



Shaqah

*“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”
Colossians 2:8*

As we continue our overview of the book of Exodus, we begin with the first verse of Exodus chapter 25 where Moses has come before the direct presence of God, and will stay for forty days and nights receiving the Law of God! God begins with the instructions for how to build the tabernacle, which is the place where He will dwell in the midst of Israel. Taking only from those people who have a heart to give to this work, Moses is to gather from Israel an offering of those things necessary to complete the tabernacle's construction and maintenance.

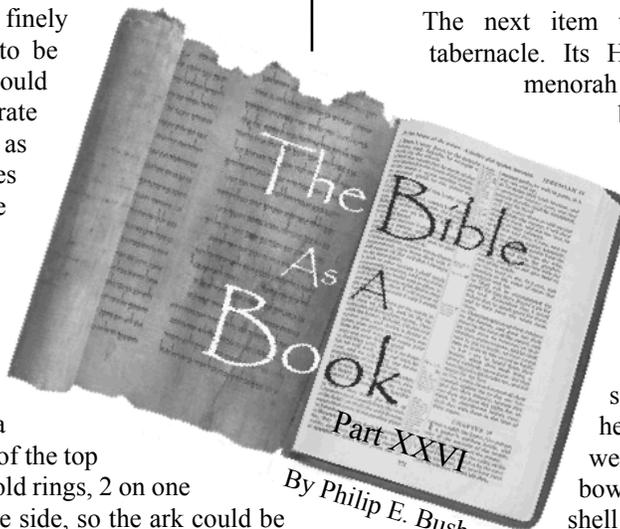
God gives Moses, not a finely detailed description of the things to be made but shows him what they should look like, and Moses is to orchestrate the building of each item to be just as he sees them. The first item Moses would be shown was the Ark of the Covenant. This was a box structure. It was to be a cubit and a half tall, of the same depth, and a full cubit greater in width. The structure was to be made of shittim wood and covered inside and out with pure gold. There was also to be a crown of gold around the perimeter of the top of the box. Then there was to be 4 gold rings, 2 on one side of the ark and 2 on the opposite side, so the ark could be carried by placing poles, or “staves,” through these rings, and thus not having to touch the ark directly. The 2 staves were to be of shittim wood and covered fully by gold. They were not to be removed from the ark, but left in place at all times. The lid was to be a throne, called the Mercy Seat, which was to cover the entire width and breadth of the ark, as it would be held in place by the gold crown. On both ends of the Mercy Seat there was to be a cherub, both made of gold. These cherubims were to look back across the Mercy Seat toward each other, and their wings were to create a canopy that covered the seat. When completed, Moses was to put the Law God was to give him inside this ark and put the lid in place. Between this Mercy Seat and the canopy of the cherubims' wings, God's presence would reside among Israel and commune with them.

Next, Moses was instructed to make a table, also constructed of shittim wood and covered with pure gold. It was

to be 2 cubits long, 1 deep, and a cubit and a half high. It was to have a rim around the edge, making the table top a bit like a tray. On top of this rim there was to be a crown, likely very much like the ark's, and all this was to be made of gold. Also like the ark, this table was to have 4 gold rings attached at the legs, so it too could be carried with shittim staves covered with gold. This table would have specific dishes - such as spoons and bowls - to put across the table's top, all made of gold; and on this table there was to continually be bread placed before God, called shewbread.

The next item was to provide light inside the tabernacle. Its Hebrew name is “Menorah.” This menorah would have a center shaft and six branches, or what could be described as three U-shaped shafts attached to the center. This is because two branches were to reach out on opposite sides of the center, creating three sets of branches in descending order down the center. However, all six ends were to extend upward so all seven lights could set at the same height. The six ends of the branches were to be topped with three decorative bowls made in the likeness of an almond shell or husk, one nestled inside the next form a stack. The top bowl would have a bulb inside, which created the actual lamp, and on top of that, a flower where the wick would come out of the center. The center shaft would be the same but with four bowls, then a bulb and flower like the others. The three sets of branches would also come out of the center, each resting on a bulb in the center shaft. The entire menorah was to be made of one piece, all of gold. The common elements to go along with such a lamp - such as snuffers and tongs - were also to be made of gold. The seven lamps would be lit using fine olive oil, which Israel was to provide for the priests on a regular basis. The lights were to never be allowed to go out day or night, giving light to the inside of the tabernacle, and show Israel's dedication to maintaining the ways of God on the earth!

The structure of the tabernacle is laid out next. Three sides of the tabernacle, north, south, and west were to be made



By Philip E. Busby



of shittim wood boards a cubit and a half wide, 10 cubits in length and covered with gold. These boards were made to stand up by carving tenons out of the bottom, which were placed in silver footings or sockets, two per board. These were then placed side by side to form a wall. Descending each board on the north, south, and west was to be 5 rings made of gold. To tie the boards together, horizontal bars, also covered in gold, were placed through these rings. The middle of the 5 was to specifically be one solid rod that reached from one end to the other. There were also two special boards placed as part of the western wall to serve as corner posts and hold the three walls together into one structure.

Over this was to be placed a covering of woven linen, the pattern of which consisted of three colors: blue, purple, and scarlet. They were also to have the image of cherubims on them. This would create the visible ceiling inside the tabernacle. This covering was to be made of 10 pieces of the same size, seamed together in groups of 5, and then the two groups specifically clasped together with 50 gold taches, which are buckles or hooks of a kind, connecting 50 loops of blue at the edge of each set. Now, the boards made the outside dimensions of the the tabernacle 10 cubits high, its width 12 and its length 30, plus the thickness of the boards on the west side. This linen covering was 28 cubits wide and 40 cubits long when bound altogether. Starting it at the front edge of the tabernacle would put the golden taches two thirds of the way back from the front of the structure, and leave almost 10 cubits to hang over the back. On the north and south it would fall 2 cubits short of touching the ground.

The next covering to go over the linen was made of goat's hair. This would insulate the tabernacle. It was to be made of 11 pieces of the same size, tied together in one group of 5 and one group of 6. These two groups would overlap each other one full piece, or 4 cubits, and be clasped together using 50 brass taches through loops. The group of 5 would be placed at the front edge of the tabernacle and the edge of the group of 6 would be clasped at the seam of five's last piece, putting these taches closer to the front of the tabernacle. This covering would be 30 cubits wide and 40 cubits long when bound altogether. This covering would drape over the back (or western side) close to 10 cubits. The north and south sides would come within a cubit of the ground. Once these two coverings were in place, this entire structure was to be tented with two more waterproof protective coverings. The inside layer of this tent was to be of rams' skins dyed red, and the top layer was to be made of badger skins.

The next element would be a vail matching the width and height of the inside of the structure. It was to be placed two thirds back from the front, just beneath the golden taches on the linen covering that made the interior ceiling. This would separate the Holy Place in the front of the tabernacle, where the table of shewbread would set on the north side and the menorah directly across on the south, from the most Holy Place in the back of the tabernacle, where the ark was to be placed. This vail was to be made much like the linen covering, which means it would have appeared to match the ceiling in many ways. The vail was to be of fine linen using the colors blue, purple, and scarlet, with the image of cherubims on it. It would be held up by gold hooks on 4 pillars of shittim wood covered with gold,

which were to be set in silver bases. The front (or eastern side of the tabernacle) would have a covering, or door, again made of linen and matching the colors of the vail and ceiling. It was to be held up by golden hooks on 5 pillars of shittim wood covered in gold, but these would be set in brass bases.

