

### **Study 27: Moses, Part 14 Exodus 30-34**

Last week, we read the instructions for the creation of the golden altar of incense, symbolizing not only of the prayers of the saints, but also those of our Savior, who “ever lives to make intercession for us” (Heb 7:25).

I forgot to mention that the **gate** or entrance to the tabernacle was located on the East side of the courtyard. Remember when we were studying Genesis, and I told you about the East being the direction of being banished or lost? When an Israelite approached the place where they were to meet with the Lord, they would come from the East, through the tribe of Judah, who camped on the eastern side.

We left off in **Exodus, chapter 30**. In v 22, the Lord tells Moses the formula for the “sacred anointing oil.” Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus began His public ministry, He said, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.” This anointing oil was to be made up of various spices, such as cinnamon and **myrrh**, mixed with pure olive oil. **Myrrh** is an aromatic resin that comes from trees that have long thorns on their branches. When people harvest it, they wound the trees repeatedly to make them bleed the resin. It is used as incense and perfume, among other things, and is therefore associated with the burial of Christ. It was also used in Egypt in the mummification process. In the Bible, it is also known as the “balm of Gilead” (e.g. Jer 8:22). Wine mixed with myrrh was offered to Jesus on the cross, which was a small kindness, as this drink had painkilling properties. Jesus, however, refused to drink it.

**Exodus 30** 25 Make these into a sacred **anointing oil**, a fragrant blend, the work of a perfumer. .... 26 Then use it to anoint the tent of meeting, the ark of the covenant law, 27 the table and all its articles, the lampstand and its accessories, the altar of incense, 28 the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the basin with its stand. 29 You shall consecrate them so they will be most holy, and whatever touches them will be holy.

30 “Anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate them so they may serve me as priests. 31 Say to the Israelites, ‘This is to be my sacred anointing oil for the generations to come. 32 Do not pour it on anyone else’s body and do not make any other oil using the same formula. It is sacred, and you are to consider it sacred. 33 Whoever makes perfume like it and puts it on anyone other than a priest must be cut off from their people.’”

34 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Take fragrant spices—gum resin, onycha and galbanum—and pure **frankincense**, all in equal amounts, 35 and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer. [Frankincense is an aromatic resin used in incense and perfumes, harvested from trees by slashing the bark, which is called **striping**, and allowing the resin to bleed out and harden.] It is to be **salted** and pure and sacred. 36 Grind some of it to powder and place it in front of the ark of the covenant law in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. 37 Do not make any incense with this formula for yourselves; consider it holy to the Lord. 38 Whoever makes incense like it to enjoy its fragrance must be cut off from their people.”

**Exodus 31** Then the Lord said to Moses, 2 “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— 4 to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, 5 to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts. 6 Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given ability to all the skilled workers to make everything I have commanded you....11 ....They are to make them just as I commanded you.”

12 Then the Lord said to Moses, 13 “Say to the Israelites, ‘You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy.

14 “Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it is to be put to death; those who do any work on that day must be cut off from their people. 15 For six days work is to be done, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day is to be put to death. 16 The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. 17 It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’”

18 When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the **two tablets of the covenant law**, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

**Exodus 32** When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come, make us gods [Hebrew: *Elohim*, so could be “a god”] who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.”

2 Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” [Was he hoping that by asking for their gold, their vanity and greed would make them give up the idea?] 3 So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. 4 He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. [Ps 106:19-20 says, “They made a calf in Horeb, and worshiped a molten image; thus, they exchanged their glory for the likeness of a bull eating grass.”] Then **they said**, “These are your gods [Hebrew: *Elohim*, so it could be translated, “This is your god”], Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.” 6 So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry. [KJV: “to play,” i.e. engage in an orgy. “Sympathetic magic.”]

7 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go down, because **your** people, whom **you** brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. 8 They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, ‘[This is your god], Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’

9 “I have seen these people,” the Lord said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people. 10 Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.”

11 But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God. “Lord,” he said, “why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth’? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. 13 Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and **Israel**, to whom you swore by your own self: ‘I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.’” 14 Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

15 Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands. They were **inscribed on both sides**, front and back. [When Ezekiel was called by the Lord, he was told, “Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me.... Then...I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, 10 which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe.” (Ezk 2:3, 9-10). Rev 5:1 says, “Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals.”] 16 The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

17 When Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting, he said to Moses, “There is the sound of war in the camp.”

