The-120-Day-Version.htm*

Exodus 30:11-34:35

Exodus 30:11-13

The Census Tax

¹¹ The Lord said to Moses, ¹² “When you take the census of the people of Israel, then each shall give a ransom for his life to the Lord when you number them, that there be no plague among them when you number them. ¹³ Each one who is numbered in the census shall give this: half a shekel^[a] according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs),^[b] half a shekel as an offering to the Lord.

In order to fund the building of the Sanctuary, God commands Moses to take a census of the people of Israel and to instruct them to give a half shekel of silver.

“This is what everyone who is numbered shall give: half a shekel ... as a contribution to the LORD.” **Exodus 30:13**

THIS THEY SHALL GIVE... HALF A SHEKEL (30:13)

Why not a complete coin? To teach us that no man is a complete entity unto himself. Only by joining with another can a person become a “whole thing”.

(The Chassidic Masters)

THIS THEY SHALL GIVE (30:13)

Moses could not understand: How could a mere coin serve a person as “a ransom for his soul to G-d”? G-d answered him by showing him a “coin of fire.” G-d was saying: When a person performs even a modest act of charity with the fire of passion and enthusiasm, he is indeed giving a piece of his soul.

(The Rebbe of Kotzk)

Money is fire. Like fire it can destroy and annihilate, or illuminate and warm, depending on how it is used.

(Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk)

Exodus 30:14-15

¹⁴ Everyone who is numbered in the census, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the Lord's offering. ¹⁵ The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when you give the Lord's offering to make atonement for your lives.

We are reminded of God's request of Moses in building the Tent of Meetings in the Desert, to **ask His people to freely give to His Creation of this dwelling place, not as a Command, but as an act of love, and together they built a Tabernacle that was a Copy of the one in Heaven:** “The Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me.” Exodus 25:1-2

THE RICH SHALL NOT GIVE MORE, AND THE POOR SHALL NOT GIVE LESS (30:15)

People differ in their intellect, character and talents, in the quantity of their material resources and the timbre of their spiritual sensitivities. But all are equal in the very basis of their bond with G-d: the intrinsic commitment to Him that resides at the core of their souls. So while every man contributed to the making of the various components of the Sanctuary in accordance with their individual capacity, all gave equally of the silver of which its foundation was made. As regards the foundation of the relationship between man and G-d, the “rich man” cannot give more, and the “pauper” cannot give less.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Exodus 30:16-19

¹⁶ You shall take the atonement money from the people of Israel and shall give it for the service of the tent of meeting, that it may bring the people of Israel to remembrance before the Lord, so as to make atonement for your lives.”

The Bronze Basin

¹⁷ The Lord said to Moses, ¹⁸ “You shall also make a basin of bronze, with its stand of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it, ¹⁹ with which Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet.

A water basin and pedestal, both of copper, should be made. These should be placed between the Sanctuary and the Outdoor Altar, so that the priests should **wash** their hands and feet from the water in the basin before “they go into the Tent of Meeting... or when they come near to the Altar to minister.”

AND AARON AND HIS SONS SHALL WASH THEIR HANDS AND THEIR FEET... WHEN THEY COME NEAR TO THE ALTAR TO MINISTER (30:19)

Every person, upon waking in the morning... should wash his hands with [a minimum of] a quarter-log of water poured from a utensil...

Man entrusts his soul [to G-d at night] tired and exhausted, and G-d restores it to him rejuvenated and refreshed so that he may serve his Creator with all his capacity, this being the purpose of man. Therefore we should sanctify ourselves with His holiness and wash our hands with water from a vessel before serving Him and ministering to Him, like the Kohen who would wash his hands from the Basin each day before beginning his service...

(Shulchan Aruch HaRav)

Exodus 30:20-31

²⁰ When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn a food offering^[s] to the Lord, they shall wash with water, so that they may not die. ²¹ They shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they may not die. It shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his offspring throughout their generations.”