From here, we move to the outside of the tabernacle and see the instructions for building the altar of sacrifice. The base structure was to be made of shittim wood. Its overall width and depth was to be 5 cubits and its height 3. At each of the top four corners there was to be an angular projection or "horn," and each of these were to be of the same size and design. This entire structure was to be covered in brass, and down inside there was to be brass mesh work. Attached to this and protruding to the outside edges of the altar, was to be the 4 brass rings for staves to carry it. These staves were to be covered in brass, and all the elements to go with this altar - such as pans for fire and ash, shovels, fleshhooks, basins and the like - were also to be of brass.

The tabernacle was to consist of a courtyard as well. This courtyard would be created using pillars and linen curtains. The pillars and their bases were to be of brass, and the hooks on the pillars and the rods that ran between them to hold the curtains, as well as any other tie downs, were all to be silver. All ground stakes for tie downs were to be brass as well as all other vessels made for general use in the tabernacle complex. The north and south sides of the courtyard were to be a 100 cubits consisting of 20 pillars with curtains. The west and east were to be 50 cubits. The west 10 pillars with curtains, and the east would have 3 pillars with curtains coming toward the center from both corners and covering 15 cubits each. This would leave a 20 cubit opening in the middle for the gateway of the courtyard, and the gateway would be a curtain of blue, purple, and scarlet, hung on 4 pillars. They were to be careful that all courtyard pillar lines were straight and everything squared.

Next, Moses was told that his brother Aaron along with Aaron's sons were to serve as priests, and in this service they were to wear special clothing crafted by those in Israel whom God had prepared to do the work and do it well. The outermost garment was an ephod, which is two pieces of cloth, one going down a person's front and the other down the back, the tops of which are connected on both sides at the shoulders. A matching girdle was to go with this, which was a very wide cloth belt tied around the waist. Both these items were to be made of fine linen using the familiar colors of blue, purple, and scarlet, with gold also woven in. Connected to the ephod, where it comes together at the shoulders, each side was to have a gold socket, each of which would hold an onyx stone. Using the finest techniques available, these stones were to have engraved on them the names of Israel's sons in order of their birth. Six names were to be on one stone and six on the other. Wearing these, the priest would continually bear upward upon his shoulders the names of the tribes of Israel before God, during all his service in the tabernacle.

Along with these there would be a square breastplate made in the same fashion and colors as the ephod itself. It would hold four rows of three stones each, all precious, none alike, and all set in gold. Each one of these stones would be engraved with a singular name of one of the tribes of Israel. The breastplate would be attached by gold rings and chains to the settings of the

What About Tithing?

Part I

From Living Springs' Questions and Answers

"I am a Jewish believer in Messiah Jesus. For years I've given tithes to the church(es) I was attending. I have left the church and withdrew my name on the membership list. Now, about tithing; I was told by another Jewish believer that it is not required in the New testament as it was in the old testament. Can you clarify this with scripture please?"

In your question you use the word "required," and that word is really the key word in many discussions about tithing because that is the question most people struggle with. "Is there a requirement for me to tithe?" Now, just to be clear, asking this does not automatically put a person on the negative side of the subject, which is that people are always looking to do the minimum they can get away with. It's also about the positive side where people want to make sure they are doing at least what they should! Of course, because we are talking about requirements, this question is also very appropriately coupled with the second tithing question many people have, which is, where should I give my tithe?

In this answer, we will attempt to look primarily at the question of requirement; but in doing that, we will likely touch many times on the same information needed to discuss the, "Where should I tithe?" question. We will also look at requirement from the other key aspect pointed out in this question, which is the issue of Old versus New Testament. In truth, that's a perfect way to look at the tithing issue; because to understand the subject of tithing from a true Biblical perspective, we must be fairly well acquainted with the Bible as a whole and the history it teaches us. Now, if we take the Bible as a whole, we should come to understand there is no real Old versus New Testament issues. I have written quite a bit on this subject in the series titled "The Bible As A Book." However, the short-hand answer comes directly from Jesus Himself in the New Testament. There are many arguments which people claim to be New versus Old Testament on the basis they feel there is a "New Testament Church." Claiming to be followers of Jesus, people will act in many of the same ways people act when they follow a cult leader. Instead of seeing Jesus' work as a continuance of what was going on in the Old Testament, they argue as if Jesus was starting something totally new and/or taking us down a path no one has ever walked before!

This is very disturbing and it has a lot to do with why, especially in the later centuries after Christ, a great many of God's chosen people did not and do not accept Jesus for Who He really is. Many who claim to believe in Jesus will make their theological arguments on the basis that when Jesus came He changed all kinds of things. This is the argument your friend is making in saying tithing is not required in the New Testament as it was in the Old. However, tithing is only one of many very important items people will use this argument for. The Sabbath is another big example, and there are many minor things all

through the church which simply end up being misunderstood because of this kind of false teaching!

People who believe this way point to those times when Jesus talked about the things which were said of old, and then expounded upon them. Such as the time He told us that looking at a woman to lust after her is committing adultery in your heart, when the Law simply says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Exodus 20:14 People like to say these are examples of Jesus re-emphasizing certain things, even making them stronger and adding things at times, while at the same time leaving other things in the Law untouched altogether. On this basis, they teach that those things Jesus did not (at least in their minds) re-emphasize or touch on, should be seen as unimportant or no longer a commandment at all. This teaching is what leads people down the path of the thinking which says, there was the formation of a New Testament church, or at least new teaching in general, which took the place of what God had done and given in the Old Testament. The extreme end of this thinking is the idea that the "church" somehow took the place of the Jewish people as God's chosen nation. All this is foolishness, and causes many to see the Bible in a very wrong way!

Unfortunately, people who want this thinking to be true will often scrutinize a great deal of things said in the New Testament, in an attempt to cloud the issue. However, if they really believe so simple a thing as the idea that just because Jesus did not specifically repeat a commandment means it no longer has force, they should easily accept that they are wrong in their thinking by simply looking at a couple of verses in one of the very chapters of the New Testament which they like to talk about. In Matthew chapter 5 we find Jesus talking about some of the issues where He says, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time,..." However, in verses 17-20 Jesus tells us why He is going to talk about some of the commandments as He does, by making it clear from what perspective we should see what He is about to say! He says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The first thing Jesus says here is very point-blank. He did not come to destroy the Law and/or the prophets! This means the idea of people believing Jesus, or the New Testament in general, wiped the slate clean in some way or ways, is a direct violation of Jesus' own words! Now, people will point to the

next part of the verse where Jesus says He is come to “fulfill,” and argue that He did fulfill the Law and that is what wiped the slate clean. However, that is taking the second part of the sentence out of the context created by the very first part of the sentence. If you're going to fractionalize the things people say that badly, you can make an argument for just about anything you want. The truth is, sometimes it's hard to say something or talk about a subject in a way people will understand without them misconstruing what you're saying as just the opposite of what you intend to convey. The only way to combat this is to start off with words which make certain facts clear and foundational to what you are about to say. This is what Jesus was doing. He is pointing out that the teaching He is about to give is specifically not intended to replace the Law, but to serve as examples of the kind of righteous living God's commandments have always attempted to lead us into!

