

Exodus Chapters 30-31 John Karmelich

1. Does God have expectations of you? (There's a great way to start a lecture! ☺)
 - a) Believe it or not, that is the main theme of tonight's lesson.
 - b) Wait a minute you say, I've read these two chapters. It's about more details on constructing the tabernacle. What does *that* have to do with God's expectations of us?
 - i) Glad you asked! ☺
 - c) Tonight we get into the last pieces of furniture to be built for the tabernacle.
 - i) The clue to my opening question ("What does God expect of us?") is that when you read these chapters, they seem out of place in the description of the construction of the temple.
 - a) If you've noticed that, you're becoming a good Bible student!
 - ii) If you remember, we had chapter after chapter on constructing every single aspect of the tabernacle.
 - a) I talked about how all the aspects are "pictures" for our learning.
 - b) The "pictures" in the Old Testament are "principals" of the New!
 - (1) I pointed out that all the "parts" of the temple point to Jesus in some way or fashion.
 - c) Next, we got into the garments of Aaron and his sons.
 - d) Now that we've finished all that, we're back tonight building more parts of the Temple. Isn't this out of order?
 - (1) No it isn't. Allow me to explain
2. Everything we've built so far focuses on what God has done for us! Here is a quick review:
 - a) First there was the ark of covenant. The most holy place of God. His law is placed in the ark. The law was given for our benefit as a model for our lives.
 - i) Also in the ark was Aaron's rod that budded. This speaks of the resurrection, as the rod sprouted new life.
 - ii) The last thing in the ark, was a pot of manna, which speaks of the live giving bread that God gives us to sustain us.
 - iii) All of these were gifts to us. We had no part in this matter.
 - b) There was the light stand. It speaks of Jesus being the light of the world. We are the branches *supported* by the light.
 - c) There are all the coverings of the tabernacle. Each speaks of some aspect of Jesus' ministry. We can only see the beauty from the *inside*. The outside cover was plain.
 - d) There is the gold-covered wood support beams. This is the support system for the cloth and animal coverings. Many commentators see the wood as the believers, who together form the body of Christ. The gold represents deity that was given to us.
 - e) There was the white linen fencing that rests on silver sockets. The silver represents blood. The fence that separates believers/non-believers rests on the blood of Christ.
 - f) There was the table of showbread. There was 12 loaves, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. The bread is *carried* on this golden table. It speaks of Christ persevering us.
 - g) Then there was Aaron the high priest. This speaks of Jesus, as *our* High Priest. He was *given* clothes and some rituals were performed *on* him for purification. There were "the sons of Aaron". This speaks of believers, following in the role of Aaron.
 - h) This is all review. What I want you to see is that all of these things represent pictures of what God has done for us. There is nothing we added on our part. That is what salvation is all about. It is simply about accepting what God did.

- i) Something to consider: If all this construction completed so far represents just things “God has done for us”, then why does it describe the Israelites *constructing (works)* in building this thing? Remember that they were building a *model*. Just as churches build big crosses. The crosses are not the *actual* cross, but are used as models to remind us of what Jesus did.
3. What does this have to do with today’s lesson?
 - i) Glad you asked! ☺
 - b) The items were building in Chapter 30-31 focus on us.
 - i) It is about our obedience to God.
 - c) Chapters 30-31 is about the construction of “The Alter of Incense”, “The Bronze Laver” and about paying a “ransom” for every adult male.
 - i) It is also about God calling special individuals to certain tasks. When we get to this part, we’ll spend a little time talking about spiritual gifts.
 - ii) Like everything built so far, we are constructing “pictures” for everyone to see.
4. Remember last week I asked the question, “Why did God bother?, or what’s in it for God?”
 - a) Why did God go through all the trouble of creating us in the first place, and having Jesus die on our behalf so we can spend eternity with him? Why did he bother?
 - b) The answer is in Ephesians. (See Ephesians 2:7). He wants to show off his grace to us! He created us *because* he loves us. He wants us to lead fruitful lives *here on earth* for His glory. Then, we need an eternity for Him to show us how much he loves us! That is the greatest calling in life. That is our purpose: to glorify God. That is what worship is all about.
 - c) The whole book of Ephesians is also a model of what we have tonight.
 - i) The first 3 chapters of Ephesians focuses on what God did for us.
 - ii) The last 3 chapters focus on what God expects from us in return.
 - iii) That is what we’re going to see. That is why the altar of Incense and the Bronze laver are in Exodus Chapter 30, and not part of the list in Chapters 25-27.
 - a) The redemption money is also a picture of what God expects of us.
 - d) If all of this sounds a little confusing, give it time to sink in. Read through this lesson, and spend some prayer time (ask the Holy Spirit) for guidance on what God expects of you personally. Hopefully, tonight’s lesson will give you some insight.
5. All, right, get your hard hats and construction belt back on, we’re building an Alter of Incense.