The Anointing Oil and Incense

²² The Lord said to Moses, ²³ “Take the finest spices: of liquid myrrh 500 shekels, and of sweet-smelling cinnamon half as much, that is, 250, and 250 of aromatic cane, ²⁴ and 500 of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin^[d] of olive oil. ²⁵ And you shall make of these a sacred anointing oil blended as by the perfumer; it shall be a holy anointing oil. ²⁶ With it you shall anoint the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony, ²⁷ and the table and all its utensils, and the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense, ²⁸ and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils and the basin and its stand. ²⁹ You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy. Whatever touches them will become holy. ³⁰ You shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests. ³¹ And you shall say to the people of Israel, ‘This shall be my holy anointing oil throughout your generations.’

THIS SHALL BE A HOLY ANOINTING OIL UNTO ME THROUGHOUT YOUR GENERATIONS (30:31)

... it sufficed for the anointing of the Tabernacle and its vessels, and Aaron and his sons, on each of the seven days of consecration; and High Priests and kings [throughout the generations] also were anointed with it... And that very oil remains in reserve for the [rebuilding of the Sanctuary] in the Messianic Era to come, as it is written: “This shall be a holy anointing oil unto Me throughout your generations.”

(Talmud, Hora'yot 11b)

Exodus 30:32-35

³² It shall not be poured on the body of an ordinary person, and you shall make no other like it in composition. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you. ³³ Whoever compounds any like it or whoever puts any of it on an outsider shall be cut off from his people.”
³⁴ The Lord said to Moses, “Take sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, sweet spices with pure frankincense (of each shall there be an equal part), ³⁵ and make an incense blended as by the perfumer, seasoned with salt, pure and holy.”

AND YOU SHALL MAKE IT A PERFUME, A CONFECTION AFTER THE ART OF THE PERFUMER (30:35)

Since many animals were slaughtered in the sacred place each day, their flesh butchered and burned and their intestines cleaned, its smell would doubtless have been like the smell of a slaughterhouse.... Therefore G-d commanded that the Ketoret be burned twice a day, each morning and afternoon, to lend a pleasing fragrance to the Sanctuary and to the garments of those who served in it.

(Maimonides' Guide to the Perplexed)

. . . “G-d forbid that the great principle and mystery of the Ketoret should be reduced to this mundane purpose” . . . however, *these* words as a reference to the spiritual “stench” of the Animal Soul within man, whose sacrifice and dedication to G-d was the deeper significance of the animal offerings brought in the Sanctuary. This explains why the Ketoret was the most sacred component of the Yom Kippur service: the Ketoret represents the power of teshuvah (“*returning in repentance*”), the sublimation of “foul odors” of man’s failings and iniquities into the “sweet fragrance” of a new, invigorated bond with G-d.

Romans 12:1

A Living Sacrifice

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to **offer your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

2 Corinthians 2:15

For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,

Exodus 30:36-31:6

³⁶ You shall beat some of it very small, and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting where I shall meet with you. It shall be most holy for you. ³⁷ And the incense that you shall make according to its composition, you shall not make for yourselves. It shall be for you holy to the Lord. ³⁸ Whoever makes any like it to use as perfume shall be cut off from his people.”

Oholiab and Bezalel

³¹ The Lord said to Moses, ² “See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, ³ and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, ⁴ to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, ⁵ in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft. ⁶ And behold, I have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. And I have given to all able men ability, that they may make all that I have commanded you:

SEE, I HAVE CALLED BY NAME BEZALEL... OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH... AND I HAVE APPOINTED WITH HIM AHALIAV... OF THE TRIBE OF DAN (31:2, 6)

No tribe was greater than Judah and none more lowly than Dan... Said G-d: “Let the one come and be associated with the other, so that no man may despise [his fellow] or be arrogant, for both great and small are equal in G- d’s sight.”

(Midrash Tanchuma)

Exodus 31:7-17

⁷ the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is on it, and all the furnishings of the tent, ⁸ the table and its utensils, and the pure lampstand with all its utensils, and the altar of incense, ⁹ and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the basin and its stand, ¹⁰ and the finely worked garments,^[e] the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, for their service as priests, ¹¹ and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense for the Holy Place. According to all that I have commanded you, they shall do.”