If Jesus had said, “I am here to fulfill the Law,” you can see how someone might take it just the way some people want to interpret it. However, that is not what He said. He led the statement about His work being to fulfill the Law, by further emphasizing that His work was not intended to destroy the Law or the prophets! Jesus emphasizes the point that His work is not intended to destroy, dismantle, or change the Law and prophets, by going on to inform us not one small letter of the Law will pass until heaven and earth pass. This is a statement which confirms to us the written Law, just as we know it, will be with us as long as we are walking on this planet.

Some will say the end of this sentence tells us Jesus was saying no piece of the Law will pass as long as the earth remains and the entire Law is unfulfilled, meaning that either of these events will change everything. However, this is looking at it the way you want to, instead of for what is actually said. Again, Jesus was saying every part of the Law, no matter how small a piece, will remain in full force and unchanged until the time we are taken out of this world, and all humanity is gathered for the purpose of judgment and the desire of God to take all those who seek Him to a new place which Jesus said He was leaving this earth to prepare! (Rev. 20:11-21:5, John 14:1-3) The reason the sentence ends with the statement “...till all be fulfilled.” is because it will not be until this heaven and earth have passed away, and we are in that new heaven and new earth with a new Jerusalem, that all the Law will be fulfilled. You cannot have one without the other. That's the point of the statement!

In the next part of what Jesus said, He goes on to directly warn against not only breaking even what might be considered small commandments, but especially teaching others to do the same. Teaching others to break the commandments of God is exactly what is being done by those who tell you that the New Testament has done away with the Old, or at least part of the Old Testament, and/or the Law! This is why Jesus emphasizes the point here that He disapproves of the religious, non-heart-felt ways the Scribes and Pharisees go about their so-called attempt to follow the laws of righteousness. Scribes and Pharisees were to be the teachers of others, but Jesus instructs that our attempt to live our lives right before God must exceed what the Scribes and Pharisees have accomplished through their practices. If we want to make it to heaven, we must

understand it can't be done by following just what we call the letter of the Law, which is to religiously complete every ceremony, even if we do it down to the smallest arguable degree. If we are going to make it to heaven, it is going to take a real relationship with God which respects what the Law is trying to accomplish in our lives!

This point takes us directly to that New Testament scripture where Jesus does, in fact, tell us tithing is still in effect. In Matthew 23:23 Jesus says, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” Anytime the word “Woe” is used, it is a very bad thing, because it basically means the trouble you're in is beyond the ability of words to do it justice. Jesus says the Scribes and Pharisees are in this kind of trouble, not because they pay tithes down to the increase of their herb gardens, but because even after becoming that religious in tithing practices, they don't care very much about things God cares more about than their herbs! Jesus does not say here that they shouldn't care about giving tithes from their smallest increase which many people may never think to do. What Jesus is pointing out is that by following God's Law, long before they ever came to those thoughts, they should have clearly learned to care greatly about things which have a greater impact on righteous living such as judgment, mercy, and faith!

In these words of Jesus, we see not just that tithing is still important through Jesus telling them they should not leave the tithing undone, but we also see that following the letter of the Law down to the smallest degree is not the way to be assured you are in the right. As we read the words of Jesus, we should not become confused into thinking Jesus was doing away with the Law by teaching things differently than the Scribes and Pharisees. What we should see is the contrast between how Jesus taught the Law compared to how the Scribes and Pharisees did it. In seeing this, we can correct our focus. The Scribes and Pharisees were talking to people about tithing out of their herb gardens, and getting onto people for wearing shoes on the Sabbath or picking up their children, because it was doing work. Jesus' teachings on the Law did not focus on sweating the little things which most people would never see any practical benefit from following. Jesus was teaching things which had everyday application to why people fall into sin, such as the instruction that a man should not just refrain himself from doing the physical act of adultery, a man should also refrain from even looking at a woman for the purpose of lusting after her. This is because doing so is the same activity inside your mind, which is not only directly damaging to your walk with God, but it is the precursor to doing the physical act! Living in righteousness is about having a relationship with God and doing what you do because of your love and desire to be with God, which is the greatest commandment; and loving your neighbor, which is the second greatest. (Matt. 22:35-40) It is from this perspective that we should understand why the Law, and the nation God established to hold it, even exists!

Everyone who has even the most basic handle on the Bible's words, should know one of the very first facts we need in order to truly tackle the requirement issue of this question,

Following the Biblical Stream:

By Philip E. Busby

In our last segment, we took a look at the information in chapter 10 that shows us where the families of the three sons of Noah went after the confounding of the language took place, and the people left the tower and city which became known as Babel. In doing this, we looked at some of the names of the post-flood descendants and the places that help us understand generally from whom the original nations of the world came. All this information in chapter 10 shows us how the families were insistent on a path contrary to God's perfect will for man. However, this path is one that God would interact with. We see this in that when the path at first would have kept all the people of the world under one general form of government and religion, God put an end to that specific problem by confounding language. The people separated, but only into smaller groups who still held on to the ideas started at the tower, and formed nations! What we do not see is God putting an end to nations, because it was not the full destructive force a one world government would have been.

This is why we see what we see next. As we move from the story of the tower, the confounding, and the separation of the families across the earth to various regions, we see the Bible narrative begin to focus down again from all of humanity to a more specific group. After talking in chapter 10 and at the start of 11 about an ever widening story of human development and genealogy, we again start down a path of genealogy, beginning in chapter 11 verse 10, that focuses down on a specific family. In fact, this path, much like the one we followed from Adam through Seth down to Noah, will take us to another specific individual. After following the genealogy down to that one man, we will continue looking at the happenings of his life, the life of a specific son, and eventually a grandson. This story will occupy far more space in the book of Genesis than anything we have covered so far. Thus, it serves a great purpose to pause here and once again absorb the facts as to why this happens.

It is at this point the story of mankind begins to become a bit more complicated than it once was, while being in many ways very solidified. We have moved through the story that tells us the truths of how God created us to be, not the least of which is the fact He created us to be individuals. We have seen how individuals chose to gather in groups. At first there were two. One group served God and one did not! From there we see how, in spite of the drastic difference there would be between two such groups, humans still melded into one large group where only a handful of people here and there continued to seek and serve God. We then see how that process continues to trend down, until there was only one man left who found grace in the eyes of The Lord. (Gen. 6:7-8)

All this was a development process that showed us how a totally freewilled being would act and react to life. What we see on this side of the flood is a clear picture of how much

this process was and is the fundamental thought patterns of mankind, as man immediately became concerned there would be separation and individual development. (Gen. 11:4) This story is where we see man is no longer in a developmental stage on the earth, but following a pattern. Now, when looking at the Bible's story, one might be tempted to think there is a break at the flood where God turned from individuals, to looking more at humanity as a whole. While this is off base, it comes from a truth that there does emerge a greater defined secondary path of God dealing with humanity as a whole. While the story shows us only God's dealings with individuals before the flood, the story of the flood, specifically the grievance against mankind which God explains to Noah, shows us God must at times take action to deal with mankind as a group. To truly understand the Bible, we should not see this as a shift in God's thinking in any way. I say this because there is a belief out there, especially in many church people's minds, that God shifted or maybe always was about humanity as a group instead of humans as individuals. This is where ridiculous arguments, such as, "The church replaced the nation of Israel as God's chosen people." come from. It is also where thinking is derived such as the thought God had ordained land divisions for the families of Ham, Shem, and Japheth, and the fact they did not go to them is why God confounded man's language. We must be careful to understand the herd mentality comes not from how God created us to be, or how He intended us to interact, but from the fleshly thought patterns of men living only for the physical world of now!

