
שמות ת EXODUS

INTRODUCTION

The *Book of Exodus* tells the story of the Exodus from Egypt (1:1–15:21) and the Covenant at Mount Sinai (19:1–40:38), connected by the account of the Israelites' journey through the desert (15:22–18:27). The Hebrew title of the book (שמות – 'Names') comes from the first verse, wherein the names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel are listed.

The Decalogue, or the 'Ten Words' inscribed on the tablets at Sinai, lays down the fundamental Law of the Covenant. It is recorded in two places, Ex 20:2–17 and Dt 5:6–18, with some significant textual differences. After giving the Ten Commandments and other important laws, the narrative continues with a detailed description of the tabernacle – as revealed to Moses in a vision on Mt Sinai – and associated items, such as the ritual costume for the Aaronic priests. This is followed by an account of how the Israelites, led by the Aaronic priests, then built the tabernacle.

Although there are numerous differences between the *Masoretic Text* and that of the Greek *Septuagint*, most of these are trivial and/or variants in names. Textual evidence of the *Book of Exodus* from the *Qumran Scrolls* is, unfortunately, fragmentary; though the 18 scrolls, collectively, represent (parts of) every chapter, they differ widely in their dates, styles and languages (some are in the paleo-Hebrew script, others are more 'commentaries' or 'reworkings' than representative copies of the 'original' text).

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

The composition, authorship, and date of origin of the Torah (Pentateuch) have become the subjects of much debate between (and among) scholars and religious leaders. There are, essentially, two vastly different (and seemingly irreconcilable) opinions.

Since at least the early Christian era, the traditional, Jewish/Christian view is that the entire work was written by Moses, having been dictated to him by God during the Israelites' 40-year sojourn in the desert, and neither Jesus nor his apostles question this (Jn 1:45, 5:45–47, Rm 10:5). Indeed, it is an article of faith for Rabbinic Jews that the current, 'received text' of the Torah is letter-perfect to that originally given/written.

However, many (if not most) biblical scholars today accept (to varying extents) the so-called, 'Documentary Hypothesis', first proposed in the 19th Century. According to this theory, the Pentateuch is an amalgam of four documents, issuing from different places and times (but all much later than Moses). The first two documents are the Yahwistic Source (J) and the Elohistic Source (E); the former uses the Divine Name, 'Yahweh' and was supposedly written in Judah in the 10th Century BCE; the latter uses 'Elohim' and originates in Israel, a little later. After the fall of the Northern Kingdom, these two documents were combined into what is generally now known as the Old Epic Tradition (JE). After the reign of Josiah, the Deuteronomic Source (D) was added and, after the Exile, the Priestly Code (P) was further added, to give the work form and sinew. Though we do not, in this project, necessarily subscribe to this documentary hypothesis, we nevertheless colour the English text according to the source assigned by those scholars who do so: the OLD EPIC (JE) sections are in blue text, the DEUTERONOMIC (D) in brown and the PRIESTLY CODE (P) in purple.

שמות פרק א

EXODUS 1

א ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה את יעקב איש וביתו באו: ב ראובן שמעון לוי ויהודה: ג יששכר זבולן ובנימין: ד דן ונפתלי גד ואשר: ה ויהי כל-נפש יצאי ירד-יעקב שבעים נפש ויוסף היה במצרים: ו וימת יוסף וכל-אחיו וכל הדור ההוא: ז ובני ישראל פרו וישרצו וירבו ויעצמו במאד מאד ותמלא הארץ אתם: {פ}

ח ויקם מלך-חדש על-מצרים אשר לא-ידע את-יוסף: ט ויאמר אל-עמו הנה עם בני ישראל רב ועצום ממנו: י הבה נתחכמה לו פן-ירבה והיה כִּי

1 These are the names of the sons of Israel, who went with Jacob to Egypt, each with his family: 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, 3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, 4 Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. 5 In all, the seed of Jacob's loins were seventy souls. Joseph was in Egypt already. 6 Then Joseph died, and his brothers, and all that generation. 7 But the Israelites were fruitful and prolific; they became numerous and mighty and the whole land was full of them.

8 Now, there arose in Egypt a new king who did not know Joseph. 9 He said to his people, "Look, the Israelites are now more and stronger than us. 10 We must be wise, lest they increase further; or, if

EXODUS 1

- 1 The expression **בני ישראל** ('sons of Israel') in most places refers to the nation as a whole and can be translated 'Israelites' (as NJB), although traditionally it has been rendered 'the children of Israel' or 'the sons of Israel'; here, it refers primarily to the individual sons of the patriarch Israel, for they are named.
- 2 For 'Reuben' (**ראובן**), 'Simeon' (**שמעון**), 'Levi' (**לוי**) & 'Judah' (**יהודה**), the LXX reads *Ρουβην, Συμεων, Λευι & Ιουδας*, respectively.
- 3 For 'Issachar' (**יששכר**), 'Zebulun' (**זבולן**) & 'Benjamin' (**בנימין**), the LXX reads *Ισσαχαρ, Ζαβουλων & Βενιαμιν*, respectively.
- 4 For 'Dan' (**דן**), 'Naphtali' (**נפתלי**), 'Gad' (**גד**) & 'Asher' (**אשר**), the LXX reads *Δαν, Νεφθαλι, Γαδ & Ασηρ*, respectively.
- 5 The LXX reads 'seventy-five' (*πέντε καὶ ἑβδομήκοντα* – see #Gn 46:27), as do 2 Qumran MSS, and opens with, "Joseph was in Egypt already."
- 6 Over four centuries elapsed since Joseph's death (12:40, compare Gn 15:13).
- 7 The promise concerning Abraham's numerous descendants was being fulfilled (Gn 17:1 – 8, see #Ex 12:37).
- 8 This verse alludes to the new regime at the start of the 19th Dynasty under Seti I (1308–1290 BCE) and Rameses II (1290–1224 BCE). Hoping to regain Egypt's lost Asiatic empire, the pharaohs moved their capital from Thebes, where it had been during the 18th Dynasty, to the Delta.
- 9 The particle **הנה** ('look', traditionally 'behold') introduces the foundational clause for the exhortation to follow by drawing the listeners' attention to the Israelites; in other words, the exhortation that follows is based on this observation.
- 10 The presence of the Hebrews on Egypt's frontier was regarded as a security risk.

תִּקְרָאנָה מִלְחָמָה וְנוֹסְף גַּם־הוּא עַל־שֹׁנְאֵינוּ וְנִלְחֹם־
בָּנוּ וְעָלָה מִן־הָאָרֶץ: ^{יא} וַיִּשְׁימוּ עָלָיו שָׂרֵי מִסִּים לְמַעַן
עֲנֹתוֹ בְּסִבְלָתָם וַיְבִין עָרֵי מִסְכְּנוֹת לַפְּרָעָה אֶת־פִּתּוֹם
וְאֶת־רַעַמְסֵס: ^{יב} וְכַאֲשֶׁר יֵעָנוּ אֹתוֹ כֵּן יִרְבֶּה וְכֵן יִפְרָץ
וַיִּקְצוּ מִפָּנָי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

^{יג} וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפֶרֶךְ: ^{יד} וַיִּמְרְרוּ
אֶת־חַיֵּיהֶם בַּעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה בַּחֲמֹר וּבִלְבָּנִים וּבְכָל־
עֲבֹדָה בַּשָּׂדֶה אֶת כָּל־עֲבֹדָתָם אֲשֶׁר־עָבְדוּ בָהֶם
בְּפֶרֶךְ:

^{טו} וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְמִילֵדֹת הָעִבְרִית אֲשֶׁר שֵׁם
הָאֶחָת שִׁפְרָה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית פּוּעָה: ^{טז} וַיֹּאמֶר בִּילְדָכָן

there is war, they will join our enemies, take arms against us, and so
leave the land.” ¹¹ So, they put slave drivers over them to oppress
them with hard labour; they built store-cities for Pharaoh: Pithom
and Rameses. ¹² But the more they were crushed, the more they
increased and spread, and they came to fear the Israelites.

¹³ The Egyptians made the Israelites serve rigorously, ¹⁴ making their
lives miserable with hard labour: with digging clay, making bricks,
and all kinds of work in the fields – all sorts of labour that they
imposed on them without mercy.

¹⁵ The king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom
was named Shiprah, and the other Puah. ¹⁶ “When you attend

¹¹ Egypt does not seem to have had a regular system of forced labour, though the manpower for major undertakings was provided in part by prisoners of war, and by serfs attached to the royal domain (see, for Israel, 2S 12:31). The city, *Rameses*, would be the residence of Rameses II in the Delta: either Tanis or Qantir; the reference indicates Rameses II (1290–1224 BCE) as the oppressive Pharaoh and gives an approximate date for the Exodus. ‘Pharaoh’ is from the Egyptian, ‘per-aa’ (‘the Great House’), conventional designation of the Palace or Court and, from the 18th dynasty onwards, of the king’s own person; here, it is used as a proper name.

¹² The imperfect tenses in this verse (‘they were crushed’, ‘they increased and spread’, ‘they came to fear’) are customary uses, expressing continual action in past time.

¹³ The story of the oppression is continued in 5:6–23. In the following verses (Elohistic), the measures taken for the destruction of the male children do not tally with the requirements of forced labour but prepare the ground for the story of the birth of Moses.

¹⁴ NETB ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, “Every kind of service the Israelites were required to give was rigorous.”

¹⁵ The term ‘Hebrew’, older and broader than ‘Israelite’, (see Gn 10:21–31) was often used when foreigners spoke to or about Abraham’s people (Gn 39:14, 17, 40:15). The LXX (μαίαις τῶν Εβραίων) & Vg (obstetricibus Hebræorum) do not take the term ‘Hebrew’ as an adjective but as a genitive after the construct, yielding ‘midwives of/over the Hebrews’.

¹⁶ The meaning of the phrase, ‘watch the two stones’, is uncertain; it may refer to the seat on which women sat while in labour, or the sexual organs of the infant. The Peshitta reads ‘the two knees’ and the LXX (ὡς πρὸς τῷ τίλτειν) interprets the text freely: ‘when they are about to give birth’.

אֶת־הָעִבְרִיּוֹת וַרְאִיתָן עַל־הָאֲבָנִים אֲסִבֶּן הוּא
וְהִמָּתֵן אֹתוֹ וְאֲסִבֶּת הוּא וְחִיָּה: ^ז וְתִירָאן הַמִּילָדֹת
אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים וְלֹא עָשׂוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֲלֵיהֶן מֶלֶךְ
מִצְרַיִם וְתַחֲיִין אֶת־הַיִּלָּדִים: ^י וַיִּקְרָא מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם
לַמִּילָדֹת וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶן מִדּוּעַ עָשִׂיתֶן הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְתַחֲיִין
אֶת־הַיִּלָּדִים: ^{יט} וְתֹאמַרְןָ הַמִּילָדֹת אֶל־פַּרְעֹה כִּי לֹא
כְנָשִׁים הַמִּצְרַיִת הָעִבְרִיֹּת כִּי־חַיּוֹת הֵנָּה בְּטָרִם תִּבּוּא
אֲלֵהֶן הַמִּילָדֹת וַיִּלְדוּ: ^כ וַיֵּיטֵב אֱלֹהִים לַמִּילָדֹת וַיִּרְב
הָעָם וַיַּעֲצֻמוּ מְאֹד: ^{כא} וַיְהִי כִי־יִרְאוּ הַמִּילָדֹת אֶת־
הָאֱלֹהִים וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם בָּתִּים:

^{כב} וַיִּצֹּ פַרְעֹה לְכָל־עַמּוֹ לֵאמֹר כָּל־הַבֶּן הַיֵּלֹד הַיְאֹרָה
תִּשְׁלִיכֻהוּ וְכָל־הַבֶּת תַּחֲיִין: {פ}

Hebrew women,” he said, “watch the two stones carefully. If it is a boy, kill him; if a girl, let her live.” ¹⁷ But they were God-fearing women and disobeyed the command of the king of Egypt, and allowed the boys to live. ¹⁸ Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives. “Why,” he asked them, “have you done this and spared the boys?” ¹⁹ “The Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women,” they answered Pharaoh; “they are hardy, and they give birth before the midwife reaches them.” ²⁰ God was kind to the midwives. The people went on increasing and grew very powerful; ²¹ since the midwives feared God, he granted them descendants.

²² Pharaoh then gave all his subjects this command: “Throw every new-born boy into the river but let all the girls live.”

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- ¹⁷ The verb ‘live’ is a Piel preterite, which often indicates a factual nuance, showing the cause of the action; here, it means ‘let live’; the verb is the exact opposite of Pharaoh’s command for them to kill the boys.
- ¹⁸ The second verb in Pharaoh’s speech is a preterite with a *vav* consecutive; it may indicate a simple sequence: “Why have you done ... and (so that you) let live?” It could also indicate that this is a second question, “Why have you done ... (why) have you let live?”
- ¹⁹ In place of ‘hardy’, here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have ‘vigorous’.
- ²⁰ The *vav* consecutive on the verb וַיֵּיטֵב (‘was kind’) shows that this favour from God was a result of their fearing and obeying him.
- ²¹ The temporal indicator וַיְהִי focuses attention on the causal clause and lays the foundation for the main clause, namely ‘God granted them families’; this is the 2nd time the text affirms the reason for their defiance: their fear of God.
- ²² The word used for ‘river’ indicates the Nile, the great river of Egypt, but it is also used of its main branches.

EXODUS 2

שמות פרק ב

א וילך איש מבית לוי ויקח את־בת־לוי: ב ותהר האשה ותלד בן ותרא אתו כ־טוב הוא ותצפנהו שלשה ירחים: ג ולא־יכלה עוד הצפינו ותקח־לו תבת גִּמָּא ותחמרה בחמר ובזפת ותשם בה את־הילד ותשם בסוף על־שפת היאר: ד ותתצב אחתו מרחק לדעה מה־יעשה לו:

ה ותרד בת־פרעה לרחץ על־היאר ונערתיָה הלכת על־יד היאר ותרא את־התבה בתוך הסוף ותשלח את־אמתה ותקחה: ו ותפתח ותראה את־הילד והנה־נער בכה ותחמל עליו ותאמר מילדי העברים זה: ז ותאמר אחתו אל־בת־פרעה האלך וקראתי לך אשה מינקת מן העברית ותינק לך את־הילד:

¹ Now a man of the tribe of Levi had married a daughter of Levi. ² She conceived and bore a son and, seeing he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. ³ When she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him; coating it with bitumen and pitch, she put the child inside and laid it among the reeds at the river's edge. ⁴ His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

⁵ Pharaoh's daughter went to bathe in the river, and her attendants walked along the riverside. Among the reeds, she saw the basket, and sent her maid to fetch it. ⁶ She opened it and saw a baby boy, crying; and she pitied him. "This is one of the Hebrews' children," she said. ⁷ Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and find you a nurse among the Hebrew women to nurse the child for

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¹ In place of 'daughter of Levi', here following the MT & NETB, the NRSV has 'woman of Levi'.

² Aspects of this story are paralleled in the legends of other national heroes, e.g. Sargon of Agade, king of Mesopotamia (circa 2600 BCE) who, in infancy, was saved from danger by being put in a basket of rushes sealed with pitch and floated on the river.

³ The term here translated as 'basket' is used elsewhere only of the ark of Noah; it may be connected to the Egyptian word for 'chest'.

⁴ Moses' sister was Miriam (15:20, Nb 26:59). The verb 'would happen' is a Niphal imperfect; it should be classified here as a historic future, future from the perspective of a point in a past time narrative.

⁵ It is difficult to identify 'Pharaoh's daughter'. If Rameses was the pharaoh, there were numerous daughters. The *Book of Jubilees* names her Tharmuth (Jub 47:5) and Josephus has Thermouthis (*Ant.*, II 9:5), but Eusebius has Merris (*Praep. Ev.*, IX 27). Some identify her as the famous Hatshepsut, daughter of Thutmose I; the picture of her from history shows her to be a princess with the courage to disobey her father's decree.

⁶ In place of 'pitied', here following NETB, the NJB has 'felt sorry for', but the verb has a stronger meaning than this.

⁷ No respectable Egyptian woman of this period would have undertaken the task of nursing a foreigner's baby, so the suggestion by Miriam was proper; since she was standing a small distance away from the events, she was able to come forward when the discovery was made.

ח וַתֹּאמֶר-לָהּ בַת-פַּרְעֹה לְכִי וְתִלְדִּי הָעֹלָמָה וְתִקְרָא
אֶת-אִם הַיֶּלֶד: ט וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ בַת-פַּרְעֹה הֲלִיכִי אֶת-
הַיֶּלֶד הַזֶּה וְהִנְקָהוּ לִי וְאֲנִי אֶתֵּן אֶת-שְׂכָרְךָ וְתִקַּח
הָאִשָּׁה הַיֶּלֶד וְתִנְקָהוּ: י וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד וְתַבְאֵהוּ לְבַת-
פַּרְעֹה וַיְהִי-לָהּ לְבֵן וְתִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מֹשֶׁה וְתֹאמַר כִּי מִן-
הַמַּיִם מָשִׂיתָהוּ:

יא וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָהֵם וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל-אֶחָיו וַיֵּרָא
בְּסִבְלָתָם וַיֵּרָא אִישׁ מִצְרִי מַכֶּה אִישׁ-עִבְרִי מֵאֶחָיו:
יב וַיִּפֶּן כָּה וְכָה וַיֵּרָא כִּי אֵין אִישׁ וַיַּךְ אֶת-הַמִּצְרִי
וַיִּטְמְנֵהוּ בַחֹל: יג וַיֵּצֵא בַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי וְהִנֵּה שְׁנֵי-אֲנָשִׁים
עֹבְרִים נֹצִים וַיֹּאמֶר לְרָשָׁע לָמָּה תִּכֶּה רֵעֶךָ: יד וַיֹּאמֶר
מִי שְׂמֶךָ לְאִישׁ שֶׁר וְשִׁפְטִי עָלֵינוּ הֲלֹהֲרֹגְנִי אַתָּה אָמַר
כָּאֲשֶׁר הִרְגָתָ אֶת-הַמִּצְרִי וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אָבֹן
נוֹדַע הַדָּבָר: טו וַיִּשְׁמַע פַּרְעֹה אֶת-הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה וַיִּבְקֹשׁ

you?" ⁸ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go!" So, the girl went to find the baby's mother. ⁹ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse it for me; I will see you are paid." So, the woman took the child and nursed it. ¹⁰ The child grew up and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter who adopted him; she named him Moses saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."

¹¹ When Moses had grown up, he went out to his brothers and saw their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian strike a Hebrew, one of his brothers. ¹² Looking around, there was no one in sight, so he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. ¹³ The next day, he came back and saw two Hebrews fighting. He said to him who was in the wrong, "Why did you hit your neighbour?" ¹⁴ He said, "Who made you a prince over us, and judge? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Moses was afraid, thinking, "Clearly that thing is

⁸ The word here translated as 'girl' (עֹלָמָה) is used in Is 7:14, where it is usually translated either 'virgin' or 'young woman'; the word basically means a young woman who is ripe for marriage, implying that Miriam is a teenager and so about fifteen years older than Moses.

⁹ The literal translation of 'I will see you are paid' is 'I will pay you wages'.

¹⁰ This is the popular etymology of the name 'Moses' from the Hebrew verb 'to draw out'; but Pharaoh's daughter did not speak Hebrew. Actually, the name is Egyptian, known under its shortened form, 'Moses', or under a complete form, e.g. 'Tutmoses', "The god Tut is born."

¹¹ The text says nothing about Moses' education, 11:3 merely stating that he had become a 'man of great importance' and Acts 7:22 that he was 'taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians'. Josephus and Philo add legendary details.

¹² The literal translation of 'looking around' (וַיִּפֶּן כָּה וְכָה) is 'he turned thus and thus'.

¹³ The word translated as 'in the wrong' (רָשָׁע) is a legal term meaning the guilty; this guilty man rejects Moses' intervention for much the same reason Pharaoh – he does not recognise his authority. Later, Pharaoh will use this term to declare himself as in the wrong and God in the right.

¹⁴ Literally translated, the man's question is, "Who placed you for a man, a ruler and a judge over us?"

לְהָרֹג אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וַיִּבְרַח מֹשֶׁה מִפְּנֵי פַרְעֹה וַיָּשָׁב
בְּאֶרֶץ־מִדְיָן וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל־הַבְּאֵר:

טז וַיִּלְכְּדוּ מִדְיָן שִׁבְעַת בָּנוֹת וַתִּבְאֶנָּה וַתְּדַלְּנָה וַתִּמְלְאֶנָּה
אֶת־הַרְהָטִים לְהַשְׁקוֹת צֹאן אָבִיהֶן: יז וַיָּבֹאוּ הָרָעִים
וַיִּגְרְשׁוּם וַיִּקָּם מֹשֶׁה וַיִּזְשַׁעַן וַיִּשְׁק אֶת־צֹאנָם:
יח וַתִּבְאֶנָּה אֶל־רְעוּאֵל אָבִיהֶן וַיֹּאמֶר מִדְּוַע מֵהֶרְתָּן
בָּא הַיּוֹם: יט וַתֹּאמְרֶן אִישׁ מִצְרִי הִצִּילָנוּ מִיַּד הָרָעִים
וְגַם־דָּלָה דָּלָה לָנוּ וַיִּשְׁק אֶת־הָצֹאן: כ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־
בָּנָתָיו וְאִיוֹ לָמָּה זֶה עֲזַבְתֶּן אֶת־הָאִישׁ קְרָאֵן לוֹ וַיֹּאכַל
לֶחֶם: כא וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְשִׁבְתָּ אֶת־הָאִישׁ וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־
צִפּוֹרָה בִּתּוֹ לְמֹשֶׁה: כב וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ גֶּרְשֹׁם
כִּי אָמַר גֵּר הָיִיתִי בְּאֶרֶץ נִכְרִיָּה: {פ}

known.” ¹⁵ When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and made for the land of Midian; and he sat down beside a well.

¹⁶ Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father’s flock. ¹⁷ Shepherds came to drive them off but Moses came to save them and watered their sheep. ¹⁸ When they came to their father Reuel, he said, “You are back early today!” ¹⁹ They said, “An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds; yes, and he drew water for us and watered the flock.” ²⁰ He asked his daughters, “Where is he? Why did you leave the man? Ask him to eat with us.” ²¹ Moses agreed to stay with this man, who gave him his daughter Zipporah. ²² She bore him a son whom he named Gershom for, he said, “I am a stranger in a foreign land.”

¹⁵ The traditional site of *Midian* is in Arabia, to the south of Edom and to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba, and Arabic folklore has preserved a memory of a stay by Moses in this region. More precise indication of where their territory lay is given in 1K 11:18, where a prince of Edom, fleeing to Egypt, crosses Midian and then Paran (the southern part of the Negeb, between Kadesh and Egypt). Thus, Midian, where God revealed himself to Moses, is to be situated in the Sinai Peninsula, to the east of the desert of Paran, and not in Arabia.

¹⁶ The word ‘water’ is not in the MT but it is implied. See #18:1.

¹⁷ The actions of the shepherds are subordinated to the main statement about what Moses did.

¹⁸ The text disagrees over the name and person of Moses’ father-in-law. Here, we have ‘Reuel’, priest of Midian; in 3:1, 4:18 & 18:1, he is called ‘Jethro’; Nb. 10:29 speaks of ‘Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite’, and Jg 1:16 & 4:11 of ‘Hobab the Kenite’.

¹⁹ Continuing the theme of Moses as the deliverer, the text now uses another word for salvation, הִצִּילָנוּ (‘rescued’).

²⁰ The literal translation of ‘to eat’ is ‘to have bread’.

²¹ Another reading for ‘Moses agreed’ is ‘Moses was willing’; the Talmud understood this to mean that he swore; and so, when it came time to leave, he had to have a word from God and permission from his father-in-law (4:18–19).

²² ‘Gershom’ (גֶּרְשֹׁם) is from גֵּר (a resident alien).

כג וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָרַבִּים הָהֵם וַיָּמָת מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וַיֵּאָנְחוּ
 בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־הָעֲבָדָה וַיִּזְעֻקוּ וַתַּעַל שְׁוַעֲתָם אֶל־
 הָאֱלֹהִים מִן־הָעֲבָדָה: כד וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נַאֲקָתָם
 וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת־אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יִצְחָק
 וְאֶת־יַעֲקֹב: כה וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּדַּע
 אֱלֹהִים: {ס}

23 And, during this long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites,
 groaning in their slavery, cried out for help and from the depths of
 their slavery their cry came up to God. 24 God heard their groaning
 and God called to mind his Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and
 with Jacob. 25 God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of
 them.

23 The 'king' was probably Seti I (see #1:8). The Israelites hoped that their condition would improve under the new regime, but Rameses II continued the oppressive building program.

24 Concerning the Covenant with Israel's ancestors, see Gn 12:1–3, 17:1–4, 26:2–5. The word for this painfully intense 'groaning' appears elsewhere to describe a response to having two broken arms (Ezk 30:24).

25 This verse follows the NRSV. The NJB reads, "God saw the Israelites and took note ..." (including the ellipsis) and includes a footnote to the effect that the end of the verse is missing.

שמות פרק ג

EXODUS 3

א וּמֹשֶׁה הָיָה רֹעֶה אֶת־צֹאן יִתְרוֹ חֹתָנוּ כֹּהֵן מִדְיָן וַיִּנְהֲגֵהוּ אֶת־הַצֹּאן אַחֲרֵי הַמִּדְבָּר וַיָּבֹא אֶל־הָרַ הַהוּא חֹרֵב׃ ב וַיֵּרָא מֶלֶאךָ יְהוָה אֵלָיו בְּלִבַּת־אֵשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה הַסִּנֵּה בֹעֵר בָּאֵשׁ וְהַסִּנֵּה אֵינֶנּוּ אָבֹל׃ ג וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְתֶּרֶנָּא וְאַרְאֶה אֶת־הַמֶּרְאָה הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה מִדּוֹעַ לֹא־יִבָּעֵר הַסִּנֵּה׃ ד וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה כִּי סָר לִרְאוֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹהִים מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי׃ ה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־תִּקְרַב הֵלֶם שָׁלֵךְ נַעֲלֶיךָ מֵעַל רַגְלֶיךָ כִּי הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עומד עָלָיו אֲדַמֶּת־קֹדֶשׁ הוּא׃ ו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֱלֹהֵי אֲבִיךָ אֱלֹהֵי

¹ Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, and priest of Midian; and he led his flock beyond the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There, the Angel of Yahweh appeared to him in a flame of fire, out of a bush; he looked: the bush was blazing yet it was not consumed. ³ "I must go and look at this great sight," Moses said, "and see why the bush is not burnt." ⁴ When Yahweh saw him go forward to look, God called to him from the middle of the bush. "Moses, Moses!" he said. "Here I am," he said. ⁵ "Come no closer," he said, "take off your sandals, for the place on which you stand is holy ground." ⁶ And he said, "I am the God of

EXODUS 3

- ¹ 'Horeb' is the name for the Sinai Range in the historical context of the Deuteronomist and in the Deuteronomic editing of the Book of Kings; here, it is a gloss, as in 17:6.
- ² The 'Angel of Yahweh' here refers to God's manifesting himself in the world (see #Gn. 16:7). Fire frequently accompanies the revelation of God in Exodus as he delivers Israel, guides her, and purifies her. The description here is unique, calling attention to the manifestation as a flame of fire from within the bush.
- ³ 'Great' (following the MT & NRSV) means something extraordinary here (the NJB has 'strange' and NETB has 'amazing'); in using this term, Moses revealed his reaction to the strange sight and his anticipation that something special was about to happen – so he turned away from the flock to investigate.
- ⁴ The repetition of the name in God's call is emphatic, making the appeal direct and immediate (see also Gn 22:11, 46:2). The use of the personal name shows how specifically God directed the call and that he knew this person. The repetition may have stressed even more that it was indeed he whom God wanted.
- ⁵ The removal of sandals before entering a holy place was an ancient custom (Jos 5:15). Even though God was drawing near to Moses, Moses could not casually approach him; there still was a barrier between God and human, and God had to remind Moses of this with instructions.
- ⁶ The vision of God veiled in fire aroused dread (33:20); for, God's majesty is such that no creature can gaze at it and live.

אֲבֹרָהֶם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וַיִּסְתֵּר מֹשֶׁה פָּנָיו
כִּי יֵרָא מִהִבֵּיט אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה רָאֵה רָאִיתִי אֶת־עֲנִי עַמִּי אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְרַיִם
וְאֶת־צַעֲקָתָם שָׁמַעְתִּי מִפְּנֵי נִגְשָׁיו כִּי יִדְעֹתִי אֶת־
מַכָּאֲבֵיו: ^ח וְאֵרֵד לְהַצִּילוֹ מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וְלִהְיוֹתָ מִן־
הָאָרֶץ הַהִוא אֶל־אָרֶץ טוֹבָה וְרוֹחָבָה אֶל־אָרֶץ זֶבֶת
חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ אֶל־מְקוֹם הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהָאֱמֹרִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי
וְהַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוֹסִי: ^ט וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה צַעֲקַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּאָה
אֵלַי וְגַם־רָאִיתִי אֶת־הַלֶּחֶץ אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם לֹחֲצִים
אֹתָם: ^י וְעַתָּה לֵךְ וְאֶשְׁלַחְךָ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וְהוֹצֵא אֶת־
עַמִּי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם:

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים מִי אֲנֹכִי כִּי אֵלֶךְ אֶל־
פַּרְעֹה וְכִי אוֹצִיא אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם: ^{יב} וַיֹּאמֶר
כִּי־אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ וְזֶה־לָּךְ הָאוֹת כִּי אֲנֹכִי שְׁלַחְתִּיךָ

your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ Then Yahweh said, “I have observed affliction of my people who are in Egypt. I have heard their appeal to be free of their slave drivers. Indeed, I know their sufferings. ⁸ I mean to rescue them from the clutches of the Egyptians and bring them up out of that land to a land rich and broad, a land where milk and honey flow, to the home of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites. ⁹ And now, the Israelites’ cry has come to me, and I have seen how the Egyptians oppress them; ¹⁰ so come, I send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring the Israelites, my people, out of Egypt.”

¹¹ Moses said to God, “Who am I to go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” ¹² “I shall be with you,” was the answer, “and this is the sign by which you shall know that it is I who have

⁷ In place of ‘affliction’, here following NETB, the NRSV has ‘misery’ and the NJB has ‘miserable state’.

⁸ “A land where milk and honey flow,” is a description of the Promised Land frequent in the Pentateuch.

⁹ The word here translated as ‘cry’ is a technical term for the outcry one might make to a judge; God had seen the oppression and so knew that the complaints were accurate, and so he initiated the proceedings against the oppressors

¹⁰ These instructions for Moses are based on the revelation made to him. The deliverance of Israel was to be God’s work, hence, ‘I send you’; when God commissioned people, it indicated that they went with his backing, his power, and his authority.

¹¹ When he was younger, Moses was confident and impulsive; now that he is older, the greatness of the task makes him unsure. The remainder of this chapter and the next chapter record the 4 difficulties of Moses and how God answers them (11–12, 13–22, 4:1–9, and 4:10–17).

¹² The ‘sign’ may be what is said in the 2nd part of the verse, or perhaps a sign of the type in 4:1–9 that has been omitted.

בְּהוֹצִיאֲךָ אֶת־הָעָם מִמִּצְרַיִם תַּעֲבֹדוּן אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים
עַל הַהָר הַזֶּה:

י' וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים הֲנֵה אֲנֹכִי בֹא אֶל־בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתִּי לָהֶם אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם
וְאָמְרוּ־לִי מַה־שֵּׁמוֹ מָה אָמַר אֱלֹהִים: י"ד וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים
אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲהִיָּה שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם: טו וַיֹּאמֶר עוֹד אֱלֹהִים
אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כֹּה־תֹאמַר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי
אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב
שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם זֶה־שֵּׁמִי לְעֹלָם וְזֶה זִכְרִי לְדֹר דֹּר:

טז לֵךְ וְאֶסַּפְתָּ אֶת־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם נִרְאָה אֵלַי אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב

sent you; after you have led the people out of Egypt, you are to offer worship to God on this mountain."

¹³ And Moses said to God, "If I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is his name?' what am I to tell them?" ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I Am He-Who-Is." He added, "Thus you shall tell the Israelites: 'I Am has sent me to you.'" ¹⁵ And God said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites, 'Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever and this is my memorial to all generations.

¹⁶ "Go and bring together the elders of Israel and tell them, 'Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob,

¹³ According to the Elohist tradition, the name of Yahweh was first revealed to Moses as the name of the God of the Ancestors. The Priestly tradition (6:2-3) agrees with this, adding the information that the name of the God of the Ancestors was El Shaddai (see #Gn 17:1).

¹⁴ This narrative presents two difficulties: **1** The etymology: attempts have been made to explain the name, 'Yahweh', by languages other than Hebrew; but clearly, it is part of the Hebrew verb 'to be' in an archaic form. Some see it as a causative form of the verb: 'he causes to be', 'he brings into existence', but it is more probably a form of the indicative, meaning 'he is'. **2** The interpretation: the word is explained here, in an ancient addition from the same tradition. The meaning of this explanation is disputed: Speaking of himself, God can only use the 1P, 'I am', and the Hebrew (אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה) can be translated literally, 'I am *what* I am', meaning that God does not wish to reveal his name; but, in fact, here God is giving his name, which, according to the Semitic way of thinking, ought in some degree to define him. But the Hebrew can also be translated literally as, 'I am *who* I am', and, by the rules of Hebrew syntax, this corresponds to, 'I am *he who is*' or 'I am *the one who exists*'; and this is how the translators of the LXX understood it (Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὢν): God is the only truly existent being.

¹⁵ The literal translation of 'to all generations' is 'from generation to generation'.

¹⁶ When used of God, 'visit' implies an absolute right of scrutiny, judgement and punishment. His interventions in the destiny of individuals or peoples can bring well-being (4:31, Gn 21:1, 50:24-25, Ps 65:9, 80:14, Ws 3:7-13 & Jr 29:10 and see #Lk 1:68) or punishment (1S 15:2, Ws 14:11, 19:15, Jr 6:15, 23:24 & Am 3:2).

לֵאמֹר פֶּקֶד פֶּקֶדְתִּי אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת־הַעֲשׂוֹי לָכֶם
בְּמִצְרַיִם: ^{יז} וְאֵמַר אֲעֵלֶה אֶתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם אֶל־
אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהָאֱמֹרִי וְהַיִּבּוּסִי
אֶל־אֶרֶץ זִבְתַּח חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ: ^{יח} וְשָׁמְעוּ לְקֹלְךָ וּבֹאֲתָ
אֶתָּה וְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וְאָמַרְתָּם אֵלָיו
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִיִּים נִקְרָה עָלֵינוּ וְעַתָּה גֵלְכָה־נָּא
דֶּרֶךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים בַּמִּדְבָּר וְנִזְבַּחָה לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ:
^{יט} וְאֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי כִּי לֹא־יִתֵּן אֶתְכֶם מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְהֵלֶךְ
וְלֹא בְיַד חֲזָקָה: ^כ וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אֶת־יָדִי וְהִבִּיתִי אֶת־
מִצְרַיִם בְּכָל־נִפְלְאוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֶעֱשֶׂה בְּקִרְבּוֹ וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן
יִשְׁלַח אֶתְכֶם:

^{כא} וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־חֶן הָעַם־הַזֶּה בְּעֵינֵי מִצְרַיִם וְהָיָה כִּי
תֵּלְכוּן לֹא תֵּלְכוּ רִיקִם: ^{כב} וְשָׂאֲלָה אִשָּׁה מִשְׁכַּנְתָּהּ

has appeared to me, saying: I have visited you and seen all that has been done to you in Egypt. ¹⁷ So, I have resolved to bring you up out of Egypt where you are in misery, to the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, to a land where milk and honey flow.” ¹⁸ They will listen to your words and, with the elders of Israel, you shall go to the king of Egypt and tell him, “Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us now go three days’ journey into the desert to sacrifice to Yahweh our God.” ¹⁹ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go and not with a mighty hand. ²⁰ I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders I am going to work there; after this, he will let you go.

²¹ “I will give this people favour in the eyes of the Egyptians so, when you go, you will not go empty-handed. ²² Every woman will ask her

¹⁷ Each people group is joined to the preceding by the *vav* conjunction, (*‘and’*); each also has the definite article, as in similar lists (3:17; 13:5; 34:11). However, repetition in the translation puts more weight on the list than is necessary in identifying what land God was giving the Israelites.

¹⁸ Was this a deceptive request if they were not planning on coming back? Since no one knows what the intent was, that question is not likely to be resolved. The request may have been intended to test the waters, so to speak – how did Pharaoh feel about the Israelites? Would he let them go and worship their God as they saw fit? In any case, it gave him the opportunity to grant to the Israelites permission that other groups are known to have received.

¹⁹ The NJB ends this verse with, “*unless a mighty hand forces him.*”

²⁰ The outstretched arm is a bold anthropomorphism; it describes the power of God: the Egyptians will later admit that the plagues were by the hand of God (8:19).

²¹ This idiom ‘*favour in the eyes of*’ usually means that someone will be treated well by the observer; it is unlikely that it means here that the Egyptians will like the Hebrews: rather, it means that the Egyptians will give things to the Hebrews free.

²² It is clear that God intended the Israelites to plunder the Egyptians, as they might a defeated enemy in war.

וּמִגֵּרַת בֵּיתָהּ כָּל־כֶּסֶף וְכָל־זָהָב וְשִׁמְלֹת וְשִׁמְתָם
עַל־בְּנֵיכֶם וְעַל־בָּנֹתֵיכֶם וְנָצַלְתֶּם אֶת־מִצְרָיִם:
neighbour and she who visits her house for silver jewels and gold,
and clothes; you will put them on your sons and daughters; you will
plunder the Egyptians.”