30:1 And you are to make an altar for burning incense; you are to make it out of acacia wood.

30:2 Its length is to be a foot and a half and its width is to be a foot and a half; it is to be square. And its height is to be three feet. Its horns are to be of one piece with it. **30:3** And you are to overlay it with pure gold-its top, and its sides, and its horns. And you are to make a crown of gold for it on all four sides.

 - a) Compared to the size of the Ark of the Covenant and the table of showbread this was a small box. The King James (and others) says it is one cubit wide, by one cubit deep by two cubits high. A cubit is roughly 18 inches, and thus the dimensions above.
 - b) As I mentioned a number of lessons ago, the wood speaks of Christ’s humanity.
 - i) Acacia wood is the strongest type of wood there is. Termites can’t touch it.
 - ii) Acacia wood is very “gnarly”. It has to be grounded up to be used. The “picture” of Christ represents how it had to be crucified to be any good to us.
 - c) “Horns” in the Bible, speak of power, or government authority. Just as horns on an animal represent their most powerful weapon. Notice the horns are *part* of the wood. They are not be added separately. It is all one piece. Christ’s power is *part* of Him.
 - d) The gold speaks of deity. The entire altar is covered in gold.

- e) On top of this altar was a “crown”. This is a rim around the top edge. Much the same way a dinning room table on a boat would have a rim around the edge to keep things from falling off as the boat rocks back and forth.
 - i) The crown has a literal purpose. Incense was to be burned on this altar. The crown keeps the incense from falling off. The crown speaks of preservation. Just as there was a crown on the table of showbread for preservation. The only other item with a “crown” was the ark itself. The law is also preserved for us.
- 6. **30:4** And you are to make two gold rings for it under its crown, on its two sides, you are to make them on the two sides. And the rings are to be places for the poles to carry it with. **30:5** You are to make the poles out of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.
 - a) Like the other items, this altar is to be portable. It goes where we go. It speaks of God traveling wherever we go. The poles that touch it must be pure gold. Anything associated with God’s holiness must be pure gold. (Again, more visual pictures for us.)
- 7. **30:6** And you are to put it in front of the veil that is before the ark of the testimony (before the place of propitiation that is over the testimony), where I will meet you.
 - a) This little altar is located just outside the veil. Just outside the “Holy of Holies”, the most important place of the tabernacle.
 - b) If you remember back a few weeks ago, I stated that God is building this tabernacle from “the inside out”. He is starting with the most important item (the ark) and working his way backward. We are seeing the tabernacle from *God’s perspective*, from the most important to the least important. Now, here we are building something *right next* to the most important item in the tabernacle.
 - c) The last part of Chapter 30, Vs. 6 has an interesting comment “where I will meet you”
 - i) What is God talking about here?
 - ii) This altar is the focus of our prayers and worship!
 - a) It is the altar where incense is burned.
 - b) It is a picture of our “prayers” going up to God.
 - iii) Back to the question of why is this prayer-altar not mentioned until now?
 - a) Again, we have another “model” of our Christian worship.
 - b) Because we can’t talk to God (i.e. prayers) without dealing with sin first!
 - (1) The blood sacrifices, the cleansing, are all symbolic of what has to be done “first” before we can approach God.
 - (2) Just as today, we have to accept God’s sacrifice (i.e. Jesus on the Cross) before we can communicate with God.
 - (a) Does this mean God *only* talks to Christians?
 - (b) Of course not, if that were true, how does anyone get saved? It means we can’t have a relationship with God without accepting Jesus first!
 - d) One more comment before we move on. The Book of Hebrews states that this altar was *in* the Holy of Holies (Hebrews 9:4). Yet, here, it states that this was just outside the veil. This is a classical debate in Christianity. How do you explain this?
 - i) Incense from the altar was taken *into* the “Holy of Holies” once a year on the Day of Atonement. It could be speaking of that event.
 - ii) The other explanation is that Hebrews is from *a New Testament perspective*. When Jesus was on the cross, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom. (Matthew 27:51) There was no more separation of the Holy of Holies. Our prayers, which is represented by the Golden Alter, can now go directly to God, and therefore is now part of the “Holy of Holies”.