Because this is how man has chosen to live, God must interact with the herd mentality. What we see is not God declaring through His actions He has a divine purpose for man as a group, and that is what He is working on, but that God is ensuring the herd does not destroy the individual's chance at individuality! We have talked quite a bit about this idea throughout the conversations about the Tower of Babel, but understand that this is still what is going on as we move forward. When the genealogy of the earlier chapters of Genesis took us down to a man named Noah, it truly was because Noah was the only righteous man left on the earth. God cared deeply about Noah, but Noah had to take on a task that had to do with all mankind. This is a foundational principle we must all understand! God wants each individual to be what He created us to be. Where that goes and what it becomes is something we see in this lifetime from a very inhibited viewpoint. (I Cor. 13:12) This is because sin very much inhibits our progress along this path, and ultimately there is no way for us to truly be free to accomplish what this is all about in the here and now. This is why God taking us away from the Tree of Life was a blessing, not a curse as we often think of it. Jesus completed the reason this is true by showing us we can have a new life, where growing into what God wants us to be can be accomplished without hindrance.

Along with this, there is another truth God is trying to show us, and that is the fact there would be no sense in allowing this world to stand if there was no way for any individual living in it to find and choose to put their feet on God's intended path for their life. Thus, God begins to interact with man in a way He did not right at the start, and even uses those who follow Him in this work. This was not to change what He wanted or expects from individuals, but to preserve it! However, what this gives us is two distinct perspectives of God's work throughout the Biblical story line, especially from this point on. As we come down to the next individual the Bible focuses on, it will not be because he is the only righteous man on the earth, as was the case with Noah. The story does not focus on him because the end of all flesh had once again come before God. However, like Noah, the focus does come down to him because he would be the man God would choose to use in order to slow mankind's decline to what it came to in the days of Noah, and ensure God's intended purpose for man's existence would never be lost on the earth!

Without taking from mankind that ever crucial free will that God made the fundamental part of our creation, God would interact on a constant basis to hinder man's total corruption. God had said to Noah He would never again destroy the earth like He had done with the flood. (Gen. 8:20-22, 9:8-17) In truth, what God said was man was not worth that kind of continual destruction of everything else He had created! In order to fulfill this promise and still keep this creation from needing to be destroyed very quickly, God would interact with mankind as a whole on a continual basis. This would start by confounding man's language and ensuring mankind would never again totally meld into one corrupt group. As nations formed on the earth, we see by looking at later Biblical information that what God had done through the confounding would, in fact, ensure a one world government, at least in the way it is traditionally looked at as being, such as what was going on at the tower and later attempts of empires such as the Babylonians, Romans, etc., were never going to accomplish their ultimate goal. This then became a solidified part of the story of mankind, whether man accepted it or not; and he certainly has not! As we have discussed, this did/does not mean man was/is not going to try to put these elements into play in the ways he could/can; and that is why we have a beast in Revelation that not only has seven heads but is also described as one which is and is not! (Rev. 13:1-4, 17:8) The beast will never exist as it did at the tower. The heads he grew in an attempt to do it again show it won't work; and yet man has not given up on the idea of centralized power and control, even continuing to believe it is, or would be, the pentacle of human achievement. This is why we see phenomena such as a one world monetary system. This is the beast being a beast, without it being the beast it was in the days of the Assyrians, etc.

The basis of all this, as we talked some about last time, is the formation of nations. Now, this brings us into what could be a very long discussion about the ins and outs of what man has done wrong; but the end of it all is that man shows his desire to live in a form of centralized government power and planning on at least the levels he can make it "work." Humans today simply can not figure out what one would do if there was not a governing power to orchestrate at least some of the things in our

world, not the least of these things being money! This is because we simply have taken on this lifestyle for so long, while turning our back on God so significantly, we just don't know what other way there could be. In another way the beast is not yet is: there is the truth it is hard to live an independent life without at least some governing entity protecting us from the other entities that exist. This is what the prophet Habakkuk was driving at in Habakkuk chapter 1 verse 14 when he asks of God, "And makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them?" Well, the answer to that question is, in fact, yes, God did make man in that respect as the fish of the sea, in that he had no ruler over him. One can argue God was/is man's ruler; and this is ultimately true, but God does not come down to correct every problem and punish every mistake. This is why the Bible reminds us over and over that all men will stand before God for judgment, and those who do wrong should not believe they go unseen by God. The fact we need to be reminded of this at all points and times shows God is not as the pagan believes. The One True God does not come down on every occasion and punish us in some form for the wrong we have done. Crops do not fail because we must have angered God in some way. Our car does not break down because we have done something wrong against God. People like to say, "Everything happens for a purpose." However, this is a misunderstanding which comes close to, if not directly violates, the third commandment of the ten. One of the main points of not taking the name of The Lord our God in vain is people tend to blame God for the "wrong" they feel they have suffered. To say all things happen for a purpose, is to say even the bad things which happen to us are orchestrated by God, at least in an overall way. It is to say there is nothing truly bad that happens, because everything has a good purpose or outcome in some way, or eventually. This is why people like to say, "What does not kill you makes you stronger!" Well, this might give your average person who has rejected God in their life a reason to get out of bed in the morning; but, again, we should be careful not to mix pagan theology with the truth!

All things don't happen for a purpose, but all things do happen because of some choice that is made. The reason your thumb got smashed by a hammer is not because you have wronged God in some way or because there is some great lesson to be learned by it, but because you chose to use a tool, made a mistake and/or suffered some malfunction while using that tool, and your thumb happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time - as so often they are! One could choose to curse God because God did not make our thumb indestructible, or because He created the nerve endings which tell our brain the pain is there; but this is just being disrespectful of God for the general way He made us to live in this life. In truth, this is most often what people are doing in taking the name of God in vain; and this kind of thinking grows into the much larger reality of people challenging such things as the fact: in the beginning He made them male and female, (Gen. 1:27) which is talked about specifically in both the fifth and seventh commandments! Yes, God will act under many circumstances, but not very often are those circumstances so specific as people like to believe, especially if we, as individuals are not directly choosing to seek God. People may like to believe everything is making them stronger because it did not kill them, but the truth is, the wages of sin is and always will be death! (Rom. 6:23) God cares so

much about the individual's right to live as they choose, He acts mostly in those large ways that protect our ability to continue living and choosing for ourselves. If we choose to listen to God's voice, all things can work together for good; but this takes a continual walk in faith to be true, and even this is not because God is orchestrating everything that happens to us in some way.