The Sabbath

¹² And the Lord said to Moses, ¹³ “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. ¹⁴ You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵ Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. ¹⁶ Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. ¹⁷ It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’”

AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SHALL KEEP THE SABBATH, TO MAKE THE SABBATH (31:16)

There are two dimensions to Shabbat, referred to in the dual commandment to “keep” it and to “make” it. It is a day possessing an intrinsic holiness from the very beginning of time; this holiness the people of Israel are com- manded to keep and preserve. And then there is the command “to make the Shabbat”—to impart greater sanctity and meaning to it by our actions.

(Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch)

Just as a bride comes to her groom beautiful, bejeweled and perfumed, so does the Shabbat come to the people of Israel... Just as the groom dresses in his finest raiment to receive his bride, so does the Jew receive the Shabbat. Just as a groom is pampered and absolved from working all his nuptial days, so is the Jew on Shabbat.

(Midrash)

Although the construction of the Sanctuary is an important and sacred task, God makes it clear that His commandment to rest on the Sabbath takes priority over this worthy goal.

We also may be working toward worthwhile achievements (and even those that are for the purpose of serving the Lord), but we must remember that God prefers us to put them on hold for a day in order to keep the Shabbat holy.

Resting and being refreshed on the seventh day Sabbath is a special sign of our covenantal relationship with the Almighty God.

It is a testimony that He is the Creator. And just as He created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, so are we to work for six days and rest on the seventh.

“It will be a sign between Me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.” **Exodus 31:17**

Exodus 31:18

¹⁸ And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

AND HE GAVE TO MOSES, WHEN HE HAD CONCLUDED (31:18)

The Sages note the similarity of the Hebrew word *kechaloto*—“when he had concluded”—with the word *d kekallato*, “as his bride.” The Sealing of a Wedding Covenant, from the peoples “I Do” (⁷ So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. ⁸ All the people answered together and said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do.” And Moses reported the words of the people to the Lord. **Exodus 19:7-8**), to God’s finger written Covenant stone tablets, and agreement to:

The Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ⁴ ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ **Exodus 19:3-6**

AND HE GAVE TO MOSES, WHEN HE HAD CONCLUDED SPEAKING TO HIM UPON MOUNT SINAI, TWO TABLETS OF THE TESTIMONY (31:18)

This means that when G-d handed the Tablets to Moses, the people had already made the Golden Calf! Thus the Midrash says: It is usual for an earthly king to bestow gifts on his subjects and furnish supplies for them, as long as they are loyal to him, being then obliged to support them; but as soon as they rebel against him, G-d forbid, he has no obligation whatsoever towards them, and he immediately cuts off their supplies as a penalty for denying his royal authority. With G-d, however, it is not so; for while they were busy provoking Him to anger below, He was occupied in heaven with bestowing upon them a Torah of life...

(Midrash Rabbah)

Exodus 32:1

The Golden Calf

32 When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, “Up, make us gods who shall go before us. 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.”

WHEN THE PEOPLE SAW THAT MOSES DELAYED TO COME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN (32:1)

When Moses ascended the mountain, he said to them: After forty days, in the first six hours of the day, I shall return. They thought that the day of his ascent should be counted as one of the forty, while he meant forty full, 24- hour days. In truth, the day of his ascent—Sivan 7 (*Feast of Weeks/Pentecost Sivan 6-7*)—should not have been counted, since it did not include its previous night, meaning that the forty days ended on Tammuz 17.

On the 16th of Tammuz Satan came and filled the world with darkness and confusion. Said he to them: “Where is your teacher Moses?” “He has ascended on high,” they answered him. “The sixth hour has come,” said he to them, but they disregarded him. “He is dead”—but they disregarded him. So Satan showed them a vision of Moses’ bier. This is what they said to Aaron, “For this man Moses, who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.”

(Rashi; Talmud, Shabbat 89a)

On 7 Sivan, Moses went up onto the mountain . . . On 17 Tammuz, the tablets were broken. On the 18th, he burned the [Golden] Calf and judged the transgressors. On the 19th, he went up for forty days and pleaded for mercy. On 1 Elul, he went up to receive the second tablets, and was there for forty days. On 10 Tishrei, G-d restored His goodwill with the Jewish people gladly and wholeheartedly, saying to Moses, “I have forgiven, as you ask,” and gave him the Second Tablets.