- iii) Personally, this is one of those things scholars like to argue about where I don't see a lot of application to our lives. Its better to just mention there is a debate over this, and let it go at that. Back to the text:
- 8. **30:7** And Aaron is to burn sweet incense on it morning by morning; when he attends to the lamps he is to burn incense. **30:8** And when Aaron sets up the lamps between the evenings he is to burn incense on it; it is to be a regular incense offering before the Lord throughout your generations.
 - a) The purpose of the alter is stated here (that means pay attention!)
 - i) Aaron is to burn incense on it in the morning and in the evenings.
 - ii) What is the "picture" here? Think about incense:
 - a) It has a nice smell, and smoke is visible as it rises up.
 - b) So what is this a picture of, or a model of? Prayer!
 - (1) It is a sweet smell to God, and rises up toward the heavens.
 - (2) Our prayers are a "sweet smell" to God!
 - iii) Like everything else, there is the picture of Christ:
 - a) "Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma." (Ephesians 5:2 NKJV)
 - b) Some translations say Aaron must burn incense morning & evening. That is a better translation. God desires a relationship with us.
 - c) This alter, refereed to as "The Golden Alter" or the "The Alter of Incense" depending upon your commentary or your Bible" is the alter that prayers are offered upon!
- 9. **30:9** You must not offer strange incense on it, nor burnt offering, nor meal offering, and you must not pour out a drink offering on it.
 - a) This altar was strictly for the use of prayer.
 - i) No sacrifices, or sharing communion (meal offering).
 - ii) God wants our time of prayer to be special.
 - iii) I heard an analogy of prayer priority that I liked: "Its ok to pray while driving, its not ok to tell God, "let me say my good-night prayers now while I'm driving home in order to save time".
- 10. **30:10** And Aaron is to make atonement on its horns once in the year from the blood of the sin offering of atonements; once in the year he is to make atonement on it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the Lord."
 - a) On the holiest day of the year, (today called "Yom Kippor"), the high priest enters the holy of Holies. Among the things the High Priest does is place blood on this altar.
 - b) Why did he do this? The answer is in Hebrews:
 - i) "But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. (Hebrews 9:7 NIV)
 - ii) There are two types of sin. 1) "willful" and "ignorant". Willful sins require our confession. But what if we sin out of ignorance. (This means we were unaware we offended God). God can tolerate no sin. Thus the need for additional blood as part of our prayers.
 - iii) When we pray "The Lord's prayer", it is often good to ask God to forgive us our sins that we are unaware of. Most veteran Christians will tell how God has revealed sins in their live that they were unaware of at that time.
 - iv) David did this in the Psalms:
 - a) "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24 NIV)