18 Moses replied:

“It is not the sound of victory,  
it is not the sound of defeat;  
it is the sound of singing [indiscriminate shouting or revelry] that I hear.”

19 When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, **breaking them to pieces** at the foot of the mountain. [This was an act of legally **abrogating** the binding agreement / covenant that was written on the tablets.] 20 And he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it. [Similar to the “water of jealousy” in Num 5:11-31, in which a woman suspected of adultery would be made to drink water into which dust from the floor of the tabernacle had been sprinkled, and the words of a curse had been washed.]

21 He said to Aaron, “What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?”

22 “Do not be angry, my lord,” Aaron answered. “You know how prone these people are to evil. 23 They said to me, ‘Make us [a god] who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.’ 24 So I told them, ‘Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.’ Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!”

25 Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies. 26 So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, “Whoever is for the Lord, come to me.” And all the Levites rallied to him.

27 Then he said to them, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.’” 28 The Levites did as Moses

commanded, and that day about **three thousand** of the people died. [Cp. Acts 2:41 where “Those who accepted (Peter’s gospel) message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”] 29 Then Moses said, “You have been set apart to the Lord today, for you were against your own sons and brothers, and he has blessed you this day.”

30 The next day Moses said to the people, “You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the Lord; **perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.**”

31 So Moses went back to the Lord and said, “Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves [a god] of gold. 32 But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.” [Is this the “book of Life” mentioned in Revelation? See: Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27.]

33 The Lord replied to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book. 34 Now go, lead the people to the place I spoke of, and my angel will go before you. However, when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin.”

35 And the Lord struck the people with a plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.

**Exodus 33** Then the Lord said to Moses, “Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ 2 I will send an angel before you and drive out the [the inhabitants of the land]. 3 Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way.”

4 When the people heard these distressing words, they began to mourn and no one put on any ornaments. 5 For the Lord had said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites, ‘You are a stiff-necked people. If I were to go with you even for a moment, I might destroy you. Now take off your ornaments and I will decide what to do with you.’” 6 So the Israelites stripped off their ornaments at Mount Horeb.

7 Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the “tent of meeting.” Anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. 8 And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. 9 As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the Lord spoke with Moses. 10 Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to their tent. 11 The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.

12 Moses said to the Lord, “You have been telling me, ‘Lead these people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, ‘I know you by name and you have found favor with me.’ 13 If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.”

14 The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

15 Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. 16 How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

17 And the Lord said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.”

18 Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”

19 And the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 20 But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”

21 Then the Lord said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a **rock**. 22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a **cleft in the rock** and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

**Exodus 34** The Lord said to Moses, “Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. 2 Be ready in the morning, and then come up on Mount Sinai. Present yourself to me there on top of the mountain. 3 No one is to come with you or be seen anywhere on the mountain; not even the flocks and herds may graze in front of the mountain.”

4 So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the Lord had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. 5 Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. 6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”

8 Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped. 9 “Lord,” he said, “if I have found favor in your eyes, then let the Lord go with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as your inheritance.”

10 Then the Lord said: “I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you. 11 Obey what I command you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 12 Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. 13 Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles [wooden symbols of the goddess Asherah]. 14 Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

15 “Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices. 16 And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.

17 “Do not make any idols.

18 “Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread. For seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Aviv, for in that month you came out of Egypt.

19 “The first offspring of every womb belongs to me, including all the firstborn males of your livestock, whether from herd or flock. 20 Redeem the firstborn **donkey** with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. [According to some, the donkey represents human beings.] Redeem all your firstborn sons.

“No one is to appear before me empty-handed.

21 “Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest.

22 “Celebrate the Festival of Weeks with the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, and the Festival of Ingathering at the turn of the year [i.e., autumn]. 23 **Three times a year all your men are to appear before the Sovereign Lord**, the God of Israel. 24 I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your territory, and no one will covet your land when you go up three times each year to appear before the Lord your God.

25 “Do not offer the blood of a sacrifice to me along with anything containing yeast, and do not let any of the sacrifice from the Passover Festival remain until morning.

26 “Bring the best of the firstfruits of your soil to the house of the Lord your God.

“Do not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.”