Now, all this is complex and something only God could work out, but this is what led Habakkuk to question the idea of God creating man as the fish with no ruler over them. In a world where there are powerful government entities who oppress people and their freedoms, it can be hard to see how anyone could live without a ruler to at least protect them, especially since God does not act so directly as we'd often like. However, these are the times when we should observe and attempt to learn, if nothing else, the nature of God and what He is doing here, instead of continuing to say the wrong things which contradict such events! When Cain killed his brother Abel, God came down to talk to Cain about the wrong he had done. What Cain shows in one point of that conversation is the truth he understood, in a day long before government entities existed, every man who found him would have the right to punish him for what he had done to his fellow human. (Gen. 4:13-14) God sets a mark on Cain to take care of this, but it shows us the personal individual responsibility for right and wrong that God has placed on every man. Even later when God builds the nation of Israel, He gives them a law, but no king to impose it. God said the people would someday demand a king, and when that day came God did establish a king in Israel. (1 Sam. 8:4-22, 10:17-19) However, what we see in this fact is what was and was not God's perfect plan in spite of what actually took place due to the choices of men. This kind of thing is seen as well in the day the Scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus and asked if it was right for a man to put away his wife for every cause? Their hope was that Jesus would say something they could accuse Him of; for if He said yes, they would jump on the fact He taught love for our fellow man! If he said no, they would go with the idea He was contradicting the Law of Moses. What Jesus told them was - not for every cause, but only for the cause of fornication. This was an answer they did not expect, but they went to their secondary accusation anyway, and asked why then did the Law of Moses allow a bill of divorcement? Jesus' answer? Because of the hardness of man's heart! (Matt. 19:3-9)

There is a truth that is hard for many people to grasp as they serve The Lord - or at the very least they struggle with it - when knowing what the Bible says. It is a truth that adds to the accusation the Bible is full of contradictions. That truth is that there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but those ways lead to death. (Prov. 14:12) We clearly see, if God allows us total freedom and never interacts, we would destroy ourselves very quickly. Thus, God acts to slow this process for mankind as a whole, but not stop it altogether. What we should be clear on is the fact that as God allows us our free will, it does not mean what we choose to do is His will. What God does and His purpose is to preserve and give to the individual who will listen to His voice a chance to hear it! What the Bible tells us is that mankind as a whole will continue on a downhill slide, but individuals who follow God can still climb the upward way! As

God deals with the truths of humanity's choices, it may look like a contradiction. Yes, God allowed for a bill of divorce to be given, but not because that was or is God's expectation for the two people who have agreed to marriage. In society there will always be sin and a need to handle sin's consequences on an earthly level. This because there will always be those who choose not to follow the ways of God in their individual life, but the individual expectation of God is still that we all be righteous!

This is the truth Jesus was trying to emphasize to us. There is the law which is just unto all men, but then there is the righteousness God wants of each of us and that can't be put into a law. This is the truth of what we see following the confounding of language and the redevelopment of man into nations. Again, there are those who believe God wanted man to go out and form into nations or at least take hold of divine land divisions. This is totally wrong! Individuals is what God wanted to see choosing to do what they wanted in going out across the world, but many individuals did not choose to do this. In confounding the language, God did not force every individual to go out as He intended, but He also did not collapse the idea of central planning altogether. He gave individuals a chance to escape the beast the tower was creating. Because man would go out and form into nations - in later times even making attempts at a world empire - God would have to continually deal with the downhill slide man was on as a whole, in order to continually allow individuals the chance to climb back up and be the person He wants us to be! This is the dual path we see in the Bible and the reason it exists. We should not see this as a contradiction, but the hand in hand purpose it is.

This brings us to the verses of scripture where we are told that God actually ordains government. This subject is important to our study because what we are headed into are scriptures that will take us through a genealogy that leads to a Biblical focus on one man and his family, whom God will develop into a nation. The understanding of why God would do such a thing when it is not His perfect will for men to form into nations is that this is the story of God's interaction with the sinful choices man is making, not the perfect will God has for humanity. It was not God's perfect will that He had to destroy the earth with a flood, and after it was done, God said He would never do it again, but this did not stop it from happening once, in order to deal with man's sinful choices! Thus, in the early parts of the Scripture we clearly see God did not establish government over men; yet in much later segments, there seems to be the sentiment of saying government is of God. What we must be careful to do is not reverse what is going on to try and understand. We should not take latter segments of the Bible and God's interaction with later generations of sinful men and automatically assume that means we are living as God intended us to live all along. This understanding is vital to our development into the individuals God wants us to be. Man's sinful downhill slide is what brings us to that end point where there simply is no reason for God to continue to allow man to exist and procreate in this world. Thus, it is very necessary we see the actions of God as having to deal with mankind, not as if mankind is being formed into something God ultimately wants us to cumulatively be, but as the sinful creatures we are!

Again, what God is trying to do is glean from among

all mankind those who will, by their free will, choose Him and His ways. This requires God to reach out into what man does in a way that touches us all, and point those who desire God, back to what He created us to be in the first place! Maybe the most personal way to look at it is to say, the way God deals with society as a whole is different than what is expected out of individuals. Why? Because God is not trying to save society, but He is trying to save individuals! James Madison, one of the forefathers of the United States, stated, "If men were angels, no government would be necessary." If all individuals were good, there would be no need for any earthly power to administer justice. This is why God did not give Israel a king in the beginning. He wanted to show first and foremost it was His will they all follow His Law by their own choosing. If they had followed His Laws going all the way to the top two, which is to ultimately love God with all your being and love your neighbor as yourself, they certainly would not need a ruler to execute judgment, and God had promised to defend them in the world.

This also directly relates to what Jesus said to His disciples one day after the mother of James and John had asked Jesus to put her two sons at His right and left hand in God's Kingdom. Jesus tells the woman the positions were simply not His to give, but His Father's. However, the other disciples couldn't believe such a thing would be asked. As Jesus speaks to His disciples about this, He points out that the Gentiles, or in other words - those living in and among them who were not led by the Law of Moses, had people whom they considered better than the average person. These people were consistently placed as rulers over the rest of the people. This is exactly what happened after the flood as people looked at Nimrod as one greater than the common man. However, Jesus said He expected better out of the disciples. He points out that if anyone shows special skill or ability, that person should use those abilities to be of service to the others, not to rule over them! (Matt. 20:20-28) Some may argue that is what putting a person of great ability in a rulership role is all about; but the point is not what you intend or expect, rather it is about what actually takes place. If we want to be a group, then all individuals in the group need to use their abilities to serve, not just expect one central leader to solve all their problems and provide for them. There is even the truth that using one's talents for others is not something which can be forced upon individuals by a ruler. People simply must choose righteousness for themselves; and thus, the ability of rulers is actually much more limited than many people think, hope, or are willing to admit!

As we read what the Bible tells us about government, we should understand this is the basis of what is being said. The words of Paul in Romans chapter 13, and other places, are not telling us that government is this great thing God wants for man. We are being told what part of the concept of government is legitimate. Because of man's sinful heart and actions in this world, God expects government to take on certain responsibilities! We should not be as the gentile, but understand that no government is anything more than a group of men. To those who do not believe in the Word of God, there may be the temptation to take on the idea that somehow people in

government are, in fact, something far above the rest of us, but this is in no way true. Even if they, like Nimrod, have special abilities that have great value to humanity, those abilities should be used to serve, not worshiped as if they deserve a high position of ruler over our lives. Thus, we should respect governing authorities for carrying out the purposes for which God tolerates their existence. What we are told rulers are truly suppose to be is the ministers of God!