11. The next verse begins a new topic. A redemption “tax” for every Hebrew Adult: **30:11** The Lord spoke to Moses: “When you take a census of the Israelites according to their number, then each man is to pay a ransom for his life to the Lord when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them. **30:13** Every one who crosses over to those who are numbered is to pay this: a half shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel weighs twenty gerah). The half shekel is to be an offering to the Lord. **30:14** Everyone who crosses over to those numbered, from twenty years old and up, is to pay an offering to the Lord. **30:15** The rich are not to increase it, and the poor are not to pay less than the half shekel when giving the offering of the Lord, to make atonement for your lives.
- a) We interrupt the construction process to pass the collection plate! ☺
 - b) The purpose of this is very straightforward.
 - i) It is not a revenue-raising scheme.
 - ii) It was not for census purposes
 - iii) It is to remind every adult that they have been redeemed.
 - c) Notice children don’t pay this. Children don’t yet comprehend redemption. They can watch what their parents do, but as rational-adults they pay this.
 - d) Everyone pays the same. It is a model for God to remind us that when it comes to redemption, He doesn’t care if we are rich or poor, “very religious” or “semi-religious”. God and God alone paid the price for our redemption.
 - e) With a handful of exemptions, God never wanted the Israel leaders to take a census. This was one of David’s sins late in his life (2 Samuel 24:2) was taking a census not ordained by God. Why does God prohibit census taking? Because he wants us to rely upon HIS strength, not our own. For an Israelite leader to take a census was to take account of their own strength.
 - i) This passage is NOT a contradiction to that order. The purpose was not to count everybody, but to remind every adult of the cost of his or her redemption.
12. **30:16** And you are to receive the atonement money from the Israelites, and give it for the service of the tent of meeting. It will be a memorial for the Israelites before the Lord, to make atonement for your lives.”
- a) The money had to be used for something, and it was used for maintenance of the tabernacle. Later, a similar collection was used for the maintenance of the temple.
13. End of the collection plate, back to construction. Next, the bronze laver. **30:17** And the Lord spoke to Moses: **30:18** “You are also to make a bronze laver with a bronze stand for washing. And you are to put it between the tent of meeting and the altar; and you are to put water in it. **30:19** And Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and their feet from it. **30:20** When they enter the tent of meeting, they must wash with water so that they do not die. Also, when they draw near to minister by burning incense as an offering made by fire to the Lord, **30:21** they must wash their hands and their feet so that they do not die. And this will be a perpetual ordinance for them and for their descendants throughout their generations.”
- a) Here is another piece of furniture that was never discussed earlier when we built the ark, the candlestick, the bronze altar, etc. This is called the “bronze laver”, among other things, depending upon your translation.
 - b) We’ve already discussed that the priests were “ready” to minister to God:
 - i) When the priests enter the tabernacle, they first sacrificed an animal on the bronze altar. This was a substitute for their sins.
 - ii) Next we now have this bronze “wash tub” in the outside court area where the priests wash their hands and feet. What was this for? (Glad you asked!)
 - iii) The bronze altar represents their continued walk before God!

- c) It is best to explain the bronze altar to think about a conversation between Jesus and Peter in the Gospel of John.
- d) There is the story in John, Chapter 13, of Jesus' washing the disciples' feet. Let's pick it up in Verse 6: (NIV)
 - i) He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" (vs. 6-9)
 - ii) And here is the key verse we're looking for:
 - iii) Verse 10 Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." (The last part refers to Judas not being "clean" as He wasn't a true believer.)
- e) Jesus was saying their body was already "clean", but they still needed to wash their feet. This isn't just about dusty feet! It is about being ceremonially clean. The blood of Christ *cleanses* us from our sin. (See Hebrews 9:14). However we still get "dirty" from this world as we walk.
- f) Thus we still need to wash our hands and feet as we work in service for God!
 - i) That's what the "bronze lavin basin" is for in this verse! The priests were already "ceremonially clean" from the animal sacrifice. Just as we are made clean from Jesus' one-time sacrifice. But there is a separate picture here, with the hand/feet-washing basin. It has to do with our continual service before God.
- g) Remember this is all figurative language. The sanctuary was all "word pictures" for both the Israelites and for us. I don't think God cares about the dust on our hands and feet as much as He cares about our service for Him!
- h) OK, so how do we "wash" today? Peter gives us a clue:
 - i) "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word," Ephesians 5:25-26a NIV)
 - i) The "word" is Word of God; it is our daily "cleansing" from the world.
 - ii) Want another verse for support? Try this one:
 - a) How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. (Psalm 119:9 NKJV, emphasis added)
- j) One of my favorite things to point out about the bronze lavin is that it is the only piece of furniture in the tabernacle with no specified dimensions. Every other aspect of the tabernacle God is *very specific* as to its size. This thing? No word on its dimensions. I believe (as do most commentators) is that there is no end to our cleansing through the Word of God, nor no limit to the power of the Word of its cleansing.
- k) Last thing on the bronze altar (I promise! ☺) Bronze is associated with judgement. Reading the word is often convicting of our personal sins, as it brings to light our own faults. The bronze used was very shiny. The same material was used to make mirrors. Thus, the washing (i.e. reading the word) "revealed" ours faults to God.
 - i) "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12 NIV)
 - ii) Part of the reason for our daily time in the word is for God to *reveal* aspects of our lives he wants us to work on. That is our daily "washing".