Rashi, *Exodus 32:1* and 33:11
https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/2508/jewish/The-120-Day-Version.htm

Read Act 1 & 2 – Fulfillment of the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost – Testimony of God’s Second Chance

Exodus 32:2-29

² So Aaron said to them, “Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” ³ So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. ⁴ And he received the gold from their

hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden¹¹ calf. And they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!”⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord.”⁶ And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

⁷ And the Lord said to Moses, “Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.”⁸ They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’”⁹ And the Lord said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people.”¹⁰ Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you.”

¹¹ But Moses implored the Lord his God and said, “O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?”¹² Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people.”¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.’”¹⁴ And the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.

¹⁵ Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets that were written on both sides; on the front and on the back they were written.¹⁶ The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.¹⁷ When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “There is a noise of war in the camp.”¹⁸ But he said, “It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing that I hear.”¹⁹ And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.²⁰ **He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it.**

²¹ And Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?”²² And Aaron said, “Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil.”²³ For they said to me, ‘Make us gods who shall go before us. 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.’”²⁴ So I said to them, ‘Let any who have gold take it off.’ So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.”

²⁵ And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies),²⁶ then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, “Who is on the Lord's side? Come to me.” And all the sons of Levi gathered around him.²⁷ And he said to them, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.’”²⁸ And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell.²⁹ And Moses said, “Today you have been ordained for the service of the Lord, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day.”

Standing in the Gap

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said to him: 'Come, make us a god who shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.'" (*Exodus 32:1*)

While Moses is on Mount Sinai receiving God's instruction, the people become impatient for his return and demand that Aaron make them a god they can see.

Aaron gives in to the pressure and fashions a golden calf, proclaiming the idol as their god: "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." (*Exodus 32:4*)

When God sees the people worshipping a golden calf, **He threatens to destroy the nation of Israel and to start all over again with Moses.**

"‘I have seen these people,’ the Lord said to Moses, ‘and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave Me alone so that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.’" (*Exodus 32:9–10*)

Instead of accepting God's offer to make him the beginning of a great nation, Moses stands in the gap and intercedes on behalf of the people of Israel.

We see in this Parasha that even though Moses prays for the people, he is so angry when he comes down from the mountain and witnesses their idolatry that he smashes the tablets of testimony that God had engraved with His own hand.

Moses then destroys the Golden Calf, and the primary instigators to this idolatry are put to death.

Although God relents from destroying Israel entirely, their sin is not without consequences — 3,000 men fall under the sword of judgment that day. Amazingly enough, on Shavuot (Pentecost), which commemorates the giving of the Torah, God poured out His Ruach (Spirit) in Jerusalem soon after the resurrection of Yeshua (Jesus) and the exact same number were saved!

"So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls." (*Acts 2:41*)

His pouring out of God's Ruach underscores the fact that Yeshua did not come to condemn us but to save us. There is hope for us yet. We have been given the Spirit of God to bring us into life, not death, by leading and guiding us into all truth.

Exodus 32:30-34:7

³⁰ The next day Moses said to the people, “You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” ³¹ So Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. ³² But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.” ³³ But the Lord said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book. ³⁴ But now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.”

³⁵ Then the Lord sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf, the one that Aaron made.

The Command to Leave Sinai

³³ The Lord said to Moses, “Depart; go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your offspring I will give it.’ ² I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ³ Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.”

⁴ When the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. ⁵ For the Lord had said to Moses, “Say to the people of Israel, ‘You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you.’” ⁶ Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward.

The Tent of Meeting

⁷ Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. ⁸ Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up, and each would stand at his tent door, and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. ⁹ When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord^[a] would speak with Moses. ¹⁰ And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door. ¹¹ Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

Moses' Intercession

¹² Moses said to the Lord, “See, you say to me, ‘Bring up this people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.’ ¹³ Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.” ¹⁴ And he said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” ¹⁵ And he said to him, “If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. ¹⁶ For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?”