שמות פרק ד

א וַיַּעַן מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר וְהֵן לֹא־יֵאֱמִינוּ לִי וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹלִי כִּי יֹאמְרוּ לֹא־נִרְאָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ יְהוָה: ב וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו יְהוָה מִזֶּה [מֵה־זֶּה] בְּיָדְךָ וַיֹּאמֶר מִטֶּה: ג וַיֹּאמֶר הַשְׁלִיכֵהוּ אֶרְצָה וַיִּשְׁלַכְהוּ אֶרְצָה וַיְהִי לְנָחָשׁ וַיֵּנָס מֹשֶׁה מִפָּנָיו: ד וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה שְׁלַח יָדְךָ וְאַחֲזֵ בְזָנְבוֹ וַיִּשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וַיַּחֲזֹק בּוֹ וַיְהִי לְמִטָּה בְּכַפּוֹ: ה לִמְעַן יֵאֱמִינוּ כִּי־נִרְאָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתָם אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:

ו וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לֹא עוֹד הֵבֵאתִי יָדְךָ בְּחִיקְךָ וַיָּבֵא יָדוֹ בְּחִיקוֹ וַיּוֹצֵאָהּ וְהִנֵּה יָדוֹ מְצֹרֶעֶת כַּשָּׁלֵג: ז וַיֹּאמֶר הֲשֵׁב יָדְךָ אֶל־חִיקְךָ וַיָּשֻׁב יָדוֹ אֶל־חִיקוֹ וַיּוֹצֵאָהּ מִחִיקוֹ

EXODUS 4

¹ And Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, "Yahweh has not appeared to you?" " ² Yahweh said to him, "What is that in your hand?" "A rod," he said. ³ He said, "Throw it on the ground;" so he threw the rod on the ground – it became a snake and Moses fled from it. ⁴ Yahweh said to Moses, "Put your hand out and take it by the tail." He put out his hand and caught it and it became a rod in his hand. ⁵ "Thus, they may believe that Yahweh, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

⁶ Again, Yahweh said to him, "Put your hand into your cloak." He put his hand into his cloak and, when he drew it out, it was leprous, white as snow. ⁷ "Put your hand back into your cloak." He put his

EXODUS 4

- ¹ The use of הֵן ('what if') is unusual here, introducing a conditional idea in the question without a following consequence clause (see 8:22, Jr 2:10, 2Ch 7:13). The LXX has 'if not' (Ἐὰν οὐκ μὴ) but adds the clause 'what shall I say to them' (τί ἐρῶ πρὸς αὐτούς).
- ² The NJB has 'Moses said', in place of 'he said', here following the MT & NRSV. The contracted form in the *Ketiv* here lacks the letter that represents the number, 5; some suggest that this means that only 5 of the plagues will come about through the use of the rod.
- ³ Snake magic was practised in ancient Egypt; this was the reverse of a trick whereby a snake is made rigid by hypnotism.
- ⁴ The signs authenticated Moses' ministry as the Lord's emissary. This sign will show that the Lord had control over Egypt and its stability, over life and death. But first Moses has to be convinced that he can turn it into a dead stick again.
- ⁵ This verse interrupts the story and some consider it an addition.
- ⁶ In vv. 6-7, the NJB has 'bosom' in place of 'cloak', here following the NRSV. The word, חֵיק, refers to the front of the chest and a fold in the garment there where an item could be placed for carrying (see Pr 6:27, 16:33, 21:14); so, 'into your cloak' should be understood loosely here as referring to the inside of the top front of Moses' garment.
- ⁷ The literal translation of 'restored' is 'returned'. Alternative readings for 'body' (as NRSV) are 'skin' (NETB) and 'flesh' (NJB).

וְהָיָה שֶׁבַח כְּבָשָׁרוֹ: ^ח וְהָיָה אִם-לֹא יֵאֱמִינוּ לָךְ וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ לְקֹל הָאֵת הָרֵאשׁוֹן וְהָאֲמִינוּ לְקֹל הָאֵת הָאַחֲרוֹן: ^ט וְהָיָה אִם-לֹא יֵאֱמִינוּ גַם לְשֵׁנֵי הָאֲתוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ לְקֹלְךָ וּלְקַחְתָּ מִמִּימֵי הַיָּאֵר וְשִׁפְכָתָּ הַיִּבְשָׁה וְהָיוּ הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר תִּקַּח מִן-הַיָּאֵר וְהָיוּ לְדָם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא:

^י וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-יְהוָה בִּי אֲדֹנָי לֹא אִישׁ דְּבָרִים אֲנִי גַם מִתְמוּל גַּם מִשְׁלֵשׁ גַּם מֵאִזְ דְּבָרְךָ אֶל-עַבְדְּךָ בִּי כְבֹד-פֶּה וְכְבֹד לָשׁוֹן אֲנִי: ^{יא} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלָיו מִי שֵׁם פֶּה לֹא אֲדָם אוֹ מִי-יָשׁוּם אֵלִים אוֹ חֵרֶשׁ אוֹ פֶקֶח אוֹ עֹר הָלֹא אֲנִי יְהוָה: ^{יב} וְעַתָּה לָךְ וְאֲנִכִּי אֶהְיֶה עִם-פִּיךָ וְהוֹרִיתִיךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּדְבֹּר:

^{יג} וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנָי שְׁלַח-נָא בְיָד-תְּשֻׁלַּח: ^{יד} וַיַּחֲרֹאֶף יְהוָה בְּמֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלֹא אֶהְרֵן אַחִיךָ הַלֵּוִי יִדְעָתִי בִּי

hand back into his cloak and when he drew it out, it was restored, like the rest of his body. ⁸ “If they will not believe you or heed the first sign, the second will convince them. ⁹ But if they will not believe these two signs and not listen to your words, you must take water from the Nile and pour it on the ground, and the water you have drawn from the Nile will turn to blood on the ground.”

¹⁰ Moses said to Yahweh, “But, my Lord, never in my life have I been eloquent, either before or since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.” ¹¹ “Who gave man his mouth?” Yahweh answered him. “Who makes him dumb or deaf, gives him sight or leaves him blind? Is it not I, Yahweh? ¹² Now go, I shall help you speak and tell you what to say.”

¹³ And he said, “Please, my Lord, send anyone you will!” ¹⁴ The anger of Yahweh burned against Moses, and he said, “What of your brother

⁸ Literally translated, the word ‘heed’ would be ‘listen to the voice of’ (i.e. ‘take notice of’).

⁹ The NJB has ‘river’ in place of ‘Nile’ (twice in this verse), here following the NRSV. This is a powerful sign, for the Nile was always known as the source of life in Egypt, but now it will become the evidence of death. So, the three signs were alike, each consisting of life and death; they would clearly anticipate the struggle with Egypt through the plagues.

¹⁰ The literal translation of ‘slow of speech’ (כְּבֹד-פֶּה) and ‘slow of tongue’ (כְּבֹד לָשׁוֹן) are, respectively, ‘heavy of mouth’ and ‘heavy of tongue’.

¹¹ In Hebraic thought, human conditions were not ascribed to secondary causes but to God, whose will is sovereign in all things (Dt 32:39).

¹² The promise of divine presence always indicates intervention (for blessing or cursing); here, it means that God would be working through the organs of speech to help Moses speak (see Dt 18:18, Jr 1:9).

¹³ The word בִּי (‘please’) is a particle of entreaty; it seeks permission to speak and is always followed by ‘Lord’ or ‘my Lord’.

¹⁴ Some suggests that the term ‘Levite’ may refer to a profession rather than ancestry here, because both Moses and Aaron were from the tribe of Levi and there would be little point in noting that ancestry for Aaron. Possibly, ‘the Levite’ referred to one who had had official training as a

דָּבַר יִדְבָּר הוּא וְגַם הִנֵּה-הוּא יֵצֵא לִקְרֹאתְךָ וְרֹאֶךָ
 וְשִׂמַּח בְּלִבּוֹ: ^{טו} וְדִבַּרְתָּ אֵלָיו וְשָׁמַתְּ אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים בְּפִיו
 וְאַנְכִי אֶהְיֶה עִם-פִּיךָ וְעִם-פִּיהוּ וְהוֹרִיתִי אֶתְכֶם אֵת
 אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּן: ^{טז} וְדִבַּר-הוּא לְךָ אֶל-הָעָם וְהָיָה הוּא
 יְהִי־לְךָ לִפֹּה וְאַתָּה תִּהְיֶה-לּוֹ לְאֱלֹהִים: ^{יז} וְאַתָּה-
 הַמָּטָה הַזֶּה תִּקַּח בְּיָדְךָ אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה-בּוֹ אֶת-
 הָאֵתוֹת: {פ}

^{יח} וַיֵּלֶךְ מֹשֶׁה וַיָּשָׁב אֶל-יִתְרוֹ חֹתֵנוּ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֵלְכָה
 נָא וְאֶשׁוּבָה אֶל-אֶחָי אֲשֶׁר-בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאַרְאֶה הָעוֹדִם
 חַיִּים וַיֹּאמֶר יִתְרוֹ לְמֹשֶׁה לֵךְ לְשָׁלוֹם:

^{יט} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה בְּמִדְיָן לֵךְ שָׁב מִצְרַיִם כִּי-
 מָתוּ כָּל-הָאֲנָשִׁים הַמְּבַקְשִׁים אֶת-נַפְשְׁךָ: ^כ וַיִּקַּח

Aaron the Levite? I know that he can speak well; here he comes to meet you. When he sees you, his heart will glad. ¹⁵ You will speak to him and tell him what message to give. I shall help you speak, and him too, and instruct you what to do. ¹⁶ He indeed will speak to the people in your place; he will be your mouthpiece, and you will be as the god inspiring him. ¹⁷ And take this rod in your hand; with this you will perform the signs."

¹⁸ Moses went away and returned to his father-in-law Jethro, and said to him, "Please let me go back to my relatives in Egypt to see if they are still alive." Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

¹⁹ Yahweh said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, for all those who wanted to kill you are dead." ²⁰ So, Moses took his wife and his

priest (cf. Jg 17:7, where a member of the tribe of Judah was a Levite); if it was the duty of the priest to give 'torah' – to teach – then some training in the power of language would have been in order (Ex 29).

¹⁵ The literal translation of 'help you speak' is 'be with your mouth'.

¹⁶ The relationship between God and his prophetic spokesman is analogous to that between Moses and Aaron (7:1, compare 16:9).

¹⁷ Moses receives his rod back from God (hence its name, 'staff of God', see v. 20); it is to be the instrument of wonders (7:20, 9:22ff, 10:13ff, & cf. the staff of Elisha, 2K 4:29).

¹⁸ This last section of the chapter reports Moses' compliance with the commission; it has four parts: the decision to return (vv. 18–20), the instruction (vv. 21–23), the confrontation with Yahweh (vv. 24–26), and the presentation with Aaron (vv. 27–31).

¹⁹ The text clearly stated that Pharaoh sought to kill Moses, so this seems to be a reference to Pharaoh's death shortly before Moses' return. Moses spent 40 years in Midian: in the 18th Dynasty, only Pharaoh Thutmose III had a reign of the right length (1504–1450 BCE) to fit this period of Moses' life; this would place Moses' returning to Egypt near 1450 BCE, in the beginning of the reign of Amenhotep II, whom most identify as the pharaoh of the Exodus. Rameses II, of course, had a very long reign (1304–1236 BCE); but, if he were the one from whom Moses fled, then he could not be the pharaoh of the Exodus: his son would be – and that puts the date of the Exodus after 1236 BCE, a date too late for anyone.

²⁰ Only one of Moses' sons has been mentioned so far (2:22, see 18:3–4).

מֹשֶׁה אֶת־אֲשֶׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־בָּנָיו וַיִּרְכָּבֶם עַל־הַחֲמֹר וַיָּשָׁב
 אֶרֶצָה מִצְרַיִם וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־מִטֵּה הָאֱלֹהִים בְּיָדוֹ:
 כ^א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּלֻכְתְּךָ לָשׁוּב מִצְרָיִמָה
 רְאֵה כָל־הַמִּפְתִּים אֲשֶׁר־שִׁמַּתִּי בְיָדְךָ וַעֲשִׂיתָם לִפְנֵי
 פַּרְעֹה וְאֲנִי אֲחַזֵּק אֶת־לְבָבוֹ וְלֹא יִשְׁלַח אֶת־הָעָם:
 כב וַאֲמַרְתָּ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה בְּנִי בְכֹרִי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל: כג וַאֲמַר אֵלֶיךָ שְׁלַח אֶת־בְּנִי וַיַּעֲבֹדֵנִי וְתִמָּאֵן
 לְשַׁלְּחוֹ הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי הֹרֵג אֶת־בְּנֶךָ בְּכָרְךָ:

כד וַיְהִי בַדֶּרֶךְ בַּמִּלּוֹן וַיִּפְגְּשֵׁהוּ יְהוָה וַיִּבְקֶשׁ הַמִּיתּוֹ:
 כה וַתִּקַּח צִפּוֹרָה צֹר וַתִּכְרֹת אֶת־עֶרְלַת בְּנָהּ וַתַּגֵּעַ
 לְרַגְלָיו וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי חֲתָן־דָּמִים אַתָּה לִּי: כו וַיֵּרָף מִמֶּנּוּ
 אַז אָמְרָה חֲתָן דָּמִים לְמוֹלֶת: {פ}

כז וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן לֵךְ לִקְרֹאת מֹשֶׁה הַמִּדְבָּרָה
 וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּפְגְּשֵׁהוּ בְּהַר הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּשְׁקֻלּוּ: כח וַיַּגֵּד מֹשֶׁה

sons, put them on a donkey and started back for the land of Egypt; and Moses took in his hand the staff of God.²¹ Yahweh said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders that I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.²² You will then say to Pharaoh, “Thus says Yahweh: Israel is my firstborn son.²³ I told you: Let my son go that he may worship me; but you refused to let him go; well then, I shall surely kill your firstborn son.”

²⁴ On the way, at an inn, Yahweh met him and tried to kill him.²⁵ But Zipporah, taking a flint, cut off her son’s foreskin and with it touched his feet and said, “You are my blood bridegroom!”²⁶ So, he let him go. She said, “Blood bridegroom,” because of the circumcision.

²⁷ Yahweh said to Aaron, “Go into the desert to meet Moses.” So, he went and met him on God’s mountain and kissed him.²⁸ Moses told

²¹ Vv. 21–23 are secondary and anticipate the plagues of Egypt: v. 21 the first nine plagues and the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart (see #7:8); and vv. 22–23, the tenth plague (see #11:1).

²² ‘Israel’ (the people) is Yahweh’s ‘firstborn son’ among the nations, a pre-eminent rank based upon divine adoption or election (Jr 31:9, Ho 11:1).

²³ The construction, ‘I shall surely kill’, is emphatic; the particle הִנֵּה gives it immediacy, as if God is already beginning to act. The participle with this particle has the nuance of an imminent future act, as if God is saying, ‘I am about to kill’; these words are not repeated until the last plague.

²⁴ The narrative of vv. 24–26 is mysterious because of its brevity and lack of context; Moses is not named (but see #25), and it is not clear to whom the personal pronouns apply. It may be that Moses attracts God’s anger for not being circumcised and that Zipporah appeased it by circumcising her son but simulating a circumcision of Moses by touching his genitals (his ‘feet’, see Is 6:2 & 7:20) with the child’s foreskin.

²⁵ The NRSV names Moses in place of the pronoun, ‘his’; see #24.

²⁶ The words ‘because of’, here following the WEBBE, are not in the MT.

²⁷ Some take this verse as continuing vv. 17–18, so that Aaron met Moses before he started back to Egypt (Ch. 33).

²⁸ The verbs ‘said’ and ‘charged’ are read as past perfects because they refer to what Yahweh had done prior to Moses’ telling Aaron.

לְאַהֲרֹן אֵת כָּל־דְּבַר יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַח וְאֵת כָּל־
הָאֵתֹת אֲשֶׁר צִוָּהוּ: כִּט וַיֵּלֶךְ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאסְפוּ אֶת־
כָּל־זִקְנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ל וַיְדַבֵּר אַהֲרֹן אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים
אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיַּעַשׂ הָאֵתֹת לְעֵינֵי הָעָם:
לֹא וַיֹּאמְנוּ הָעָם וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ כִּי־פָקַד יְהוָה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְכִי רָאָה אֶת־עַנְיָם וַיִּקְדּוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ:

Aaron all that Yahweh had said when he set him his task and all the signs with which he charged him. ²⁹ Moses and Aaron then went and assembled all the elders of the Israelites ³⁰ and Aaron told all that Yahweh had said to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. ³¹ The people believed and when they heard that Yahweh had visited the Israelites and seen their misery, they bowed down and worshipped.

²⁹ The 'elders' are the leaders of the tribes who represented all the people; later, after the Exodus, Moses will select the most capable of them and others to be rulers in a judicial sense (18:21).

³⁰ The NJB rearranges this verse, placing 'in the sight of the people' before 'performed'.

³¹ In place of 'when they heard', here following the MT (& NRSV), the NJB, following the LXX, has 'they rejoiced'.

שמות פרק ה

EXODUS 5

א וְאַחֲרַיִם בָּאוּ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁלַח אֶת־עַמִּי וַיְחַגּוּ לִי בַמִּדְבָּר: ב וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה מִי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר אֲשַׁמַּע בְּקִלּוֹ לְשַׁלַּח אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יָדַעְתִּי אֶת־יְהוָה וְגַם אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא אֲשַׁלַּח: ג וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִים נִקְרָא עָלֵינוּ גִלְכָּה נָא דֶּרֶךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים בַּמִּדְבָּר וְנִזְבַּחַהּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ פֶּן־יִפְגְּעֵנוּ בַדֶּבֶר אוֹ בַחֲרָב: ד וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְמֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן תִּפְרִיעוּ אֶת־הָעָם מִמַּעֲשֵׂי לָבוֹא לְסִבְלַת־יָכֶם: ה וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה הַיִּזְרֵבִים עֲתָה עִם הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁבַּתֶּם אֹתָם מִסִּבְלָתָם:

1 Afterwards, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, "Let my people go, so they may hold a feast to me in the desert."" 2 Pharaoh said, "Who is Yahweh, that I should heed him and let Israel go? I do not know Yahweh and I will not let Israel go." 3 They said, "The God of the Hebrews has come to meet us. Let us go three days' journey into the desert to sacrifice to Yahweh our God, lest he fall on us with plague or sword." 4 The king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get back to your labours!" 5 Pharaoh said, "The common folk are many; you want them to stop working."

EXODUS 5

- 1 The word שְׁלַח (the Piel imperative) is traditionally translated as 'let (my people) go' (as here, following the NRSV); the Qal would be 'send', so the Piel could be 'release' (as NETB), 'dismiss', or 'discharge'. If a person was dismissed through the use of this verb, then he ceased to be within the power of the individual who had dismissed him: he was completely free and subsequently acted entirely on his own responsibility.
- 2 The contemptuous Pharaoh, whose absolute power was enforced by his deification in Egyptian religion, knew many gods; but Yahweh was unheard of and a request made in his name carried no authority.
- 3 Where did Moses get the idea that they should have a pilgrim feast and make sacrifices? God had only said they would serve him in that mountain. In the OT, the pilgrim feasts to the sanctuary three times a year incorporated the ideas of serving Yahweh and keeping the commandments. So, the words here use the more general idea of appearing before their God: they would go to the desert because there was no homeland yet; Moses later spoke of the journey as necessary to avoid offending Egyptian sensibilities (8:25–26).
- 4 Pharaoh's speech is a rhetorical question; he is not asking them why they do this, but rather is accusing them of doing it. He suspects their request is an attempt to get people time away from their labour. In Pharaoh's opinion, Moses and Aaron were 'removing the restraint' of the people in an effort to give them rest. Ironically, under the Law the people would be expected to cease their labour when they went to appear before God; he would give them the rest that Pharaoh refused to give.
- 5 Many translations have 'thought' in place of 'said', arguing that this is not the kind of thing that Pharaoh is likely to have said to Moses.

^י וַיֵּצֵאוּ פַרְעֹה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶת־הַנֹּגְשִׁים בָּעַם וְאֶת־שֹׁטְרָיו לֵאמֹר: ^ז לֹא תֹאסְפוֹן לָתֵת תֶּבֶן לָעַם לִלְבָּן הַלִּבְנִים כִּתְמוֹל שֶׁלֶשׁם הֵם יִלְכוּ וּקִשְׁשׁוּ לָהֶם תֶּבֶן: ^ח וְאֶת־מִתְכַּנֶּת הַלִּבְנִים אֲשֶׁר הֵם עֹשִׂים תְּמוֹל שֶׁלֶשׁם תַּשִּׁימוּ עֲלֵיהֶם לֹא תִגְרְעוּ מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי־נִרְפִּים הֵם עַל־כֵּן הֵם צֹעֲקִים לֵאמֹר גִּלְכָּה נִזְבַּחַה לֵאלֹהֵינוּ: ^ט תִּכְבֹּד הָעֶבֶדָה עַל־הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיַּעֲשׂוּ־בָהּ וְאֵל־יִשְׁעוּ בְּדַבְרֵי־שָׁקֶר:

^י וַיֵּצְאוּ נֹגְשֵׁי הָעַם וּשְׁטָרָיו וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־הָעַם לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר פַּרְעֹה אֵינֶנִּי נֹתֵן לָכֶם תֶּבֶן: ^{יא} אַתֶּם לֵכוּ קַחוּ לָכֶם תֶּבֶן מֵאֲשֶׁר תִּמְצְאוּ כִּי אֵין נִגְרַע מֵעֲבַדְתְּכֶם דְּבַר: ^{יב} וַיִּפֹּץ הָעַם בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לִקְשֹׁשׁ קֹשׁ לִתְבֵּן: ^{יג} וְהַנֹּגְשִׁים אָצִים לֵאמֹר כָּלוּ מַעֲשֵׂיכֶם דְּבַר־יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר בְּהִיּוֹת הַתֶּבֶן: ^{יד} וַיֵּלְכוּ שֹׁטְרֵי בְנֵי־

⁶ That same day, Pharaoh commanded the people's slave drivers and overseers: ⁷ "Up to now, you have given these people straw for brick making; do so no longer: let them go and gather straw for themselves. ⁸ But you are to get from them the same number of bricks as before, not reducing it at all. They are lazy, and that is why their cry is, "Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God." ⁹ Make these men work harder than ever, so that they do not have time to stop and listen to deceptive words."

¹⁰ The people's slave drivers went out with the overseers and said to the people, "Thus says Pharaoh: "I am not giving you straw. ¹¹ Go yourselves and get straw where you can find it; but your output will be no less." ¹² So, the people scattered all over the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. ¹³ The slave drivers were urgent, saying, "Complete your work for each day, just as when there was straw."

⁶ In place of 'overseers' (here following the NJB – the NRSV has 'supervisors' & NETB has 'foremen'), the LXX has 'scribes' (γραμματεῖς), perhaps thinking of these lesser officials as keeping records of the slaves and the bricks.

⁷ Chopped straw was mixed with the clay to give cohesion to the unbaked brick.

⁸ The literal translation of 'before' is 'yesterday and three days ago', a Hebrew idiom for 'in the past'.

⁹ Pharaoh treats the request for a three-day journey as a ruse to leave the country permanently.

¹⁰ The literal translation of 'I am not giving' is 'there is not I – giving'; the construction uses the negative particle combined with a subject suffix before the participle (אֵינֶנִּי נֹתֵן).

¹¹ The tense in the latter part of the 1st sentence could be translated as having the nuance of possibility ('wherever you may find it') or the nuance of potential imperfect ('wherever you are able to find any').

¹² The verb וַיִּפֹּץ, here translated as 'scattered' can also mean 'spread abroad'.

¹³ In place of 'were urgent', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'harassed them' and NETB has 'were pressuring them'.

יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר־שָׂמוּ עֲלֵהֶם נֹגְשֵׁי פַרְעֹה לֵאמֹר מִדּוּעַ
לֹא כְלִיתֶם חֻקְכֶם לִלְבֹּן בְּתַמּוּל שְׁלֹשׁ גַּם־תַּמּוּל גַּם־
הַיּוֹם:

טו וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׂטָרֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲקֹוּ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה לֵאמֹר
לָמָּה תַעֲשֶׂה כֹה לַעֲבָדֶיךָ: טז תָּבֵן אֵין נָתַן לַעֲבָדֶיךָ
וּלְבָנִים אֹמְרִים לָנוּ עָשׂוּ וְהִנֵּה עֲבָדֶיךָ מְכִים וְחֻטְאֵת
עֹמֵד: יז וַיֹּאמֶר נִרְפִּים אַתֶּם נִרְפִּים עַל־כֵּן אַתֶּם
אֹמְרִים נִלְכָּה נִזְבַּחַה לַיהוָה: יח וַעֲתָה לָכוּ עֲבָדוּ וְתָבֵן
לֹא־יִנָּתֵן לָכֶם וְתָכֵן לְבָנִים תִּתְּנוּ:

יט וַיֵּרְאוּ שְׂטָרֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲתֵם בָּרַע לֵאמֹר לֹא־
תִּגְרַעוּ מִלְּבָנֵיכֶם דְּבַר־יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ: כ וַיִּפְגְּעוּ אֶת־מֹשֶׁה
וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן נָצְבִים לִקְרֹאתָם בְּצֵאתָם מֵאֵת פַּרְעֹה:

¹⁴ The foremen, whom Pharaoh's slave drivers had set over the Israelites, were flogged, and were asked, "Why did you not finish the full amount of bricks as before, either yesterday or today?"

¹⁵ The Israelites' foremen went to Pharaoh and cried, "Why do you treat your servants so? ¹⁶ No straw is given to your servants, yet they tell us, 'Make bricks!' Now your servants are flogged! You are unjust to your own people." ¹⁷ He said, "You are lazy, lazy! That is why you say: "Let us go and sacrifice to Yahweh." ¹⁸ Go now, and work; you shall get no straw but you must deliver your quota of bricks."

¹⁹ The Israelites' foremen saw they were in trouble when told there would be no reduction in the daily quota of bricks. ²⁰ As they left Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for them.

¹⁴ The idioms for time here are found also in 3:10 and 5:7-8 (see #8). This question no doubt represents many accusations shouted at Israelites during the period when it was becoming obvious that, despite all their efforts, they were unable to meet their quotas as before.

¹⁵ The last section of this event tells the effect of the oppression on Israel, first on the people (15-19) and then on Moses and Aaron (20-21). The immediate reaction of Israel was to cry to Pharaoh – something they would learn should be directed to God. When Pharaoh rebuffed them harshly, they turned bitterly against their leaders.

¹⁶ The *NJB* lacks the last sentence, here taken from the *NRSV*. In a footnote, it offers 'but your people are to blame' as an option. The supervisors diplomatically suggest that the fault lies with Pharaoh's subordinates.

¹⁷ In place of 'lazy' (twice), here following the *NJB* & *NRSV*, *NETB* has 'slackers'; the form נִרְפִּים is derived from the verb רָפָה, meaning 'to be weak' or 'to let oneself go'.

¹⁸ In place of 'your quota' (תָּכֵן), here following *NETB*, the *NRSV* has 'the same number'.

¹⁹ The common Hebrew verb translated 'saw', like the common English verb for seeing, is also used to refer to mental perception and understanding, as in the question, "See what I mean?" The foremen understood how difficult things would be under this ruling.

²⁰ Moses and Aaron would not have made the appeal to Pharaoh that these Hebrew foremen did, but they were concerned to see what might happen, and so they waited to meet the foremen when they came out.

כא וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם יְיָהוּה עֲלֵיכֶם וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אֲשֶׁר
הִבְאִשְׁתֶּם אֶת־רִיחֲנוּ בְעֵינֵי פַרְעֹה וּבְעֵינֵי עֲבָדָיו
לְתַת־חֶרֶב בְּיָדָם לְהַרְגֵנוּ: כב וַיָּשָׁב מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְיָהוּה
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי לָמָּה הִרְעַתָּה לְעַם הַזֶּה לָמָּה זֶה
שְׁלַחְתָּנִי: כג וּמֵאֵז בָּאתִי אֶל־פַּרְעֹה לְדַבֵּר בְּשִׁמְךָ הֲרַע
לְעַם הַזֶּה וְהֵצַל לֹא־הֵצַלְתָּ אֶת־עַמְּךָ:

21 They said to them, “May Yahweh look on you and judge! You have made us hated by Pharaoh and his court, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.” 22 Moses returned to Yahweh and said, “Lord, why do you mistreat this people? Why did you send me? 23 Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has mistreated this nation, and you have done nothing to deliver your people.”

21 The literal translation of ‘made us hated by Pharaoh’ is ‘made our aroma stink in the eyes of Pharaoh’.

22 The designation in Moses’ address is אֲדֹנָי (*Adonai*), the term for ‘lord’ or ‘master’, but here it is pointed as it would be when it represents the Tetragrammaton.

23 Now the verb הִרְעַתָּה (*mistreated*) has a different subject – Pharaoh. The ultimate cause of the trouble was God, but the immediate cause was Pharaoh and the way he increased the work. Meanwhile, the Israelite foremen have pinned most of the blame on Moses and Aaron. Moses knows all about the sovereignty of God; and, as he speaks in God’s name, he sees the effect it has on pagans like Pharaoh. Thus, the rhetorical questions are designed to prod God to act differently.

שמות פרק ו

EXODUS 6

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה עֲתָה תִּרְאֶה אֲשֶׁר אֲעֲשֶׂה
לְפָרְעֹה כִּי בְיַד חֲזָקָה יִשְׁלַחַם וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה יִגְרָשֻׁם
מֵאֶרְצוֹ: {ס}

בַּיּוֹדָבָר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי יְהוָה:
אֲנִי אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אֶל־יִצְחָק וְאֶל־יַעֲקֹב בְּאֵל שְׁדַי
וְשְׁמִי יְהוָה לֹא נִודַעְתִּי לָהֶם: ד וְגַם הִקְמַתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי
אִתָּם לָתֵת לָהֶם אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֵת אֶרֶץ מִגְרֵיהֶם
אֲשֶׁר־גָּרוּ בָּהּ: ה וְגַם אֲנִי שָׁמַעְתִּי אֶת־נִאֲקַת בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם מַעֲבָדִים אִתָּם וְאָזְכֹּר אֶת־
בְּרִיתִי: ו לָכֵן אֶמַּר לְבְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי יְהוָה וְהוֹצֵאתִי
אֶתְכֶם מִתַּחַת סִבְלַת מִצְרַיִם וְהִצַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם
מֵעֲבָדָתָם וְגִאלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּזִרְעוֹ נְטוּיָה וּבְשִׁפְטִים

¹ Yahweh then said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. By a mighty hand, he will let them go; by a mighty hand, he will drive them from his land."

² Then God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am Yahweh. ³ To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I appeared as El Shaddai; I did not make myself known to them by my name Yahweh. ⁴ I also established my Covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land they lived in as strangers. ⁵ And I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, enslaved by the Egyptians, and I have remembered my Covenant.

⁶ Say therefore to the Israelites, "I am Yahweh. I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians; I will release you from slavery to them and, with my outstretched arm and with strokes of power, I will

EXODUS 6

- ¹ This verse is clearly a part of the final paragraph of Ch. 5, where some translations (such as the *NJB*) place it. The expression 'by a mighty hand' (וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה) could refer to God's powerful intervention to Pharaoh's forceful pursuit.
- ² Note that the verse numbers given in this chapter will be one less than those in the *NJB*. The revelation of the divine name is situated in Egypt, and the name, 'Yahweh' (יהוה), replaces the name, 'El Shaddai' (אֵל שְׁדַי), used by the Patriarchs (see #3:13).
- ³ The traditional rendering of 'El Shaddai' (אֵל שְׁדַי) as 'God Almighty' is reflected in the *LXX* and *Vg* but there is still little agreement on the etymology and exact meaning of the title. Suggestions have included the idea of 'mountain God', meaning the High God, as well as 'the God with breasts', but there is very little evidence supporting such conclusions and not much reason to question the early translations.
- ⁴ The 'Covenant' is that with Abraham, which guaranteed possession of the land of Canaan. The verb הִקְמַתִּי ('established') means 'set up', 'established', 'gave effect to' or 'concluded'; God's reference to the covenant here is meant to show the new revelation through redemption will start to fulfil the promises and show what the reality of the name Yahweh is to them.
- ⁵ The addition of the independent pronoun אֲנִי ('I') emphasises the fact that it was Yahweh himself who heard the cry.
- ⁶ The expression 'outstretched arm' is equivalent to the 'mighty hand' of 5:24.

גְּדֹלִים: ^ז וְלִקְחָתִי אֶתְכֶם לִי לְעָם וְהָיִיתִי לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים
וַיֵּדְעוּתָם כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הַמוֹצִיא אֶתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם
סְבִלֹת מִצְרַיִם: ^ח וְהִבֵּאתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁאַתִּי אֶת־יָדִי לָתֵת אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב
וְנָתַתִּי אֹתָהּ לָכֶם מוֹרָשָׁה אֲנִי יְהוָה: ^ט וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה בֵּן
אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה מִקְצֶר רוּחַ
וּמִעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה: {פ}

י וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ^{יא} בֹּא דַבֵּר אֶל־פַּרְעֹה
מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ: ^{יב} וַיְדַבֵּר
מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לֵאמֹר הֵן בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ אֵלַי
וְאִידֹּי יִשְׁמַעֲנִי פַרְעֹה וְאֲנִי עֶרְל שִׁפְתַּיִם: {פ}

יג וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן וַיִּצְוֶם אֶל־בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶל־פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְהוֹצִיא אֶת־בְּנֵי־
יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: {ס}

deliver you. ⁷ I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am Yahweh your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸ Then I will bring you to the land I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for your heritage; I am Yahweh!”” ⁹ Moses told this to the Israelites, but they would not listen to Moses, so crushed was their spirit and so cruel their slavery.

¹⁰ Yahweh then said to Moses, ¹¹ “Go and tell Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to let the Israelites leave his land.” ¹² But Moses before Yahweh, saying, “Look, since the Israelites have not listened to me, why should Pharaoh listen to a poor speaker like me?”

¹³ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron and ordered them both to go to the Israelites, to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to bring the Israelites out of the land of Egypt.

⁷ The coordinate terms of the 1st sentence, expressing the new relationship between God and his people are the time-honoured expression for God’s election and covenant, especially in Lv 26:12, Dt 26:17–19, 29:12, and often in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

⁸ Here, the twofold aspect of the covenant is clearly depicted: God swore the promise to the patriarchs, but he is about to give what he promised to this generation; this generation will know more about him as a result.

⁹ In place of the 2nd occurrence of ‘Moses’, here following the MT, the NJB, NRSV, NETB and most other English translation, read ‘him’.

¹⁰ The literal translation of this verse is, “And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying.”

¹¹ The form וַיִּשְׁלַח (‘let ... leave’) is the Piel imperfect or jussive with a sequential *vav*; following an imperative, it gives the verb’s purpose and intended result: they are to speak to Pharaoh and, as a result, he will release Israel. After the command to speak, however, the 2nd clause also indirectly states the content of the speech (cf. 11:2, 14:2, 15, 25:2, Lv 16:2, 22:2); but, as the next verse shows, Moses doubts that what he says will have the intended effect.

¹² The phrase ‘poor speaker like me’ would, if literally translated from the Hebrew, be ‘I (who am) of uncircumcised lips’.

¹³ The phrase, ‘to the Israelites’, follows the MT; the LXX and NJB omit it.

י^ד אֵלֶּה רָאשֵׁי בֵּית־אֲבֹתָם בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן בְּכֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל
חֲנוּךְ וּפְלֹוא חֲצֹרֹן וְכַרְמִי אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת רְאוּבֵן:
טו^ו וּבְנֵי שִׁמְעוֹן יִמְוָאֵל וַיִּמִּין וְאֹהַד וַיַּכִּין וְצֹחַר וְשָׁאוּל
בֶּן־הַכְּנַעֲנִית אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת שִׁמְעוֹן: טז^ז וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת
בְּנֵי־לֵוִי לְתֹלְדֹתָם גִּרְשֹׁן וְקָהַת וּמֶרָרִי וּשְׁנִי חַיִּי לֵוִי
שָׁבַע וּשְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה: יז^ח בְּנֵי גִרְשֹׁן לְבִנֵּי וּשְׁמֵעִי
לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם: יח^ט וּבְנֵי קָהַת עֲמֶרֶם וַיִּצְהָר וְחִבְרֹן
וְעִזִּיאֵל וּשְׁנִי חַיִּי קָהַת שְׁלֹשׁ וּשְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה:
יט^י וּבְנֵי מֶרָרִי מַחְלִי וּמוּשִׁי אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת הַלֵּוִי
לְתֹלְדֹתָם: כ^י וַיִּקַּח עֲמֶרֶם אֶת־יֹכְבֵּד דָּדָתוֹ לֹא לְאִשָּׁה
וּתְלִיד לָהּ אֶת־אֶהֱרֹן וְאֶת־מֹשֶׁה וּשְׁנֵי חַיִּי עֲמֶרֶם שָׁבַע
וּשְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה: כא^י וּבְנֵי יִצְהָר קָרַח וְנֹפֶג וְזִיכְרִי:
כב^י וּבְנֵי עִזִּיאֵל מִישָׁאֵל וְאֶלְצָפָן וְסִתְרִי: כג^י וַיִּקַּח אֶהֱרֹן
אֶת־אֵלִישֶׁבַע בַּת־עַמִּינָדָב אַחֹת נַחֲשֹׁן לֹא לְאִשָּׁה

¹⁴ The heads of their families: the sons of Reuben, Israel's firstborn: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi: these are the clans of Reuben.
¹⁵ The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar and Shaul, son of the Canaanite woman: the clans of Simeon. ¹⁶ The names of the sons of Levi and their descendants: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. Levi lived for a hundred and thirty-seven years. ¹⁷ The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei and their clans. ¹⁸ The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. Kohath lived for a hundred and thirty-three years. ¹⁹ The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. The clans of Levi with their descendants. ²⁰ Amram married Jochebed, his father's sister, who bore him Aaron and Moses. Amram lived for a hundred and thirty-seven years. ²¹ The sons of Izhar: Korah, Nepheg and Zichri. ²² The sons of Uzziel: Mishael, Elzaphan and Sithri. ²³ Aaron married Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab and the

¹⁴ For 'Hanoch' (חֲנוּךְ), 'Pallu' (פְּלֹוא), 'Hezron' (חֲצֹרֹן) & 'Carmi' (כַּרְמִי), the LXX reads, respectively, *Ενωχ, Φαλλους, Ασρων & Χαρμι*.