14. Next topic, “oil and incense” to be sprayed on different parts of the tabernacle. **30:22** And the Lord spoke to Moses: **30:23** "Take choice spices: twelve and a half pounds of liquid myrrh, and sweet-smelling cinnamon, about half of that, about six and a quarter pounds, and sweet-smelling cane, six and a quarter pounds; **30:24** and cassia, twelve and a half pounds, according to the standard of the sanctuary, and four quarts of olive oil. **30:25** And you are to make this into a sacred anointing oil, a perfume of ointment-mixture, the work of the perfumer. It will be sacred anointing oil.
 - a) You may recall “myrrh” is one of the gifts the wise men brought to Jesus (Matt. 2:11).
 - i) Besides being a fragrant ointment, myrrh was used in embalming the dead.
 - a) When the wise men brought “gold, frankincense and myrrh”, the gold represents the deity of God (we’ve discussed this), the frankincense is associated with the priesthood, (Jesus as high priest), and the myrrh is associated with death, speaking of Jesus death and resurrection.
 - b) The remaining ingredients, both cinnamon and cane, are both described here as “sweet-smelling”. The combination of these ingredients gave off a wonderful aroma.
15. **30:26** And with it you are to anoint the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony, **30:27** and the table with all its utensils, and the lampstand with its accessories, and the altar of incense, **30:28** and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver with its base. **30:29** So you are to sanctify them, and they will be most holy; anything that touches them will be holy.
 - a) Ok, so what’s the deal with this “big batch of perfume”?
 - i) First of all, this “smell” was to be unique only to the tabernacle. It is not to be used for any other purpose.
 - ii) The sense of “smell” is very strong in memory recall. Everybody has a favorite smell. A particular smell can instantly bring back a childhood memory.
 - iii) As I’ve been saying for weeks, all the items in the tabernacle are “word-pictures” that speaks of different aspects of God and His ministry.
 - a) A smell, which is unique to the tabernacle, would be another association.
16. **30:30** And you are to anoint Aaron and his sons and sanctify them, so that they may minister to me as priests. **30:31** And you are to tell the Israelites: "This is to be my sacred anointing oil throughout your generations. **30:32** It must not be poured on people's bodies, and you must not make any like it with the same composition. It is holy, and it must be holy to you. **30:33** Whoever makes perfume like it, and whoever puts any of it on a stranger, will be cut off from his people'."
- a) Anyone within “nose range” would immediately associate this unique smell with the tabernacle.
- b) Just as there is to be only one tabernacle, there is to be only one “smell” associated with the tabernacle. A “sweet-smelling” smell that would be a positive association to anyone who is near.
- c) The “sweet-smelling” aroma is also associated with God accepting our services of the priests. Our service to God is a “sweet-smelling” aroma.
 - i) “And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.” (Eph. 5:2 NKJV)
 - ii) “Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. (Philippians 4:18 NKJV)