Now, when we talk about those who we say are in the "ministry," we should clearly understand that we are talking about people who have been called as a servant of God directly in the full-time work of sharing God's Word. These ministers of God are people called to put forth the Word of God to be a help unto the believer and unbeliever. For the believer, they are someone who should help you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is so we can make our own choices in becoming what God created us to be. To the unbeliever, they are someone who can help you find that relationship with God, which you have neglected altogether! For this, they have authority to preach the Word of God; but people get this confused in that they think these ministers are somehow the authority of God in their lives. The problem that arises when we believe they are our authority is we begin to believe that as long as we do what they teach us, we will be in the right. We end up believing this even when their teaching contradicts something God has spoken directly to us. This can, and has created great harm in people's lives, as it has caused many to ultimately believe they can put church doctrine above God's Word. However, a minister, while having the authority to do what they are sent to do, is not someone who has the authority to choose anything for you!

This is what we should understand about Paul telling us governing authority is ordained of God. No sincere believer should have trouble seeing the fact, we can't simply follow the rule of law and expect to be considered righteous. God stopped man from creating a one world government system and religion. At the same time, God did not put a stop to the the idea of government overall. God is allowing man's desire to have government; but because He is allowing it, He has ordained their purpose, and by doing so has limited their true authority. God has given them the authority on earth to punish those who have done wrong. Some get it right and some get it wrong. Some intentionally; others unintentionally. However, what this means for the rest of us is, just like a minister of God's Word, we should understand they do not have the authority to make up any law they want, especially those which go against God's commandments, and expect the righteous to follow. While they have authority from God to administer justice - and we should respect that - just as with all God's ministers, we can not blindly follow what they say and believe we are righteous in doing so. They may want to define for you what is right and wrong; but in truth, they don't ultimately get to choose. You still have to do that for yourself, and do it in spite of the earthly consequences you may face!

Until next time, Shalom!

What About Tithing? continued from pg. 4

and that is the fact: God did not set forth the Law of Moses at the time of creation. This fact is not one which many people would find any reason to argue with, considering the Law of Moses is called that because Moses is the man God directly gave the Law to. However, many people do argue that God did, in fact, put at least some of His Law upon men from creation or at least the time of Adam and Eve's fall into sin. This is where the question of what is required and what is not becomes a theological issue, and one which keeps us from seeing the forest for the trees, much like the Scribes and Pharisees!

A good story for discussion is that of Cain and his brother Abel. This, because it is a story which focuses on giving to God and which comes directly on the heels of the fall of man into sin. Many people will teach that Cain and Abel's situation had something to do with following a specific law which they knew even before the laws of sacrifice were given to Moses for the children of Israel. People will point out that sacrificing animals to God is a practice which is seen in the Bible far more than once or twice before the Law of Moses was given. This is true, but the problem arises in that people do not get the reason they see it. Many just don't understand the most basic element God wants from humans; and because of this, they often think on that negative side where people are always looking to do the minimum they can get away with. Because they think this way, they extrapolate the idea that people before the written Law were already following many of the same instructions from God as the Law contains, but they just failed to officially write them down, or the writings were lost somewhere along the way. This is standing the truth on its head!

In the story of Cain and Abel, people see the bringing of offerings and even the sacrificing of animals. This raises a question. How did they know to do this? Because we ask the wrong question, we get the wrong answer. The answer to, "How did Cain and Abel know what to bring?" or "Why did they bring anything?" seems to come with an obvious answer when we are familiar with the Law. We say, Cain and Abel knew at least some of the Law which only later would be officially written down. Thus, we approach the rest of the story with that thought, and believe Abel knew what he needed to do to please God and so did Cain. From this perspective it looks like Cain chose to bring something to God which was not a blood sacrifice, and this put Cain in the wrong from the very beginning. However, that is just not the case!

In fact, the truth is just the opposite. Neither Cain nor Abel knew what they should and shouldn't bring to God. Neither had been told by God or other people what they needed to bring and/or what they should not bring. In fact, that very point is a key to understanding the story, and one which, if not understood, causes people to miss some of the main teachings contained in this story. We should not ask, "How did they know?"; we should understand that without the Law as yet, they were specifically not running on set guidelines. Because this is true, both Cain and Abel simply brought to God items which came out of the work of their hands. Abel brought a lamb, not because he knew or thought that was what God required, but simply because he was a keeper of sheep! Cain brought

vegetables, not because he didn't care about God's instruction, but because he was a tiller of the ground! (Gen. 4:1-2) If we pay attention to the words, we realize God never says Cain was in the wrong for bringing what He brought. Believing God says this, is another extrapolation based on an already false assumption. What the story tells us is that God had "respect" for Abel and his offering and not for Cain's. Maybe it should be said that the words here lose something in the translation, but we should not interpret this as meaning Cain brought the wrong thing. The original language the word "respect" comes from here does not carry the meaning of approval versus disapproval. The word at its core means, "to gaze upon or about." In truth, it means just the opposite of what people think about God having already laid out instructions for what man should do when it comes to sacrifice. Because this word conveys the idea of God taking time to consider Abel's offering, it means there was not a decision already set in stone! Cain didn't bring the wrong thing, Cain simply brought a different thing! The simple truth is, Abel's offering was a blood offering; and therefore, in the end, it received a direct reaction from God which Cain's offering, being a plant based offering, did not.

When it comes to the story of Cain and Abel, we mistakenly take the point in much the way Cain took it! We see this respect thing as being about Cain and what he did wrong; but the truth in the story at this juncture is not about Cain, it's about the way God would look upon different offerings brought to Him. The entire problem in the story was not that God was angry with Cain, but that God giving special attention to what Abel had brought, beyond the kind of attention any offering or time of communing with God had brought before, caused Cain to be jealous because it was not his offering which brought the attention! The fact this is true is why the story turns to Cain. Cain became upset by the fact his offering did not receive the same reaction as his brother's. This is where we see the evidence God is not angry with Cain. While Cain is off sulking and stewing over what had happened, God comes to him. If God was some angry pagan-like god, Cain's anger would have garnered more anger from God, not the father-like love we see next.

Now, because wrong thoughts are already in most people's minds, here again, people misinterpret the words of God as meaning Cain had, in fact, done something wrong; and if he had done what he should in the first place, everything would be fine. However, all this is looking at God as if He is some man invented deity which needs to be appeased. God did not, and does not need to be appeased! What God desires out of us is communion. Both Cain and Abel were communing with God in bringing their offerings. In this, God was very pleased! This is why God comes to Cain as a father might come to a beloved son and tries to have a reasonable conversation with Cain about the fact he should not be upset Abel's offering received the attention it did. If Cain had stopped to think about what was going on at that very moment, he should have done an about face. God Himself was specifically talking and spending time with Cain. What more could you want! In talking to Cain, God also points out what should have been the obvious lesson from this incident. If receiving the same kind of attention to his offering that Abel's offering received is what was important to Cain, then all Cain needed to do was bring a blood offering. God would respect a blood offering from Cain in the same way He

did Abel, but it was not wrong for Cain to bring what he did!