¹⁵ For 'Jemuel' (יִמְוָאֵל), 'Jamin' (יַמִּין), 'Ohad' (אֹהַד), 'Jachin' (יַכִּין), 'Zohar' (צֹחַר) & 'Shaul' (שָׁאוּל), the LXX reads, respectively, *Ιεμουηλ, Ιαμιν, Αωδ, Ιαχιν, Σααρ & Σαουλ*.

¹⁶ For 'Gershon' (גִּרְשֹׁן), 'Kohath' (קָהַת) & 'Merari' (מֶרָרִי), the LXX reads, respectively, *Γερσων, Καρα & Μεραρι*.

¹⁷ For 'Libni' (לְבִנִי) & 'Shimei' (שְׁמֵעִי), the LXX reads, respectively, *Λοβενι & Σεμει*.

¹⁸ For 'Amram' (עֲמֶרֶם), 'Izhar' (יִצְהָר), 'Hebron' (חִבְרֹן) & 'Uzziel' (עִזִּיאֵל), the LXX reads, respectively, *Αμβραμ, Ισσααρ, Χεβρων & Οζιηλ*.

¹⁹ The LXX renderings of 'Mahli' (מַחְלִי) & 'Mushi' (מוּשִׁי) are, respectively, *Μοολι & Ομουσι*.

²⁰ The literal translation of 'married' is 'took for a wife'.

²¹ The LXX renderings of 'Korah' (קָרַח), 'Nepheg' (נֹפֶג) & 'Zichri' (זִיכְרִי) are, respectively, *Κορε, Ναφεκ & Ζεχρι*.

²² For 'Mishael' (מִישָׁאֵל), 'Elzaphan' (אֶלְצָפָן) & 'Sithri' (סִתְרִי), the LXX has *Μισαηλ, Ελισαφαν & Σετρι*; some LXX MSS lack 'Mishael' (*Μισαηλ*).

²³ The LXX renderings of 'Nadab' (נַדָּב), 'Abihu' (אַבְיְהוּא), 'Eleazar' (אֶלְעָזָר) & 'Ithamar' (אִיתָמָר) are *Ναδαβ, Αβιουδ, Ελεαζαρ & Ιθαμαρ*.

וַתֵּלֶד לוֹ אֶת־נָדָב וְאֶת־אֲבִיהוּא אֶת־אֶלְעָזָר וְאֶת־
אִיתָמָר: ^{כד} וּבְנֵי קֹרַח אֲסִיר וְאֶלְקָנָה וְאַבְיָאֶסָף אֵלֶּה
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַקֹּרַחִי: ^{כה} וְאֶלְעָזָר בֶּן־אֶהֱרֹן לָקַח־לוֹ מִבְּנוֹת
פּוּטִיֶּאל לֹא לְאִשָּׁה וַתֵּלֶד לוֹ אֶת־פִּינְחָס אֵלֶּה רֹאשֵׁי
אֲבוֹת הַלְוִיִּם לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם: ^{כו} הוּא אֶהֱרֹן וּמֹשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר
אָמַר יְהוָה לָהֶם הוֹצִיאוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם עַל־צְבָאָתָם: ^{כז} הֵם הַמְּדַבְּרִים אֶל־פְּרֹעֹה
מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם לְהוֹצִיא אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם הוּא
מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן:

^{כח} וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם: {ס} ^{כט} וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר אֲנִי יְהוָה
דִּבֶּר אֶל־פְּרֹעֹה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי דֹבֵר
אֵלָיו: ^ל וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה הֵן אֲנִי עֶרְל שְׂפָתַיִם
וְאֵיךְ יִשְׁמַע אֵלַי פְּרֹעֹה: {פ}

sister of Nahshon and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ²⁴ The sons of Korah: Assir, Elkanah and Abiasaph. These are the clans of the Korahites. ²⁵ Eleazar, son of Aaron, married one of Putiel's daughters who bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of families of the Levites according to their clans. ²⁶ It was to this same Aaron and Moses that Yahweh had said, "Bring the Israelites out of the land of Egypt in battle order." ²⁷ It was they who spoke with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to lead the Israelites out of Egypt – it was the same Moses and Aaron.

²⁸ On the day Yahweh spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt: ²⁹ Then Yahweh said this to Moses, "I am Yahweh. Tell Pharaoh, king of Egypt, all that I say to you." ³⁰ However, Moses said before Yahweh's face, "But my manner of speech is inelegant, why should Pharaoh listen to me?"

²⁴ The LXX renderings of 'Assir' (אֲסִיר), 'Elkanah' (אֶלְקָנָה) & 'Abiasaph' (אַבְיָאֶסָף) are, respectively, *Ασιρ*, *Ελκανα* & *Αβιασαφ*.

²⁵ The LXX renderings of 'Putiel' (פּוּטִיֶּאל) & 'Phinehas' (פִּינְחָס) are, respectively, *Φουτιηλ* & *Φινεες*.

²⁶ The literal translation of 'in battle order' is 'by their hosts (or armies)'; often translated 'hosts' or 'armies', **צבאות** is a military term that portrays the people of God in battle array. In contemporary English, 'regiments' (as NETB) is more easily understood as a force for battle than 'companies' or 'divisions', which can have commercial associations.

²⁷ In place of 'it was the same', here following the MT (& NETB), the NJB has 'namely'.

²⁸ This verse continues from v. 11; the section mark at its end is not easy to explain.

²⁹ The literal translation of דִּבֶּר ('tell') is 'speak', but this does not sound as natural with a direct object in contemporary English.

³⁰ On Moses' 'inelegant speech', see #12.

שמות פרק ז

EXODUS 7

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה רְאֵה נִתְּתִיךָ אֱלֹהִים לְפָרְעֹה
וְאַהֲרֹן אֲחִיךָ יִהְיֶה נְבִיאֲךָ: ב אֶתָּה תְּדַבֵּר אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר
אֶצְוֶךָ וְאַהֲרֹן אֲחִיךָ יְדַבֵּר אֶל־פָּרְעֹה וְשַׁלַּח אֶת־בְּנֵי־
יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ: ג וְאֲנִי אֶקְשֶׁה אֶת־לֵב פָּרְעֹה וְהִרְבִּיתִי
אֶת־אֲתֹנִי וְאֶת־מוֹפְתֵי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: ד וְלֹא־יִשְׁמַע
אֲלֵכֶם פָּרְעֹה וְנִתַּתִּי אֶת־יָדִי בְּמִצְרַיִם וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶת־
עַבְדִּי אֶת־עַמִּי בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּשַׁפְטִים
גְּדֹלִים: ה וַיֵּדְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה בְּנִטְתִּי אֶת־יָדִי
עַל־מִצְרַיִם וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם: ו וַיַּעַשׂ
מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתָם בְּן עֶשְׂו: ז וּמֹשֶׁה
בֶּן־שְׁמֹנִים שָׁנָה וְאַהֲרֹן בֶּן־שְׁלֹשׁ וּשְׁמֹנִים שָׁנָה
בְּדַבְּרָם אֶל־פָּרְעֹה: {פ}

¹ Then Yahweh said to Moses, "See, I have made you as a god for Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. ² You must tell him all I command you, and Aaron your brother will tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave his land. ³ But I will harden Pharaoh's heart and perform many signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. ⁴ But Pharaoh will not listen to you, so I will lay my hand on Egypt and with strokes of power lead out my armies and my people, the Israelites, from the land of Egypt. ⁵ And the Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the Israelites from among them." ⁶ Moses and Aaron did so; they did what Yahweh commanded them. ⁷ Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three when they spoke to Pharaoh.

EXODUS 7

- ¹ The word אֱלֹהִים ('God(s)') is used a few times in the Bible for humans (e.g. Ps 45:6, 82:1) and always clearly in the sense of a subordinate to God – they are his representatives on earth. The explanation here goes back to 4:16: if Moses is like God in that Aaron is his prophet, then Moses is certainly like God to Pharaoh; only Moses, then, is able to speak to Pharaoh with such authority, giving him commands.
- ² 'All I command you' is a noun clause serving as the direct object of the verb 'tell' (see #6:29). The verb in the clause, אֶצְוֶךָ, is the Piel imperfect; it could be classified as a future: 'all I will command you'; a nuance of progressive imperfect also fits well: 'all I am commanding you'.
- ³ The imperfect tense אֶקְשֶׁה ('I will harden') is found only here in these 'hardening passages'. This Hiphil verb summarises Pharaoh's resistance to what God would be doing through Moses – he would stubbornly resist and refuse to submit; he would be resolved in his opposition.
- ⁴ See #6:26 on the use of the term צְבָאוֹת.
- ⁵ If God should 'stretch out his hand' against the Egyptians, they would be destroyed (cf. 24:11).
- ⁶ In place of 'did so', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'obeyed'.
- ⁷ The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV & NETB, with, "at the time of their audience with Pharaoh."

ח וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: ט כִּי יִדְבֹר
 אֲלֵכֶם פֶּרְעֹה לֵאמֹר תֵּנוּ לָכֶם מִזֶּפֶת וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל־
 אַהֲרֹן קַח אֶת־מִטְּעֶךָ וְהִשְׁלַךְ לִפְנֵי־פֶרְעֹה יְהִי לְתַנִּין:
 י וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל־פֶּרְעֹה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כֹן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה
 יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁלַךְ אַהֲרֹן אֶת־מִטְּהוֹ לִפְנֵי פֶרְעֹה וּלְפָנֵי עֲבָדָיו
 וַיְהִי לְתַנִּין: יא וַיִּקְרָא גַם־פֶּרְעֹה לַחֲכָמִים וּלְמַכְשָׁפִים
 וַיַּעֲשׂוּ גַם־הֵם חֲרָטְמֵי מִצְרַיִם בִּלְהִטִּיהֶם כֹּן:
 יב וַיִּשְׁלִיכוּ אִישׁ מִטְּהוֹ וַיְהִיו לְתַנִּינִם וַיִּבְלַע מִטְּה־
 אַהֲרֹן אֶת־מִטְּתָם: יג וַיַּחֲזֹק לֵב פֶּרְעֹה וְלֹא שָׁמַע
 אֱלֹהִים כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה: {ס}

יד וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כִּבְדֹּד לֵב פֶּרְעֹה מֵאֵן לִשְׁלַח
 הָעָם: טו לֶךְ אֶל־פֶּרְעֹה בַּבֹּקֶר הַנֶּה יֵצֵא הַמִּיָּמָה וְנִצַּבְתָּ
 לִקְרָאתוֹ עַל־שֵׁפֶת הַיָּאֵר וְהַמָּטָה אֲשֶׁר־נִהַפְּךָ לִנְחָשׁ

⁸ Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, ⁹ “If Pharaoh says to you, “Perform a wonder,” you must say to Aaron, “Take you rod and throw it down before Pharaoh and let it turn into a serpent.”” ¹⁰ So, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did as Yahweh commanded. Aaron threw down his rod before Pharaoh and his court, and it became a serpent. ¹¹ Then Pharaoh in his turn called for the sages and sorcerers, and with their witchcraft, the magicians of Egypt did the same. ¹² Each threw his rod down and they became serpents. But Aaron’s rod swallowed up theirs. ¹³ Still, Pharaoh’s heart was stubborn and, as Yahweh had said, he would not listen to them.

¹⁴ Then Yahweh said to Moses, “Pharaoh is adamant. He refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵ In the morning go to him as he makes his way to the water and wait for him by the bank of the river. In your hand,

⁸ The narrative of 7:8–10:29 tells of the first nine ‘*plagues of Egypt*’ – a time-honoured expression, which the text, in fact, applies only to the 10th; the first nine are ‘signs’ or ‘wonders’, like those of Ch. 4 and v.9. The first 9 differ from the 10th in form and vocabulary.

⁹ The literal translation of ‘*perform*’ (תִּנֵּן) is ‘*give*’.

¹⁰ The noun here translated as ‘*serpent*’ is תַּנִּין, and not the word for ‘snake’ used in Ch. 4; this noun refers to a large reptile, in some texts large river or sea creatures (Gn 1:21, Ps 74:13) or land creatures (Dt 32:33). Some think here it must be a large land reptile, or even a small crocodile. This wonder paralleled Moses’ miracle in 4:3 when he cast his rod down; but this is Aaron’s rod, and a different miracle.

¹¹ The חֲרָטְמֵי (‘*magicians*’) seem to have been the keepers of Egypt’s religious and magical texts, the sacred scribes.

¹² In the phrase ‘*each (man) threw*’, the verb is plural but the subject is singular.

¹³ ‘*Stubborn*’ translates חֲזָק; this indicates a will that is unyielding and firm.

¹⁴ With the first plague, or blow on Pharaoh, a new section of the book unfolds. Until now, the dominant focus has been on preparing Moses for the Exodus; from here, the account will focus on preparing Pharaoh for it.

¹⁵ Moses was to meet Pharaoh by the riverbank with a challenge to Egyptian existence; for the Nile, believed to have its source in the subterranean ocean (see #Gn 2:6), was the source of life and fertility.

תִּקַּח בַּיָּדְךָ: ^{טז} וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִים
 שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר שְׁלַח אֶת-עַמִּי וַיַּעֲבֹדְנִי בַּמִּדְבָּר
 וְהִנֵּה לֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ עַד-כָּה: ^{יז} כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה בְּזֹאת תֵּדַע
 כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מִכָּה | בַּמָּטֶה אֲשֶׁר-בְּיָדִי עַל-
 הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּאֵר וְנִהְפְּכוּ לָדָם: ^{יח} וְהִדְגָּה אֲשֶׁר-בַּיָּאֵר
 תָּמּוֹת וּבֹאֵשׁ הַיָּאֵר וְנִלְאוּ מִצְרַיִם לִשְׁתּוֹת מִיָּם מִן-
 הַיָּאֵר: {ס}

^{יט} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה אֲמַר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן קַח מִטֶּדֶךָ
 וְנִטְהַרְיֶדְךָ עַל-מֵימֵי מִצְרַיִם עַל-נְהַרְתָּם | עַל-יֶאֱרִיָּהֶם
 וְעַל-אֲגֻמֵּיהֶם וְעַל כָּל-מִקְוֵה מִימֵיהֶם וַיְהִי-יָדָם וְהָיָה
 דָּם בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּבְעֵצִים וּבְאֲבָנִים: ^כ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ-כֵן
 מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן כְּאֲשֶׁר | צִוָּה יְהוָה וַיֵּרָם בַּמָּטֶה וַיִּךְ אֶת-
 הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּאֵר לְעֵינֵי פֶרַעַה וּלְעֵינֵי עַבְדָּיו וַיַּהֲפֹכוּ
 כָּל-הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר-בַּיָּאֵר לָדָם: ^{כא} וְהִדְגָּה אֲשֶׁר-בַּיָּאֵר
 מִתָּה וַיִּבָּאֵשׁ הַיָּאֵר וְלֹא-יָכְלוּ מִצְרַיִם לִשְׁתּוֹת מִיָּם מִן-

take the rod that turned into a serpent. ¹⁶ Say to him, “Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to say: Let my people go to worship me in the desert. Now, so far you have not listened. ¹⁷ Thus says Yahweh: By this you shall learn that I am Yahweh: with the rod that is in my hand I will strike the water of the river and it shall be turned to blood. ¹⁸ The fish in the river will die, and the river will stink and the Egyptians will be unable to drink the water of it.”

¹⁹ Yahweh said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, “Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over its rivers, its canals, its ponds, all its reservoirs, and let them turn to blood throughout the land of Egypt, even in every tub and jar.”” ²⁰ Moses and Aaron did as Yahweh commanded. He raised his rod and, before Pharaoh and his court, struck the waters of the river; and all the water in the river turned to blood. ²¹ When the fish in the river died, the river stank, so the Egyptians could not drink its water. In all the land of Egypt, there

¹⁶ An alternative translation for ‘listened’ (שָׁמַעְתָּ) is ‘complied’.

¹⁷ ‘The staff that is in my hand’ refers to that in the hand of Moses, God’s appointed agent.

¹⁸ The plague of blood may reflect a natural phenomenon: namely, the reddish colour of the Nile at its height in the summer, owing to red particles of earth or perhaps minute organisms.

¹⁹ The tendency to enhance the tradition is seen in the facts that, here, the rod is Aaron’s (see 4:14, 7:2) and that all the water of Egypt is said to have been polluted. The literal translation of ‘even in every tub and jar’, here (loosely) following the NJB, is ‘even wooden or stone containers’.

²⁰ Striking the water was not a magical act; it signified two things: 1 the beginning of the sign, which was in accordance with God’s will, as Moses had previously announced, and 2 to symbolise actual ‘striking’, wherewith Yahweh strikes Egypt and its gods (see v. 25)

²¹ The preterite could be given a simple definite past translation, but an ingressive past (‘when the fish died’) would be more likely, as the smell would get worse and worse with the dead fish.

הַיָּאֵר וַיְהִי הַדָּם בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: כב וַיַּעֲשׂוּ־בֶן חֲרָטְמֵי מִצְרַיִם בְּלִטְיָהֶם וַיַּחֲזֹק לֵב־פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא־שָׁמַע אֱלֹהִים כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה:

כג וַיִּפֶּן פַּרְעֹה וַיָּבֹא אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ וְלֹא־שָׁת לְבֹו גַם־לְזֹאת: כד וַיַּחֲפְרוּ כָל־מִצְרַיִם סְבִיבַת הַיָּאֵר מִיָּם לַשְּׂתוֹת כִּי לֹא יָכְלוּ לַשְׁתֹּת מִמֵּי הַיָּאֵר: כה וַיִּמָּלֵא שְׁבַעַת יָמִים אַחֲרֵי הַכּוֹת־יְהוָה אֶת־הַיָּאֵר: {פ}

כו וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה שְׁלַח אֶת־עַמִּי וַיַּעֲבֹדֵנִי: כז וְאִם־מָאֵן אַתָּה לִשְׁלַח הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי נֹגֵף אֶת־כָּל־גְּבוּלְךָ בְּצַפְרִדִּיעִים: כח וְשָׂרֵץ הַיָּאֵר צַפְרִדִּיעִים וְעָלוּ וּבָאוּ

was blood. ²² But the magicians of Egypt used their witchcraft to do the same, so that Pharaoh's heart was hard and, as Yahweh had said, he would not listen to Moses and Aaron.

²³ Pharaoh turned and went into his palace, taking no notice even of this. ²⁴ And all the Egyptians dug holes along the banks of the river in search of drinking water, for they could not drink the water of the river. ²⁵ After Yahweh had struck the river, seven days passed.

²⁶ Yahweh said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, "Thus says Yahweh: Let my people go to worship me. ²⁷ If you refuse to let them go, I will plague your whole land with frogs. ²⁸ The river will swarm with frogs; they will come into your palace, into your bedroom, on

²² In place of 'Moses and Aaron', here following the NJB & NETB, the MT (& NRSV) has simply 'them'.

²³ The literal translation of 'taking no notice even of this' (וְלֹא־שָׁת לְבֹו גַם־לְזֹאת) is 'and did not set his heart also to this'; this Hebrew idiom means that he did not pay attention to it, or take it to heart (cf. 2S 13:20, Ps 48:13, 62:10, Pr 22:17, 24:32): since Pharaoh had not been affected by this, he did not consider it or its implications further.

²⁴ The text stresses that the water in the Nile, and Nile water that had been diverted or collected for use, was polluted and undrinkable. Underground water was also from the Nile but it had not been contaminated with dead fish and so would be drinkable.

²⁵ It is important to note that, in parts of Egypt, there was a fear of frogs as embodying spirits capable of great evil; people developed the mentality of bowing to incredibly horrible idols to drive away the bad spirits. The frogs that the magicians produced could very well have been in the realm of evil spirits. Exactly how the Egyptians thought about this plague is hard to determine; but there is enough evidence to say that the plague would have made them spiritually as well as physically uncomfortable, and that the death of the frogs would have been a 'sign' from God about their superstitions and related beliefs. The frog is associated with the god Hapi, and a frog-headed goddess named Heqet was supposed to assist women at childbirth.

²⁶ The NRSV, NETB and many other English translations, following the Vg, include vv. 26–29 as 8:1–4; here, we follow the MT, LXX & NJB.

²⁷ The word here used for frogs (צַפְרִדִּיעִים) is mentioned in the OT only in conjunction with this plague (here and Ps 78:45, 105:30).

²⁸ The mud of the Nile, after the seasonal overflowing, was a natural place for frogs to generate. Egypt has been spared more frequent occurrence of this pestilence by the frog-eating bird, the ibis.

בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְחֶדֶר מְשַׁכְּבְּךָ וְעַל־מִטָּתְךָ וּבְבַיִת עַבְדֶּיךָ to your bed, into the house of your courtiers, and to your subjects'
וּבְעֵמֶם וּבְתַנּוּרֶיךָ וּבְמִשְׁאָרוֹתֶיךָ: כֹּט וּבִכָּה וּבְעֵמֶם homes, into their ovens and kneading bowls. ²⁹ The frogs shall come
וּבְכָל־עַבְדֶּיךָ יֵעָלוּ הַצִּפְרֹדִּים: up on you, on your courtiers, and on all your subjects.""

²⁹ The word order of the Hebrew text is important because it shows how the plague was pointedly directed at Pharaoh: *"and against you, and against your people, and against all your servants frogs will go up."*

שמות פרק ח

EXODUS 8

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֲמַר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן נָטָה אֶת־יָדְךָ
בַּמֶּטֶק עַל־הַנְּהָרוֹת עַל־הַיָּאֲרוֹים וְעַל־הָאֲגָמִים וְהָעַל
אֶת־הַצִּפְרָדִּים עַל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: ב וַיֵּט אַהֲרֹן אֶת־יָדוֹ
עַל מִימֵי מִצְרַיִם וְהָעַל הַצִּפְרָדִּים וַתֵּבֹא אֶת־אֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם: ג וַיַּעֲשׂוּ־כֵן הַחֹרְטָמִים בְּלִטְיָהֶם וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶת־
הַצִּפְרָדִּים עַל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

ד וַיִּקְרָא פַרְעֹה לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְאַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר הִעֲתִירוּ אֵלַי
יְהוָה וְיִסַּר הַצִּפְרָדִּים מִמֶּנִּי וּמֵעַמִּי וְאֶשְׁלַח אֶת־
הָעָם וְיִזְבְּחוּ לַיהוָה: ה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְפַרְעֹה הֲתִפְאֵר
עָלַי לְמַתִּין אֶעֱתִיר לָךְ וְלַעֲבָדֶיךָ וְלַעֲמָךְ לְהַכְרִית
הַצִּפְרָדִּים מִמֶּךָ וּמִבֵּיתְךָ רַק בַּיָּאֵר תִּשְׁאֲרָנָה:
ו וַיֹּאמֶר לְמַחֵר וַיֹּאמֶר כְּדַבְּרְךָ לְמַעַן תֵּדַע כִּי־אִין

¹ Yahweh said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, "Stretch out your hand, with your rod, over the rivers, the canals, the pools, and make frogs swarm all over the land of Egypt."" ² So, Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. ³ But the magicians did the same with their witchcraft, and made frogs swarm all over the land of Egypt.

⁴ Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, "Entreat Yahweh to rid me and my people of the frogs, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to Yahweh." ⁵ Moses answered Pharaoh, "Now get the better of me! When shall I pray for you and your courtiers, and for your subjects, that the frogs leave you and your houses, and stay in the river?"

⁶ "Tomorrow," he said. "As you say," he said. "By this you shall learn

EXODUS 8

In the NRSV & NETB, the verse numbers of this chapter are incremented by 4 (see #7:26); here, we follow the MT & NJB.

- ¹ After the instructions for Pharaoh (7:25–29), the plague now is brought on by the staff in Aaron's hand (8:1–2); this will lead to the confrontation (vv. 3–6) and the hardening (vv. 7–10).
- ² The noun here translated as 'frogs' is a collective singular.
- ³ In these first two plagues the fact that the Egyptians could and did duplicate them is ironic; by duplicating the experience, they added to the misery of Egypt. One wonders why they did not use their skills to rid the land of the pests instead, and the implication is that they could not.
- ⁴ For the first time, Pharaoh momentarily recognises Israel's God.
- ⁵ The sentence, "Now get the better of me" (loosely following the MT & NJB) literally translates as, "Glorify yourself about me." The NRSV, following the LXX (*Τάξαι πρὸς με, πότε εὐξώμαι περὶ σοῦ*), has, "Kindly let me know when I am to pray." To enhance the wonder, Moses promises to pray for the scourge to stop at a specified time.
- ⁶ In place of 'Yahweh our God has no equal', here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have 'there is no one like the LORD our God'.

כִּיהוֹה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: וְסָרוּ הַצִּפְרָדִּיעִים מִמֶּךָ וּמִבֵּיתֶךָ
וּמִעֲבָדֶיךָ וּמִמַּעְמָךְ רַק בִּיאָר תִּשְׁאָרְנָה: וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה
וְאַהֲרֹן מֵעַם פְּרָעָה וַיֵּצֵעַק מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוָה עַל־דְּבַר
הַצִּפְרָדִּיעִים אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם לִפְרָעָה: וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה כְּדִבְרֵי
מֹשֶׁה וַיָּמָתוּ הַצִּפְרָדִּיעִים מִן־הַבָּתִּים מִן־הַחֲצֹצְרוֹת וּמִן־
הַשָּׂדֶת: וַיִּצְבְּרוּ אֹתָם חֲמָרִם חֲמָרִם וַתִּבָּאֵשׁ הָאָרֶץ:
יֵא וַיֵּרָא פְרָעָה כִּי הִיתָה הַרְוּחָה וְהַכִּבֵּד אֶת־לִבּוֹ וְלֹא
שָׁמַע אֱלֹהִים כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה: {ס}

יב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אָמַר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן נֹטֶה אֶת־
מִטֶּךָ וְהָךְ אֶת־עֶפֶר הָאָרֶץ וְהָיָה לְכֹנָם בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ
מִצְרָיִם: יג וַיַּעֲשׂוּ־כֵן וַיִּטֵּ אַהֲרֹן אֶת־יָדוֹ בַּמִּטָּה וַיִּדֹּ
אֶת־עֶפֶר הָאָרֶץ וְתָהִי הַכֹּנָם בָּאָדָם וּבַבְּהֵמָה כָּל־עֶפֶר
הָאָרֶץ הָיָה כֹּנָם בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם: יד וַיַּעֲשׂוּ־כֵן
הַחֲרָטְמִים בְּלִטְיָהֶם לְהוֹצִיא אֶת־הַכֹּנָם וְלֹא יָכְלוּ

that Yahweh our God has no equal.⁷ The frogs will go from you and your palaces, your courtiers, and your subjects; they will stay in the river.”⁸ When Moses and Aaron had left Pharaoh’s presence, Moses pleaded with Yahweh about the frogs he had afflicted on Pharaoh;⁹ and Yahweh granted Moses’ prayer: and the frogs died in house, court, and field;¹⁰ they piled them up in heaps and the land stank.

¹¹ But when Pharaoh saw there was a respite, he became adamant again and, as Yahweh had said, he refused to listen to them.

¹² And Yahweh said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, “Stretch out your rod and strike the dust on the ground: throughout the land of Egypt, it will become gnats.””¹³ And they did so; Aaron stretched out his hand, with his rod and struck the dust on the ground; and gnats attacked man and beast: throughout the land of Egypt, the dust on the ground became gnats.¹⁴ The magicians with their witchcraft tried to produce

⁷ The NRSV has ‘be left only’ in place of ‘stay’, here following the NJB.

⁸ The verb יֵצֵעַק (‘pleaded’) is used for prayers in which people cry out of trouble or from danger; Moses would have been in real danger if God had not answered this prayer.

⁹ The NJB & NRSV lack the conjunction ‘and’ before ‘the frogs died’; here, we follow the MT.

¹⁰ The word ‘heaps’ is repeated: חֲמָרִם חֲמָרִם; the repetition serves to intensify the idea to the highest degree – ‘countless heaps’ (as NETB).

¹¹ An alternative translation for ‘respite’ (רְוָחָה), here following the NJB & NRSV, is ‘relief’ (as NETB).

¹² From ancient times, stinging gnats or mosquitoes have plagued Egypt, especially in the autumn. The Nile, receding from its overflow, leaves stagnant pools of water in which the insects breed.

¹³ The NJB, following the LXX, omits the clause ‘and they did so’, here following the MT & NRSV.

¹⁴ The report of what the magicians did (or as it turns out, tried to do) begins with the same words as the report about the actions of Moses and Aaron – ‘and they did so’ (vv. 17 & 18). The magicians copy the actions of Moses and Aaron, leading readers to think momentarily that the

וַתְּהִי הַכֹּנָם בָּאָדָם וּבַבְּהֵמָה: ^{טו} וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַחֲרָטָמִם
אֶל־פֶּרְעֹה אֲצַבֵּעַ אֱלֹהִים הוּא וַיַּחְזֹק לִב־פֶּרְעֹה וְלֹא־
שָׁמַע אֱלֹהִים כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה: {ס}

^{טז} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הִשָּׁכֵם בְּבֹקֶר וְהִתְיַצַּב לִפְנֵי
פֶּרְעֹה הִנֵּה יוֹצֵא הַמִּימָה וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
שְׁלַח עַמִּי וַיַּעֲבֹדֵנִי: ^{יז} כִּי אִם־אֵינְךָ מְשַׁלַּח אֶת־עַמִּי
הֲנִי מְשַׁלֵּיחַ בָּךְ וּבַעֲבָדֶיךָ וּבַעֲמָלֶיךָ אֶת־הָעֶרֶב
וּמִלְאוּ בָתֵּי מִצְרַיִם אֶת־הָעֶרֶב וְגַם הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־הֵם
עָלֶיהָ: ^{יח} וְהִפְלִיתִי בְיוֹם הַהוּא אֶת־אֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן אֲשֶׁר
עָמְדָה עָלֶיהָ לְבִלְתִּי הִיזֵת־שָׁם עֶרֶב לְמַעַן תֵּדַע כִּי
אֲנִי יְהוָה בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ: ^{יט} וְשִׁמַּתִּי פֶדֶת בֵּין עַמִּי וּבֵין
עַמָּךְ לְמַחֵר יִהְיֶה הָאֵת הַזֶּה: ^כ וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה כֵּן וַיָּבֹא

gnats and failed. There were gnats on man and beast. ¹⁵ And the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s heart was hard and he did not listen to them, as Yahweh had said.

¹⁶ And Yahweh said to Moses, “Rise early in the morning and wait for Pharaoh as he makes for the water; tell him, “Thus says Yahweh: Let my people go to worship me. ¹⁷ For, if you do not let my people go, I shall send flies on you, on your courtiers and your palaces; the houses of the Egyptians will be infested with them, and even the soil they stand on. ¹⁸ But I shall set apart the land of Goshen, where my people live, on that day; there will be no flies there, and so you may know that I am Yahweh, in the midst of the land, ¹⁹ I will separate my people from yours. This sign shall come tomorrow.”” ²⁰ Yahweh

magicians are again successful, but at the end of the verse comes the news that they ‘failed’. Compared with the first two plagues, this third plague has an important new feature, the failure of the magicians and their recognition of the source of the plague.

¹⁵ ‘The finger of God’ could also read ‘the finger of a god’ a formula occurring in Egyptian magico-religious texts.

¹⁶ The announcement of the 4th plague parallels that of the 1st. Now there will be flies (the NJB has ‘gadflies’). Egypt had often suffered from flies, more so in the summer than in the winter; but the flies the plague describes involve something greater than any normal season for flies.

¹⁷ The word עֶרֶב means ‘mix’ or ‘swarm’; it seems that some irritating kind of flying insect is involved. Ps 78:45 says that the Egyptians were eaten or devoured by them. Various suggestions have been made over the years: **1** it could refer to beasts or reptiles; **2** the LXX took it as the dog-fly (κυνόμυια), a vicious blood-sucking gadfly, more common in the spring than in the fall; **3** the ordinary house fly, which is a symbol of Egypt in Is 7:18; and **4** the beetle, which gnaws and bites plants, animals, and materials. The fly probably fits the details of this passage best; the plague would have greatly intensified a problem with flies that already existed.

¹⁸ The sign was not just the coming of myriads of flies but the isolation of Goshen so that the scourge did not affect the Hebrews.

¹⁹ ‘I shall separate’ (loosely) follows the LXX (δῶσω διαστολήν) and Vg; the MT has ‘I shall set redemption’.

²⁰ Alternative translations for ‘great’ (כָּבֵד), here following the NJB, are ‘grievous’ (as JPS & WEBBE), ‘thick’ (as NETB), ‘heavy’ & ‘severe’.

עָרַב כָּבֵד בֵּיתָהּ פֶּרֶעָה וּבֵית עֲבָדָיו וּבְכָל־אֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם תִּשְׁחַת הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵי הָעָרָב:

כֹּא וַיִּקְרָא פֶּרֶעָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְלֹא־הָרִן וַיֹּאמֶר לָכֵן זָבָחוּ
לְאֱלֹהֵיכֶם בָּאָרֶץ: כֵּב וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לֹא נִכּוֹן לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן
כִּי תִזְעַבְתָּ מִצְרַיִם גְּזֹבַח לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הֵן גְּזֹבַח אֶת־
תִּזְעַבְתָּ מִצְרַיִם לַעֲנִיָּהֶם וְלֹא יִסְקָלְנוּ: כֵּג דֶּרֶךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת
יָמִים נֵלֶךְ בַּמִּדְבָּר וְזָבָחוּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר יֹאמֶר
אֱלֹהֵינוּ: כִּד וַיֹּאמֶר פֶּרֶעָה אֲנֹכִי אֲשַׁלַּח אֶתְכֶם וְזָבַחְתֶּם
לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בַּמִּדְבָּר רַק הִרְחֵק לֹא־תִרְחִיקוּ
לֵלֶכֶת הָעֲתִירוּ בַעֲדַי: כֵּה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי יוֹצֵא
מֵעַמָּךְ וְהִעֲתַרְתִּי אֶל־יְהוָה וְסָר הָעָרָב מִפְּרֶעָה
מֵעַבְדָּיו וּמֵעַמּוֹ מָחָר רַק אֶל־יִסָּף פֶּרֶעָה הָתַל לְבַלְתִּי
שַׁלַּח אֶת־הָעָם לְזָבַח לַיהוָה: כִּו וַיֹּצֵא מֹשֶׁה מֵעַם

did so, and great swarms of flies found their way into Pharaoh's palace, the houses of his courtiers, and all the land of Egypt, and ruined the country.

²¹ Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. "Go," he said, "and offer sacrifice to your God, in this land!" ²² "That would not be right," Moses answered. "What we sacrifice to Yahweh our God could be offensive to the Egyptians. If we offer in front of the Egyptians sacrifices that outrage them, will they not stone us?" ²³ We must make a three days' journey into the desert to sacrifice to Yahweh our God, as he commands us." ²⁴ Pharaoh said, "I will let you go to sacrifice to Yahweh your God in the desert, provided you do not go far; and pray for me." ²⁵ Moses said, "As soon as I leave you, I will pray to Yahweh; tomorrow, the flies will leave Pharaoh and his courtiers and his subjects. Only, Pharaoh must not play false again, in not letting the

²¹ After the plague is inflicted on the land, then Pharaoh makes an appeal; so, there is the familiar confrontation (vv. 25–29). Pharaoh's words to Moses are an advancement on his previous words; now he uses imperatives: "Go and offer sacrifice to your God." But he restricts it to 'in this land'; this is a subtle attempt to keep them as a subjugated people and prevent their absolute allegiance to their God. This offered compromise would destroy the point of the Exodus – to leave Egypt and find a new allegiance under Yahweh.

²² The pastoral Israelites sacrificed animals from their flocks; Egyptian rites were very different: vegetable offerings, poultry and pieces of butcher's meat. Furthermore, the ram and he-goat were sacred animals for them.

²³ The form of the phrase here translated 'as he commands us' (following the NRSV) is the imperfect (the NJB has 'as he has commanded us') but could also be translated as the future tense ('as he will command us'); NETB assumes a progressive imperfect ('as he is telling us').

²⁴ Pharaoh's further concession – permission to go just beyond the border – reflects his suspicion of Moses' intention (see 5:9). By changing from 'the people' to 'you' (plural) the speech of Pharaoh was becoming more personal.

²⁵ The verb תָּלַל means 'to mock' or 'to trifle with'; the construction in this verse forms a verbal hendiadys: the Hiphil jussive אֶל־יִסָּף ('must not') is joined with the Hiphil infinitive הָתַל ('play false'). Changing to the third person in this warning to Pharaoh is more decisive, more powerful.