17. Perfume #2, to be used as incense. **30:34** And the Lord said to Moses: "Take spices, gum resin, onycha, galbanum, and pure frankincense of equal amounts. **30:35** And you are to make it into an incense, a perfume, the work of the perfumer. It is to be finely ground, and pure and sacred. **30:36** And you are to beat some of it very fine, and put some of it before the ark of the testimony in the tent of meeting where I will meet with you; it is to be most holy to you. **30:37** And the perfume you are to make, you must not make for yourselves using the same composition; it is to be for you holy to the Lord. **30:38** Whoever makes anything like it, to use as perfume, will be cut off from his people."
- a) This unique "smell" was to be used only for the incense. It was a different odor than that used to be sprayed on the tabernacle.
 - b) For those of you who are fascinated by ingredients, the gum resin, is called "stacte" is came from the trees. The "galbanum" is the leaves of a local plant. The onycha came from a crab-like shell fish. (I don't have any particular application for this, just stating the background of the ingredients for the curious!)
 - c) Just like the smell of the sanctuary, there is to be a different unique smell associated with the altar of incense.
 - i) Remember that this altar is associated with prayer. The visual picture is the smoke of the incense rising up, as our prayers go up to God (only our prayers arrive at their destination much faster! ☺)
 - ii) I mentioned earlier that one of the 3 gifts the "wise men" brought Jesus was the frankincense. Here the high priest uses as part of the incense offering.
 - a) Again, this speaks of Jesus as our High Priest, our intercessor between God and man.
 - b) "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5 NIV)
 - iii) "The burnt altar speaks of what Christ did for us on earth. The incense altar speaks of what Christ is doing for us in heaven today". J. Vernon McGee.
 - d) Like the sanctuary "perfume", God forbid its use other than for the altar of incense (Verse 38).
 - e) There are some interesting commentaries about all of these ingredients. Some writers look for Christ-like features in each of them. I believe the main point to remember is that together it forms a unique, sweet-smelling fragrance that is only to be associated with the altar of incense.
 - i) Again, the altar of incense represents the high priests offering the prayers of the people to God.
18. The next 11 verses are a big chunk, but they all go together. **31:1** And the Lord spoke to Moses: **31:2** "See, I have called by name Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, **31:3** and I have filled him with the Spirit of God in skill, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of workmanship, **31:4** to make artistic designs for work with gold, with silver, and with bronze, **31:5** and with cutting and setting stone, and with cutting wood, to work in every kind of craftsmanship. **31:6** Moreover, I have also given him Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the hearts of all the specially skilled I have put wisdom, that they might make everything I have commanded you: **31:7** the tent of meeting, the ark of the testimony, the place of propitiation that is on it, all the furnishings of the tent, **31:8** the table with its utensils, the pure lampstand with all its accessories, the altar of incense, **31:9** the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, the laver with its base, **31:10** and also the woven garments, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments for his sons, to minister as priests, **31:11** the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the holy place, according to all that I have commanded them.

- a) This passage is about specific “spiritual gifts” given to two men, Bezalel and Oholiab. God gave them specific talents (gifts) to accomplish his purpose. These two men became the “foreman” in the construction of the temple.
 - a) The rest of these verses describe items we’ve already discussed.
 - b) God gives us “special/spiritual” gifts also to accomplish His purposes.
 - c) All believers in Jesus Christ have some sort of special spiritual gift. Some more than others, but everyone has at least one.
 - d) Remember that the primary purpose of the “church” (i.e. you and I) is to build up the body of Christ. God gave each of us talents and gifts, that we should work together as a team to help mature fellow believers. Bringing in new members (evangelism) is part of building up the “Body of Christ”.
 - e) “It was he (Jesus) who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Eph. 4:11-13 NIV)
 - f) How do I know what my gift(s) are? First, it is something that comes easy to you. Is being helpful something that you enjoy and it is “second nature”? That’s a spiritual gift. If you have a talent to design, to weave, to sing, to speak, these are all examples.
 - i) There are little questionnaires one can get at a Christian bookstore to help identify your gifts. If you are still not sure, ask other Christians who know you well. Sometimes it is easier for others to point out qualities about ourselves that we may not be aware of.
 - ii) Myself, I enjoy writing. People tell me I have good insight of the Bible. This is the spiritual gift of “knowledge”. I honor God with these lessons. I consider it a spiritual gift.
 - iii) With spiritual gifts, it’s a lot like keeping in shape. “Use it or Lose It”. God gave you specific gifts, and does not want you to waste them.
 - iv) There are several places in the Bible that list spiritual gifts. The best place to read about them is 1st Corinthians Chapter 12 and 14.
 - g) Some denominational churches do not believe the “spiritual gifts” are for today. They argue these gifts were only for the early church, and once the canon of the Bible was complete, they are no longer necessary. Now that I’ve stated that position, I can say how much I whole heartedly disagree. ☺
 - h) I have personally witnessed too many people with special spiritual gifts to ever deny that they exist today. If you disagree, that’s ok, but that’s my position.
 - i) On the other “extreme” of spiritual gifts, there are some Pentecostal groups who claim that unless you have all the spiritual gifts, you have not matured as a Christian. If you encounter one of these, ask them if they have the gifts of jewelry engraving, metal casting and weaving as mentioned in these verses! These are spiritual gifts.
19. Last topic, God explains the Sabbath again. **31:12** And the Lord spoke to Moses: **31:13** "Tell the Israelites, 'Surely you must keep my sabbaths, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you. **31:14** So you must keep the sabbath, for it is holy for you. Everyone who defiles it must surely be put to death; indeed, anyone who does any work on it, then that life will be cut off from among his people. **31:15** Six days work may be done, but on the seventh day is a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the Lord; anyone who does work on the seventh day must surely be put to death. **31:16** And the Israelites must keep the sabbath to observe the sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. **31:17** It is 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."