The whole reason we primarily see blood offerings being made in worship to God in later times is because of exactly what God told Cain. Men like Noah and Abraham knew - either because of this story and/or its truth was handed down by earlier generations, or because they found the truth just as Cain and Abel had - that blood offerings received more direct attention from God than other things did. They wanted that attention, and they also came to learn the reason why it happened. We see this in the words of Abraham as he takes his son Isaac to be sacrificed. When Isaac asks his father where the actual sacrifice is, Abraham tells Isaac God will provide the true sacrifice by sacrificing Himself! (Gen. 22:1-8)

In the Law, we see again the truth that blood sacrifices are treated differently than offerings which come from plants. At the same time, we see evidence that bringing plant offerings is not a wrong thing to do. In the Law, we read instructions that basically every blood sacrifice be accompanied by "meat offerings." Meat offerings are typically flour, which comes from plants, mingled with oil, which comes from olives or the like, not animal fat! Again, I come back to the point that the Law, in writing, as it was given to Moses in the wilderness, for the children of Israel, did not exist in Cain's day. However, God is not a changing God. (Heb. 13:5-9) Thus, the principles given in the Law of Moses are not made up just for the purpose of establishing a chosen nation. The truth we should all understand is that the Laws are based on the truths of righteousness, holiness, and God's interaction with man throughout the centuries leading up to their giving. Cain and Abel were not following a law in order to learn how to interact with God, they were learning how to interact with God, by interaction with God!

This all relates directly to our tithing question, because we should not forget the basis of the story we have been discussing is that Cain and Abel, without a law which told them to or required them to bring anything, brought offerings to The Lord. Just like the Law's requirement of tithing, they brought those offerings out of the increase of their labor. As men, walking this earth, they made a choice to interact with God; and in doing so, not only did they set a precedent which would be carried throughout later generations, they revealed God's reaction to different offerings. These kinds of interactions by men who desired to come before God taught men the lessons God wanted us to learn. These lessons were eventually written as a law and required to be enacted by a specifically chosen people. We miss the point of the history the Bible is showing us if we do not realize which came first; and what it means is that whether Jew or non-Jew, whether there is a law requiring us or not, we should all be compelled to bring offerings to God out of the increase and substance of our lives!

Now, just as Cain and Abel had the chance to learn about blood versus non-blood sacrifices in bringing offerings to God out of their personal increase, there is another truth we learn by studying the Bible's history. In communing with God and interacting with God, long before the Law of Moses, man had the answer to the question of what constituted a reasonable

amount to give God out of the increase He blesses us with. The Bible does not pinpoint to us exactly where this formula was found as it does the blood sacrifice, but God settles any doubt any person should have that it is in fact a truth, by putting it in the Law of Moses. In fact, that is another big point of having a law at all. There are many things which people not under the Law might argue or wonder about being truly right or wrong; but when we can see it in the Law God gave to His chosen nation, we know we are on the right track.

Somewhere along the line, man learns a good standard as to how much of our increase should be given to God and His work on a regular basis. That standard is a percentage which the word "tithing" tells us. We are to give a tenth. Before and outside the Laws of Moses and especially the later teachings of the Scribes and Pharisees we discussed earlier, this would have been a simple - shall we say - more organic kind of thing. It was a truth men learned by having faith, which is the opposite of what Cain wanted. Faith is a relationship with God where those who desire the things of God grow and learn. What people of God learned about being faithful to God, even in their physical life and work, was to bring a tenth of their increase. This is what we call tithing, and why we call it that. Bringing more than a tenth is truly an offering which is going above and beyond that which would be standard.

Now, one may ask, why would there need to be a standard? Well, the first thing we should understand is that tithing is a very physical thing. It's about bringing actual physical items to God, out of the actual physical work we do! That being said, we should understand just by the fact we walk this world every day, there are a couple of sayings which sum up our physical situation of working by the sweat of our brow. In this universe, where man is given a free will, and especially because of our immature sinful nature, there are no free lunches, and it's pretty much a get what you pay for kind of place!

Now, we will come back to the concepts of tithing as a standard and why; but again, we want to do it by looking more directly at the requirement issue. Again, it is because the truth of tithing already existed that it shows up as a requirement in the Law of Moses, given to the children of Israel to follow. However, the true "requirement" would come because God would write down the precept of tithing and say this is what I expect of you. Once this Law was given directly to Israel, it made tithing for them, not just a, bring it if you want to because you care about the things of God, kind of thing. Tithing became a commandment! Why was it made a commandment and therefore a requirement for Israel? Because the nation of Israel is the largest example of what tithing is meant to support - and that is? God's work in this universe!

Next time we will continue our look at the requirement of tithing, and talk more about why tithing exists in the first place, what it is intended to do, and what it should mean to all true believers. Until then, may we each seek to give of ourselves to those around us as God gives us the opportunity!

**Questions submitted to the Institute, answered by
Philip E. Busby.**

The Bible As A Book continued from pg. 2

onyx stones placed on the shoulders of the ephod. It would also be attached with blue ribbon that ran from gold rings placed on either side, at the edge of the front cloth of the ephod just above the girdle, to gold rings on either side at the bottom of the breastplate. This would tie down the breastplate and ensure it did not swing from the priest's chest, for he was to bear the names of Israel upon his heart. The stones were to be top quality, highly polished stones so they would reflect the glory of The Lord's light and perfection as the priest went before The Lord. This was a reminder of the work Israel was to do in this world!

Directly under the ephod was to be a linen robe of pure blue. This robe was of one piece and had to be slipped over the priest's head to wear. The collar of this robe was to be reinforced with woven work, much like the protective clothing worn by a man dressed for war, to ensure it did not easily tear. This robe would be fringed at the bottom with blue, purple, and scarlet colored pomegranates. In between each pomegranate was to be a gold bell, and this pattern was to go all the way around the bottom of the robe. These bells would serve as a way to hear the movement of the priest when he entered the tabernacle where others were not allowed to go or see.

The priest was also to wear a hat made of fine linen, which is not specifically described, but by historical evidence we may believe it was a smooth short conical shape with its very rounded point gently sweeping back, such as later kings of Israel wore. This hat would also be a crown, of sorts, as it was to be held at its base around the head of the priest by a blue lace that would also hold to his forehead a pure gold plate engraved with the words, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." When looking at the priest as one brought their offerings and sacrifices, these words would remind you that you are dedicating something to The One True God and His purposes!

The innermost garment of the priest would be a fine linen coat. A similar coat would also be worn by Aaron's sons. The sons would also have girdles to tie around their coats, and a different hat which was likely more rounded and simply set directly on the top of the head. Finally, both Aaron and his sons were also to have linen undergarments that covered their mid section. With these garments, Aaron and his sons were to be anointed and prepared to do the priest's service. They and all those who followed them in later generations were to wear these garments which Moses was shown, at all times when they came before The Lord and did their priestly service. This was not to change in any way with the fashion of the day. In future times they were not to be made differently by or because of the use of newer materials, but forever these are the garments of the priests.

Moses was then instructed as to the ceremony for anointing Aaron and his sons to be the priests of God. This would require one bullock, two rams, all as perfect as they can be, anointing oil and a basket containing unleavened bread, cakes with oil, and wafers anointed with oil, all of wheat. First, Aaron and his sons were to be taken to the door of the tabernacle and washed with water. Aaron is then to be dressed in the garments God had instructed Moses to make for the High Priest, putting the mitre and crown on last. Then anointing oil was to be poured on his head. Aaron's sons were then to be dressed in their garments and hats. With these garments, Aaron's sons were to be

dedicated to the priest's office throughout their generations. Aaron's priestly garments were to be passed down to the next person of his family to serve as the High Priest, and they were to be worn every day as that person served at the tabernacle!