¹⁷ And the Lord said to Moses, “This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.” ¹⁸ Moses said, “Please show me your glory.” ¹⁹ And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The Lord.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.” ²⁰ But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.” ²¹ And the Lord said, “Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, ²² and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³ Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen.”

Moses Makes New Tablets

³⁴ The Lord said to Moses, “Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. ² Be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me on the top of the mountain. ³ No one shall come up with you, and let no one be seen throughout all the mountain. Let no flocks or herds graze opposite that mountain.” ⁴ So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first. And he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand two tablets of stone. ⁵ The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. ⁶ The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands,^[b] forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.”

God Gives Second Chances

Like the Israelites, some of us might go through periods of our lives where we descend into sin or fall away from the Lord, but **God promises the hope of restoration and renewal if we will agree to come back into His presence in repentance to find forgiveness.**

This, perhaps, is represented by God calling Moses to come back up the mountain to receive a second set of tablets, even though Moses destroyed the first set in a rage.

“Now the Lord said to Moses, ‘Cut out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered.’” (*Exodus 34:1*)

God is so good! He passed in front of Moses and proclaimed to him His Divine character:

“The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness [**chesed** / covenant loyalty] and truth; who keeps lovingkindness [**chesed**] for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin.” (*Exodus 34:6–7*)

The more we become conformed and transformed into the image and likeness of God, in whose image we have been created, the more we will demonstrate these wonderful qualities of His chesed love, mercy, grace, patience, long-suffering, goodness, and truth. We will become less judgmental and more merciful; we will criticize less and intercede more.

Oh, how we long to be changed — to be more like Him. Coming into covenant with God is not about just following the rules; it is about having a deep, abiding, intimate relationship with a loving God.

Exodus 34:8-9

⁸ And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. ⁹ And he said, “If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.”

Battle for the Eternal Covenant with Israel

Today, there is a portion of the Christian Church that believes in the doctrine of **replacement theology**, a fallacious teaching that contends God is no longer in covenant with the Jewish People — that He has disowned them and has replaced them with the Church.

Those who believe they are now God’s new Israel display an arrogance that starkly contrasts Moses’ humility — a man who could have replaced Israel but, instead, prayed for their survival.

The apostle Paul warned the church against the conceit of non-Jews in the family tree of God: “Do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.” (*Romans 11:18*)

Rather than replacing the tree, Gentile Believers are grafted in as branches to an ancient tree whose root is still Jewish.

It is quite impossible that God has substituted another people for His Chosen because He has promised that He will never forsake or abandon His people Israel:

“For the Lord will not abandon His people, nor will He forsake His inheritance.” (*Psalms 94:14*)

Exodus 34:10-35

The Covenant Renewed

¹⁰ And he said, “Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you. ¹¹ “Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ¹² Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. ¹³ **You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim** ¹⁴ **(for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God)**, ¹⁵ lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, ¹⁶ and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods. ¹⁷ “You shall not make for yourself any gods of cast metal.

¹⁸ “You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month Abib, for in the month Abib you came out from Egypt. ¹⁹ All that open the womb are mine, all your male^[i] livestock, the firstborn of cow and sheep. ²⁰ The firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem. **And none shall appear before me empty-handed.** ²¹ “Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest. In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest. ²² **You shall observe the Feast of Weeks, the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year’s end.** ²³ **Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel.** ²⁴ For I will cast out nations before you and enlarge your borders; no one shall covet your land, when you go up to appear before the Lord your God three times in the year. ²⁵ “You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with anything leavened, or let the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover remain until the morning. ²⁶ The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of the Lord your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.”

²⁷ **And the Lord said to Moses, “Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.”** ²⁸ **So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.**^[ii]

The Shining Face of Moses

²⁹ When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.^[k] ³⁰ Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹ But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. ³² Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. ³³ And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.

³⁴ Whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, ³⁵ the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

Next Weeks Reading:

Week 22: Vayakhel (And He Assembled) - Pekudei (Accountings Of) - Exodus 35:1–40:38
1 Kings 7:40–8:21; Mark 6:14–29; John 6:1–71; Numbers 19:1–22; Ezekiel 36:16–38