פֶּרַעַה וַיַּעֲתָר אֶל־יְהוָה: כִּי וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה כְּדִבְרֵי מֹשֶׁה
 וַיִּסַּר הָעָרֹב מִפְּרַעַה מִעַבְדָּיו וּמֵעַמּוֹ לֹא נִשְׁאַר אֶחָד:
 כֹּחַ וַיִּכְבֹּד פֶּרַעַה אֶת־לְבָבוֹ גַּם בַּפֶּעַם הַזֹּאת וְלֹא שָׁלַח
 אֶת־הָעָם:
 {פ} go.

²⁶ In place of ‘*went out from Pharaoh*’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘*left Pharaoh’s presence*’.

²⁷ The literal translation of ‘*as Moses asked*’ is ‘*according to Moses’ word*’.

²⁸ ‘*Hardened*’ here translates כָּבֵד (see #7:8).

EXODUS 9

שמות פרק ט

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וְדַבֵּרְתָּ אֵלָיו כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִים שְׁלַח אֶת־עַמִּי וַיַּעֲבֹדֵנִי: ב כִּי אִם־מֵאֵן אַתָּה לְשַׁלַּח וְעוֹדֶדָּה מִחֲזִיק בָּם: ג הִנֵּה יַד־יְהוָה הוֹיָה בְּמִקְנֶךָ אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׂדֶה בַּסּוּסִים בַּחֲמֹרִים בַּגְּמֵלִים בַּבָּקָר וּבַצֹּאן דָּבָר כָּבֵד מְאֹד: ד וְהַפְּלָה יְהוָה בֵּין מִקְנֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבֵין מִקְנֶה מִצְרַיִם וְלֹא יָמוּת מִכָּל־לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל דָּבָר: ה וַיֵּשֶׁם יְהוָה מוֹעֵד לֵאמֹר מָחָר יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה בְּאֶרֶץ: ו וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה מִמַּחֲרֹת וַיָּמָת כָּל מִקְנֶה מִצְרַיִם וּמִמִּקְנֶה בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא־מָת אֶחָד: ז וַיִּשְׁלַח פַּרְעֹה

1 Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and tell him, "Thus says Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews: Let my people go to worship me. 2 If you refuse to let them go and still hold them, 3 the hand of Yahweh will fall on your livestock in the fields, horse, donkey, camel, herd and flock, with a deadly plague. 4 Yahweh will discriminate between the livestock of Israel and of Egypt: no thing shall die of all that belongs to the Israelites. 5 Yahweh set a time, saying: Tomorrow, Yahweh will do this thing in the land."" 6 Next day Yahweh kept his word: all the Egyptians' livestock died, but none owned by the Israelites died. 7 Pharaoh inquired and found that none of the

EXODUS 9

- ¹ This plague demonstrates that Yahweh has power over the livestock of Egypt; he is able to strike the animals with disease and death, thus delivering a blow to the economic as well as the religious life of the land. By the former plagues, many of the Egyptian religious ceremonies would have been interrupted and objects of veneration defiled or destroyed; now, some of the important deities will be attacked. In Goshen, where the cattle are merely cattle, no disease hits; but in the rest of Egypt, it is a different matter.
- ² In place of 'still hold them', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'detain them any longer'. עוֹד, an adverb meaning 'yet' or 'still', can be inflected with suffixes and used as a predicator of existence, with the nuance 'to still be'; here, it is joined with the Hiphil participle מִחֲזִיק, to form the sentence 'you still hold them'.
- ³ This plague, possibly anthrax, seems to have resulted from conditions created by former plagues: disease spread by mosquitoes or flies.
- ⁴ There is a wordplay in this section: a 'plague' (דָּבָר, v. 3) will fall on Egypt's cattle, but no 'thing' (דָּבָר, v. 4) belonging to Israel would die; it may be for this reason that the verb was changed in v. 1 from 'say' to 'tell' (דַּבֵּר).
- ⁵ This time, Pharaoh was given twenty-four hours' notice.
- ⁶ The word 'all' is clearly not exclusive, because subsequent plagues involve cattle; the word must denote such a large number that whatever was left was insignificant for the economy. It could also be taken to mean 'all (kinds of) livestock died'.
- ⁷ The literal translation of 'inquired' is 'sent'.

וְהָיָה לֹא־מֵת מִמֶּקְנֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד־אֶחָד וַיִּכְבַּד לֵב
פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא שָׁלַח אֶת־הָעָם: {פ}

ח וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאַל־אַהֲרֹן קָחוּ לָכֶם מִלֵּא
חַפְנֵיכֶם פִּיחַ כִּבְשָׁן וּזְרְקוּ מֹשֶׁה הַשָּׁמַיְמָה לְעֵינַי
פַּרְעֹה: ט וְהָיָה לְאַבֶּק עַל כָּל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְהָיָה עַל־
הָאָדָם וְעַל־הַבְּהֵמָה לְשַׁחֵן פֶּרַח אֲבַעֲבַעַת בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם: י וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־פִּיחַ הַכִּבְשָׁן וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ לִפְנֵי פַרְעֹה
וַיִּזְרֹק אֹתוֹ מֹשֶׁה הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וַיְהִי שַׁחִין אֲבַעֲבַעַת פֶּרַח
בָּאָדָם וּבַבְּהֵמָה: יא וְלֹא־יָכְלוּ הַחֲרָטָמִים לַעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי
מֹשֶׁה מִפְּנֵי הַשַּׁחִין כִּי־הָיָה הַשַּׁחִין בַּחֲרָטָם וּבְכָל־
מִצְרַיִם: יב וַיַּחֲזֹק יְהוָה אֶת־לֵב פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא שָׁמַע
אֱלֹהִים כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה: {ס}

יג וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הִשָּׁכֶם בִּבְקָר וְהִתִּיצַב לִפְנֵי
פַּרְעֹה וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִים

livestock of the Israelites was dead. But Pharaoh became adamant again and did not let the people go.

⁸ Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from the kiln and, in sight of Pharaoh, let Moses throw it up towards the sky.

⁹ And it shall spread like fine dust over the whole land of Egypt and cause festering boils on man and beast all over the land of Egypt.”

¹⁰ So, they took soot from the kiln and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses threw it up towards the sky; and it brought out festering boils on man and beast; ¹¹ and the magicians could not stand before Moses, because the boils covered the magicians like all the other Egyptians.

¹² But Yahweh made Pharaoh’s heart stubborn and, as Yahweh had foretold to Moses, and he refused to listen to them.

¹³ Then Yahweh said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh. Tell him, “Thus says Yahweh, the God

⁸ The 6th plague, boils or a similar skin outbreak (Dt 28:27), is parallel to the previous one, as far as the cattle are concerned. This plague, like the 3rd, is unannounced: God instructs his servants to take handfuls of ashes from the Egyptians’ furnaces and sprinkle them heavenward in the sight of Pharaoh; these ashes would become little particles of dust that would cause boils on the Egyptians and their animals.

⁹ The word שַׁחִין (*‘boils’*) may be connected to an Arabic cognate that means ‘to be hot’; the illness is associated with Job (Job 2:7–8) and Hezekiah (Is 38:21), and it has also been connected with other skin diseases described especially in the Law. The word connected with it, אֲבַעֲבַעַת, means ‘blisters’ or ‘pustules’ and is often translated as *‘festering’* (here following the NRSV).

¹⁰ In place of *‘kiln’*, here following the NRSV, the NJB & NETB have *‘furnace’* (as also in v. 8).

¹¹ Even the Egyptian magicians are helpless in the face of this plague, as now God begins to touch human life.

¹² *‘Stubborn’* translates the word חָזַק.

¹³ With the 7th plague, there is more explanation of what God is doing to Pharaoh; this plague begins with an extended lesson (vv. 13–21). Rain was almost unknown in Egypt, and hail and lightning were harmless; the Egyptians were fascinated by all these, though, and looked on them as portentous. If ordinary rainstorms were ominous, what must fire and hail have been?

שְׁלַח אֶת־עַמִּי וַיַּעֲבֹדֵנִי: יִי כִּי בַפֶּעַם הַזֹּאת אֲנִי שֹׁלֵחַ
 אֶת־כָּל־מִגַּפְתִּי אֶל־לִבְךָ וּבַעֲבֹדֶיךָ וּבַעֲמָךְ בַּעֲבוּר
 יָדְעַ כִּי אֵין כָּמֹנִי בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ: טו כִּי עָתָה שֹׁלַחְתִּי
 אֶת־יָדִי וְאָךְ אוֹתָךְ וְאֶת־עַמָּךְ בַּדֶּבֶר וּתִכָּחַד מִן־
 הָאָרֶץ: טז וְאוֹלָם בַּעֲבוּר זֹאת הָעַמְדָתִיךָ בַּעֲבוּר
 הָרֹאֲתָךְ אֶת־כֹּחִי וּלְמַעַן סַפֵּר שְׁמִי בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ:
 יז עוֹדָךְ מִסְתּוֹלֵל בְּעַמִּי לְבַלְתִּי שִׁלְחָם: יח הַגָּנִי מִמַּטִּיר
 כַּעַת מֵחֵר בָּרָד כְּבֹד מֵאֵד אֲשֶׁר לֹא־הָיָה כָמוֹהוּ
 בַּמִּצְרַיִם לְמִן־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַד־עָתָה: יט וְעָתָה שֹׁלַח
 הָעֹז אֶת־מִקְנֶךָ וְאֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לָךְ בַּשָּׂדֶה כָּל־הָאָדָם
 וְהַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר־יִמָּצֵא בַשָּׂדֶה וְלֹא יֵאָסֶף הַבֵּיתָה וְיָרֹד
 עֲלֵהֶם הַבָּרָד וּמָתוּ: כ הִירָא אֶת־דְּבַר יְהוָה מִעֲבָדֶי
 פְּרָעָה הַנִּיס אֶת־עַבְדּוֹ וְאֶת־מִקְנֵהוּ אֶל־הַבְּתִיִּם:

of the Hebrews: Let my people go, so they may worship me. ¹⁴ For, this time I will send my plagues on you, on your officials and on your subjects, and you shall learn that there is no one like me in the whole world. ¹⁵ Had I stretched out my hand to strike you and your subjects with pestilence, you would have been swept from the earth. ¹⁶ But I have let you live for this: to make you see my power and to have my name resound through all the earth. ¹⁷ High-handed with my people still, you will not let them go. ¹⁸ So tomorrow, at this time, I will let fall so great a storm of hail as was never known in Egypt from the day of its foundation. ¹⁹ So now gather your livestock, and all that is yours in the fields, indoors: every man and beast that is in the open fields and is not brought indoors will die when the hail falls on them.”” ²⁰ Those of Pharaoh’s courtiers who feared Yahweh’s word

¹⁴ The phrase ‘on your subjects’ would literally translate from the Hebrew as ‘against your heart’. The meaning of ‘all my plagues’ is not clear but may refer to unleashing the full fury of heaven: thunder, hail, rain and lightning (vv. 23, 33).

¹⁵ The verb here translated ‘had I stretched out’, here following the NRSV, is the Qal perfect שִׁלַּחְתִּי, but a past tense, or completed action translation does not fit the context at all. This could be an example of the use of the perfect to express actions and facts, whose accomplishment is to be represented not as actual but only as possible: ‘I had almost put forth’; some suggest, ‘I should have stretched out’ and others read the potential nuance instead and render it as ‘I could have stretched out’ (as NETB).

¹⁶ It is explained that the ineffectiveness of the plagues up to this point is not due to Yahweh’s weakness but to patient determination to demonstrate divine sovereignty (compare Rm 9:17).

¹⁷ ‘High-handed’ translates מִסְתּוֹלֵל, a Hitpacl participle from a root that means ‘raise up’ or ‘obstruct’.

¹⁸ The literal translation of ‘as was never known in Egypt’ is ‘which not was like it in Egypt’.

¹⁹ ‘Gather’ (הָעֹז), here following NETB, could also be translated as ‘bring into safety’ or ‘secure’.

²⁰ The literal translation of ‘those’ is ‘the one’; the singular expression here and throughout vv. 20–21 refers to all who fit the description.

כא ואֲשֶׁר לֹא־שָׁם לְבֹו אֶל־דְּבַר יְהוָה וַיַּעֲזֹב אֶת־עַבְדָּיו
וְאֶת־מִקְנֵהוּ בַשָּׂדֶה: {פ}

כב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה נָטָה אֶת־יָדְךָ עַל־הַשָּׁמַיִם
וַיְהִי בָרָד בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַל־הָאָדָם וְעַל־הַבְּהֵמָה
וְעַל כָּל־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: כג וַיִּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת־
מִטְּהוֹ עַל־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיְהוָה נָתַן קֹלֹת וּבָרָד וּתְהִלָּה אֲשֶׁר
אֶרֶצָה וַיִּמָּטֵר יְהוָה בָּרָד עַל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: כד וַיְהִי בָרָד
וְאֵשׁ מִתְּלַקַּחַת בְּתוֹךְ הַבָּרָד כְּבֹד מְאֹד אֲשֶׁר לֹא־הָיָה
כָּמֹהוּ בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מֵאִזְ הִיתָה לְגֹוִי: כה וַיֵּךְ הַבָּרָד
בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׂדֶה מֵאָדָם וְעַד־
בְּהֵמָה וְאֶת כָּל־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה הָכָה הַבָּרָד וְאֶת־כָּל־עֵץ
הַשָּׂדֶה שִׁבַּר: כו רַק בְּאֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
לֹא הָיָה בָרָד:

כז וַיִּשְׁלַח פַּרְעֹה וַיִּקְרָא לְמֹשֶׁה וְלֵאחֶרֶן וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם
חֲטֹאתַי הַפַּעַם יְהוָה הַצְדִּיק וְאֲנִי וְעַמִּי הַרְשָׁעִים:

brought their slaves and livestock indoors²¹ but those who did not fear Yahweh's word left their slaves and livestock in the fields.

²² Yahweh said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand towards heaven so that hail may fall on the whole land of Egypt, on man and beast and all the plants of the fields in the land of Egypt." ²³ Moses stretched out his staff towards heaven, and Yahweh sent thunder and hail, and lightning struck the earth; and Yahweh rained hail on the land of Egypt. ²⁴ There was hail, with lightning flashing in the midst of it, a greater storm than had ever fallen in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. ²⁵ Throughout the land of Egypt, the hail struck down everything in the fields, man and beast. It struck all the crops in the fields and shattered every tree in the fields. ²⁶ Only in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived, was there no hail.

²⁷ Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron. "This time I have sinned," he said, "Yahweh is right; I and my people are guilty." ²⁸ Pray to Yahweh

²¹ Literally translated, 'fear' reads 'put to his heart'.

²² An alternative translation for 'heaven' (as NJB & NRSV) is 'the sky' (as NETB); the Hebrew term (שָׁמַיִם) may be translated as either.

²³ The literal translation of 'thundered' (נָתַן קֹלֹת) is 'gave voice'; the 'voice of Yahweh' is thunder (see v. 29, 19:19, Job 37:2, and Ps 18:13 & 29:3-9).

²⁴ The form מִתְּלַקַּחַת is a Hitpael participle; the clause reads, literally, 'and fire taking hold of itself in the midst of the hail'. This probably refers to lightning flashing back and forth (see also Ezk 1:4); God created a great storm with flashing fire connected to it.

²⁵ The literal translation of 'crops' is 'cultivated grain'.

²⁶ In place of 'Israelites' (literally, 'sons of Israel'), here following the MT (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) & NRSV, the NJB has 'Hebrews'.

²⁷ In place of 'guilty' (רָשָׁעִים), here following NETB, the NJB & NRSV have 'in the wrong'; the word can also mean 'ungodly', 'wicked' or 'criminal'. For the first time, Pharaoh confesses that he is beaten, hoping to appease the foreign deity without making further concessions.

²⁸ The last clause uses a verbal hendiadys: 'you will not add to stand', meaning 'you need stay no longer'.

כח העתירו אל־יהוה וְרַב מֵהֵיטָקֶלֶת אֱלֹהִים וַיִּבְרַד
וַאֲשַׁלַּח אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא תִסָּפֹן לַעֲמֹד: כט וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו
מֹשֶׁה כְּצֵאתִי אֶת־הָעִיר אֶפְרָשׁ אֶת־כַּפֵּי אֱלֹהֵהָ
הַקְלוֹת יִחַדְלוֹן וְהַבְרֹד לֹא יִהְיֶה־עוֹד לְמַעַן תֵּדַע כִּי
לִיהוָה הָאָרֶץ: ל וְאַתָּה וַעֲבָדֶיךָ יִדְעֵתִי כִּי טָרִם תִּירְאוֹן
מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים: לא וְהַפְשַׁתָּה וְהַשְׁעֵרָה נִבְתָּה כִּי
הַשְׁעֵרָה אֲבִיב וְהַפְשַׁתָּה גִבְעֹל: לב וְהַחֲטָה וְהַכְסִמַת
לֹא נָכוּ כִּי אֶפִּילַת הִנֵּה:

לג וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה מֵעַם פְּרָעָה אֶת־הָעִיר וַיִּפְרֹשׁ כַּפָּיו אֶל־
יְהוָה וַיִּחַדְלוּ הַקְלוֹת וְהַבְרֹד וּמָטָר לֹא־נָתַד אֶרֶצָה:
לד וַיֵּרָא פְּרָעָה כִּי־יִחַדֵּל הַמָּטָר וְהַבְרֹד וְהַקְלוֹת וַיִּסָּף
לַחֲטֹא וַיִּכְבֹּד לְבֹו הוּא וַעֲבָדָיו: לה וַיַּחֲזֹק לֵב פְּרָעָה

to stop the thunder and the hail. I will let you go; you need stay no longer.” ²⁹ Moses said to him, “The moment I leave the city I will stretch out my hands to Yahweh: the thunder will stop, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is Yahweh’s. ³⁰ But as for you and your courtiers, I know that you do not yet fear Yahweh our God.” ³¹ (The flax and the barley were ruined, since the barley was in the ear and the flax in bud; ³² but the wheat and the spelt, being late crops, were not destroyed.)

³³ Moses left Pharaoh, went out of the city and stretched out his hand to Yahweh; and the thunder and the hail stopped and the rain no longer poured on the earth. ³⁴ When Pharaoh saw that the rain, hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned yet again and became adamant,

²⁹ The plagues bear witness that the ‘earth is Yahweh’s’ (19:5, Ps 24:1), for the powers of nature serve God’s purpose. There has been a good deal of speculation about why Moses would leave the city before praying: possibly, he did not want to pray where there were so many idols, or it may also be that most of the devastation of this plague had been outside in the fields, and that was where Moses wished to go.

³⁰ The adverb טָרִם (‘not yet’) occurs with the imperfect tense to give the sense of the English present tense to the verb negated by it; Moses is saying that he knew that Pharaoh did not really stand in awe of God.

³¹ This parenthesised remark explains why there were still plants for the locusts to eat during the next plague and, incidentally, dates the 7th plague around the middle of January, when the crops begin to mature.

³² The word כְּסָמַת (‘spelt’) occurs only here and in Is 28:25 & Ezk 4:9; spelt is a grain closely allied to wheat.

³³ NETB has ‘spread’ in place of ‘stretched’, here following the NJB & NRSV.

³⁴ The construction ‘sinned yet again’ (וַיִּסָּף לַחֲטֹא) is another verbal hendiadys, literally rendered ‘and he added to sin’; the infinitive construct becomes the main verb, and the Hiphil preterite becomes adverbial. The text is clearly interpreting as sin the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart and his refusal to release Israel; at the least, this means that the plagues are his fault, but the expression probably means more than this – he was disobeying Yahweh.

וְלֹא שָׁלַח אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה בְּיַד־
מֹשֶׁה: {פ} he and his courtiers. ³⁵ The heart of Pharaoh was stubborn and, as
Yahweh had spoken through Moses, he did not let the Israelites go.

³⁵ The verb about Pharaoh's heart in this verse is וַיִּחְזֶק, a Qal preterite: this forms the summary statement of this stage in the drama. The verb used in v. 34 to report Pharaoh's response was וַיִּכְבֹּד, a Hiphil preterite: the use of two descriptions of Pharaoh's heart in close succession, along with mention of his servants' heart condition, underscores the growing extent of the problem.

שמות פרק י

EXODUS 10

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה כִּי־אֲנִי
הַכְּבִדְתִּי אֶת־לִבּוֹ וְאֶת־לִבְ עֲבָדָיו לִמְעַן שְׁתִּי אֶתְתִּי
אֱלֹהִים בְּקִרְבּוֹ: ב וְלִמְעַן תְּסַפֵּר בְּאָזְנֵי בְנֶךָ וּבְנֵי־בְנֶךָ אֵת
אֲשֶׁר הִתְעַלְלָתִי בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֶת־אֶתְתִּי אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי
בָּם וַיִּדְעֻם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה: ג וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל־
פַּרְעֹה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִים
עַד־מָתַי מֵאַנֶּתָּ לַעֲנֹת מִפְּנֵי שַׁלַּח עַמִּי וַיַּעֲבֹדְנִי: ד כִּי
אֶסְמָאן אַתָּה לְשַׁלַּח אֶת־עַמִּי הַנִּגִּי מִבֵּיָּא מִחֹר
אַרְבֶּה בְּגִבְלָךָ: ה וְכִסָּה אֶת־עֵין הָאָרֶץ וְלֹא יוּכַל
לִרְאוֹת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְאָכַל אֶת־יִתֵּר הַפְּלֹטָה הַנִּשְׁאֶרֶת
לָכֶם מִן־הַבָּרָד וְאָכַל אֶת־כָּל־הָעֵץ הַצֹּמַח לָכֶם מִן־

¹ Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and his courtiers', so I could work these, my signs, among them, ² so you can tell your son and your son's son how I made fools of the Egyptians and what signs I performed among them, to let you know that I am Yahweh." ³ So, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh; and told him, "Thus says Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, "How long will you refuse to submit to me? Let my people go to worship me. ⁴ If you refuse to let my people go, then tomorrow I will send locusts over your land. ⁵ They shall cover the surface of the soil, so no one will be able to see the soil. They shall eat the remainder that is left to you after the hail and shall eat all your trees growing in the

EXODUS 10

- ¹ The Egyptians dreaded locusts like every other ancient civilisation. The announcement of the plague falls into the now-familiar pattern: God tells Moses to go and speak to Pharaoh but reminds Moses that he has hardened his heart; Yahweh explains that he has done this so that he might show his power, so that in turn they might declare his name from generation to generation. This point is stressed so often that it must not be minimised: God was laying the foundation of the faith for Israel – the sovereignty of Yahweh.
- ² The verb **הִתְעַלְלָתִי** ('made fools of') is a bold anthropomorphism; the word means to occupy oneself at another's expense, to toy with someone, which may be paraphrased with 'mock'. The whole point is that God is shaming and disgracing Egypt, making them look foolish in their arrogance and stubbornness. Some prefer to translate it as 'I have dealt ruthlessly' with Egypt.
- ³ The verb **מֵאַנֶּתָּ** ('refuse') is a Piel perfect; after 'how long', the form may be classified as present perfect, for it describes actions begun previously but with the effects continuing. The use of a verb describing a state or condition may also call for a present translation that includes past, present, and potentially future, in keeping with the question 'how long'.
- ⁴ The word here used for 'locusts' (**אַרְבֶּה**) comes from **רבה** ('to be many'); it was used for locusts because of their immense numbers.
- ⁵ The verbs describing the locusts are singular because it is a swarm or plague of locusts.

הַשָּׂדֶה: ^ו וּמָלְאוּ בְתֵיךְ וּבְתֵי כָל־עַבְדֶּיךָ וּבְתֵי כָל־מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־רָאוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ וְאֲבוֹת אֲבֹתֶיךָ מִיּוֹם הַיּוֹתֵם עַל־הָאֲדָמָה עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וַיִּפֶּן וַיֵּצֵא מֵעַם פְּרָעֹה: ^ז וַיֹּאמְרוּ עַבְדֵי פְרָעָה אֵלָיו עַד־מַתִּי יִהְיֶה זֶה לָנוּ לְמוֹקֵשׁ שֶׁלַח אֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיַּעֲבְדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם הֲטָרָם תִּדַּע כִּי אֲבָדָה מִצְרַיִם:

^ח וַיּוֹשֶׁב אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן אֶל־פְּרָעֹה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם לָכוּ עַבְדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִי וּמִי הַחֹלְכִים: ^ט וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בְּנַעֲרֵינוּ וּבְזִקְנֵינוּ גִלְדָּךְ בְּבָנֵינוּ וּבְבָנוֹתֵנוּ בְּצֹאנֵנוּ וּבְבִקְרָנוּ גִלְדָּךְ כִּי חַג־יְהוָה לָנוּ: ^י וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יְהִי כֵן יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר אֲשַׁלַּח אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת־טַפְכֶם רְאוּ כִּי רָעָה נִגַּד פְּנִיכֶם: ^{יא} לֹא כֵן לְכוּ־נָא הַגְּבָרִים וַעֲבְדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה כִּי אַתָּה אַתָּם מִבְקָשִׁים וַיַּגְרֹשׁ אֹתָם מֵאֶת פְּנֵי פְרָעֹה: {ס}

^{יב} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה נִטֵּה יָדְךָ עַל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּאֲרָבָה וַיַּעַל עַל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיֹּאכַל אֶת־כָּל־עֵשֶׂב

fields; ⁶ they shall fill your palaces, the houses of your courtiers and of all the Egyptians. Your fathers and fathers' fathers never saw the like since first they lived in the land." Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh. ⁷ Pharaoh's courtiers said to him, "How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go to worship Yahweh their God. Do you not yet know that Egypt is ruined?"

⁸ So, Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh; he said to them, "Go, serve Yahweh your God; but who are those who will go?" ⁹ Moses said, "We shall take our young and our old. We shall take our sons and daughters, our flocks and our herds; for, we must hold a feast to Yahweh." ¹⁰ He said to them, "May Yahweh be with you if ever I let you and your little ones go! Plainly, you are up to no good. ¹¹ Never! Your men may go and worship Yahweh, since that is what you wanted." And they were driven them from before Pharaoh.

¹² Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt to bring the locusts. Let them invade the land of Egypt and

⁶ The literal translation of 'since they first lived' (מִיּוֹם הַיּוֹתֵם) is 'since the day of their being'.

⁷ The word מֹקֵשׁ ('snare') was used for catching birds; here, it is a figure for the cause of Egypt's destruction.

⁸ Pharaoh's question (מִי וּמִי הַחֹלְכִים) is literally, "who and who are the ones going?" His answer to Moses includes this rude question, which was intended to say that Pharaoh would control who went; the participle in this clause, then, refers to the future journey.

⁹ Alternative translations for 'feast' (חַג), here following the NJB, are 'festival' (as NRSV) and 'pilgrim feast' (as NETB).

¹⁰ Pharaoh is by no means offering a blessing on them in the name of Yahweh: the meaning of his 'wish' is connected to the next clause: as he is releasing them, may God help them; he is planning to keep the women and children as hostages to force the men to return.

¹¹ Pharaoh is suspicious, and reluctant to give general permission; he lets the men to go but wants to keep the women and children as hostages.

¹² The noun עֵשֶׂב ('everything that grows') would normally indicate cultivated grains but here it seems to indicate plants in general (cf. v. 15).

הָאָרֶץ אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר הַשָּׁאִיר הַבֶּרֶד׃ י¹³ וַיֹּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת־
מִטְּהוֹ עַל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיְהִי נֶהָג רוּחַ־קָדִים בָּאֶרֶץ
כָּל־הַיּוֹם הַהוּא וְכָל־הַלַּיְלָה הַבֹּקֶר הָיָה וְרוּחַ הַקָּדִים
נִשָּׂא אֶת־הָאֲרָבָה׃

י¹⁴ וַיַּעַל הָאֲרָבָה עַל כָּל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיָּנַח בְּכָל גְּבוּל
מִצְרַיִם כָּבֵד מְאֹד לְפָנָיו לֹא־הָיָה בֵּן אֲרָבָה כָּמֹהוּ
וְאַחֲרָיו לֹא יִהְיֶה־כֵּן׃ טו¹⁵ וַיִּכֹּס אֶת־עֵין כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
וַתַּחֲשֹׁךְ הָאֶרֶץ וַיֹּאכַל אֶת־כָּל־עֵשֶׂב הָאֶרֶץ וְאֵת כָּל־
פְּרִי הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר הוֹתִיר הַבֶּרֶד וְלֹא־נֹתַר כָּל־יֵרֶק בָּעֵץ
וּבְעֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם׃

טז¹⁶ וַיִּמְהַר פֶּרְעֹה לִקְרֹא לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְאַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר חַטָּאתִי
לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְלָכֶם׃ יז¹⁷ וְעַתָּה שָׂא נָא חַטָּאתִי אֲדָּ
הַפֵּעַם וְהַעֲתִירוּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וַיֹּסֶר מֵעָלַי רַק אֶת־
הַמָּוֶת הַזֶּה׃ יח¹⁸ וַיֵּצֵא מֵעַם פֶּרְעֹה וַיַּעֲתֵר אֶל־יְהוָה׃
יט¹⁹ וַיִּהְיֶה רוּחַ־יָם חֲזָק מְאֹד וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת־הָאֲרָבָה

devour everything that grows, all that the hail has left.” ¹³ Over the land of Egypt, Moses stretched his staff; and Yahweh brought up an east wind over the land and it blew all that day and night. By morning, the east wind had brought the locusts.

¹⁴ The locusts invaded the whole land of Egypt. On all the territory of Egypt they fell, such great swarms that had never been before, nor ever shall be again. ¹⁵ They covered the surface of the soil until the ground was black; they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. No green remained on tree or plant in the fields in all the land of Egypt

¹⁶ Pharaoh sent urgently for Moses and Aaron and he said, “I have sinned against Yahweh your God, and against you. ¹⁷ Please forgive my sin this time only and entreat Yahweh your God only to rid me of this death.” ¹⁸ So, he went out from Pharaoh and prayed to Yahweh. ¹⁹ And Yahweh changed the wind into a strong west wind,

¹³ The miracle rests upon a natural phenomenon (14:21, Nb 11:31); an ‘east wind’ brought the locusts and a ‘west wind’ drove them away (v. 19).

¹⁴ The literal translation of ‘ever shall be again’ is ‘after them’.

¹⁵ The phrase ‘was black’ follows the MT (and the NRSV); the NJB, following the LXX (ἐφθάρη), has ‘was devastated’.

¹⁶ Pharaoh goes a step further here, confessing that he has sinned, and adds a request for forgiveness. However, his acknowledgment does not go far enough, for this is not genuine confession; since his heart was not yet submissive, his confession was vain.

¹⁷ Pharaoh’s double emphasis on ‘only’ uses two different words and was meant to deceive: he was trying to give Moses the impression that he had finally come to his senses, and that he would let the people go; but he had no intention of letting them out.

¹⁸ In place of ‘went out from Pharaoh’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘left Pharaoh’s presence’.

¹⁹ ‘West wind’ is, literally, ‘sea wind’. In place of ‘Sea of Reeds’ (יַמֶּה סוּף), here following the NJB (סוּף is a collective noun that may derive from a name for papyrus reeds), many other English translations have ‘Red Sea’, following the LXX (ἐρυθρὰν θάλασσαν).

וַיִּתְקַעְהוּ יָמָּה סוֹף לֹא נִשְׂאָר אַרְבֵּה אֶחָד בְּכָל גְּבוּל מִצְרַיִם: כ' וַיַּחֲזֶק יְהוָה אֶת-לֵב פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא שָׁלַח אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: {פ}

כ"א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה נִטֵּה יָדְךָ עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְיְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ עַל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּמַּשׁ חֹשֶׁךְ: כ"ב וַיִּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת-יָדוֹ עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְיְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ-אֲפֹלָה בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים: כ"ג לֹא-רָאוּ אִישׁ אֶת-אָחִיו וְלֹא-קָמוּ אִישׁ מִתַּחַת יָדוֹ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים וְלִכְל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה אֹר בְּמוֹשְׁבֵתָם:

כ"ד וַיִּקְרָא פַּרְעֹה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר לָכוּ עֲבַדוּ אֶת-יְהוָה רַק צֹאנְכֶם וּבָקָרְכֶם יֵצֵג גַּם-טֶפְכֶם יֵלֶךְ עִמָּכֶם: כ"ה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה גַם-אַתָּה תִּתֵּן בִּידְנוּ זִבְחִים וְעֹלֹת וְעֹשִׂינוּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: כ"ו וְגַם-מִקְלָנוּ יֵלֶךְ עִמָּנוּ לֹא

which lifted the locusts and swept them into the Sea of Reeds. Not one locust was left in the whole land of Egypt. ²⁰ But Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart and he did not let the Israelites go.

²¹ Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand towards the sky, and let darkness cover the land of Egypt, darkness so thick it can be felt." ²² So, Moses stretched out his hand towards the sky and, for three days, there was deep darkness over the whole land of Egypt. ²³ No one could see anyone else or move about for three days; but, where the Israelites lived, there was light for them.

²⁴ Pharaoh called Moses and said, "Go and worship Yahweh, but your flocks and herds must remain here. Your children may go with you." ²⁵ Moses said, "Will you also provide us sacrifices and burnt offerings for Yahweh our God. ²⁶ Our livestock, also, must go with

²⁰ In place of 'made Pharaoh's heart stubborn', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'hardened Pharaoh's heart'.

²¹ The 9th plague is that darkness fell on all the land – except on Israel. It is significant in that Egypt's high god was the Sun God: Lord Sun was now being shut down by Lord Yahweh; if Egypt would not let Israel go to worship their God, then Egypt's god would be darkness.

²² A darkness 'so thick that it can be felt' (v. 21) aptly describes conditions created by the hot wind, the 'khamsin', which blows in from the desert during the spring (March–May), bringing with it so much dust and sand that the air is darkened and breathing becomes difficult. The text, however, is probably describing something that was not a seasonal wind, or Pharaoh would not have been intimidated. If it coincided with that season, then what is described here is so different and so powerful that the Egyptians would have known the difference easily.

²³ The literal translation of 'no one could see anyone else' is 'a man could not see his brother'.

²⁴ The term here translated as 'children' (following the NJB & NRSV) could also include women and other dependents.

²⁵ The intent of Moses in using גַּם ('also') is to make an emphatic rhetorical question (cf. Nb 22:33, 1S 17:36, 2S 12:14); the point is that if Pharaoh told them to go and serve Yahweh, they had to have animals to sacrifice.

²⁶ Moses makes it clear that he has no intention of leaving any pledge with Pharaoh.

תִּשְׂאֹר פֶּרֶסָה בִּי מִמֶּנּוּ נִקַּח לַעֲבֹד אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְאִנְחֵנוּ לֹא־נִדַּע מִה־נַּעֲבֹד אֶת־יְהוָה עַד־בֹּאֵנוּ
שָׁמָּה:

כִּי וַיַּחֲזֹק יְהוָה אֶת־לֵב פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא אָבָה לְשַׁלְּחָם:
כִּי וַיֹּאמֶר־לּוֹ פַּרְעֹה לְךָ מַעֲלִי הַשֹּׁמֵר לְךָ אֶל־תֵּסֶף
רְאוֹת פָּנַי בִּי בַיּוֹם רֵאתְךָ פָּנַי תָּמוּת: כִּט וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה
בֵּן דְּבָרְתָּ לֹא־אֶסֶף עוֹד רְאוֹת פָּנֶיךָ: {פ}

us; not one hoof must be left behind: we must choose some of them to worship Yahweh our God; we will not know what to use to worship Yahweh until we arrive there.”

²⁷ But Yahweh hardened Pharaoh’s heart and he refused to let them go. ²⁸ Pharaoh said to him, “Out of my sight! Take care! Never appear before me again; for, on the day you do, you die!” ²⁹ Moses replied, “As you have said it: I shall never see your face again.”

²⁷ For this verse, here following the NJB, NETB reads, “But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he was not willing to release them.”

²⁸ The literal translation of ‘out of my sight’ (לְךָ מַעֲלִי) is ‘go on from me’.

²⁹ Literally translated, ‘as you have said’ is ‘thus you have spoken’.

שמות פרק יא

EXODUS 11

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה עוֹד נֹגַע אֶחָד אָבִיא עַל-
פְּרַעֲהוֹ וְעַל-מִצְרַיִם אַחֲרֵי-כֵן יִשְׁלַח אֶתְכֶם מִזֶּה
כְּשִׁלְחוֹ כָּלָה גֵרֶשׁ יִגְרַשׁ אֶתְכֶם מִזֶּה: ^ב דְּבַר-נָא בְּאָזְנֵי
הָעָם וְיִשְׁאַלּוּ אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רֵעוּתָהּ
כְּלִי-כֶסֶף וְכָלִי זָהָב: ^ג וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה אֶת-חַן הָעָם בְּעֵינֵי
מִצְרַיִם גַּם | הָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה גָדוֹל מְאֹד בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
בְּעֵינֵי עַבְדֵי-פְרַעֲהוֹ וּבְעֵינֵי הָעָם: {ס}

ד וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה כַּחֲצֹת הַלַּיְלָה אֲנִי יוֹצֵא
בְּתוֹךְ מִצְרַיִם: ^ה וּמָת כָּל-בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבְּכוֹר
פְּרַעֲהוֹ הַיֹּשֵׁב עַל-כִּסְאוֹ עַד בְּכוֹר הַשֹּׁפְחָה אֲשֶׁר אַחֲרֵי
הָרִחִים וְכָל בְּכוֹר בַּהֲמָה: ^ו וְהָיְתָה צַעֲקָה גְדֹלָה בְּכָל-
אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר כָּמְהוּ לֹא נִהְיְתָה וְכָמְהוּ לֹא תִסָּף:
ז וְלֹכֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִחַר־כְּלָב לִשְׁנֹו לְמֵאִישׁ וְעַד-

¹ And Yahweh said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and Egypt, after which he will let you go. When he lets you go, he will drive you out! ² Tell the people that every man is to ask his neighbour, every woman hers, for jewels of silver and of gold."
³ Yahweh gave the people favour in the eyes of the Egyptians and Moses was a great man in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's officials and of the people.