- a) OK, why re-state the Sabbath again?
 - b) Answer, to prevent "workaholic -syndrome". I'm only half-kidding with that answer!
 - i) There is a tendency when given a project to want to work non-stop until you get it done. Here is God-Almighty giving the people instructions on building a tabernacle. If God didn't remind them about the Sabbath, you think they would have stopped?
 - ii) This is God reminding us about our "priorities".
 - a) There is an old saying that I like here: "The people were so busy with the kings' service, they forgot about the king."
 - iii) Yes, God expects us to be obedient in our service, in our witness, etc. but not at the expense of ignoring time with God himself.
 - iv) Think this is just an Old Testament thing? In the Book of Revelation, Jesus himself gives this warning to the church of Ephesus:
 - a) "Jesus says: "I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. (Revelation 2:2-4 NIV)
 - (1) Jesus is commending them for their service, etc., but they forgot the top priority, which is the worship of God.
 - (2) That is what the "Sabbath" is all about. It's not about whether you go to church on Saturday or Sunday; it is about dedicating time to worship God. Worship can be church, group study, individual study, prayer, etc. It is about putting the entire personal issues aside to worship God.
20. Last Verse: **31:18** And he gave to Moses two tablets of testimony when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, tablets of stone written with the finger of God.
- a) Moses spent 40 days on the mountain with God. Since the first verse of Chapter 25, we have been reading a one on one dialog between God & Moses.
 - i) God was speaking, and Moses was taking dictation.
 - ii) God also gave Moses a "souvenir" on the way out ☺, which are the 10 commandments on two tablets of stone.
 - a) We'll talk next week about the significance of the stone tablets.
 - iii) If you remember back a few weeks ago, I joked that when Charleton Heston came off the mountain in "The Ten Commandments", besides the two tablets of stone, he should also have had a set of "blue-prints" under his arm! After six chapters of construction details, you now understand why!
 - b) So why did God do it this way? God spoke directly to all the people to give them the 10 commandments? Why not audibly give this 6 page speech?
 - i) Part of it was out of practicality. One man, the leader could write it down, and then pass on the instructions.

- c) The Book of Hebrews, Chapter 3 gives a good comparison of the role of Moses, as “builder” of the tabernacle compared to the role of Jesus. It might be a good idea to end on this comparison:
- i) “Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.” Hebrews 3:1-6 NIV.

21. Let's Pray. Father, we thank you for these lessons about obedience. Like the altar of incense, may our prayers rise up to you like the smoke of that sweet smelling aroma. May we keep our hands “clean”, by daily washing in the Word of God. We thank you for the spiritual gifts you have bestowed upon us. If we are unaware of them, bring them to light for your glory. If we are aware, show us how we can use them for your glory. Finally, may we never ignore your Sabbaths. Remind us that spending time *with* you is a priority over service *for* you. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.