As a sin offering, the bullock is then to be killed there at the door with Aaron's and his sons' hands on its head in representation of giving their own lives. Using his finger, Moses was to put the bull's blood upon the horns of the altar. The rest of the blood was to be poured at the base of the altar, and its fat, caul, and two kidneys burned upon the altar, while the skin, and remaining parts were to be burned outside the camp of Israel. The next sacrifice would be a burnt offering. Again, with their hands upon its head, one of the rams was to be killed and its blood sprinkled on all sides of the altar. The entire ram was to be cut in pieces, his inner parts washed, the pieces stacked in a certain order and placed upon the altar to be burned.

The second ram was a peace offering for Aaron and his sons' consecration. It would also be killed with their hands upon its head, and Moses was to put its blood on Aaron and his sons, beginning with the right ear, then their right thumb, and finally the big toe of their right foot. This was to dedicate their bodies literally from head to toe unto the physical work of The Lord's temple. The rest of the blood was, once again, to be sprinkled around the altar. Blood from off the altar, along with anointing oil, was then to be sprinkled on Aaron and his clothing. The same was done to his sons, all in order to separate them and their garments unto the service of God. The ram was then to be cut in its appropriate pieces, with the left shoulder and the breast separated from the rest. The fat, rump, caul, both kidneys, and the right shoulder, along with one cake and one wafer out of the basket of unleavened bread, were to be put in Aaron's hands and the hands of his sons to be literally heaved into the air and waved as a way to present them to God. Those pieces were then to be placed upon the altar to be consumed by God's fire. The same waving procedure was to be done with the breast and the left shoulder. Once done, these pieces were to be cooked and consumed by Aaron and his sons. They were to eat these pieces by the door of the tabernacle along with the remaining bread from the basket, in order to commune with God. Any of this meal that they did not eat before morning was to be burned with fire. Throughout Israel's generations these pieces from any peace offerings brought to the tabernacle would belong to the priests, and be eaten by them and no stranger.

It would take a total of seven days to complete the priests' consecration, preparing Aaron, his sons, along with the altar itself, for the service of God. Every day a bullock was to be sacrificed for a sin offering. The altar was to be anointed and made holy, and anything that even touched the altar would also be separated for the purposes of God. God would also tell Moses about the continual sacrifices that would be performed on the altar every day. These sacrifices would be burnt offerings and consist of two lambs of the first year. One lamb would be offered in the morning and the other in the evening. Along with these lambs would be offered a specific measurement of flour mingled with a specific measurement of beaten oil. Also, there would be offered a specific measurement of wine as a drink offering. This was to be done generation upon generation, as the tabernacle and the priests would be sanctified by God as the place God would meet with Israel, dwell among them, and make them a people

prepared unto His service!

Moses would be further instructed to make one more item for inside the tabernacle's Holy Place. This would be another altar, much smaller than the one outside, and nothing but the incense which God would instruct to be made was to be burned on it! It too would be made of shittim wood, a cubit wide and deep, and 2 cubits in height. It also will have horns at the top corners; but this altar, like the other elements inside the tabernacle, was to be covered with pure gold. It was also to be crowned with gold around the top. Just under that crown were to be placed 2 gold rings on either side to carry it with staves, also covered in gold. This altar was to be placed in front of the ark, but on the other side of the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies where the ark was. Every morning and evening as Aaron came to tend to the menorah and keep it burning, he was to also burn sweet incense on this altar to keep incense burning continually before The Lord. This altar would be atoned once a year on the Day of Atonement with the blood of the sin offering being placed on its horns by the High Priest.

Moses was also told that to avoid the plagues of an arrogant nation, any census of the people was to be done with a purpose other than numbering. Instead, every person will be accounted for so those 20 years old or older may offer unto God a half shekel, as a shekel is measured at the tabernacle. This will be a ransom for their souls unto God. In a symbol that we are all truly equal in God's eyes, those who are rich do not have to pay more, and those who are poor do not get to pay less. This money was then to be used to continually maintain the tabernacle as a place to meet with God and as a memorial to its importance in Israel!

After this, God gives Moses instructions for one more element to be placed in the courtyard of the tabernacle. This piece would be a washbasin. It would be of two main parts, one on top of the other. The top bowl would be filled with water to wash hands and the bottom with water to wash feet. This, like the altar of sacrifice was to be made of brass. It was to be placed in between the door of the tabernacle and the altar of sacrifice. Its purpose was so Aaron and his sons could pass by this washbasin and wash their hands and feet when going into the tabernacle to do service, or when going out to the altar to sacrifice. This was a rule to be kept by Aaron and his sons throughout their generations. If they failed to do so, God's Holiness would strike them down.

God would tell Moses how to make the holy anointing oil to be used at and for the tabernacle. For this, God lays out measurements of spices to be used. The spices were to be pure myrrh, sweet cinnamon, sweet calamus, and cassia. This was to be mixed into a specific measurement of olive oil using the same care and techniques used to make the finest perfumes and medicine! This oil was then to be used to anoint the priests. It was also to anoint the tabernacle itself and all the furniture and elements that belonged to the tabernacle. All these items would then be holy unto God, and anything that touched any of them would also to be considered holy. This anointing oil was not to be duplicated or mimicked in any way. It was not to be used as

a perfume, and it was not to be put on a person outside the nation of Israel. Anyone who did such a thing was to be removed from the nation.

Moses was also told how to make the incense that was to be kept in the tabernacle and used on the altar of incense. It was to be made of three sweet spices: stacte, onycha, and galbanum. Equal parts of these were to be put with an equal weight of pure frankincense. It was to be put together again with the same care and techniques of those who put medical compounds together. To protect it from being blown away and/or creating its smell outside the tabernacle, only as portions of it were taken into the Holy Place to be there for use on the altar of incense, was it to be beaten very small. As with the anointing oil, there was to be nothing like this made and used by Israel for anything else in their lives. Again, those who did such a thing would be removed from the nation of Israel!

God would even give Moses the specific name of the man whom He had called to do and lead the work of building everything Moses had just been told to build. This man was named Bezaleel, and as a prophetic statement that Jesus would go to prepare a place for us that where He is there we may be also, this man was from the same tribe The Messiah would eventually come through, and be the lead tribe as Israel moved - Judah! Along with this man, God would name a right-hand man to Bezaleel named Aholiab. Aholiab was from the tribe of Dan, which was to lead the rear most group when Israel was on the move. However, this is bound to the next words spoken to Moses, which was the fact that all who were wise in Israel, God had placed it on their hearts and instructed their minds to use the skills they possessed to do at least a piece of the work needed to build everything Moses had been shown. God would truly involve the nation of Israel in the building of the tabernacle that would stand for a place where God's presence could literally dwell among them!

God would add to all these instructions the emphasis that the seventh day of the week was, from creation, something God had taken unto Himself. When God created the world, He worked six days; but on the seventh God rested. This pattern was to be kept by the nation of Israel as a sign they served The God who created the entire universe, and they should never come to believe it was no longer of importance for any reason. Moses was to understand that even in doing the work of building God's tabernacle, they were to follow this pattern of resting on the Sabbath. God also knew the tabernacle or temple would be maintained at times and not at others, stand at times and not at others; but in spite of Israel's ability or inability to perform any of the ceremonies they had been given by God, the Sabbath would always remain something any and all individuals could observe, respect, and if remembered, use as their time to come before the presence of God to spend time doing what we were actually created to do, which was/is to commune with our Creator!

Let's stay in God's Word!