⁴ Moses said, "Yahweh says this, "About midnight, I will go through Egypt. ⁵ All the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die: from the firstborn of Pharaoh, heir to his throne, to the firstborn of the maid at the mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle; ⁶ and throughout the land of Egypt, there shall be such a cry as never was heard before, nor will be again. ⁷ But not a dog shall bark at any of the Israelites,

EXODUS 11

- ¹ After 'he will drive you out', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB, following the Tg, adds 'completely'. The expression כְּשִׁלְחוֹ כָּלָה is difficult; it may say, 'as/when he releases (you) altogether'. The LXX has 'when he sends you forth with all your things' (ὅταν δὲ ἐξαποστέλλῃ ὑμᾶς, σὺν παντί).
- ² The despoiling of the Egyptians is a secondary theme, appearing earlier in 3:21 and later in 12:35-36.
- ³ The presence of this clause about Moses, which is parenthetical in nature, further indicates why the Egyptians gave rather willingly to the Israelites: they were impressed by Moses' miracles and his power with Pharaoh.
- ⁴ The literal translation of 'midnight' is 'the middle of the night'.
- ⁵ The firstborn of the beasts are added here, borrowing from 12:12, because, like the human firstborn, they are first fruits dedicated to God.
- ⁶ Literally translated, this verse ends, "which like there has never been and like it will not add."
- ⁷ The literal translation of 'bark' is 'sharpen its tongue'; the expression is unusual, but it must indicate that not only would no harm come to the Israelites, but that no unfriendly threat would come against them either – not even so much as a dog barking.

בְּהֵמָה לְמַעַן תִּדְעוּן אֲשֶׁר יַפְלֶה יְהוָה בֵּין מִצְרַיִם וּבֵין
יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^ח וַיֵּרְדּוּ כָל-עֲבָדֶיךָ אֵלַי וְהִשְׁתַּחֲווּ-לִי
לֵאמֹר צֵא אִתָּה וְכָל-הָעָם אֲשֶׁר-בְּרַגְלֶיךָ וְאַחֲרֶי-כֵן
אֵצֶא וַיֵּצֵא מִעַם-פְּרֹעֶה בַּחֲרִי-אָף: {ס}

^ט וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֹא-יִשְׁמַע אֲלֵיכֶם פְּרֹעֶה
לְמַעַן רַבּוֹת מִזִּמְתִּי בָאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: ^י וּמֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן עָשׂוּ
אֶת-כָּל-הַמִּפְתִּים הָאֵלֶּה לִפְנֵי פְרֹעֶה וַיַּחֲזֹק יְהוָה אֶת-
לֵב פְּרֹעֶה וְלֹא-שָׁלַח אֶת-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ: {ס}

man or beast, so you may know that Yahweh separates Egypt and Israel. ⁸ Then all your courtiers will come down to me and bow low before me and say: Go away, you and the people who follow you! After this, I shall go.”” He went from Pharaoh in hot anger.

⁹ And Yahweh said to Moses, “Pharaoh won’t listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.” ¹⁰ All these wonders Moses and Aaron worked in the presence of Pharaoh. But Yahweh hardened Pharaoh’s heart and he did not let the Israelites leave his land.

⁸ Moses’ anger is expressed forcefully: he had appeared before Pharaoh a dozen times either as God’s emissary or when summoned by Pharaoh, but he would not come again; now they would have to search him out if they needed help.

⁹ The thought is essentially the same as in 7:3–4, but the ‘wonders’, or portents, here refer to what is yet to be done in Egypt.

¹⁰ Some consider vv. 9–10, which refer to the first nine ‘plagues’, an editorial addition.

שמות פרק יב

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
לֵאמֹר: ^ב הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֹאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים רִאשׁוֹן הוּא
לָכֶם לַחֲדָשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה: ^ג דַּבְּרוּ אֶל-כָּל-עֵדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל
לֵאמֹר בַּעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם אִישׁ שֵׂה לְבֵית-
אָבִת שֵׂה לְבֵית: ^ד וְאִם-יִמְעַט הַבֵּית מִהְיוֹת מִשֵּׂה
וְלָקַח הוּא וּשְׁכֵנוֹ הַקָּרֵב אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ בְּמִכְסַת נַפְשָׁת
אִישׁ לְפִי אֲכָלוּ תִכְסּוּ עַל-הַשֵּׂה: ^ה שֵׂה תָמִים זָכָר בֶּן-
שָׁנָה יִהְיֶה לָכֶם מִן-הַכִּבְשִׂים וּמִן-הָעִזִּים תִּקְחוּ: ^ו וְהָיָה
לָכֶם לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת עַד אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה
וּשְׁחָטוּ אֹתוֹ כָּל קָהָל עֵדַת-יִשְׂרָאֵל בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים:

EXODUS 12

¹ Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ² "This month is to be the first of all months for you, the first month of your year. ³ Tell the whole assembly of Israel, "On the tenth day of this month each man must take a lamb, one for each family: a lamb for a household. ⁴ If the household is too small for a lamb, a man must join with his neighbour next to his house, as the number of souls requires. The count for the lamb shall depend on what each can eat. ⁵ It must be a lamb without blemish, a male a year old; you may take it from sheep or goats. ⁶ You must keep it until the fourteenth day of the month when the whole assembly of the community of Israel shall slaughter it between the two evenings.

EXODUS 12

- ¹ The word **לֵאמֹר** ('saying') at the end of this verse is redundant in contemporary English and has not been translated.
- ² The verse refers to the first month of spring, corresponding to our March–April, called Abib in the ancient calendar (Dt 16:1), and Nisan in the post-exilic calendar of Babylonian origin. The intent of this passage was not to make this month in the springtime the New Year – that was in the autumn; rather, when counting the months of the years this was supposed to be remembered first, for it was the great festival of freedom from Egypt. Some scholars have unnecessarily tried to date one New Year earlier than the other
- ³ The Priestly tradition assumes that Israel in Egypt was already an organised congregation under the leadership of tribal princes (16:22).
- ⁴ Later Judaism ruled that 'too small' meant fewer than ten, in accordance with the interpretation based on Nb 14:27 that ten was the smallest number that would constitute a congregation
- ⁵ The term **שֵׂה**, here translated as 'lamb' (following the NRSV – the NJB has 'animal') refers to a single head from the flock, or smaller cattle, which would include both sheep and goats.
- ⁶ The phrase 'between the two evenings' (**בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים**) refers to twilight: the slaughter should take place either between sunset and darkness (Samaritans), or between afternoon and sunset (Pharisees and Talmud).

וְלָקְחוּ מִן־הַדָּם וְנָתְנוּ עַל־שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזֹת וְעַל־
הַמִּשְׁקוֹף עַל הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר־יֹאכְלוּ אֹתוֹ בָּהֶם: ^ח וְאָכְלוּ
אֶת־הַבָּשָׂר בַּלֵּילָה הַזֶּה צֹלִי־אֵשׁ וּמִצּוֹת עַל־מַרְרִים
יֹאכְלֶהוּ: ^ט אֲלֹת־אֲכָלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ נֶאֱמַר וּבָשָׂל מִבָּשָׂל בְּמִים
כִּי אִם־צֹלִי־אֵשׁ רָאשׁוֹ עַל־כְּרַעְיוֹ וְעַל־קֶרְבּוֹ: ^י וְלֹא־
תוֹתִירוּ מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֹּקֶר וְהִנֵּתָר מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֹּקֶר בָּאֵשׁ
תִּשְׂרְפוּ: ^{יא} וְכָכָה תֹאכְלוּ אֹתוֹ מִתְּנִיכֶם חֲגָרִים
נֹעֲלִיכֶם בְּרֹגְלֵיכֶם וּמַקְלָכֶם בְּיָדְכֶם וְאָכַלְתֶּם אֹתוֹ
בַּחֲפָזֹן פֶּסַח הוּא לַיהוָה: ^{יב} וְעִבְרַתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם
בַּלֵּילָה הַזֶּה וְהִכִּיתִי כָל־בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מֵאָדָם
וְעַד־בְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֲעֹשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים אֲנִי
יְהוָה: ^{יג} וְהָיָה הַדָּם לָכֶם לְאֹת עַל הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם
שָׁם וְרָאִיתִי אֶת־הַדָּם וּפָסַחְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם וְלֹא־יְהִיָּה בְּכֶם

⁷ They shall take some of the blood and put on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸ That night, they shall eat the lamb, roasted with fire; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹ Do not eat it raw or boiled, but roasted with fire, head, feet, and entrails. ¹⁰ Let nothing remain until the morning: whatever remains until morning, you are to burn. ¹¹ You shall eat it like this: with a belt round your waist, sandals on your feet, and a staff in your hand. You shall eat it hastily: it is Yahweh's Passover. ¹² That night, I will go through the land of Egypt and strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and I will deal out punishment to all the gods of Egypt; I am Yahweh! ¹³ The blood shall serve to mark the houses where you live; when I see the blood, I will pass over you and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land

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- ⁷ Blood, regarded as God's portion of the sacrifice (Lv 1:5), was smeared on the doorposts and the lintel, the 'holy places' of the house (21:6, Dt 6:9), as a protection against the destroyer (vv. 22–23).
- ⁸ Unleavened bread could be baked quickly, not requiring time for the use of leaven; in Dt 16:3, the unleavened cakes are called 'the bread of affliction', which alluded to the alarm and haste of the Israelites.
- ⁹ This ruling was to prevent their eating it just softened by the fire or partially roasted as differing customs might prescribe or allow.
- ¹⁰ At the end of this verse, the *NJB*, following the *LXX* (*καὶ ὁστοῦν οὐ συντρίψετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ*) adds 'and you are not to break any of its bones' (see v. 46); here, we follow the *MT* & *NRSV*.
- ¹¹ The etymology of the word translated as 'Passover' (פֶּסַח) is unknown. Vv. 13, 23 & 27 explain that Yahweh 'jumped over', 'left out' or 'protected' the Israelites' houses, but this explanation is secondary.
- ¹² The verb וְעִבְרַתִּי ('go through') provides a contextual motive for the name 'Passover' (see #11).
- ¹³ Both of the verbs for seeing and passing over are perfect tenses with *vav* consecutives: וְרָאִיתִי ... וּפָסַחְתִּי; the first of these parallel verb forms is subordinated to the second as a temporal clause.

נִגַּף לְמִשְׁחִית בְּהִכְתִּי בָאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: י' וְהָיָה הַיּוֹם
הַזֶּה לָכֶם לְזִכְרוֹן וְחֻגְתֶּם אֹתוֹ חֹג לַיהוָה לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם
חֻקַּת עוֹלָם תִּחְגְּגֶהוּ:

טו שִׁבְעַת יָמִים מַצּוֹת תֹּאכְלוּ אָדָּךְ בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן
תִּשְׁבִּיתוּ שְׂאֹר מִבֵּיתֵיכֶם כִּי | כָּל-אֹכֵל חֶמֶץ וְנִכְרְתָה
הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל מִיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן עַד-יּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי:
טז וּבַיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִקְרָא-
קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל-מְלֹאכָה לֹא-יַעֲשֶׂה בָהֶם אָדָּךְ אֲשֶׁר
יֹאכֵל לְכָל-נֶפֶשׁ הוּא לִבְדּוֹ יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם: יז וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם
אֶת-הַמַּצּוֹת כִּי בְעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוֹצֵאתִי אֶת-
עֲבָאֲדֵיכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת-הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם: יח בְּרִאשׁוֹן בָּאֲרֻבָּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם
לַחֹדֶשׁ בָּעֶרֶב תֹּאכְלוּ מַצָּת עַד יוֹם הָאֶחָד וְעֶשְׂרִים
לַחֹדֶשׁ בָּעֶרֶב: יט שִׁבְעַת יָמִים שְׂאֹר לֹא יִמָּצֵא
בְּבֵיתֵיכֶם כִּי | כָּל-אֹכֵל מִחֶמֶץ וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא

of Egypt. ¹⁴ This day is to be a memorial for you; you must celebrate it as a festival to Yahweh. For all generations you are to declare it a perpetual ordinance.

¹⁵ “Seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove all yeast from your houses; for, whoever eats leavened bread from the first to the seventh day shall be cut off from Israel.

¹⁶ And, on the first day, you are to hold a holy gathering, and on the seventh day, a holy gathering. On those days, no work is to be done, except to prepare what each man can eat. ¹⁷ You shall observe the feast of Unleavened Bread; for, on that day, I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt; keep that day from age to age: it is an ordinance forever. ¹⁸ In the first month, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day, you are to eat unleavened bread. ¹⁹ For seven days, no yeast must be found in your houses; for, whoever eats leavened bread will be cut off from the

¹⁴ The Feast of Unleavened Bread, originally an agricultural festival held at the time of barley harvest, was also converted into an historical commemoration, and became closely connected with the Passover (Dt 16:1–8, Ezk 45:21–25).

¹⁵ The feast was to last from the 15th to the 21st day of the month. The absence of leaven (yeast) is interpreted as due to hasty preparations for flight (vv. 34, 39, Dt 16:3).

¹⁶ In place of ‘sacred gathering’ (twice in this verse), here following the NJB, NETB has ‘holy convocation’ and the NRSV has ‘solemn assembly’.

¹⁷ The word here translated as ‘same’ actually means ‘bone’; the expression then means ‘the substance of the day’, the day itself, the very day

¹⁸ The MT lacks the word ‘month’, here added for clarity (following the NJB, NRSV & NETB).

¹⁹ Since the ‘stranger’ was also born in the land, the distinction between this and the ‘native-born’ has to be greater: the natural citizen is the one who has ancestors who came out of Egypt by the Exodus.

מַעֲדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל בֶּגֶר וּבְאֶזְרַח הָאָרֶץ: כ כל־מִחְמַצֶּת לֹא
תֹאכְלוּ בְּכָל מוֹשְׁבֵיכֶם תֹאכְלוּ מִצּוֹת:

{פ}

כא וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְכָל־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם מִשְׁכוּ
וְקַחוּ לָכֶם צֹאן לְמִשְׁפַּחְתֵּיכֶם וּשְׁחֹטוּ הַפֶּסַח:
כב וְלִקַּחְתֶּם אֵגֶדֶת אֲזוּב וּטְבַלְתֶּם בָּדָם אֲשֶׁר־בַּסֶּף
וְהִגַּעְתֶּם אֶל־הַמִּשְׁקוֹף וְאֶל־שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת מִן־הַדָּם
אֲשֶׁר בַּסֶּף וְאַתֶּם לֹא תֵצְאוּ אִישׁ מִפֶּתַח־בֵּיתוֹ עַד־
בֹּקֶר: כג וְעָבַר יְהוָה לַלַּיְלָה אֶת־מִצְרַיִם וְרָאָה אֶת־הַדָּם
עַל־הַמִּשְׁקוֹף וְעַל שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת וּפָסַח יְהוָה עַל־
הַפֶּתַח וְלֹא יִתֵּן הַמַּשְׁחִית לָבֹא אֶל־בְּתִיכֶם לַלַּיְלָה:
כד וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה לְחֻק־לָךְ וּלְבָנֶיךָ עַד־
עוֹלָם: כה וְהָיָה כִּי־תָבֹאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יִתֵּן יְהוָה
לָכֶם כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הָעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת:
כו וְהָיָה כִּי־יֹאמְרוּ אֲלֵיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם מָה הָעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת

assembly of Israel, whether stranger or native-born. ²⁰ You must eat
nothing leavened; in all your dwellings, you must eat unleavened
bread."

²¹ Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go,
choose animals from the flock for your families, and kill the Passover
victim. ²² Then take a spray of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in
the basin and, with the blood from the basin, touch the lintel and the
two doorposts. Let none of you go out of the house until morning.
²³ For, when Yahweh goes through Egypt to strike it, and sees the
blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, Yahweh will pass over the
door and not allow the Destroyer to enter your homes and strike.
²⁴ You shall observe this rite as an ordinance for you and your
children forever. ²⁵ And, when you come to land that Yahweh will
give you, as he has promised, you must observe this ritual. ²⁶ And,
when your children ask you, "What does this ritual mean?" ²⁷ you

²⁰ In place of 'nothing leavened', here following the NRSV & WEBBE, the NJB has 'no leavened bread'.

²¹ The verb, 'go' is from the LXX (Ἀπελθόντες); the MT uses 'draw out'.

²² 'Hyssop' is an aromatic plant (*Origanum Maru* L., or *O. Aegyptiacum*) used in various purification rites (Nb 19:6, Ps 51:7, Heb 9:19).

²³ In the pre-Israelite Passover rite, the 'Destroyer' was a demon threatening flock and family (2S 24:16, Is 37:36).

²⁴ In place of 'an ordinance ... forever', here following the WEBBE, the NJB has 'a perpetual ordinance'.

²⁵ The verb translated here (and at the beginning of v. 24) as 'observe' is שמר; this can be translated 'watch', 'keep', or 'protect' but, in this context, 'observe' the religious customs and practices set forth in these instructions.

²⁶ The literal translation of the children's question is, "What is this service to you?"

²⁷ The expression, 'the sacrifice of Yahweh's Passover', occurs only here; the word זֶבַח means 'slaughtering'. The fact that this word is used in Lv 3 for the peace offering has linked the Passover as a kind of peace offering, both of which were eaten as communal meals.

לָכֶם: כִּי וַאֲמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח-פֶּסַח הוּא לַיהוָה אֲשֶׁר פָּסַח
עַל-בֵּיתִי בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּמִּצְרִים בְּנִגְפוֹ אֶת-מִצְרַיִם
וְאֶת-בָּתֵּינוּ הֲצִיל וַיִּקַּד הָעָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ: כֹּחַ וַיִּלְכוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ
בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן בֶּן
עֲשׂוֹ: {ס}

כֹּחַ וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה וַיְהוֹהֶה הָכָה כָּל-בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם מִבְּכֹר פַּרְעֹה הַיֹּשֵׁב עַל-כִּסְאוֹ עַד בְּכוֹר הַשֶּׁבִי
אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית הַבּוֹר וְכָל בְּכוֹר בַּהֲמָה: ל וַיָּקָם פַּרְעֹה
לַיְלָה הוּא וְכָל-עַבְדָּיו וְכָל-מִצְרַיִם וַתְּהִי צַעֲקָה גְדֹלָה
בְּמִצְרַיִם כִּי-אֵין בַּיִת אֲשֶׁר אֵין-שָׁם מָת: לֹא וַיִּקְרָא
לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְאַהֲרֹן לַיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר קוּמוּ צֵאוּ מִתּוֹךְ עַמִּי גַם-
אַתֶּם גַּם-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּלְכוּ עֲבַדוּ אֶת-יְהוָה כַּדְּבַרְכֶם:
לִב גַּם-צֹאנֵכֶם גַּם-בְּקִרְכֶם קָחוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתֶּם וּלְכוּ
וּבִרְכַתֶּם גַּם-אֹתִי: לֵב וַתַּחֲזֹק מִצְרַיִם עַל-הָעָם לְמַהֵר
לְשַׁלְּחָם מִן-הָאָרֶץ כִּי אָמְרוּ כָלֵנוּ מָתִים: לִד וַיֵּשָׂא

shall say, "It is the sacrifice of Yahweh's Passover, when he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, and struck Egypt but spared our houses." And the people bowed down and worshipped. And the Israelites went and did as Yahweh had commanded Moses and Aaron.

At midnight, Yahweh struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt: the firstborn of Pharaoh, heir to the throne, the firstborn of the prisoner in his dungeon, and the firstborn of cattle. Pharaoh, all his courtiers, and all the Egyptians got up in the night, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house without its dead; and he summoned Moses and Aaron at night, saying, "Get up and go, you and the Israelites, and get away from my people. Go and serve Yahweh as you have asked and, as you have asked, take your flocks and herds, and go. And bless me too." The Egyptians urged the people to hurry up and leave the land because, they said, "We

²⁸ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "The Israelites then went away and did as Yahweh had ordered Moses and Aaron."

²⁹ This section records the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and so becomes the turning point of the book.

³⁰ One should not push the description at the end of this verse to complete literalness: the reference would be limited to houses that actually had firstborn people or animals.

³¹ The urgency in Pharaoh's words is caught by the abrupt use of the imperatives – 'get up, go' (קוּמוּ צֵאוּ), and 'go and serve' (וּלְכוּ עֲבַדוּ).

³² Pharaoh probably meant that they should bless him also when they were sacrificing to Yahweh in their religious festival – after all, he might reason, he did let them go (after divine judgment). To bless him would mean to invoke divine blessing or good gifts on him.

³³ The verb used here for 'urged' (חָזַק) is the same verb used for Pharaoh's heart being hardened; it then conveys the idea of their being resolved or insistent in this – they were not going to change.

הָעָם אֶת־בִּצְקוֹ טָרָם יַחֲמֹץ מִשְׁאֲרֵתָם צָרֹת
בְּשִׁמְלָתָם עַל־שִׁכְמָם:

לָהּ וּבְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עָשׂוּ כַּדְּבַר מֹשֶׁה וַיִּשְׁאַלּוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם
כְּלִי־כֶסֶף וְכִלְיָ זָהָב וּשְׁמָלֹת: לוֹ וַיְהִי־נָתַן אֶת־חֶן הָעָם
בְּעֵינֵי מִצְרַיִם וַיִּשְׁאַלּוּם וַיִּנְצְלוּ אֶת־מִצְרַיִם:
{פ}

לוֹ וַיִּסְעוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִרַעַמְסֶס סִכְתָּה כְּשֵׁשׁ־מֵאוֹת
אַלֶּף רִגְלֵי הַגְּבָרִים לְבַד מִטָּף: לָהּ וְגַם־עָרַב רַב עָלָה
אִתָּם וְצֹאן וּבָקָר מְקֻנָּה כְּבֹד מְאֹד: לט וַיֹּאפּוּ אֶת־
הַבֶּצֶק אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם עֲגֹת מִצּוֹת כִּי לֹא חָמֵץ
כִּי־גִרְשׁוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְהִתְמַהֵּמָה וְגַם־צָדָה
לֹא־עָשׂוּ לָהֶם: מ וּמוֹשֵׁב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ
בְּמִצְרַיִם שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה: מא וַיְהִי

shall all be dead.” ³⁴ The people took their dough, yet unleavened, their kneading bowls wrapped in their cloaks on their shoulders.

³⁵ The Israelites did as Moses had told them and asked the Egyptians for silver jewels and gold, and clothes. ³⁶ Yahweh gave the people favour in the eyes of the Egyptians, so they gave them what they asked. Thus, they plundered the Egyptians.

³⁷ And the Israelites left Rameses for Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. ³⁸ And a mixed crowd joined them; and there were flocks and herds in immense droves. ³⁹ They baked cakes with the dough, which they had brought from Egypt, unleavened because the dough had not risen; they had been driven out of Egypt and could not wait or prepare food for themselves.

⁴⁰ Now, the time that the Israelites had spent in Egypt was four

³⁴ The imperfect tense after the adverb טָרָם is to be treated as a preterite, ‘yet unleavened’.

³⁵ The literal translation of ‘the Egyptians’ is ‘of Egypt’; the Hebrew uses the name of the country to represent the inhabitants (a metonymy).

³⁶ God was destroying the tyrant and his nobles on the throne, and the land’s economy because of their stubborn refusal; but God established friendly, peaceful relations between his people and the Egyptians.

³⁷ ‘Rameses’ (1:11) and ‘Succoth’ (13:20) were the starting places on Israel’s itinerary (Nb 33:5).

³⁸ The ‘mixed crowd’ (עָרַב רַב) refers to a great ‘swarm’ (see a possible cognate in 8:17) of folk who joined the Israelites, people who were impressed by the defeat of Egypt, who came to faith, or who just wanted to escape Egypt (maybe slaves or descendants of the Hyksos).

³⁹ These unleavened cakes were not the unleavened bread of the later ritual, but an element of the ancient Passover ritual as celebrated by nomads who habitually eat unleavened bread (see also Jos 5:11).

⁴⁰ The Samaritan Pentateuch and LXX include the period of the Patriarchs’ stay in Canaan in this figure. If the 430 years (see Gn 15:13, and #Ac 7:6 & #Ga 3:17) covers the total time of the Egyptian sojourn, then the descent into Egypt would have coincided with the Hyksos invasion (circa 1720 BCE) and the Exodus occurred during the reign of Rameses II (circa 1290 BCE).

מִקֵּץ שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וַיְהִי בַעֲצֹם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יֵצְאוּ כָּל־עֲבָאוֹת יְהוָה מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: ^{מב} לַיִל שְׁמֵרִים הוּא לַיהוָה לְהוֹצִיאָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הוּא־הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה לַיהוָה שְׁמֵרִים לְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְדֹרֹתָם: {פ}

^{מג} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן זֹאת חֻקַּת הַפֶּסַח כָּל־בֶּן־נֹכַר לֹא־יֹאכֹל בּוֹ: ^{מד} וְכָל־עֶבֶד אִישׁ מִקְנֵת־כֶּסֶף וּמִלְתָּה אֹתוֹ אִזּוֹ יֹאכֹל בּוֹ: ^{מה} תּוֹשֵׁב וְשָׂכִיר לֹא־יֹאכֹל בּוֹ: ^{מו} בֵּית אֶחָד יֹאכֹל לֹא־תוֹצִיא מִן־הַבֵּית מִן־הַבָּשָׂר חוּצָה וְעֵצִים לֹא תִשְׁבְּרוּ־בּוֹ: ^{מז} כָּל־עֵדֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל יַעֲשׂוּ אֹתוֹ: ^{מח} וְכִי־יִגֹּר אִתָּךְ גֵּר וַעֲשֵׂה פֶסַח לַיהוָה הַמּוֹל לֹו כָּל־זָכָר וְאִזּוֹ יִקְרָב לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ וְהָיָה

hundred and thirty years;⁴¹ and, after four hundred and thirty years, to the day, all the armies of Yahweh left the land of Egypt.⁴² That night, when Yahweh kept vigil, to bring them out of the land of Egypt, must be kept as vigil in honour of Yahweh for all the Israelites, throughout their generations.

⁴³ Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the ordinance for the Passover: no alien may eat it⁴⁴ but any slave bought for money may eat it if you have circumcised him;⁴⁵ no bound or hired servant may eat it.⁴⁶ It must be eaten in one house, out of which you shall not take any of the flesh; do not break any of its bones.⁴⁷ The whole assembly of Israel must keep it.⁴⁸ If a stranger who resides with you wants to celebrate the Passover of Yahweh, all his males must be circumcised:

⁴¹ In place of ‘armies’, here following the WEBBE, the NJB has ‘array’, NETB has ‘divisions’ and the NRSV has ‘companies’.

⁴² There is some ambiguity in לַיִל שְׁמֵרִים הוּא לַיהוָה. It may be this first clause means that Yahweh was on watch for Israel to bring them out, as the next clause says: he was protecting his people; then, the night of vigil will be transferred to Israel, who must keep it in honour of him.

⁴³ The ban on aliens refers to the victim, not the feats. Vv. 43–50 lay down the conditions for non-Israelites who wish to join in the paschal meal and explain how it is to be conducted.

⁴⁴ In place of ‘any slave’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘everyone’s servant’.

⁴⁵ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “No stranger and no hired servant may take part of it.”

⁴⁶ In place of ‘any’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘a single morsel’.

⁴⁷ The NRSV has ‘congregation’ in place of ‘community’, here following the NJB.

⁴⁸ The foreigner who settled in Israel (גֵּר) had his own charter; the Patriarchs had been resident aliens in Canaan (Gn 23:4), as had the Israelites in Egypt (2:22, Gn 15:13). After the conquest of Canaan, the roles were reversed: the Israelites became citizens and hosted resident foreigners (Dt 10:19). These were subject to the Law (Lv 17:15 & 24:16–22) and bound to observe the Sabbath (20:10 & Dt 5:14). They could make offerings to Yahweh (Nb 15:15–16) and were permitted to celebrate the Passover (Nb 9:14), provided they were circumcised (12:48). In the LXX, גֵּר is translated προσήλυτος.

בְּאַזְרַח הָאָרֶץ וְכָל־עַרְל לֹא־יֵאָכֵל בּוֹ: ^{מט} תּוֹרָה אַחַת
 יִהְיֶה לְאַזְרַח וְלִגֵּר הַגֵּר בְּתוֹכְכֶם: ^נ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כָל־בְּנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן בֶּן
 עֲשׂוֹ: {ס}
^{נא} וַיְהִי בַּעֲצֹם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַל־צְבָאָתָם: {פ}

he may then come to the celebration; he shall be as native-born. But no uncircumcised person may eat it. ⁴⁹ One law will run for the native and the stranger resident among you.” ⁵⁰ The Israelites all obeyed; they did exactly as Yahweh had commanded Moses and Aaron.

⁵¹ On that very day, Yahweh brought the Israelites in their armies out of Egypt.

⁴⁹ אֶזְרַח refers to the native-born individual, the ‘native’ Israelite as opposed to the ‘stranger’ or ‘alien’.

⁵⁰ At the end of this verse, the MT adds ‘so they did’; this phrase, which is somewhat redundant in contemporary English, is here represented by the word ‘exactly’.

⁵¹ The NJB opens this verse, here following the NRSV with, “It was on that exact day that...”

EXODUS 13

שמות פרק יג

¹ וַיֹּדְבֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ² כִּדְשִׁי לִי כָל־בְּכוֹר פֶּטֶר כָּל־רֶחֶם בִּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּאָדָם וּבַבְּהֵמָה לִי הוּא:

³ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם זִכֹּר אֶת־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאתֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים כִּי בְחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם מִזֶּה וְלֹא יֹאכַל חֶמֶץ: ⁴ הַיּוֹם אַתֶּם יֹצְאִים בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב: ⁵ וְהָיָה כִּי־יָבִיאֲךָ יְהוָה אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהָאֲמֹרִי וְהַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוֹסִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לֵאבְדֶּיךָ לָתֵת לָךְ אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ וְעַבַדְתָּ אֶת־הָעֲבָדָה הַזֹּאת בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה: ⁶ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תֹּאכַל מִצֶּת וּבִיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי חַג לַיהוָה: ⁷ מִצּוֹת יֹאכַל אֵת שִׁבְעַת הַיָּמִים וְלֹא־יֵרָאֶה לָךְ חֶמֶץ וְלֹא־יֵרָאֶה לָךְ שָׂאֵר בְּכָל־גִּבְלֶךָ: ⁸ וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר

EXODUS 13

- ¹ In the Code of the Covenant (22:28–29), this law of the firstborn is not connected to the Passover.
- ² According to ancient belief, the devotion of the firstborn of humans and of beasts to God, the giver of fertility, was necessary for continuing increase and well-being (22:29–30, Lv 27:26–27, Nb 3:13, 8:17–18, 18:15).
- ³ Vv. 3–10 possibly comprise an old tradition about the Feast of Unleavened Bread (compare the parallel version of 12:14–20).
- ⁴ In place of ‘you go forth’, here following the NRSV and NJPS, the NJB reads, ‘you are leaving Egypt’. ‘Abib’ (אָבִיב) appears to be an old name for the month, meaning something like ‘(month of) fresh young ears’ (Lv 2:14); such names were not precise designations, but general seasons based on the lunar year in the agricultural setting.
- ⁵ Literally translated, this verse opens, “And it will be when.”
- ⁶ In place of ‘festival to’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘feast in honour of’.
- ⁷ An alternative reading for ‘be seen among you’ is ‘be visible to you’.

בַּעֲבוּר זֶה עֲשֵׂה יְהוָה לִי בְצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם: ^ט וְהָיָה לָךְ
לְאוֹת עַל־יָדְךָ וּלְזִכְרוֹן בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה תּוֹרַת
יְהוָה בְּפִיךָ כִּי בְיַד חֲזָקָה הוּצָאתָ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם:
וְשִׁמַּרְתָּ אֶת־הַחֻקָּה הַזֹּאת לְמוֹעֵדָה מִיָּמִים
יְמִימָה: {פ}

your territory. ⁸ That day, you will tell your son, “It is because of what Yahweh did for me when I came out of Egypt.” ⁹ It will be a sign on your hand, a memento between your eyes, so Yahweh’s Law will be on your lips; for, Yahweh brought you out of Egypt with a mighty hand. ¹⁰ You will observe this ordinance each year at its proper time.

יֵא וְהָיָה כִּי־יָבֵאתָ יְהוָה אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי כַּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע
לָךְ וּלְאֲבֹתֶיךָ וּנְתַנָּה לָךְ: ^{יב} וְהֵעֲבַרְתָּ כָּל־פֶּטֶר־רֶחֶם
לִיהוָה וְכָל־פֶּטֶר | שֹׁגֵר בְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה לָךְ הַזִּכְרִים
לִיהוָה: ^{יג} וְכָל־פֶּטֶר חֲמֹל תִּפְדֶּה בִּשְׂהָ וְאִם־לֹא תִפְדֶּה
וְעֲרַפְתּוּ וְכָל בְּכוֹר אָדָם בְּבִנְיָךְ תִּפְדֶּה: ^{יד} וְהָיָה כִּי־
יִשְׁאַלְךָ בִּנְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר מַה־זֹּאת וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו בַּחֲזֹק
יָד הוּצֵאתָנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים: ^{טו} וְהָיָה כִּי־

¹¹ “When Yahweh brings you to the land of the Canaanite, as he swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, ¹² you are to make over to Yahweh all that opens the womb, and every firstborn male animal is Yahweh’s. ¹³ Every firstborn donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; if you do not redeem it, you must break its neck. Every firstborn son you shall redeem; ¹⁴ and when your son asks you, in days to come, “What is this?” you will tell him, “With a mighty hand

⁸ In later times, people could tell ‘*what Yahweh did for me when I came out of Egypt*’; for, in worship, the redemptive event was made present (12:26–27, see Dt 5:2–3).

⁹ This passage has, of course, been taken literally by many devout Jews, and portions of the text have been encased in phylacteries and bound on the arm and forehead.

¹⁰ In place of ‘*each year*’, here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* has ‘*from year to year*’.

¹¹ In 22:28–29 & 34:19–20, the firstborn male, either human or animal, is pronounced God’s property. The firstborn of beasts are offered in sacrifice (Dt 15:19–20), and a portion goes to the priests (Nb 18:15–18).

¹² It was once assumed by some scholars that child sacrifice lay behind this text in the earlier days, but that the priests and prophets removed those themes. Apart from the fact that there is absolutely no evidence for anything like that, the Law forbade child sacrifice, and always used child sacrifice as the sample of what not to do in conformity with the pagans (e.g., Dt 12:31). Besides, it would be absurd for Yahweh to redeem the firstborn from death and then ask Israel to kill them.

¹³ The donkey, being an unclean animal, could not be offered in sacrifice but may be redeemed by substituting a lamb.

¹⁴ The practice, rooted in ancient fertility beliefs, is here reinterpreted in the light of the Exodus.

הַקֶּשֶׁה פֶּרַעַה לְשַׁלְּחֵנוּ וַיַּהֲרֹג יְהוָה כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם מִבְּכֹר אָדָם וְעַד־בְּכוֹר בְּהֵמָה עַל־כֵּן אֲנִי זֹבֵחַ
לַיהוָה כָּל־פֶּטֶר רֶחֶם הַזְּכָרִים וְכָל־בְּכוֹר בְּנֵי אִפְדָּה:
טז וְהָיָה לְאוֹת עַל־יָדְכָה וּלְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ כִּי בַחֲזֶק
יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם:

{ס}

יז וַיְהִי בְשַׁלַּח פֶּרַעַה אֶת־הָעָם וְלֹא־נָחַם אֱלֹהִים דֶּרֶךְ
אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים כִּי קָרוֹב הוּא כִּי | אָמַר אֱלֹהִים פֶּן־
יִנָּחֵם הָעָם בְּרֹאֲתָם מִלַּחְמָה וְשָׁבוּ מִצְרַיִמָּה: יח וַיֹּסֶב
אֱלֹהִים | אֶת־הָעָם דֶּרֶךְ הַמִּדְבָּר יַם־סוּף וַחֲמִשִּׁים עָלוּ
בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: יט וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־עֲצָמוֹת
יוֹסֵף עִמּוֹ כִּי הִשְׁבַּעַת הַשִּׁבְיעַ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר
פֶּקֶד יִפְקֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶתְכֶם וְהָעֲלִיתֶם אֶת־עֲצָמֹתַי מִזֶּה
אִתְּכֶם:

Yahweh brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.¹⁵ When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, Yahweh killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast. For this, I sacrifice to Yahweh every male that opens the womb and redeem every firstborn son.”¹⁶ It will be a sign on your hand, a symbol between your eyes; for, Yahweh brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.”

¹⁷ When Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not let them take the road to the Philistine land, although that was near. God said, “The thought of war will make the people repent and return to Egypt.”

¹⁸ And so, God led the people by the roundabout way of the desert to the Sea of Reeds. The Israelites went out armed from.¹⁹ Moses took with him the bones of Joseph who had put the Israelites on solemn oath, saying, “God will surely visit you, and then you must take my bones from here with you.”

¹⁵ The literal translation of ‘stubbornly refused to let us go’ is ‘dealt hardly in letting us go’.

¹⁶ ‘Symbol’ could also read ‘emblem’ or ‘frontlet’ (the NJB has ‘headband’); the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

¹⁷ The route taken by the Exodus and the precise stages of the journey are extremely difficult to determine. This verse notwithstanding, a certain number of names tend to indicate a northern route – that is to say through ‘Philistine territory’ (which term, however, is an anachronism). The ‘near’ route mentioned herein was the normal highway running parallel with the coast and going by way of Sileh (the modern El-Kantara).

¹⁸ The meaning and location of what is termed ‘the Sea of Reeds’ are uncertain: it is not mentioned in the Ch. 14 narrative, which only speaks of ‘the sea’. The sole ancient text to mention the ‘Sea of Suph’ or ‘Sea of Reeds’ (translating the Egyptian term – see also the phrase in Nb 21:4) is 15:4, which is poetic. In place of ‘prepared for battle’, here following the MT (חֲמִשִּׁים) & NRSV, the NJB, following the Tg, has ‘fully armed’ and the LXX has ‘in the fifth generation’ (πέμπτη δὲ γενεά).

¹⁹ The MT here uses the Hiphil infinitive absolute with the Hiphil perfect to stress that Joseph had made them take a solemn oath to carry his bones out of Egypt.

כ וַיִּסְעוּ מִסֹּכֶת וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּאֶתֶם בְּקֶצֶה הַמִּדְבָּר׃ כא וַיְהִי הָהֵאָּה
הַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵיהֶם יוֹמָם בְּעַמּוּד עָנָן לְנַחֲתָם הַדֶּרֶךְ וּלְלֵילָה
בְּעַמּוּד אֵשׁ לְהָאִיר לָהֶם לָלֶכֶת יוֹמָם וּלְלֵילָה׃ כב לֹא-
יָמִישׁ עַמּוּד הָעָנָן יוֹמָם וְעַמּוּד הָאֵשׁ לַיְלָה לִפְנֵי
הָעָם׃ {פ}

²⁰ From Succoth they moved on and camped at Etham, on the edge of the desert. ²¹ Yahweh went before them: by day in a pillar of cloud to show them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so they could travel by day and by night. ²² The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night never left the front of the people.

²⁰ For 'Succoth' (סֹכֶת), NETB uses the alternative spelling 'Sukkoth'.

²¹ The events described here are by no means legend: God chose to guide the people with a pillar of cloud in the day and one of fire at night, or, as a pillar of cloud and fire since they represent his presence. God has already appeared to Moses in the fire of the bush, and so here again is revelation with fire; there is some question about whether everyone could see these phenomena, but the point of the text is clear that this was a supernatural provision to lead the people. Whatever the exact nature of these things, they formed direct, visible revelations from God – God was guiding the people in a clear and unambiguous way; and both clouds and fire would again and again come to represent the presence of God in his power and majesty, guiding and protecting his people, by judging their enemies. (See also #22.)

²² In the Pentateuch, we find the divine presence manifested in various ways: the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire), the 'dark mist' and the Cloud, and, finally, coupled with the Cloud and the 'glory' of Yahweh (24:16ff), a consuming fire that moves like Yahweh himself (see 19:16ff and #19:16). Whatever the nature of the phenomenon originally, cloud and fire have become traditional ways of expressing God's presence and guidance (see 19:9, 33:9, 40:34–38, 1K 8:10–11).

שמות פרק יד

EXODUS 14

א וַיֹּדְבַר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּשְׁבוּ וַיַּחֲנוּ לִפְנֵי פִי הַחִירֹת בֵּין מִגְדֹּל וּבֵין הַיָּם לִפְנֵי בַעַל צֶפֶן נֶכְחוּ תַחֲנוּ עַל־הַיָּם: ג וְאָמַר פַּרְעֹה לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נִבְקִים הֵם בָּאָרֶץ סָגַר עֲלֵיהֶם הַמִּדְבָּר: ד וַחֲזַקְתִּי אֶת־לִב־פַּרְעֹה וַרְדֵּף אַחֲרֵיהֶם וְאֶכְבְּדָה בַּפַּרְעֹה וּבְכָל־חֵילוֹ וַיִּדְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ־כֵן:

ה וַיֵּגַד לְמֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם כִּי בָרַח הָעָם וַיִּהְיֶה לִבָּב פַּרְעֹה וַעֲבָדָיו אֶל־הָעָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ מִה־זֹּאת עֲשִׂינוּ כִּי־שָׁלַחְנוּ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעֲבַדְנוּ: ו וַיֹּאסֶר אֶת־רֶכֶבוֹ וְאֶת־עַמּוֹ לָקַח עִמּוֹ: ז וַיִּקַּח שֵׁש־מֵאוֹת רָכָב בָּחוּר וְכָל רֶכֶב מִצְרַיִם וְשָׁלָשׁ עַל־כֻּלּוֹ:

¹ Yahweh said to Moses, ² "Tell the Israelites to turn back and camp in front of Pi-Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, facing Baal-Zephon; pitch your camp opposite it, by the sea. ³ Pharaoh will say, "Look at these Israelites wandering in the land; the desert has closed in on them." ⁴ I will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will pursue them; but I will win honour over Pharaoh, and all his armies, and the Egyptians will learn that I am Yahweh." They did so.

⁵ The king of Egypt was told that the people had fled and he and his courtiers changed their minds about the people. They said, "What have we done, allowing Israel to leave our service?" ⁶ So, he prepared his chariot, and took his troops with him, ⁷ taking six hundred picked chariots and all the chariots in Egypt, each manned by officers.

EXODUS 14

¹ At the end of this verse, the MT adds the participle, 'saying', which is redundant in contemporary English.

² The Israelites were unable to break through and had to turn back, so they were trapped between the water barrier and the Egyptian forces.

³ The word translated 'wandering' means 'perplexed', or 'confused'; Pharaoh thought that the Israelites would not know which way to turn in order to escape – and they would never dream of crossing the sea

⁴ Yahweh intended to gain glory by this final and great victory over the strength of Pharaoh; judgment will not only destroy the wicked – it will reveal the glory and majesty of the sovereignty of God.

⁵ The verb 'fled' must be given a past perfect translation because the fleeing occurred before the telling.

⁶ The literal translation of 'troops' is 'people'.

⁷ The word שָׁלָשׁ ('officers') means some special kind of military officer. At one time, it was taken to mean a 'three-man chariot', but the pictures of Egyptian chariots only show two in a chariot; it may mean officers near the king, 'men of the third rank', so the chariots and the crew represented the elite.

ח וַיַּחֲזֹק יְהוָה אֶת-לֵב פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּרְדֹּף אַחֲרֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יָצְאוּ בְיַד רָמָה: ט וַיִּרְדְּפוּ מִצְרַיִם אַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁיֹגּוּ אוֹתָם חֲנִים עַל-הַיָּם כָּל-סוֹס רֶכֶב פַּרְעֹה וּפָרָשָׁיו וַחֲיָלוֹ עַל-פִּי הַחִירָת לִפְנֵי בַעַל צֶפֶן:

⁸ Yahweh made Pharaoh, king of Egypt, stubborn, and he gave chase to the Israelites as they escaped boldly. ⁹ And the Egyptians gave chase and overtook them encamping by the sea (all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, his horsemen, and his army), near Pi-Hahiroth, facing Bal-Zephon.

י וּפַרְעֹה הִקְרִיב וַיִּשְׂאוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-עֵינֵיהֶם וַהֲנֶה מִצְרַיִם | נֹסַע אַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיִּירָאוּ מְאֹד וַיִּצְעֲקוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-יְהוָה: יא וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה הַמְּבַלִּי אֵיךְ קִבְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם לְקַחְתָּנוּ לָמוֹת בַּמִּדְבָּר מֵהַזֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ לָּנוּ לְהוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם: יב הֲלֹא-זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְנוּ אֵלֶיךָ בְּמִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר חֲדַל מִמֶּנּוּ וְנַעֲבֹדָה אֶת-מִצְרַיִם כִּי טוֹב לָנוּ עֲבֹד אֶת-מִצְרַיִם מִמָּוֶת בַּמִּדְבָּר: יג וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעָם אֲלֹתֵיהֶם הֲתִיצְבוּ וַרְאוּ אֶת-יְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אֲשֶׁר

¹⁰ And, as Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up and saw the Egyptians in pursuit of them! The Israelites were terrified and cried out to Yahweh. ¹¹ And they said to Moses, "Were there no graves in Egypt that you must lead us out to die in the desert? What good have you done us, bringing us out of Egypt? ¹² Was this not exactly what we told you in Egypt? "Leave us alone," we said, "we would rather work for the Egyptians!" Better to work for the Egyptians than die in the desert!" ¹³ Moses answered the people, "Have no fear! Stand firm, and you will see what Yahweh will do to save you today: the

⁸ Alternative readings for 'boldly' are 'defiantly' and 'triumphantly'; the literal translation is 'with a high hand' (as WEBBE).

⁹ The NRSV has 'chariot drivers' in place of 'horsemen', here following the NJB (& NETB).

¹⁰ The Israelites' cry to Yahweh was proper and necessary but their words against Moses (v. 11) were a rebuke and disloyal, showing a lack of faith and understanding.

¹¹ The term *לְהוֹצִיאָנוּ* ('bringing ... out') is the Hiphil infinitive construct with a suffix; it is used epexegetically here, explaining the previous question.

¹² The question appears surprising at first, for we have not read previously that such words were spoken to Moses; nor is the purport of the protest of the Israelite foremen (v. 21) identical with that of the words uttered now. However, from a psychological standpoint, the matter can be easily explained: in the hour of peril, the Israelites remember that remonstrance, and now it seems to them that it was of a sharper character and flowed from their foresight, and that the present situation justifies it, for death awaits them at this moment in the desert.

¹³ Viewed in faith, the victory was a mighty act of Yahweh, who was fighting for the people in a contest with the powerful Pharaoh (v. 25).

רֹאיתֶם אֶת־מִצְרַיִם הַיּוֹם לֹא תִסְפוּ לִרְאֹתָם עוֹד עַד־
 עוֹלָם: ^ד יְהוָה יִלָּחֶם לָכֶם וְאַתֶּם תַּחֲרֹשׁוּן: {פ}

^{טו} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה מִה־תִּצַּעַק אֵלַי דִּבֶּר אֶל־
 בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסְעוּ: ^{טז} וְאַתָּה הָרֵם אֶת־מִטְּךָ וְנָטָה אֶת־
 יָדְךָ עַל־הַיָּם וּבִקְעָהוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם
 בַּיַּבֶּשֶׁה: ^{יז} וְאֲנִי הִנְנִי מַחְזֵק אֶת־לֵב מִצְרַיִם וַיָּבֹאוּ
 אַחֲרֵיהֶם וְאַפְבֹּדָה בַּפָּרֶעַה וּבְכָל־חִילוֹ בָּרָכְבוֹ
 וּבַפָּרָשָׁיו: ^{יח} וַיֵּדְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה בְּהַפְכֹּדִי
 בַּפָּרֶעַה בָּרָכְבוֹ וּבַפָּרָשָׁיו:

^{יט} וַיֵּסַע מִלֶּאֲדָה הָאֱלֹהִים הַהֹלֵךְ לִפְנֵי מַחֲנֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל
 וַיֵּלֶךְ מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיֵּסַע עִמּוֹד הָעָנָן מִפְּנֵיהֶם וַיַּעֲמֵד
 מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם: ^כ וַיָּבֹא בֵּין מַחֲנֵה מִצְרַיִם וּבֵין מַחֲנֵה

Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. ¹⁴ Yahweh will do the fighting for you; you have only to keep still.”

¹⁵ Yahweh said to Moses, “Why cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to march on. ¹⁶ Raise your rod, stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it, so the Israelites can cross the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷ Then I will harden the Egyptians’ hearts and they will follow them, and I shall win glory over Pharaoh, and all his army, his chariots and his horsemen. ¹⁸ The Egyptians will know that I am Yahweh when I have won glory over Pharaoh, and his chariots, and his army.”

¹⁹ The Angel of God, who marched in front of the army of Israel, moved to the rear; and the pillar of cloud moved from the front to the rear of them, and stayed there. ²⁰ It came between the camp of the

¹⁴ The imperfect tense of ‘keep still’ needs to be interpreted in contrast to all that Yahweh will be doing; it may be given a potential imperfect nuance ‘you can be still’ (as *NETB*) or it may be obligatory to follow the command to be still: ‘you must be still’.

¹⁵ The narrative of vv. 15–31 presents the miracle of the sea in two ways. **1:** Moses waves his staff over the sea, which divides, forming two walls of water between which the Israelites pass on dry ground. Then, when the Egyptians have followed them in, the waters flow back and engulf them. **2:** Moses encourages the pursued Israelites by assuring them that there is nothing that they need do; Yahweh then raises a wind, which dries up the sea; the Egyptians advance into it and are engulfed when the waters flow back.

¹⁶ The literal translation of ‘cross’ is ‘go into (the midst of)’.

¹⁷ God would get glory by defeating Egypt – see #4.

¹⁸ The literal translation of ‘the Egyptians’ is ‘Egypt’, but the verb (‘will know’) is plural.

¹⁹ There may have been only one pillar, one cloud; it would have been a dark cloud behind it, but in front of it, shining the way, a pillar of fire. Compare the manifestation on Sinai, when the mountain was on fire but veiled by a dark cloud (Dt 4:11 & 5:19).

²⁰ The phrase ‘and the night passed’ follows the LXX (καὶ διήλθεν ἡ νύξ) and NJB; the MT (and NRSV) has ‘there was a cloud and darkness; and it lit up the night’. In Jos 24:7, Yahweh sets a thick mist between Israelites and Egyptians. The translation used here is conjectural.

יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהִי הָעָנָן וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֹּאֲרֶה אֶת־הַלֵּילָה וְלֹא־קָרַב
זֶה אֶל־זֶה כָּל־הַלֵּילָה:

כא וַיֹּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־הַיָּם וַיּוֹלֶךְ יְהוָה | אֶת־הַיָּם
בְּרוּחַ קָדִים עֲזָה כָּל־הַלֵּילָה וַיָּשֶׁם אֶת־הַיָּם לַחֲרֵבָה
וַיִּבָּקְעוּ הַמַּיִם: כב וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם
בַּיַּבֶּשֶׁה וְהַמַּיִם לָהֶם חוֹמָה מִיְּמִינָם וּמִשְׁמָאלָם:
כג וַיִּרְדְּפוּ מִצְרַיִם וַיָּבֹאוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם כָּל־סוּס פָּרְעֹה רֶכֶבּוֹ
וּפָרָשָׁיו אֶל־תּוֹךְ הַיָּם:

כד וַיְהִי בַּאֲשֶׁמֶרֶת הַבֹּקֶר וַיִּשְׁקֹף יְהוָה אֶל־מַחֲנֵה
מִצְרַיִם בַּעֲמֹד אֵשׁ וְעָנָן וַיִּהְיֶה אֵת מַחֲנֵה מִצְרַיִם:
כה וַיִּסֹּר אֶת אַפְּן מִרְכַּבְתָּיו וַיִּנְהַגְהוּ בַּכִּבְדָּת וַיֹּאמֶר
מִצְרַיִם אֲנוֹסָה מִפְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי יְהוָה נֹלָחֵם לָהֶם
בַּמִּצְרַיִם: {פ}

כו וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה נֹטֵה אֶת־יָדְךָ עַל־הַיָּם וַיָּשָׁבוּ
הַמַּיִם עַל־מִצְרַיִם עַל־רֶכֶבּוֹ וְעַל־פָּרָשָׁיו: כז וַיֹּט מֹשֶׁה
אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־הַיָּם וַיָּשָׁב הַיָּם לַפְּנוֹת בֹּקֶר לְאִיתָנּוּ

Egyptians and the camp of Israel. The cloud was dark, and the night passed without the armies drawing any closer all night.

²¹ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. Yahweh drove back the sea with a strong east wind all night, and he made dry land of the sea. The waters parted ²² and the Israelites crossed the sea on dry ground, walls of water to right and to left of them. ²³ The Egyptians gave chase: after them, they went, right into the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen.

²⁴ In the morning watch, Yahweh looked down on the army of the Egyptians from the pillar of fire and cloud, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. ²⁵ He so clogged their chariot wheels that they could not make headway; the Egyptians cried, "Let us flee from the face of Israel. Yahweh is fighting for them against the Egyptians!"

²⁶ Yahweh said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so the waters may flow back on the Egyptians, their chariots, and their horsemen." ²⁷ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and, at

²¹ Some, still trying to explain things with natural explanations, suggest that a NE wind is to be thought of (an east wind would be directly in the Israelites' faces), such as a shallow ford might cooperate with an ebb tide in keeping a passage clear.

²² Literally translated, this verse ends, "and the waters (were) for them a wall to the right and to the left."

²³ The words 'after them' do not appear in the MT and are here added for clarity (following the NJB, NRSV & NETB)

²⁴ The 'morning watch' was the last watch of the night, 2–6 am.

²⁵ 'Clogged' is from the LXX (στυνέμεν) and other texts; the MT has 'took off' (וַיִּסֹּר).

²⁶ The verb 'may flow' (literally, 'and they will return') is here subordinated to the imperative preceding it, showing the purpose of that act.

²⁷ The literal translation of 'at dawn' is 'at the turning of the morning'.

וּמִצְרַיִם נָסִים לִקְרָאתוֹ וַיִּנְעַר יְהוָה אֶת־מִצְרַיִם בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם: ^{כח} וַיֵּשְׁבוּ הַמַּיִם וַיַּכּוּ אֶת־הָרֶכֶב וְאֶת־הַפָּרָשִׁים לְכָל־חֵיל פְּרָעָה הַבָּאִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם בַּיָּם לֹא־נִשְׁאַר בָּהֶם עַד־אַחַד: ^{כט} וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָלְכוּ בִּיבֶשֶׁת בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם וְהַמַּיִם לָהֶם חֹמָה מִיְּמִינָם וּמִשְׁמָאלָם: ^ל וַיּוֹשַׁע יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־מִצְרַיִם מֵת עַל־שַׁפַּת הַיָּם: ^{לא} וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַיָּד הַגְּדֹלָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיִּירָאוּ הָעָם אֶת־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמִינוּ בִּיהוָה וּבְמֹשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ: {ר} {ש}

dawn, the sea returned to its bed. The Egyptians fled before it and Yahweh overthrew the Egyptians in the middle of the sea. ²⁸ The returning waters covered the chariots and the horsemen of Pharaoh's whole army that had followed them into the sea; not one remained. ²⁹ But the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground, walls of water to right and to left of them. ³⁰ That day, Yahweh saved Israel from the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. ³¹ Israel witnessed the great work that Yahweh did against the Egyptians and the people venerated Yahweh; and they believed in Yahweh and in Moses, his servant.

²⁸ In place of 'them', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB & NETB have 'the Israelites'.

²⁹ See #22 on the ending of this verse.

³⁰ The term וַיּוֹשַׁע ('saved') is the key summation of the chapter, and this part of the book: 'So Yahweh saved Israel'; this is the culmination of all the powerful works of God through these chapters.

³¹ Here the title of 'servant' is given to Moses; this is the highest title a mortal can have in the OT – the 'servant of Yahweh'. It signifies more than a believer; it describes the individual as acting on behalf of God. For example, when Moses stretched out his hand, God used it as his own (Is 63:12): Moses was God's personal representative. The chapter records both a message of salvation and of judgment. Like the earlier deliverance from their dwelling by the Passover, this chapter can be used as a lesson on deliverance from present troubles – if God could do this for Israel, there is no trouble too great for him to overcome. The passage can also be used as a picture (at least) of the deliverance at the final judgment on the world; but the Israelites used this account for a paradigm on the power of God: namely, God is able to deliver his people from danger because he is the sovereign Lord of creation. His people must learn to trust him, even in desperate situations; they must fear him and not the situation: God can bring any threat to an end by bringing his power to bear in judgment on the wicked.

שמות פרק טו

EXODUS 15

אֲזַי יִשְׁרָמֶשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לַיהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ {ר} לֵאמֹר {ס}	¹ It was then that Moses and the Israelites sang this song in honour of Yahweh. They said:
אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה כִּי־גָאָה גָּאָה {ס} סוֹס {ר} וּרְכָבוֹ רָמָה בַּיָּם: {ס} בִּעֲזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה וַיְהִי־לִי {ר} לִישׁוּעָה {ס} זֶה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֵנֹהוּ {ס} אֱלֹהֵי {ר} אָבִי וְאַרְמְמָנֹהוּ: {ס} יְהוָה אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה יְהוָה {ר} שְׁמוֹ: {ס} מִרְכַּבַּת פְּרָעָה וַחֲיָלוֹ יָרָה בַּיָּם {ס} וּמִבְחָר {ר}	"I shall sing to Yahweh, for he is highly exalted. Horse and rider, he has thrown into the sea. ² Yah is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God: I shall praise him, my father's God: I will exalt him. ³ Yahweh is a warrior; Yahweh is his name. ⁴ Pharaoh's chariots and army he has cast into the sea; his picked officers were sunk in the Sea of Reeds.
שְׁלֹשׁוֹ טָבְעוּ בַיָּם־סוּף: {ס}	⁵ The floods covered them; then they went down into the depths
הַתְּהֹמֹת יִכְסִּימוּ יִרְדּוּ בְּמִצּוֹלֹת כְּמוֹ־ {ר}	like a stone. ⁶ Your right hand, Yahweh, glories in power;
אָבֹן: {ס} יְמִינֶךָ יְהוָה נֶאֱדָרִי בַכֹּחַ {ס}	your right hand,
יְמִינֶךָ {ר}	

EXODUS 15

- ¹ 'Sang' translates the verb יִשְׁרָ, a normal imperfect tense form, but after the adverb 'then' this form is to be treated as a preterite.
- ² 'Yah' is another form of the name, 'Yahweh' (the WEBBE has the traditional, 'LORD'). In place of 'he has become my salvation', here following the NRSV (& NETB), the NJB has 'to him I owe my deliverance'. The word וְזִמְרַת ('song') is problematical; it probably had a suffix *yod* that was accidentally dropped because of the *yod* on the divine name following. Most scholars posit another meaning for the word: 'power' fits the line fairly well, forming a hendiadys with 'strength': 'strength and power' becoming 'strong power'. Similar lines are in Is 12:2 & Ps 118:14.
- ³ In this and the following verses, the poet uses the ancient Middle Eastern metaphor of the Divine Warrior (Ps 24:8) to portray Yahweh's saving action on behalf of Israel (14:14,25).
- ⁴ In place of 'officers', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'horsemen'.
- ⁵ In place of 'went down into the depths', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'have sunk to the bottom'; the para-synonyms here are תְּהֹמֹת ('floods') and מִצּוֹלֹת ('depths' – literally, 'gurgling places').
- ⁶ In place of 'glories in power', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'wins glory by its strength'.

יְהוָה תִּרְעַץ אוֹיֵב: {ס} יִבְרַב גְּאוֹנֶךָ תִּהְרַס {ר} Yahweh, shatters the enemy.⁷ So great your splendour, you crush
 קִמִּיד {ס} תִּשְׁלַח חֲרֹנֶךָ יֹאכְלֵמוּ בֶקֶשׁ: {ס} your foes; you unleash your fury, it consumed them like chaff.
 וּבְרוּחַ {ר} ⁸ At a blast from your nostrils
 אֲפִיד גְּעָרְמוּ מַיִם {ס} נָצְבוּ כְמוֹ-נֵד {ר} the waters piled high; the waves stood upright like a dyke;
 נִזְלִים {ס} קָפְאוּ תִהְיֶה בְּלִבֵּי-יָם: {ס} אָמַר {ר} the bed of the sea became firm ground.⁹ The enemy said,
 אוֹיֵב אֶרְדֹּף אֲשִׁיג {ס} אֲחַלֵּק שָׁלָל תִּמְלֹאמוּ {ר} "I will pursue and overtake, I will divide the spoil and
 נִפְשִׁי {ס} אֶרְיֵק חֲרָבִי תִוְרִישְׁמוּ יָדַי: {ס} glut on them, I will draw my sword, my hand will destroy them."
 נִשְׁפָּת {ר} ¹⁰ You blew with your breath
 בְּרוּחְךָ בִּסְטֵמוֹ יָם {ס} צָלְלוּ בְּעוֹפְרֶת בְּמַיִם {ר} and the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty
 אֲדִירִים: {ס} יֵאֱמָר מִי-כְמֹכָה בָּאֵלִם יְהוָה {ס} מִי {ר} waters.¹¹ Yahweh, who is like you among the gods,
 כְּמֹכָה נֹאדָר בְּקֹדֶשׁ {ס} נֹרָא תִהְיֶה עֲשֵׂה {ר} who is like you, majestic in sanctity, fearsome of deed, working
 פְּלֹא: {ס} יֵב נָטִיתָ יְמִינֶךָ תִּבְלַעְמוּ אֶרֶץ: {ס} wonders?¹² You stretched out your right hand, the earth swallowed
 נְחִיתָ {ר} them!¹³ In your love,

⁷ The word 'fury' is a metonymy of cause; the effect – the judgment – is what is meant.

⁸ The language is influenced by the ancient myth of a divine battle against the Sea, the chaotic power hostile to God's rule (see Ps 77:16–19, 114:3–6, Hab 3:8).

⁹ The literal translation of 'glut on them' is 'my desire shall be filled on them'; the word נִפְשִׁי ('my soul') refers to the whole person, the body and the soul, or better, a bundle of appetites in a body; it therefore can figuratively refer to the desires or appetites (Dt 12:15, 14:26, 23:24). Here, with the verb 'to be full' means 'to be satisfied'; the greedy appetite was to destroy.

¹⁰ The NJB opens this verse, here following the NRSV, with 'one breath of yours you blew'.

¹¹ Another motif of ancient hymns: the incomparability of Yahweh among 'the holy ones', who compose the heavenly council (Ps 86:8, 89:7–8). Verses 11–17 will now focus on Yahweh as the incomparable one who was able to save Israel from her foes, and afterward lead them to the Promised Land.

¹² The verb 'swallowed' is the prefixed conjugation, the preterite without the *vav* consecutive; the subject ('the earth') must be inclusive of the sea, or it may indicate the grave or Sheol: the sea drowned them. Some scholars wish to see this as a reference to Dathan and Abiram, and therefore evidence of a later addition or compilation; it fits this passage well, however.

¹³ The verbs in the next two verses are perfect tenses but can be interpreted (as NETB) as a prophetic perfect, looking to the future.

בַּחֲסִדְךָ עִם־זֵו גָּאֻלְתָּ {ס} נְהַלְתָּ בְּעֶזְךָ אֶל־נְוֶה {ר}
 קִדְשְׁךָ: {ס} יִשְׁמְעוּ עַמִּים יִרְגְּזוּן {ס} חֵיל {ר}
 אֶחָז יִשְׁבִּי פִלִּשְׁתִּי: {ס} יִשְׁאֹז נְבִהֵלֹו אֱלֹופֵי {ר}
 אֲדֹם {ס} אֵילֵי מֹאָב יֶאֱחָזְמוּ רָעַד {ס} נִמְגְּזוּ {ר}
 כָּל יִשְׁבֵּי כְנָעַן: {ס} תִּפֹּל עֲלֵיהֶם אִימָתָה {ר}
 וּפָחַד {ס} בְּגִדְלֹו זִרְוּעֶךָ יִדְמֻ כָּאֶבֶן {ס} עַד־ {ר}
 יַעֲבֹר עִמָּךְ יְהוָה {ס} עַד־יַעֲבֹר עִם־זֵו {ר}
 קָנִיתָ: {ס} יִתְבָּאֲמוּ וְתִטְעַמֻּ בְּהַר נַחֲלֹתֶיךָ {ס}
 מְכוֹן {ר}
 לְשִׁבְתֶּךָ פַּעֲלֹת יְהוָה {ס} מִקְדָּשׁ אֲדָנִי כֹוֶנְנִי {ר}
 יִדְיָךְ: {ס} יִי יְהוָה | יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעַד: {ס} יִי כִי {ר}
 בָּא סוֹס פָּרְעֹה בָּרֻכָּבוֹ וּבִפְרָשָׁיו בָּיָם {ס}
 וַיָּשֶׁב יְהוָה עֲלֵיהֶם {ר}
 אֶת־מֵי הַיָּם {ס}
 וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵלְכוּ בִיבְשָׁה בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם: {ר}
 {ש}

you led the people you redeemed; you guided them in your might
 to your holy dwelling. ¹⁴ Hearing of this, the people trembled;
 pangs seized the inhabitants of Philistia ¹⁵ The chiefs of Edom
 are dismayed, panic has seized Moab's princes; all the inhabitants
 of Canaan melted away. ¹⁶ On them fall terror and dread.
 By the power of your arm, they are still as stone until your people
 passed by, Yahweh, until the people passed by,
 you bought. ¹⁷ You brought them in and set them on the mountain
 that is your heritage,
 the place you, Yahweh, made your dwelling, the sanctuary,
 your own hands made. ¹⁸ Yahweh will reign forever. ¹⁹ For,
 Pharaoh's cavalry, his chariots and horsemen, went into the sea,
 Yahweh brought back the waters
 of the sea over them
 but the Israelites walked right through the sea on dry ground.

¹⁴ The 'pangs' are like those of a woman in labour, a common biblical image. The Philistines settled 'Philistia' circa 1175 BCE; hence, the poem was written after then, though probably before the monarchy.

¹⁵ The verb 'has seized' is in the imperfect tense.

¹⁶ The two words 'terror' and 'dread' can form a nominal hendiadys, 'a terrible fear'. In place of 'purchased', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'acquired'; the verb קָנִיתָ here is probably not the homonym 'to create', 'to make' (see Gn 4:1, Dt 32:6, & Pr 8:22).

¹⁷ The 'mountain' refers to the Hill of Jerusalem, site of the Temple. The 'mountain' and the 'place' would be wherever Yahweh met with his people; it here refers to Canaan, the land promised to the patriarchs.

¹⁸ This refrain was probably the original ending of the poem (see #19).

¹⁹ The footnotes to the NJB mark this verse as an 'editorial addition'.

כ²⁰ וַתִּקַּח מִרְיָם הַנְּבִיאָה אֲחוֹת אֹהֶרֶן אֶת־תִּהְתֵּף בַּיָּדָה
וַתִּצָּאנָּן כָּל־הַנָּשִׁים אַחֲרֶיהָ בַּתָּפִים וּבַמַּחֲלֹת: כ²¹ וַתִּשָּׂא
לָהֶם מִרְיָם

שִׁירָו לַיהוָה כִּי־גָאָה גָּאָה
סוֹס וְרֹכֵבֹו רָמָה בָּיִם:

{ס}

כב²² וַיֹּסֶעַ מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּם־סוּף וַיֵּצְאוּ אֶל־מִדְבַּר־
שׁוּר וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁלֹשַׁת־יָמִים בַּמִּדְבָּר וְלֹא־מָצְאוּ מַיִם:
כג²³ וַיָּבֹאוּ מִרְתָּה וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לִשְׁתֹּת מִיַּם מִמֶּרֶה כִּי מִרְיָם
הֵם עַל־כֵּן קָרָא־שְׁמָהּ מֶרֶה: כד²⁴ וַיִּלְנוּ הָעָם עַל־מֹשֶׁה
לֵאמֹר מִה־נִּשְׁתָּה: כה²⁵ וַיִּצַּעַק אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּרְהוּ יְהוָה עֵץ
וַיִּשְׁלַךְ אֶל־הַמַּיִם וַיִּמָּתְקוּ הַמַּיִם שֵׁם שֵׁם לוֹ חֹק
וּמִשְׁפָּט וְשֵׁם נִסָּהּ: כו²⁶ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶם־שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמָע
לְקוֹל | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהִיָּשֵׁר בְּעֵינֶיךָ תַּעֲשֶׂה וְהֶאֱזַנְתָּ
לְמִצְוֹתָיו וְשָׁמַרְתָּ כָּל־חֻקָּיו כָּל־הַמַּחֲלָה אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי
בַּמִּצְרִיִּם לֹא־אֵשִׁים עָלֶיךָ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה רֹפֵאֲךָ: {ס}

²⁰ Miriam, the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took up a tambourine, and all the women followed her with tambourines, dancing, ²¹ and Miriam sang to them:

“Sing to Yahweh, for he has covered himself in glory,
horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.”

²² Moses led Israel on from the Sea of Reeds and they made for the desert of Shur; they went three days and found no water. ²³ They reached Marah but the water was too bitter to drink; this is why it was named Marah. ²⁴ The people grumbled at Moses, saying, “What can we drink?” ²⁵ So, he cried to Yahweh, and Yahweh showed him a tree; he threw it into the water and the water became sweet. There he laid down a statute and law for them and there he tested them. ²⁶ He said, “If you listen carefully to Yahweh your God's voice and do what is right in his eyes, if you give ear to his commandments and keep his statutes, I will put on you none of the diseases I put on the Egyptians; for, I am Yahweh your Healer”

²⁰ Miriam (Nb 26:59, Mi 6:4) is called a ‘prophetess’ because of her ecstatic rousing of devotion to Yahweh (compare Jg 4:4).

²¹ The verb וַתִּשָּׂא (‘sang’) normally means ‘to answer’; but it can be used more technically to describe antiphonal singing in Hebrew and in Ugaritic.

²² The ‘desert of Shur’, identified with the ‘desert of Etham’ in Nb 33:8, was on the border of Egypt.

²³ Marah (מֶרֶה) means ‘bitter’ or ‘bitterness’.

²⁴ The journey through the desert is punctuated by Israel's complaints: about thirst, here and in 17:3 & Nb 20:2ff; hunger, in 16:2 & Nb 11:4ff; and the dangers of war, in Nb 14:2ff. Israel's wilfulness is already evident, to the point of spurning the favours of God (see Ps 78 & 106).

²⁵ The ancients believed that the bark or leaves of certain trees had magical properties for sweetening or ‘healing’ water (2K 2:21).

²⁶ This verse, though Deuteronomistic in style, is often attributed to the Old Epic traditions.

כִּזְּ וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־מָה וְשָׁם שְׁתֵּים עָשָׂרָה עֵינֹת מַיִם 27 Thus, they came to Elim where twelve water-springs were, and
וְשִׁבְעִים תְּמָרִים וַיַּחֲנוּ־שָׁם עַל־הַמַּיִם: seventy palm trees; and there they camped beside the water.

²⁷ Judging from the way the story is told, they were not far from the oasis: but God had other plans for them, to see if they would trust him wholeheartedly and obey. They did not do so well this first time but this is the introduction to the desert and they will have to learn how to obey.

שמות פרק טז

EXODUS 16

א וַיֵּסְעוּ מֵאֵילִם וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־עֵדֻת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־
מִדְבַּר־סִין אֲשֶׁר בֵּין־אֵילִם וּבֵין סִינַי בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר
יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי לְצֵאתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: ב וַיִּלִּינוּ
וַיִּלּוֹנוּ כָּל־עֵדֻת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן
בַּמִּדְבָּר: ג וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֱלֹהִים בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִי־יָתֵן מוֹתָנוּ
בְּיַד־יְהוָה בָּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּשִׁבְתֵּנוּ עַל־סִיר הַבָּשָׂר
בְּאֲכִלְנוּ לֶחֶם לְשָׂבַע כִּי־הוֹצֵאתָם אֹתָנוּ אֶל־הַמִּדְבָּר
הַזֶּה לְהָמִית אֶת־כָּל־הַקָּהָל הַזֶּה בָּרָעַב: {ס}

ד וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הִנְנִי מַמְטִיר לָכֶם לֶחֶם מִן־
הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֵּצֵא הָעָם וּלְקַטּוּ דְּבַר־יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ לְמַעַן אֲנִסְנוּ
הַיֶּלֶךְ בְּתוֹרָתִי אִם־לֹא: ה וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁשִׁי וְהִכִּינוּ אֶת

¹ From Elim they set out and the whole community of Israelites entered the desert of Sin – between Elim and Sinai – on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had left Egypt. ² And the whole community of Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the desert ³ and said to them, “Why did we not die at Yahweh’s hand in the land of Egypt, when we were able to sit down to pans of meat and could eat bread to our heart’s content? For, you have brought us to this desert to starve this whole company to death!”

⁴ Then Yahweh said to Moses, “Now I will rain bread for you from the sky. The people are to go out and gather a day’s portion each day, so I will test them: whether they will follow my law or not. ⁵ On the

EXODUS 16

- ¹ The word translated here as ‘community’ is normally rendered ‘congregation’, but the modern perception of congregation is not exactly what is in mind in the desert.
- ² The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here (possible *vav*/*yod* confusion) warrants an explanation.
- ³ That the complaint leading up to the manna is unjustified can be seen from the record itself: they left Egypt with flocks and herds and a large amount of cattle, and about 45 days later they are complaining that they are without food. Moses reminded them later that they lacked nothing (Dt 3:7; for the whole sermon on this passage, see 8:1–3). Moreover, the complaint is absurd because the food of work gangs was far more meagre than they recall. The complaint was really against Moses. It is interesting that they crave the eating of meat and of bread; and so, God will meet that need; he will send bread from heaven and quail as well.
- ⁴ The word ‘law’ here properly means ‘direction’ at this point; but their obedience here would indicate also whether or not they would be willing to obey when the Law was given at Sinai.
- ⁵ There is a question here concerning the legislation – the people were not told *why* to gather twice as much on the sixth day. In other words, this instruction seems to presume that they knew about the Sabbath law.

אֲשֶׁר־יָבִיאוּ וְהָיָה מִשְׁנֶה עַל אֲשֶׁר־יִלְקְטוּ יוֹם | יוֹם:

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל־כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲרֹב
וַיִּדְעֻם כִּי יְהוָה הוֹצִיא אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: ⁶ וּבֹקֶר
וְרֵאִיתֶם אֶת־כְּבוֹד יְהוָה בְּשֹׁמְעוֹ אֶת־תְּלַנְתִּיכֶם עַל־
יְהוָה וְנִחַנּוּ מָה כִּי תִלּוּנוּ תִלְיִנוּ עָלֵינוּ: ⁷ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה
בְּתַת יְהוָה לָכֶם בָּעֶרֶב בָּשָׂר לֶאֱכֹל וּלֶחֶם בַּבֹּקֶר
לְשֹׁבַע בְּשֹׁמֵעַ יְהוָה אֶת־תְּלַנְתִּיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם מְלִינִם
עָלָיו וְנִחַנּוּ מָה לֹא־עָלֵינוּ תְּלַנְתִּיכֶם כִּי עַל־יְהוָה:

⁸ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן אָמַר אֶל־כָּל־עֵדֶת בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל קִרְבוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כִּי שָׁמַע אֶת תְּלַנְתִּיכֶם: ⁹ וְהָיָה
כַּדְּבָר אֲהֲרֹן אֶל־כָּל־עֵדֶת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּפְּנוּ אֶל־
הַמִּדְבָּר וְהִנֵּה כְבוֹד יְהוָה נֹרָאָה בָּעָנָן: {פ}

sixth day, when they prepare what they have brought in, it will be twice as much as the daily gathering.”

⁶ Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “At evening, you shall learn that Yahweh brought you out of the land of Egypt; ⁷ in the morning, you shall see the glory of Yahweh; for, he has heard your complaints about him. Who are we, that you complain about us?”

⁸ Moses said, “In the evening, Yahweh will give you meat to eat, in the morning your fill of bread; for, Yahweh has heard the complaints you made about him. Who are we? Your complaining is not about us but about Yahweh.”

⁹ Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole community of Israelites, “Draw near to Yahweh; for, he has heard your complaints.”” ¹⁰ As Aaron spoke to the whole community of Israelites, they turned towards the desert and the glory of Yahweh appeared in the cloud.

⁶ The NJB, following the LXX (παᾶσαν συναγωγὴν υἱῶν Ισραηλ) has ‘the whole community of Israelites’ in place of ‘all the Israelites’, here following the MT & NRSV. Moses is very careful to make sure that they know it is Yahweh who has brought them out, and it will be Yahweh who will feed them: they are going to be convinced of this now; this is the force of his statements here.

⁷ The Kethib/Qere difference here (possible vav/yod confusion) would benefit from an explanation.

⁸ Literally translated, the last sentence opens, “not against us (are) your murmurings.”

⁹ The verb translated ‘draw near’ is used in the Torah for drawing near for religious purposes to where Yahweh manifests. When the people of God draw near for service, they sense the presence of God more powerfully. It is possible that some sacrifice might have been involved here, but no mention is made of that.

¹⁰ A brilliant glow of fire, symbolising Yahweh’s presence, gleamed through the cloud, resting on the Tent of Meeting; the cloud shrouds the full brilliancy of the glory, which human eye could not behold (see also Ezk 1:28, 3:12, 23, 8:4, 9:3).

^{יא} וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ^{יב} שְׁמַעְתִּי אֶת-תְּלֹנֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל דֹּבֵר אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר בֵּין הָעֲרָבִים תֹּאכְלוּ בָשָׂר וּבִבְקָר תִּשְׁבְּעוּ-לֶחֶם וַיִּדְעֵתֶם כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ^{יג} וַיְהִי בָעֶרֶב וַתַּעַל הַשָּׁלוּ וַתִּכַּס אֶת-הַמַּחֲנֶה וּבִבְקָר הִיתָה שְׁכַבַּת הַטָּל סָבִיב לַמַּחֲנֶה: ^{יד} וַתַּעַל שְׁכַבַּת הַטָּל וְהָיָה עַל-פְּנֵי הַמִּדְבָּר דֶּק מִחֹסֶפֶס דֶּק כַּכֹּפֶר עַל-הָאָרֶץ: ^{טו} וַיֵּרְאוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל-אָחִיו מִן הוּא כִּי לֹא יָדְעוּ מִה־הוּא וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֱלֹהִים הוּא הַלֶּחֶם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה לָכֶם לֶאֱכֹלָה: ^{טז} זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה לִקְטוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ לְפִי אֲכָלוּ עֹמֶר לְגִלְגָּלַת מִסֹּפֶר נַפְשֵׁיכֶם אִישׁ לְאִשֶּׁר בְּאֹהֶלוֹ תִקְחוּ:

^{יז} וַיַּעֲשׂוּ-כֵן בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּלְקְטוּ הַמֶּרְבֶּה וְהַמִּמְעִיט: ^{יח} וַיִּמְדוּ בְּעֹמֶר וְלֹא הָעֲדִיף הַמֶּרְבֶּה וְהַמִּמְעִיט לֹא הִחְסִיר אִישׁ לְפִי-אֲכָלוֹ לִקְטוֹ:

¹¹ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹² "I have heard the complaints of the Israelites; tell them, "At dusk, you shall eat meat and, in the morning, you shall have your fill of bread. Then you will know that I am Yahweh, your God."" ¹³ In the evening, quails flew up and covered the camp; in the morning, dew lay around the camp. ¹⁴ When the dew lifted, there on the surface of the desert was something fine and granular, as fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, "What is it?" not knowing what it was. Moses said to them, "That is the bread Yahweh gives you to eat. ¹⁶ This is Yahweh's command: Each must gather as much as he needs, one omer a head, according to the size of your family; each should gather for those who share his tent."

¹⁷ The Israelites did so, some gathering more, some less. ¹⁸ When they measured it in an omer, he who gathered more had no excess, he who gathered less had no lack: each gathered what he needed.

¹¹ The opening conjunction of this verse ('and' or 'then') has not here been translated.

¹² In place of 'at dusk', here following NJPS, the NJB, following the MT more literally, has 'between the two evenings'.

¹³ Quails are migratory birds, said to come up in the spring from Arabia flying north and west, and returning in the autumn; they fly with the wind, and so generally alight in the evening, covering the ground.

¹⁴ 'Granular' could also be 'flaky' (as NRSV) 'rounded' or 'coagulated'. The Hebrews believed frost to be frozen dew that fell from the sky (see Ps 147:16 & Si 43:19).

¹⁵ 'What is it' (מִן הוּא כִּי לֹא יָדְעוּ מִה־הוּא) is the popular etymology of the word 'manna', the exact meaning of which is unknown.

¹⁶ The 'omer' (עֹמֶר) is an amount mentioned only in this chapter and its size is unknown, except by comparison with the ephah (v. 36).

¹⁷ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "The Israelites did this, gathering it, some more, some less."

¹⁸ The opening preterite with the *vav* consecutive is subordinated here as a temporal clause.

יט וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֲלֵהֶם אִישׁ אֶל־יֹתֵר מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֹּקֶר:
כ וְלֹא־שָׁמְעוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּתֵרוּ אַנְשִׁים מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֹּקֶר
וַיֵּרָם תּוֹלְעִים וַיִּבְאֵשׁ וַיִּקְצֹף עֲלֵהֶם מֹשֶׁה: כא וַיִּלְקְטוּ
אֹתוֹ בַּבֹּקֶר בַּבֹּקֶר אִישׁ כַּפִּי אָכְלוֹ וְחֵם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ
וַנִּמָּס:

כב וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי לִקְטוֹ לֶחֶם מִשְׁנֵה שְׁנֵי הָעֹמֶר
לְאַחַד וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־נְשֵׂאֵי הָעֵדָה וַיִּגִּידוּ לְמֹשֶׁה:
כג וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם הוּא אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה שַׁבָּתוֹן שַׁבָּת־
קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה מָחָר אֵת אֲשֶׁר־תֹּאפּוּ אַפּוֹ וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר־
תִּבְשְׁלוּ בִשְׁלוּ וְאֵת כָּל־הָעֹדֶף הַנִּיחוּ לָכֶם לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת
עַד־הַבֹּקֶר: כד וַיִּנְיְחוּ אֹתוֹ עַד־הַבֹּקֶר כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה מֹשֶׁה
וְלֹא הִבְאִישׁ וְרִמָּה לֹא־הָיְתָה בּוֹ: כה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה
אֲכַלְהוּ הַיּוֹם כִּי־שַׁבָּת הַיּוֹם לַיהוָה הַיּוֹם לֹא תִמְצְאוּהוּ
בַשָּׂדֶה: כו שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תִּלְקְטֻהוּ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת

19 Moses said to them, "Let no one keep any of it for morning." 20 But some would not listen to Moses and kept part of it for the morning, and it bred worms and smelt foul; and Moses was angry with them. 21 Every morning, they gathered it, each as much as he needed; when the sun grew hot, it melted.

22 On the sixth day, they gathered twice the amount of food: two omers a head. All the leaders of the community came to tell Moses, 23 and he said to them, "This is Yahweh's command: Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to Yahweh. Bake what you want to bake, boil what you want to boil; put aside all that is left for tomorrow." 24 So, as Moses ordered, they put it aside until morning, and it did not stink and there was no worm in it. 25 Moses said, "Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to Yahweh; you shall not find it in the field today. 26 Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day,

19 The address here ('no one') is for 'man' (אִישׁ, 'each one'): the instruction seems to be focused on the individual heads of the households.

20 In place of 'worms', here following the MT & NETB, the NRSV & NJB have 'maggots'. The verb וַיֵּרָם ('bred') is equivalent to a passive – 'it was changed' – to which 'worms' is added as an accusative of result.

21 The perfect tenses here with *vav* consecutives have the frequentative sense; they function in a protasis-apodosis relationship.

22 This construction for 'two omers' (שְׁנֵי הָעֹמֶר) is an exception to the normal rule for the numbers 2 through 10 taking the object numbered in the plural; here, is it 'two of the omer' or 'the double of the omer'.

23 The noun שַׁבָּתוֹן ('day of solemn rest') has the abstract ending on it: 'resting', 'ceasing'; the root word means 'cease' from something, more than 'to rest'. The technical expression for 'holy Sabbath' (שַׁבָּת־קֹדֶשׁ) is now used: the rest was to be characterized by holiness.

24 In place of 'it did not stink', here following NETB, the NJB has 'its smell was not foul'.

25 NETB has 'area' in place of 'field', here following the MT, NJB & NRSV.

26 The NJB adds an opening 'for' to this verse; here, we follow the NRSV.

לֹא יִהְיֶה-בּוֹ: כִּי וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יֵצְאוּ מִן-הָעֵם
לִלְקֹט וְלֹא מָצְאוּ: {ס}

כח וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה עַד-אַנֶּה מֵאַנְתֶּם לִשְׁמֹר
מִצְוֹתַי וְתוֹרָתִי: כט רְאוּ כִי-יְהוָה נָתַן לָכֶם הַשַּׁבָּת עַל-
כֵּן הוּא נָתַן לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁנִי לֶחֶם יוֹמִים שְׁבוּ אִישׁ
תַּחְתּוֹ אֶל-יֵצֵא אִישׁ מִמְּקוֹמוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי: ל וַיִּשְׁבְּתוּ
הָעָם בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי:

לא וַיִּקְרְאוּ בֵּית-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-שְׁמוֹ מֶן וְהוּא כְּזֶרַע גֹּד
לֶבֶן וְטַעְמוֹ כַּצִּפִּיקָת בַּדְּבָשׁ:

לב וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה מִלֹּא הָעֹמֶר
מִמֶּנּוּ לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם לְמַעַן יֵרְאוּ אֶת-הֵלֶחֶם
אֲשֶׁר הָאֲכַלְתִּי אֹתְכֶם בַּמִּדְבָּר בְּהוֹצִיאִי אֹתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם: לג וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶ�ה אֶל-אַהֲרֹן קַח צִנְצָנָת אַחַת
וְתִן-שָׁמָּה מִלֹּא-הָעֹמֶר מֶן וְהִנֵּחַ אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה

the Sabbath, there will be none.” ²⁷ On the seventh day, some of the people went to gather it, but they found none.

²⁸ Yahweh said to Moses, “How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? ²⁹ See! Yahweh has given you the Sabbath; so, he gives you two days’ food on the sixth day; each of you stay where you are; do not leave your home on the seventh day.”

³⁰ So, the people rested on the seventh day.

³¹ The House of Israel named it ‘manna’. It was like coriander seed: white, and its taste was like wafers made with honey.

³² Moses said, “This is Yahweh’s command: Fill an omer with it, and let it be kept for your descendants, to let them see the food that I fed you with in the desert when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.”

³³ Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar and put in it a full omer of manna and place it before Yahweh, to be kept for your descendants.” ³⁴ As

²⁷ This verse again emphasises the Israelites’ lack of faith and their disobedience (v. 28).

²⁸ The opening conjunction of this verse (‘and’ or ‘then’) has not here been translated.

²⁹ The Sabbath was a sign of God’s love: God made no request unless he provided the means for its execution.

³⁰ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “So on the seventh day the people abstained from all work.”

³¹ The expression ‘House of Israel’ (בֵּית-יִשְׂרָאֵל) is very unusual in this context. ‘Manna’ (מֶן) means ‘what is it?’.

³² In the construction here translated as ‘let them see’, after the particle expressing purpose or result, the imperfect tense has the nuance of final imperfect, equal to a subjunctive in the classical languages.

³³ Other readings for ‘kept for your descendants’ (NJB) are ‘kept throughout your generations’ (NRSV) and ‘kept for generations to come’ (NETB).

³⁴ The ‘Covenant’ refers to the tablets of the Law (see 31:18), kept inside the Ark, frequently called the ‘Ark of the Covenant’ (see #25:16). The NJB expands this verse somewhat: “Accordingly, Aaron put a full homer of manna in the jar, as Yahweh had ordered Moses, and placed the manna before the Testimony, for safekeeping.”

לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם: לֵד בְּאִשֶּׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיִּנִּיחֵהוּ אֶהֱרֹן לִפְנֵי הָעֵדֻת לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת: Yahweh commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the Covenant, for safekeeping.

לֵה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָכְלוּ אֶת־הֶמֶן אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה עַד־בָּאָם אֶל־אֶרֶץ נֹשֶׁבֶת אֶת־הֶמֶן אָכְלוּ עַד־בָּאָם אֶל־קֶצֶה אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן: לִי וְהָעֹמֶר עֲשֵׂרִית הָאֵיפָה הוּא: {פ} ³⁵ The Israelites ate manna for forty years, until they reached inhabited country: they ate manna until they reached the frontier of the land of Canaan. ³⁶ An omer is one tenth of an ephah.

³⁵ For both instances of the word ‘until’, here following the *NRSV*, the *NJB* has the rather more formal ‘up to the time that’.

³⁶ The words ‘omer’ (עֹמֶר) and ‘ephah’ (אֵיפָה) are transliterated Hebrew words; the omer is mentioned only in this passage (it is different from a ‘homer’ – cf. Ezk 45:11-14). An ephah was a dry measure whose capacity is uncertain: quotations given for the ephah vary from *circa* 45 to 20 litres.

EXODUS 17

שמות פרק יז

א וַיֵּסְעוּ כָּל־עַדַּת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּדְבַּר־סִין לְמַסְעֵיהֶם
עַל־פִּי יְהוָה וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּרִפְדִּים וְאִין מַיִם לְשִׁתּוֹת הָעָם:
ב וַיִּרְבּוּ הָעָם עִם־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמְרוּ תָנוּ־לָנוּ מַיִם וְנִשְׁתֵּה
וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם מֹשֶׁה מִה־תִּרְיֹבֹן עִמָּדִי מִה־תִּנְסֹן אֶת־
יְהוָה: ג וַיִּצְמָא שָׁם הָעָם לַמַּיִם וַיֵּלֶן הָעָם עַל־מֹשֶׁה
וַיֹּאמֶר לָמָּה זֶה הָעֲלִיתָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם לְהָמִית אֹתִי וְאֶת־
בְּנֵי וְאֶת־מִקְנִי בַצָּמָא: ד וַיִּצְעַק מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר
מָה אֶעֱשֶׂה לָּעָם הַזֶּה עוֹד מַעַט וְסִקְלֵנִי: ה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה
אֶל־מֹשֶׁה עֲבֹר לִפְנֵי הָעָם וְקַח אֶתְּךָ מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וּמִטֶּף אֲשֶׁר הִכִּיתָ בּוֹ אֶת־הַיָּאֵר קַח בְּיָדְךָ וְהִלַּכְתָּ:
ו הִנְנִי עֹמֵד לִפְנֶיךָ שָׁם | עַל־הַצּוֹר בְּחֶרֶב וְהִכִּיתָ בַּצּוֹר
וַיִּצְאוּ מִמֶּנּוּ מַיִם וּשְׁתֵּה הָעָם וַיַּעַשׂ כֵּן מֹשֶׁה לְעֵינָי
זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ז וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם מַסָּה וּמִרִיבָה עַל־
רִיב | בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל נִסְתָּם אֶת־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר הֲיֵשׁ
יְהוָה בְּקִרְבָּנוּ אִם־אֵין: {פ}

¹ From the desert of Sin, all the community of Israelites journeyed by stages, at Yahweh's command, and camped at Rephidim but there was no water for the people to drink. ² So, they complained to Moses, saying, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you grumble to me? Why do you test Yahweh?" ³ But, thirsty for water, the people grumbled about Moses, saying, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt? To kill us, our children, and our cattle with thirst?" ⁴ Moses cried to Yahweh, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready stone me!" ⁵ And Yahweh said to Moses, "Take some elders of Israel and go on ahead of the people; take in your hand the rod with which you struck the Nile and go. ⁶ I shall stand before you there on the rock, at Horeb. Strike the rock and water will flow from it for the people to drink." Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ He named the place Massah and Meribah; for, the Israelites grumbled and tested Yahweh, saying, "Is Yahweh with us, or not?"

EXODUS 17

¹ 'Rephidim' (רִפְדִּים) is a valley in the Sinai range.

² One wonders if the people thought that Moses had water and were withholding or whether Moses was able to get it on demand. The people should have come to Moses to ask him to pray to God for water; but their action led Moses to say that they had challenged God

³ The verbs and the pronouns in this verse are in the singular because 'the people' is singular in form.

⁴ An alternative reading for the last sentence (as NETB) is, "A little more, and they will stone me!"

⁵ 'Go on ahead of' indicates that Moses is the leader and the people follow him. In other words, לִפְנֵי indicates time and not place here.

⁶ A similar miracle at Kadesh is described in Nb 20:1-13; here, it is placed at Rephidim, the last stop before Sinai.

⁷ 'Massah' (מַסָּה) and 'Meribah' (מִרִיבָה) mean, respectively, 'trial' and 'contention'.

ח וַיָּבֹא עַמְלֵק וַיִּלָּחֶם עִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרֶפְדִּים: ט וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בַּחֲר־לָנוּ אַנְשִׁים וְצֵא הַלָּחֶם בְּעַמְלֵק מֵחֵר אֲנֹכִי נֹצֵב עַל־רֹאשׁ הַגִּבְעָה וּמָטָה הָאֱלֹהִים בְּיָדִי: י וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַרְלוּ מֹשֶׁה לְהִלָּחֶם בְּעַמְלֵק וּמֹשֶׁה אָהֳרֹן וְחֹר וְעָלוּ רֹאשׁ הַגִּבְעָה: יא וְהָיָה כַּאֲשֶׁר יָרִים מֹשֶׁה יָדוֹ וְגָבַר יִשְׂרָאֵל וּכַאֲשֶׁר יִנָּח יָדוֹ וְגָבַר עַמְלֵק: יב וַיְדִי מֹשֶׁה כְּבִדִּים וַיִּקְחוּ־אֶבֶן וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ תַּחְתָּיו וַיֵּשֶׁב עָלֶיהָ וְאָהֳרֹן וְחֹר תָּמְכוּ בְּיָדָיו מִזֶּה אֶחָד וּמִזֶּה אֶחָד וַיְהִי יָדָיו אֲמוּנָה עַד־בֹּא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ: יג וַיַּחֲלֵשׁ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת־עַמְלֵק וְאֶת־עַמּוֹ לִפְי־חָרֵב: {פ}

יד וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כְּתֹב זֹאת זִכְרוֹן בְּסֵפֶר וְשִׂים בְּאָזְנִי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ כִּי־מָחָה אֶמְחֶה אֶת־זִכְרָם עַמְלֵק מִתַּחַת

⁸ Then Amalek came and attacked Israel at Rephidim. ⁹ Moses said to Joshua, "Pick out men for us, and march out to engage Amalek. Tomorrow, I will stand on the hilltop, the rod of God in my hand." ¹⁰ Joshua did as Moses told him and engaged Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ As long as Moses kept his arms raised, Israel prevailed; when he let his arms fall, Amalek prevailed. ¹² But Moses' arms grew heavy, so they took a stone and put it under him and on this he sat, Aaron and Hur supporting his arms, one on one side, one on the other; and his arms remained firm till sunset. ¹³ With the edge of the sword, Joshua cut down Amalek and his people.

¹⁴ Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Write this down in a book as a reminder and say in Joshua's hearing: I shall wipe out the memory

⁸ Amalek was held to be the grandson of Esau (Gn 36:12, 16) and was a nation of great antiquity (Nb 24:20); in the time of the Judges, the Amalekites were in alliance with Midianite bandits; they were still active in David's day. There is no further mention of them until 1Ch 4:43.

⁹ The young warrior, Joshua, here mentioned for the first time, was at the head of the Israelite army. However, Moses led the battle from a hilltop and ensured victory by the power of his rod and outstretched arms, and perhaps by the power of the curse (Nb 22:4-6).

¹⁰ In place of 'engaged', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB, following the LXX (ἐξελθὼν παρετάξατο) has 'went out to engage'.

¹¹ In place of 'prevailed', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'had the advantage' (1st occurrence) & 'the advantage went to' (2nd).

¹² 'Heavy' translates the term כְּבִדִּים; but in this context, the idea is more that of being tired. This is the important word that was used in the plague stories: when the heart of Pharaoh was hard, then the Israelites did not gain their freedom or victory.

¹³ The verb translated 'cut down' means disabled or weakened; it is used elsewhere to describe how man dies and is powerless (Jos 14:10, Is 14:12).

¹⁴ The final clause would seem to be defeated by the preceding statement that the events would be written in a book for a memorial; if this war is recorded, then the Amalekites would be remembered: but here, God was going to wipe out the memory of them. However, the idea of removing the memory of a people is an idiom for destroying them – they will have no posterity and no lasting heritage.

הַשָּׁמַיִם: טו וַיִּבֶן מֹשֶׁה מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יְהוָה | נָסִי:
טז וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי־יָד עַל־כַּס יְהוָה מִלְחָמָה לַיהוָה בַּעֲמָלֵק
מִדֹּר דָּר: {פ} of Amalek from under heaven.” ¹⁵ And Moses built an altar and
named it Yahweh-Nissi. ¹⁶ He said, “A hand upon Yahweh’s banner!
Yahweh will be at war with Amalek generation after generation.”

¹⁵ ‘Yahweh-Nissi’ means ‘Yahweh is my banner’; the word ‘banner’ is restored in v. 16, where the MT reads ‘throne’.

¹⁶ The bitter feud with Amalek persisted (Nb 24:20, Dt 25:17–19, 1S 15:7– 8, 27:8, 30) until the foe was exterminated during the reign of Hezekiah (1Ch 4:41 43).

שמות פרק יח

EXODUS 18

א וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כֹּהֵן מִדְיָן חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹהִים לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ בְּיַהּוּצֵי־אֵרָץ מִצְרָיִם: ב וַיָּקָח יִתְרוֹ חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֶת-צִפּוֹרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ מִשָּׁה אַחֵר שְׁלוּחִיָּה: ג וְאֵת שְׁנֵי בָנֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר שֵׁם הָאֶחָד גֶּרְשֹׁם כִּי אָמַר גֵּר הָיִיתִי בְּאֶרֶץ נֹכְרִיָּה: ד וְשֵׁם הָאֶחָד אֱלִיעֶזֶר כִּי-אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי בָעֶזְרִי וַיֹּצִלֵנִי מִמָּוֶת פַּרְעֹה: ה וַיָּבֹא יִתְרוֹ חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה וּבָנָיו וְאִשְׁתּוֹ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הַמִּדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר-הוּא חֹנֶה שָׁם הָרֹאשִׁית: ו וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-מֹשֶׁה אֲנִי חֹתֶנְךָ יִתְרוֹ בָּא אֵלַיךְ וְאִשְׁתְּךָ וּשְׁנֵי בָנֶיהָ עִמָּה: ז וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה לְקִרְיַת חֹתֶנּוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ וַיִּשְׁקֻלּוּ וַיִּשְׁאַלּוּ אִישׁ-לְרֵעֵהוּ לְשָׁלוֹם וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֵהָלָה: ח וַיִּסְפֹּר מֹשֶׁה לְחֹתֶנּוּ אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה

¹ Jethro priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and Israel his people, how Yahweh had brought Israel out of Egypt. ² Moses' father-in-law Jethro brought Moses' wife Zipporah, after he had dismissed her, ³ with her two sons. One of these was named Gershom, for, he said, "I am a stranger in a foreign land;" ⁴ the name of the other was Eliezer, for, "The God of my father was my help and delivered me from Pharaoh's sword." ⁵ So, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and wife to Moses, in the desert where he camped, at the mountain of God. ⁶ He told Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, have come, with your wife and her two sons." ⁷ So, Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed and kissed him; they enquired of each other's health then went into the

EXODUS 18

- ¹ Attempts have been made to give the narrative of vv. 1-12 a Midianite origin: Moses received the revelation of the divine name in Midian (3:1); Jethro was 'priest of Midian' (this verse); he invoked the name of Yahweh (v. 10), offered sacrifices to him and presided over the subsequent meal (v. 12).
- ² This verse contains a unique mention of Moses' repudiation of Zipporah, a tradition independent of 4:19-20 and 24-26.
- ³ The pronoun in 'he said' refers to Moses. 'Gershom' sounds like the Hebrew for 'an alien there'.
- ⁴ The name, 'Eliezer' (אֱלִיעֶזֶר) means 'my God is a help'.
- ⁵ The 'mountain of God' is Horeb, so the desert here must be the Sinai; however, Ch. 19 suggests that they left Rephidim to go 40 Km to Sinai.
- ⁶ The verb 'he told' seems to be out of place, since the report has already been given that they came to the desert; the LXX solves this problem by taking the pronoun 'I' as the particle 'behold' and reads: 'one said to Moses, "Behold, your father-in-law Jethro has come."' (ἀνηγγέλη δὲ Μωυσεῖ λέγοντες Ἴδου ὁ γαμβρός σου Ἰδοὺ παραγίνεται)
- ⁷ This is more than polite oriental custom: Jethro was Moses' benefactor, father-in-law, and a priest; he paid much respect to him. Now he could invite Jethro into his home.

יְהוָה לַפְּרָעָה וּלְמִצְרַיִם עַל אֹדֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵת כָּל־
הַתְּלָאָה אֲשֶׁר מִצָּאתָם בַּדֶּרֶךְ וַיַּצֵּלֵם יְהוָה: ^ט וַיַּחֲדֹ
יְתֹרֹ עַל כָּל־הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה יְהוָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר
הֶצִּילוּ מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם: ^י וַיֹּאמֶר יְתֹרֹ בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר
הֶצִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וּמִיַּד פְּרָעָה אֲשֶׁר הֶצִּיל אֶת־
הָעָם מִתַּחַת יַד־מִצְרַיִם: ^{יא} עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־גָדוֹל יְהוָה
מִכָּל־הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי בִדְבָר אֲשֶׁר זָדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם:

^{יב} וַיִּקַּח יְתֹרֹ חֶתָן מֹשֶׁה עֲלָה וּזְבָחִים לָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּבְּאֵ
אֹהֶרֶן וְכָל זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֶאֱכֹל־לֶחֶם עִם־חֶתָן מֹשֶׁה
לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים:

^{יג} וַיְהִי מִמָּחֳרָת וַיֵּשֶׁב מֹשֶׁה לִשְׁפֹט אֶת־הָעָם וַיַּעֲמֵד
הָעָם עַל־מֹשֶׁה מִן־הַבֹּקֶר עַד־הָעֶרֶב: ^{יד} וַיֵּרָא חֶתָן

tent. ⁸ Then Moses told his father-in-law all that Yahweh had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had beset them on the way, and how Yahweh rescued them. ⁹ Jethro rejoiced at all Yahweh's goodness to Israel in rescuing them from the Egyptians' hands. ¹⁰ Jethro said, "Blessed be Yahweh, who has rescued you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh. ¹¹ Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all the gods, because he has rescued the people from the grasp of the Egyptians."

¹² Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, made a high-offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to share the meal with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God.

¹³ The next day, Moses sat as judge for the people and, from morning until evening, they stood round him. ¹⁴ Seeing what labours he took

⁸ The literal translation of 'travail' (a rare word) is 'weariness (of the travail)'.

⁹ Vv. 9-11 may imply that the priest of Midian was already a worshipper of Yahweh.

¹⁰ This is a common form of praise. The verb בָּרַךְ is the Qal participle; here must be supplied a jussive, making this participle the predicate: 'May Yahweh be blessed'. The verb essentially means 'to enrich'; in praise, it would mean that he would be enriched by the praises of the people.

¹¹ The clause 'because he has rescued the people from the grasp of the Egyptians' has been transposed from v 10. The NJB leaves it in v. 10 and ends v. 11 with an ellipsis, which replaces incomplete or corrupt text probably meaning 'because in the matter in which they treated them arrogantly'.

¹² The term, 'high-offering' translates עֹלָה, connecting it to a name for God (עֶלְיוֹן - 'Most High God') - the offering was for God alone.

¹³ Vv. 13-27 describe a measure presupposing a numerous and already settled population (see v. 23), and attributing to Moses a decentralisation of judicial powers, which certainly occurred much later. Nonetheless, the fact that a measure of this sort was attributed to Jethro's intervention may bear witness to a Midianite influence on the early organisation of the people.

¹⁴ This question, "What are you doing for the people?" is qualified by the next two questions: by sitting alone all day and the people standing around all day showed that Moses was exhibiting too much care for the people - he could not do this.

מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־הוּא עֹשֶׂה לָעָם וַיֹּאמֶר מֶה־הַדָּבָר
הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה לָעָם מִדּוּעַ אַתָּה יוֹשֵׁב לְבַדְּךָ
וְכָל־הָעָם נֹצֵב עָלֶיךָ מִן־בֹּקֶר עַד־עֶרֶב: ^{טו} וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה
לְחַתָּנוֹ כִּי־יָבֹא אֵלַי הָעָם לִדְרֹשׁ אֱלֹהִים: ^{טז} כִּי־יְהִי־לָהֶם
דָּבָר בָּא אֵלַי וְשִׁפְטֹתַי בֵּין אִישׁ וּבֵין רֵעֵהוּ
וְהוֹדַעְתִּי אֶת־חֻקֵּי הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֶת־תּוֹרָתוֹ: ^{יז} וַיֹּאמֶר
חַתָּן מֹשֶׁה אֵלָיו לֹא־טוֹב הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה:
^{יח} נָבֹל תִּבֹּל גַּם־אַתָּה גַּם־הָעָם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר עִמָּךְ כִּי־
כָבֵד מִמֶּךָ הַדָּבָר לֹא־תוּכַל עֲשֹׂהוּ לְבַדְּךָ: ^{יט} עָתָה
שָׁמַע בְּקֹלִי אֵינְעֻצְךָ וַיְהִי אֱלֹהִים עִמָּךְ הִיא אַתָּה לָעָם
מֹדֵל הָאֱלֹהִים וְהַבֵּאתָ אֶתָּה אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֶל־
הָאֱלֹהִים: ^כ וְהִזְהַרְתָּה אֹתָם אֶת־הַחֻקִּים וְאֶת־
הַתּוֹרָה וְהוֹדַעְתָּ לָהֶם אֶת־הַדֶּרֶךְ יֵלְכוּ בָּהּ וְאֶת־
הַמַּעֲשֵׂה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּן: ^{כא} וְאַתָּה תִּחְזֶה מִכָּל־הָעָם

on himself for the people's sake, Moses' father-in-law said to him,
"What are you doing for the people? Why do you sit here alone, with
the people standing round you, from morning until evening?"
¹⁵ Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to
inquire of God. ¹⁶ When they have a dispute they come to me, and I
decide between one man and another, and I instruct them in God's
statutes and his decisions." ¹⁷ "What you are doing is not good,"
Moses' father-in-law said to him, ¹⁸ "You will tire yourself out, you
and the people with you. The work is too heavy for you. You cannot
do it alone. ¹⁹ Take my advice, and God will be with you. You should
represent the people before God and bring their cases to him.
²⁰ Teach them the statutes and the decisions; show them the way they
must do and what they must do. ²¹ Yet, choose from the people some
able and God-fearing men, trustworthy and incorruptible, and

¹⁵ To 'inquire' (לְדַרֵּשׁ) of God would be to seek God's will on a matter, to obtain a legal decision on a matter, or to settle a dispute. As a judge, Moses is speaking for God; but, as the servant of Yahweh, Moses' words will be God's words. The Psalms would later describe judges as 'gods' because they made the right decisions based on God's Law.

¹⁶ The verb שִׁפְטֹתִי ('decide') means 'judge'; more specifically, it means to make a decision as an arbiter or umpire: when people brought issues to him, he decided between them. In the section of Law in Exodus after the Ten Commandments are the *Mishpetim*, 'the Decisions'.

¹⁷ In place of 'good', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'right'.

¹⁸ Note the specialised use of the comparative מַ where, with an adjective, the thought expressed is that the quality is too difficult for the attainment of a particular aim.

¹⁹ The literal translation of 'take my advice' (hear following the NJB – the NRSV has 'now listen to me') is 'hear my voice'.

²⁰ The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with, "...the way they must follow and what their course must be."

²¹ Moses was to deal with cases without legal precedent that required a special oracle (compare Dt 17:8–13); ordinary cases were to be handled by lay leaders (Nb 11:16–17, 24–25) or appointed judges (compare Dt 16:18–20).

אֲנָשֵׁי־חֵיל יִרְאִי אֱלֹהִים אֲנָשֵׁי אֱמֶת שְׁנָאֵי בַצֵּעַ וְשִׁמְתָּ
עֲלֵהֶם שָׂרֵי אֲלָפִים שָׂרֵי מֵאוֹת שָׂרֵי חֲמִשִּׁים וְשָׂרֵי
עֶשְׂרֹת: ^{כב} וְשִׁפְטוּ אֶת־הָעָם בְּכָל־עֵת וְהָיָה כָל־הַדָּבָר
הַגָּדוֹל יָבִיאוּ אֵלֶיךָ וְכָל־הַדָּבָר הַקָּטָן יִשְׁפְּטוּ־הֶם וְהָקֵל
מֵעָלֶיךָ וְנִשְׂאוּ אֶתְּךָ: ^{כג} אִם אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה תַּעֲשֶׂה
וְצִוְּךָ אֱלֹהִים וְיָכַלְתָּ עֲמֹד וְגַם כָּל־הָעָם הַזֶּה עַל־מְקוֹמוֹ
יָבֹא בְשָׁלוֹם:

^{כד} וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה לְקוֹל חֲתָנוֹ וַיַּעַשׂ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר אָמַר: ^{כה}
וַיִּבְחַר מֹשֶׁה אֲנָשֵׁי־חֵיל מִכָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם
רָאשִׁים עַל־הָעָם שָׂרֵי אֲלָפִים שָׂרֵי מֵאוֹת שָׂרֵי
חֲמִשִּׁים וְשָׂרֵי עֶשְׂרֹת: ^{כו} וְשִׁפְטוּ אֶת־הָעָם בְּכָל־עֵת
אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַקָּשֶׁה יָבִיאוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְכָל־הַדָּבָר הַקָּטָן
יִשְׁפְּטוּ הֵם: ^{כז} וַיִּשְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־חֲתָנוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ לוֹ אֶל־
אֶרְצוֹ: {פ}

appoint them as leaders of the people: leaders of thousands, hun-
dreds, fifties and tens. ²² Let these sit as judges for the people at all
times. They can refer all difficult questions to you, but all smaller
questions they will decide for themselves; so, it will be easier for you
and they will share the burden with you. ²³ If you do this – and may
God so command you – you will be able to endure, and all these
people will go home satisfied.”

²⁴ So, Moses took his father-in-law’s advice and did all that he had
said. ²⁵ Moses chose able men from the ranks of the Israelites and set
them over the people: leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties and
tens. ²⁶ They sat as judges for the people at all times. They referred
important questions to Moses and decided smaller questions by
themselves. ²⁷ Then Moses let his father-in-law go and he went to his
own land.

²² The expression וְהָקֵל מֵעָלֶיךָ (*‘it will be easier for you’*) means literally ‘and make it light off yourself’; the wordplay is against the word for ‘heavy’ used earlier – since it was a heavy or burdensome task, Moses must lighten the load.

²³ They may even be a humorous side to the word ‘endure’ – possibly implying, ‘you could even do this standing up’.

²⁴ The literal translation for ‘took his father-in law’s advice’ is ‘listened to his father-in-law’ (see #19).

²⁵ It is not clear how this structure would work in a judicial setting: the language of ‘leaders of thousands’, *et cetera*, is used more for military ranks.

²⁶ In place of ‘they sat as judges for the people’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘were at the service of the people to administer justice’ (as also in v. 22).

²⁷ Here, Moses is the model of humility, receiving correction and counsel from Jethro; and Jethro is the ideal adviser, for he has no intention of remaining there to run the operation.

שמות פרק יט

EXODUS 19

א בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לְצֵאת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה בָּאוּ מִדְּבַר סִינַי: ג וַיִּסְעוּ מִרְפִּידִים וַיָּבֹאוּ
מִדְּבַר סִינַי וַיַּחֲנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר וַיַּחֲנֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶד
הָהָר:
ג וּמֹשֶׁה עָלָה אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה מִן־הָהָר
לֵאמֹר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבֵית יַעֲקֹב וְתִגִּיד לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
ד אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְמִצְרַיִם וְאֲשָׂא אֶתְכֶם
עַל־כַּנְּפֵי נְשָׁרִים וָאֲבֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם אֵלַי: ה וְעַתָּה אִם־
שְׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמָעוּ בְּקוֹלִי וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וְהָיִיתֶם לִי
סֻגְלָה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים כִּי־לִי כָל־הָאָרֶץ: ו אַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי

1 On the third new moon after the Israelites came out of the land of Egypt, on this day, they came to the desert of Sinai. 2 They set out from Rephidim, reached the desert of Sinai and pitched camp in the desert; there Israel pitched camp, facing the mountain. 3 Moses went up to God and Yahweh called to him from the mountain, saying, "Say this to the house of Jacob, and tell the sons of Israel, 4 "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now, therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my Covenant, you, of all peoples, shall be my personal possession; for, the whole world is mine. 6 I will count

EXODUS 19

- ¹ In place of 'on this day', here following the MT, the NJB has 'on that very day' and WEBBE has 'that same day'.
- ² The location of the mountain is problematic. Since the 4th Century CE, Christian tradition has placed it in the southern part of the peninsula named after it, at Jebel Musa (2245 m). One theory argues from the volcanic characteristics given (see #16) and the itinerary in Nb 33 (see #Nb 33:1) that Sinai should be located in Arabia, where volcanoes were still active in historic times. Despite the lasting importance of the events and legislation connected with Sinai (3:1–4:17, 18; 19–40, & Nb 1–10), the Israelites seem quickly to have forgotten exactly where it was.
- ³ The expression בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ('sons of Israel') is normally translated as 'Israelites' but, because in this place it is parallel to 'the house of Jacob', it seems better to offer a fuller rendering (following NETB).
- ⁴ The use of the figurative phrase 'on eagle's wings' compares the way a bird would teach its young to fly and leave the nest with the way Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt; the bird referred to could be one of several species of eagles, but more likely is the griffin-vulture.
- ⁵ 'Special possession' translates the noun סֻגְלָה.
- ⁶ The construction 'a kingdom of priests' means that the kingdom is made up of priests. There are other possible renderings: 1 apposition: 'kings, that is, priests'; 2 a genitive of specification: 'royal priesthood'; 3 with the genitive being the attribute: 'priestly kingdom' (as NRSV); and 4 reading with an unexpressed 'and': 'kings and priests'.

מִמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּדְבֹּר
 אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^ז וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וַיִּקְרָא לְזִקְנֵי הָעָם וַיֵּשֶׁם
 לִפְנֵיהֶם אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּהוּ יְהוָה:
^ח וַיַּעֲנוּ כָל־הָעָם יַחְדָּו וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה
 נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע וַיָּשָׁב מֹשֶׁה אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הָעָם אֶל־יְהוָה:

^ט וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי בֹא אֵלֶיךָ בְּעָבֹ
 הָעֲנָן בְּעַבְיֹר יִשְׁמַע הָעָם בְּדִבְרֵי עֲמֹד וְגַם־בְּךָ יֵאֱמִינוּ
 לְעוֹלָם וַיַּגֵּד מֹשֶׁה אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הָעָם אֶל־יְהוָה:

^י וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵךְ אֶל־הָעָם וְקִדְשְׁתָּם הַיּוֹם
 וּמָחָר וּכְבָּסוּ שִׁמְלֹתָם: ^{יא} וְהָיוּ נֹכְחִים לַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי
 כִּי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי יֵרֵד יְהוָה לַעֲיִנִּי כָל־הָעָם עַל־הָרֹ
 סִינַי: ^{יב} וְהִגַּבְלֹתָ אֶת־הָעָם סָבִיב לֵאמֹר הִשְׁמְרוּ לָכֶם
 עֲלֹת בְּהָר וּנְגַע בְּקִצְהוּ כָל־הַנֹּגַע בְּהָר מוֹת יוֹמָת:
^{יג} לֹא־תִגַּע בּוֹ יָד כִּי־סָקוֹל יִסָּקֵל אוֹ־יֵרֶה יֵרֶה אִם־

you a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.” These are the words you shall speak to the Israelites.” ⁷ So, Moses went and called the elders of the people, putting before them all that Yahweh had bidden him. ⁸ Then all the people answered as one, “All that Yahweh has said, we will do.” Moses took the people’s reply back to Yahweh.

⁹ Yahweh said to Moses, “I am coming to you in a dense cloud so that the people may hear when I speak to you and may trust you always.” Moses took the people’s reply back to Yahweh.

¹⁰ Yahweh said to Moses, “Go to the people and prepare them today and tomorrow. Let them wash their clothes ¹¹ and be ready for the third day; for, on the third day, Yahweh will descend in sight of all the people on Mount Sinai. ¹² Set limits for the people saying, “Take care not to go up the mountain nor touch its foot. Any who touch the mountain will be put to death. ¹³ No hand must touch him; he must

⁷ In place of ‘bidden’, here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have ‘commanded’.

⁸ The verb translated ‘will do’ is the imperfect tense: the people are not being presumptuous in stating their compliance – there are several options open for the interpretation of this tense; it may be classified as a desiderative nuance: ‘we are willing to do’.

⁹ The verse ends with a repetition of the end of v. 8, added to make the transition to the following passage.

¹⁰ In place of ‘prepare them’, here following JPS, the NJB has ‘tell them to prepare themselves’. The form of the verb ‘wash’ is the perfect tense, 3CPL, with a *vav* consecutive; it could be instructional, but now, in the 3rd person, it is more like a jussive.

¹¹ The NJB includes the opening ‘and’ as part of v. 10; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

¹² In place of ‘set limits for the people’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB, following the Samaritan Pentateuch, has, ‘you will mark out the limits of the mountain’.

¹³ There is some ambiguity in the opening clause: either it means that no man will touch the mountain, so that if there is someone who is to be put to death he must be stoned or shot, since they could not go into the mountain region to get him; or it may mean no one is to touch the

בַּהֶמָּה אִם-אִישׁ לֹא יִחְיֶה בַּמִּשְׁחָה הַיָּבֵל הַמָּה יַעֲלוּ
בָהָר:

י^ד וַיֵּרֶד מֹשֶׁה מִן-הָהָר אֶל-הָעָם וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת-הָעָם
וַיַּכְבְּסוּ שְׂמֹלֵתָם: ^{טו} וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-הָעָם הֵיוּ נָכְנִים
לְשִׁלֵּשֶׁת יָמִים אֶל-תַּגְּשׁוּ אֶל-אִשָּׁה:

טז וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בַּהֵיט הַבֶּקָּר וַיְהִי קֹלֹת וּבִרְקִים
וַעֲנָן כָּבֵד עַל-הָהָר וְקוֹל שֹׁפָר חֲזָק מְאֹד וַיִּיחָרֵד כָּל-
הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּחֲנֶה: ^{יז} וַיּוֹצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת-הָעָם לִקְרַאת
הָאֱלֹהִים מִן-הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיִּתִּיצְבוּ בְּתַחֲתֵית הָהָר: ^{יח} וְהָר
סִינַי עָשָׁן כִּלּוֹ מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר יֵרֵד עָלָיו יְהוָה בָּאֵשׁ וַיַּעַל
עֲשָׁנוֹ כַּעֲשַׁן הַכֶּבֶשֶׁן וַיִּיחָרֵד כָּל-הָהָר מְאֹד: ^{יט} וַיְהִי קוֹל
הַשֹּׁפָר הוֹלֵךְ וְחֲזָק מְאֹד מֹשֶׁה יִדְבֹּר וְהָאֱלֹהִים יַעֲנֶנּוּ
בְּקוֹל: ^כ וַיֵּרֶד יְהוָה עַל-הָר סִינַי אֶל-רֹאשׁ הָהָר וַיִּקְרָא
יְהוָה לְמֹשֶׁה אֶל-רֹאשׁ הָהָר וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה: ^{כא} וַיֹּאמֶר

be stoned or shot, whether man or beast; he must not live.” When the
ram’s horn sounds a long blast, they may go up the mountain.”

¹⁴ So, Moses came down from the mountain to the people and
prepared them; and they washed their clothes. ¹⁵ He then said to the
people, “Be ready for the third day; do not lie with a woman.”

¹⁶ On the third day, at dawn, there was thunder and lightning and a
dense cloud on the mountain, and a trumpet blast so that all inside
the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Moses led the people out of the camp to meet
God; and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Mount Sinai was
wrapped in smoke, for Yahweh descended on it in fire. The smoke
went up like smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain shook
violently. ¹⁹ Louder and louder grew the sound of the horn. Moses
spoke and God answered him in thunder. ²⁰ Yahweh came down on
Mount Sinai, on the mountaintop; Yahweh called Moses to the top of

culprit who went into the region of the mountain.

¹⁴ The NRSV has ‘consecrated’ in place of ‘prepared’, here following the NJB.

¹⁵ It is assumed that sexual relations make people unfit for sacred duty.

¹⁶ The trumpet (v. 13) was sounded on cultic occasions (2S 6:15).

¹⁷ In place of ‘foot’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘bottom’ and NETB has ‘lower end’.

¹⁸ The 3 narratives (here, 24:15–17 and Dt 4:11–12, 5:23–24 & 9:15) describing the theophany on Sinai use terms appropriate to a volcanic eruption. The imagery is used to express Yahweh’s majesty and glory (see #24:16), his transcendence and the religious awe that he inspires (see Jg 5:4ff, Ps 29, 68:8, 77:17–18, 97:3–5, & Hab 3:3–15).

¹⁹ The word, ‘thunder’ literally translates as ‘in (or by) a voice’. The word always means thunder when used in the plural (see v. 16). In the singular, it can mean thunder too, but here it may mean the intelligible voice of God, who ‘answered’ Moses.

²⁰ In place of ‘mountaintop’, here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have ‘top of the mountain’.

יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה רָד הָעֵד בָּעַם פְּנִי־הָרֹסוֹ אֶל־יְהוָה
 לִרְאוֹת וְנִפֹּל מִמֶּנּוּ רַב: כב וְגַם הַכֹּהֲנִים הַנִּגְשִׁים אֶל־
 יְהוָה יִתְקַדְּשׁוּ פְנֵי־יִפְרֹץ בָּהֶם יְהוָה: כג וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה
 אֶל־יְהוָה לֹא־יֻכַּל הָעָם לַעֲלֹת אֶל־הָר סִינַי כִּי־אַתָּה
 הַעֲדַתָּה בְּנֹו לֵאמֹר הִגְבַּל אֶת־הָהָר וְקִדְּשָׁתוּ:
 כד וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו יְהוָה לִדְרֹד וְעָלִיתָ אִתָּה וְאַהֲרֹן עֲמָדִי
 וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהָעָם אֶל־יְהֹרֹסוּ לַעֲלֹת אֶל־יְהוָה פְּנֵי־יִפְרֹץ־
 בָּם: כה וַיֵּרֶד מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם:

{ס}

the mountain and Moses went up. ²¹ Yahweh said to Moses, “Go down and warn the people not to break through to look on Yahweh, or many will die. ²² Even the priests who approach Yahweh must purify themselves, or Yahweh will break out against them.” ²³ Moses said to Yahweh, “The people cannot come up Mount Sinai; for, you warned us saying, “Set limits for the mountain and keep it holy.”” ²⁴ Yahweh said to him, “Go down and return with Aaron; but do not let the priests or the people break through to come up to Yahweh, or he will break out against them.” ²⁵ So, Moses went down to the people and told them.

²¹ Vv. 21–24 refer back to vv. 12–13.

²² The mention of priests is an anachronism; the priesthood had not yet been instituted.

²³ Moses’ response to God is to ask how they would break through when God had already charged them not to; God knew them better than Moses did.

²⁴ The literal translation of ‘with Aaron’ is ‘bringing Aaron with you’.

²⁵ The NJB ends this verse with an ellipsis; the sentence is incomplete, the narrative being interrupted by the insertion of the Decalogue.

שמות פרק כ

EXODUS 20

- א וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לֵאמֹר: {ס} 1 Then God spoke all these words. He said:
- ב אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים: 2 “I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
- ג לֹא־יִהְיֶה־לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל־פָּנַי: 3 “You shall have no other gods before me.
- ד לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה־לְךָ פֶסֶל | וְכָל־תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם | מִמַּעַל וְאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת וְאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם | מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ: 4 “You shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven, or on earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. 4 You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, punishing a father’s sin in the sons to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me; 5 but I show mercy to thousands who love me and keep my commandments.
- ה לֹא־תִשָּׂא אֶת־שֵׁם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוּא כִּי לֹא יִנָּקֶה יְהוָה אֶת אֲשֶׁר־יִשָּׂא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ לְשׁוּא: {פ} 6 “You shall not misuse the name of Yahweh your God, for Yahweh will not hold guiltless anyone who misuses his name.

EXODUS 20

- ¹ Scripture makes it clear that the Law was the revelation of God at Mount Sinai. אַת is here a grammatical marker.
- ² The LXX, NJB, NRSV and many translations include the last sentence as a separate verse; therein, subsequent verse numbers are accordingly incremented. Here, we follow the MT. Similarly, the *Mechon Mamre* text does not include the *Sof Pasuq* immediately preceding that sentence but the MAM text, following the *Leningrad Codex*, does (the UXLC uses the verse numbers of the KJV).
- ³ This commandment prohibits making cult images of Yahweh (see explanation given in Dt 4:14). This prohibition set Israel apart from all the other nations surrounding it.
- ⁴ A footnote to the NJB suggests that the first sentence refers to the gods of v. 3, of which this verse is a continuation. The word, ‘generation’, (דָּר), does not occur in the MT but it is implied.
- ⁵ A more traditional reading for ‘thousands’ is ‘the thousandth generation’ (as in v. 4, the word, דָּר, is not in the MT here). After ‘tenth’, Hebrew uses cardinal numbers for ordinals also, so either reading is possible.
- ⁶ Besides perjury (Mt 5:33) and false evidence (20:16 & Dt 5:20), this can also include the use of the divine name in magic; the LXX reads ‘You shall not futilely use the name of the Lord your God’ (οὐ λήμψῃ τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ σου ἐπὶ ματαιίῳ).

זִכֹּר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ: ^ח שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וַעֲשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלֹאכֶתֶךָ: ^ט וַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה כָל-מְלָאכָה אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתֶּךָ עַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתֶךָ וּבְהֶמְתֶּךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בִּשְׁעָרֶיךָ: ^י כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת-יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל-כֵּן בֵּרַךְ יְהוָה אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ: {ס}

^{יא} כִּבְדָּד אֶת-אָבִיךָ וְאֶת-אִמְּךָ לְמַעַן יָאָרְכוֹן יְמֶיךָ עַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ: {ס}

^{יב} לֹא תִרְצַח: {ס}

לֹא תִנְאָף: {ס}

לֹא תִגְנוֹב: {ס}

לֹא-תַעֲנֶה בְרַעְיָךְ עַד שֹׁקֶר: {ס}

⁷ “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁸ Six days, you may labour and do all your work, ⁹ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your God. You shall do no work that day, you, nor your son nor your daughter nor your servant, maid, your animals, nor the alien living with you. ¹⁰ For, in six days, Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore, Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

¹¹ “Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land that Yahweh your God gives you.

¹² “You shall not kill.

“You shall not commit adultery.

“You shall not steal.

“You shall not give false evidence against your neighbour.

⁷ The biblical texts expressly connect the term, ‘Sabbath’, with a root meaning ‘to desist, to stop work’ (16:29–30, 23:12, 34:21).

⁸ The imperfect tense has traditionally been rendered as a commandment (‘you will labour’); but the point of this commandment is the prohibition of work on the seventh day, so the permission nuance of the imperfect works well here.

⁹ The wife is omitted in the list, not that she was considered unimportant, nor that she was excluded from the rest, but rather in reflecting her high status. She was not man’s servant, not lesser than the man, but included with the man as an equal before God. The ‘you’ of the commandments is addressed to the Israelites individually, male and female, just as God in the Garden of Eden held both the man and the woman responsible for their individual sins.

¹⁰ In place of ‘all that is in them’, here following NETB, the NJB has ‘all that these contain’.

¹¹ The verb כִּבְדָּד (‘honour’) is the Piel imperative; it calls for the people to give to their parents the respect and honour that is appropriate for them. It could be paraphrased to say, give them the proper weight of authority that they deserve.

¹² In the LXX, NJB, NRSV and most modern translations, the four commandments of this verse, here following the MT, comprise separate verses; therein, the following commandment is numbered v. 16. On the ‘internal’ Sof Pasuq characters in this verse, see #2.

י' לֹא תַחְמֹד בֵּית רֵעֶךָ {ס} 13 "You shall not covet your neighbour's house.

לֹא־תַחְמֹד אִשְׁתִּי רֵעֶךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתְךָ וְשׁוֹרְךָ וְחִמְרְךָ
וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ: {פ} "You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or servant, maid, or ox,
or donkey, or anything that is his."

י"ד וְכָל־הָעָם רָאִים אֶת־הַקּוֹלֹת וְאֶת־הַלְפִידִם וְאֵת קוֹל
הַשֹּׁפָר וְאֶת־הַהָר עָשָׁן וַיֵּרָא הָעָם וַיִּנָּעוּ וַיַּעֲמֻדוּ
מֵרָחֶק: ט"ו וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר־אַתָּה עִמָּנוּ
וְנִשְׁמָעָה וְאַל־יְדַבֵּר עִמָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים פֶּן־נָמוּת: ט"ז וַיֹּאמֶר
מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם אֶל־תִּירְאוּ כִּי לִבְעֹבֹר נִסּוּת אֶתְכֶם
בָּא הָאֱלֹהִים וּבְעֹבֹר תִּהְיֶה יְרֵאתוֹ עַל־פְּנֵיכֶם לְבַלְתִּי
תַּחֲסֹאוּ: י"ז וַיַּעֲמֵד הָעָם מֵרָחֶק וּמֹשֶׁה נָגַשׁ אֶל־הָעֶרְפֶּל
אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם הָאֱלֹהִים: {ס} 14 And all the people shook with fear when they perceived the peals
of thunder and the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and
the smoking mountain; and they kept their distance. 15 "Speak to us
yourself," they said to Moses, "or we shall die." 16 And Moses
answered the people, "Do not be afraid; God has come to test you, so
that your fear of him, being always in your mind, may keep you from
sinning." 17 Therefore, the people kept their distance while Moses
approached the dark cloud where God was.

13 Some regard the 1st sentence as a separate commandment; however, 'neighbour's house' probably includes what is enumerated in the 2nd part of the verse: wife, male or female slave, *et cetera*.

14 Vv. 18–21 follow on from 19:19 as part of the description of the theophany as a storm (see #19:18).

15 The verb 'speak' is the Piel imperative; in this context it has more of the sense of a request than a command: the independent personal pronoun emphasises the subject and forms the contrast with God's speaking.

16 The verb נִסּוּת ('test') is the Piel infinitive construct; it forms the purpose of God's coming with all the accompanying phenomena; the verb can mean 'to try', 'to test' or 'to prove'. The sense of 'prove' fits this context best because the terrifying phenomena was intended to put the fear of God in their hearts so that they would obey; in other words, God was inspiring them to obey, not simply testing to see if they would.

17 No wonder the Israelites were afraid when they saw the manifestation of God and heard his laws. When the whole covenant is considered, preamble and all, then it becomes clear that the motivation for obeying the commands is the person and the work of the covenant God – the one who redeemed his people. Obedience then becomes a response of devotion and adoration to the Redeemer who set them free. It becomes loyal service, not enslavement to laws. The point could be worded this way: God requires that his covenant people, whom he has redeemed, and to whom he has revealed, give their absolute allegiance and obedience to him. This means they will worship and serve him, and safeguard the well-being of each other.

י"ח וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כֹּה תֹאמַר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם כִּי מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם דִּבַּרְתִּי עִמָּכֶם: י"ט לֹא
 תַעֲשׂוּן אִתִּי אֱלֹהִי כֶסֶף וְאֱלֹהִי זָהָב לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם:
 כ מִזְבֵּחַ אֲדָמָה תַעֲשֶׂה־לִּי וְזִבְחָתָה עָלָיו אֶת־עֹלֹתֶיךָ
 וְאֶת־שְׁלָמֶיךָ אֶת־צֹאנֶךָ וְאֶת־בָּקָרְךָ בְּכָל־הַמָּקוֹם
 אֲשֶׁר אֶזְכִּיר אֶת־שְׁמִי אֲבוֹא אֵלֶיךָ וּבֵרַכְתִּיךָ: כא וְאִם־
 מִזְבֵּחַ אֲבָנִים תַעֲשֶׂה־לִּי לֹא־תִבְנֶנָּה אֶתְּהֵן גָּזִית כִּי
 חֲרָבָה הִנֵּפֶת עָלֶיהָ וְתַחֲלִלָה: כב וְלֹא־תַעֲלֶה בַמַּעֲלֹת
 עַל־מִזְבְּחִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִגָּלָה עֲרוֹתְךָ עָלָיו:
 {פ}

18 Yahweh said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites this, "You have seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you from heaven. 19 You shall not make beside me gods of silver or make gods of gold for yourselves. 20 You must make for me an altar of earth on which to make your burnt offerings and peace offerings, your sheep and your cattle. Wherever I choose to have my name remembered, I shall come to you and bless you. 21 If you make me an altar of stone, do not build it of cut stones: for, if you use a tool on it, you have profaned it. 22 And you must not go up to my altar by steps, that your nakedness may not be exposed to it."

¹⁸ 20:22–23:33 define the 'Book of the Covenant', so named in modern times because of 24:7 (although the text in question refers to the Decalogue). The clauses of the Book of the Covenant may be grouped under three headings according to subject matter: civil & penal laws (21:1–22:20); regulation of ritual (20:22–26, 22:28–31, 23:10–19); and social morality (22:21–27, 23:1–9). In literary form, the prescriptions fall into two categories: '*casuistic*' or conditional, in the style of the Mesopotamian codes; and '*apodictic*' or imperative, in the style of the Decalogue and certain Egyptian wisdom texts.

¹⁹ The direct object of the first instance of '*make*' must be '*gods of silver*'; the prepositional phrase modifies the whole verse to say that these gods would then be alongside the one true God. By the understanding of parallelism, each of the halves apply to the whole verse, so that '*beside me*' and '*for yourselves*' concern gods of silver or gods of gold

²⁰ Unlike Dt 12:5 *etc.*, the Book of the Covenant allows a plurality of cult places. Worship is lawful in any place in which Yahweh has manifested his presence, and of which, by revealing himself there, he has taken possession. The instructions here call for the altar to be made of natural things, not things manufactured by man. The altar was either to be made of clumps of earth or natural, unhewn rocks (v. 21).

²¹ The verb translated '*have profaned*' is a preterite with the *vav* consecutive; it forms the apodosis in a conditional clause.

²² Only a loincloth was worn when offering sacrifice, as among the Egyptians; hence the risk of indecency when mounting the altar steps.

שמות פרק כא

א ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפניהם: ב כי תקנה עבד עברי שש שנים יעבד ובשבעת יצא לחפשי חנם: ג אם בגפו יבא בגפו יצא אם בעל אשה הוא ויצאה אשתו עמו: ד אם אדניו יתן לו אשה וילדה לו בנים או בנות האשה וילדיה תהיה לאדניה והוא יצא בגפו: ה ואם אמר יאמר העבד אהבתי את אדני את אשתי ואת בני לא אצא חפשי: ו והגישו אדניו אל האלהים והגישו אל הדלת או אל המזוזה ורצע אדניו את אזנו במרצע ועבדו לעלם: {ס}

ז וכי ימכר איש את בתו לאמה לא תצא כצאת העבדים: ח אם רעה בעיני אדניה אשר לו לא יעדה

EXODUS 21

¹ “These are the decisions you are to set before them: ² “If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years. In the seventh year, he may leave free, without debt. ³ If he came single, he shall leave single; if he came married, his wife shall go with him. ⁴ If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, wife and children shall her master’s and the man must leave alone. ⁵ But if the slave declares, “I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go free,” ⁶ then his master shall take him to God, leading him to the door or doorpost. His master shall pierce his ear with an awl and he shall serve him for life.

⁷ “If a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not leave as male slaves do. ⁸ If she does not please her master who intended her for

EXODUS 21

¹ In place of ‘these are the decisions’, here following NETB, the NJB has ‘this is the ruling’ and the NRSV & WEBBE have ‘these are the ordinances’.

² An Israelite could go into servitude because of debts (22:1. Lv 25:39, 2K 4:1).

³ The literal translation of ‘single’ is ‘with his back’ (meaning ‘alone’).

⁴ The slave would have neither the right nor the means to acquire a wife; thus, the idea of the master ‘giving’ him a wife is clear – the master would have to pay the prices and make the provision. In this case, the wife and the children are actually the possession of the master unless the slave paid the bride price – but he is a slave because he got into debt.

⁵ Literally translated, the slave’s declaration is, “I do not want to go out free.”

⁶ In place of ‘to God’ (האלהים), here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘to the judges’.

⁷ ‘Slave’ here also implies ‘concubine’ (see v. 8).

⁸ ‘Who intended her’ follows the LXX (ὅν αὐτῷ καθωμολογήσατο); the MT reads ‘who did not intend her’. The Kethib/Qere difference here warrants an explanation.

וְהִפְדָּהּ לָעַם נִכְרִי לֹא-יִמְשַׁל לְמִכְרָהּ בְּבִגְדוֹ-בָהּ:
 ט וְאִם-לִבְנוֹ יִיעֲדָנָה כְּמִשְׁפַּט הַבָּנוֹת יַעֲשֶׂה-לָּהּ: 'אִם-
 אַחֶרֶת יִקַּח-לָזוֹ שְׂאֵרָה כְּסוּתָהּ וְעֹנֹתָהּ לֹא יִגְרַע:
 יא וְאִם-שְׁלֹש־אֵלֶּה לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה לָּהּ וַיֵּצֵאָה חֲנָם אֵין
 כֶּסֶף: {ס}

יב מִכָּה אִישׁ וּמֵת מוֹת יוּמָת: יג וְאִשֶּׁר לֹא צָדָהּ
 וְהָאֱלֹהִים אָנָּה לִידּוֹ וְשִׁמְתִּי לָהּ מָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יָנוּס
 שָׁמָּה: {ס}

יד וְכִי-יִדּוּ אִישׁ עַל-רֵעֵהוּ לְהָרְגוֹ בְּעֶרְמָה מֵעַם מִזְבְּחִי
 תִּקְחֵנּוּ לְמוֹת: {ס}

טו וּמִכָּה אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ מוֹת יוּמָת: {ס}

טז וְגִנֵּב אִישׁ וּמִכְרוֹ וְנִמְצָא בִידּוֹ מוֹת יוּמָת: {ס}

himself, he must let her be redeemed: he has no right to sell her to foreigners, as he has dealt unfairly with her. ⁹ If he intends her for his son, he shall treat her as daughters. ¹⁰ If he takes another, he must not reduce her food, clothing, or conjugal rights. ¹¹ If he denies her these three things she may leave, freely, without paying any money.

¹² "He who strikes a man and so causes his death must die. ¹³ If he does not lie in wait for him but God allows it to happen, then I will appoint you a place where he may seek refuge.

¹⁴ "But, if a man dares to kill his fellow by treachery, you must take him even from my altar to be put to death.

¹⁵ "Anyone who strikes his father or mother must die.

¹⁶ "He who abducts a man and sells him, or holds him, must die.

⁹ 'Daughters', in this context, refers to 'his own daughters'.

¹⁰ The translation of 'marital rights' is far from certain, since the word only occurs here, and it could be 'ointments' (Accadian texts list food, clothing, and oil as the necessities of life); the point is that the woman was to be cared for with all that was required.

¹¹ For the rulings on the daughter, the message could be: women, who were often at the mercy of their husbands or masters, must not be trapped in an unfortunate situation, but be treated well (vv. 7-11). God is preventing people who have power over others from abusing it.

¹² The underlying point of this section remains true today: the people of God must treat all human life as sacred.

¹³ A more literal translation of 'happen' is 'come to hand' (accidents were attributed to God).

¹⁴ The word עֶרְמָה ('treachery') is problematic; it could mean with prior intent, which would be connected with the word in Pr 8:5, 12, which means 'understanding'. It could be connected also to an Arabic word for 'enemy', which would indicate this was done with malice.

¹⁵ This verse uses the same construction as v. 12, but here there is no mention of the parents' death; this attack, then, does not lead to their death – if he killed one of them, then v. 12 would be the law. The severity of the penalty was in accord with the high view of parents

¹⁶ The implication here is that it would be an Israelite who was kidnapped and sold to a foreign tribe or country (like Joseph). However, the crime would be in taking the individual away from his home and religion and putting him into bondage or death.

¹⁷ וּמִקְלָל אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ מוֹת יוֹמָת: {ס} ¹⁷ “Anyone who curses father or mother must die.

¹⁸ וְכִי־יִרְיֹבֵן אָנָשִׁים וְהִכָּה־אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ בֶאֱבֶן אוֹ בְּאֶגְרָף וְלֹא יָמוּת וְנָפַל לְמִשְׁכָּב: ¹⁸ “If men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or fist, so that the man, though not dead, must keep his bed, ¹⁹ the assailant shall not be liable if the other gets up and can go about, even with a stick. But he must pay for lost time and arrange for full recovery.

²⁰ וְכִי־יִכֶּה אִישׁ אֶת־עַבְדּוֹ אוֹ אֶת־אִמָּתוֹ בְּשֹׁבֶט וּמֵת תַּחַת יָדוֹ נָקָם יִנָּקֶם: ²⁰ “If a man beats his slave, male or female, and he dies at his hands, he must pay the penalty. ²¹ But, if the slave survives for a day or two, he shall pay no penalty as he is his property.

²² וְכִי־יִנָּצוּ אָנָשִׁים וְנִגְפוּ אִשָּׁה הָרָה וַיֵּצְאוּ יְלָדֶיהָ וְלֹא יִהְיֶה אֶסְרוֹן עֲנוּשׁ יִעֲנֹשׁ בְּאִשֶּׁר יֵשִׁית עָלָיו בְּעַל הָאִשָּׁה וְנָתַן בְּפִלְלִים: ²² “If, when men fight, they hurt a pregnant woman and she has a miscarriage, though she does not die, the man responsible must pay the compensation demanded of him by the woman’s master; he shall hand it over, after arbitration. ²³ But should she die, you shall give

¹⁷ The curse, according to ancient belief, releases an inexorable power (Nb 22:6), thus making it as serious to curse parents as to strike them.

¹⁸ The literal translation of ‘must keep his bed’ is ‘falls to bed’.

¹⁹ The word translated ‘loss of time’ appears to be the infinitive from the verb ‘to sit’ with a meaning of ‘his sitting down’; some suggest from the verb ‘to rest’ with a meaning ‘cease’. In either case, the point in the context must mean compensation is due for the time he was down.

²⁰ In place of ‘at his hands’, here following the MT (literally, ‘under his hand’) & NJB, the NRSV has ‘immediately’. The literal translation of ‘he must pay the penalty’ is ‘he must be avenged’.

²¹ The literal translation of ‘property’ is ‘money’. The point of the verse is that if the slave survives a couple of days, it is probable that the master was punishing him and not intending to kill him; if he then dies, there is no punishment other than that the owner loses the slave who is his property – he suffers the loss.

²² The word בְּפִלְלִים means ‘with arbitrators’; the point then seems to be that the amount of remuneration for damages that was fixed by the husband had to be approved by the judges/courts.

²³ The *Lex Talionis* (see Lv 24:17–20, Dt 19:21), also to be found in the Code of Hammurabi and the Assyrian laws, is social, not individual, in scope. By imposing a punishment equal to the damage caused, it aims at limiting excesses of vengeance (see Gn 4:23–24).

תַּחַת רֶגֶל: כִּי כֹוִיָּה תַּחַת כֹּוִיָּה פָּצַע תַּחַת פָּצַע חֲבוּרָה
תַּחַת חֲבוּרָה: {ס}

כִּי וְכִי־יָכָה אִישׁ אֶת־עֵין עֲבָדוֹ אוֹ־אֶת־עֵין אִמּוֹ
וְשַׁחֲתָהּ לַחֲפָשִׁי יִשְׁלַחֲנוּ תַּחַת עֵינוֹ: כִּי וְאִם־שֵׁן עֲבָדוֹ
אוֹ־שֵׁן אִמּוֹ יִפֹּל לַחֲפָשִׁי יִשְׁלַחֲנוּ תַּחַת שָׁנוֹ: {פ}

כִּי וְכִי־יָגַח שׁוֹר אֶת־אִישׁ אוֹ אֶת־אִשָּׁה וּמָת סָקוֹל
יִסְקַל הַשׁוֹר וְלֹא יֵאָכַל אֶת־בְּשָׂרוֹ וּבָעַל הַשׁוֹר נָקִי:
כִּי וְאִם שׁוֹר נִגָּח הוּא מִתְמַל שְׁלֶשֶׁם וְהוֹעֵד בִּבְעָלָיו
וְלֹא יִשְׁמְרֵנוּ וְהָמִית אִישׁ אוֹ אִשָּׁה הַשׁוֹר יִסְקַל וְגַם־
בְּעָלָיו יוּמָת: לֹא־כֶּפֶר יוֹשֵׁת עָלָיו וְנָתַן פְּדִין נַפְשׁוֹ
כָּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־יוֹשֵׁת עָלָיו: לֹא אוֹ־בֶן יָגַח אוֹ־בַת יָגַח
כַּמִּשְׁפָּט הַזֶּה יַעֲשֶׂה לוֹ: לֹא־אִם־עֲבָד יָגַח הַשׁוֹר אוֹ

life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,
²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, stroke for stroke.

²⁶ "If a man strikes the eye of his slave or maid and destroys it, he must let him go free for his eye's sake. ²⁷ If he knocks out a tooth of his slave or maid, he must let him go free for the tooth's sake.

²⁸ "If an ox gores a man or woman to death, the ox must be stoned. Its flesh shall not be eaten but the owner of the ox shall not be liable.

²⁹ If the ox had the habit of goading and its owner was warned but did not keep it in, and this ox kills a man or woman, the ox must be stoned and its owner put to death. ³⁰ If a ransom is imposed on him, he must pay whatever is imposed, to redeem his life. ³¹ If it gores a boy or girl, he must be treated according to this same rule. ³² If the ox

²⁴ The cases here were not likely to have applied to the pregnant woman.

²⁵ In place of 'strike for strike', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'stripe for stripe' and NETB has 'bruise for bruise'.

²⁶ Interestingly, the verb used here for 'let him go' is the same verb throughout the first part of the book for Pharaoh to 'release' the Israelites from slavery; here, an Israelite will have to release the hurt slave and set him free.

²⁷ In place of 'for the sake of', here following NETB, the NJB & NRSV have 'to compensate for' (as also in v. 26).

²⁸ The point that this section of the laws makes is that one must ensure the safety of others by controlling the circumstances.

²⁹ The idea of the Hophal perfect translated as 'was warned' is 'attested' or 'testified against'.

³⁰ The family of the victim would set the amount for the ransom of the man guilty of criminal neglect; this practice was common in the ancient world but rare in Israel. If the family allowed the substitute price, then the man would be able to redeem his life.

³¹ In place of 'boy or girl', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'son or daughter'.

³² A 'shekel' was a unit for measure by means of a scale; both the weight and the value of a 'shekel of silver' are hard to determine; though there is no certainty, the shekel is said to weigh about 11.5 grams. Over four hundred years earlier, Joseph was sold into Egypt for 20 shekels; the free Israelite citizen was worth about 50 shekels (Lv 27:3).

אָמָה בְּסָף | שְׁלֹשִׁים שֶׁקֶלִים יִתֵּן לְאֹדֹנָיו וְהַשּׁוֹר
יִסָּקֵל: {ס}

לִג וְכִי־יִפְתָּח אִישׁ בּוֹר אֹדֹנֵהוּ אִישׁ בָּר וְלֹא יִכְסֶּנּוּ
וְנִפְל־שָׁמָּה שׁוֹר אֹדֹנֵהוּ חֲמֹר: לִד בְּעַל הַבּוֹר יִשְׁלֵם בְּסָף
יָשִׁיב לִבְעָלָיו וְהָמֵת יִהְיֶה־לּוֹ: {ס}

לִה וְכִי־יִגָּף שׁוֹר־אִישׁ אֶת־שׁוֹר רֵעֵהוּ וּמָתָהּ וּמָכְרוּ אֶת־
הַשּׁוֹר הַחַי וְחָצְרוּ אֶת־כֶּסֶּפוֹ וְגַם אֶת־הָמֵת יַחְצִיזוּ: לז אֹדֹנֵהוּ
נֹדֵעַ כִּי שׁוֹר נִגָּח הוּא מִתְמָזֵל שְׁלֹשׁ וְלֹא יִשְׁמְרֵנוּ
בְּעָלָיו שְׁלֹשׁ יִשְׁלֵם שׁוֹר תַּחַת הַשּׁוֹר וְהָמֵת יִהְיֶה־
לּוֹ: {ס}

לז כִּי יִגְנֹב־אִישׁ שׁוֹר אֹזֶשָׁה וּטְבָחוּ אֹדֹנֵהוּ מָכְרוּ חֲמִשָּׁה
בְּקָר יִשְׁלֵם תַּחַת הַשּׁוֹר וְאַרְבַּע־צֹאן תַּחַת הַשֶּׁה:

gores a slave or maid, the owner must pay their master thirty shekels of silver and the ox must be stoned.

³³ “If a man leaves a pit open, or digs one but does not cover it, and an ox or donkey falls into it, ³⁴ the owner of the pit shall make good the loss: pay its owner money but keeping the dead animal.

³⁵ If one man’s ox harms another’s so that it dies, the owners must sell the live ox and share the proceeds; they shall also share the dead one. ³⁶ But if it is known that the ox had the habit of goring before, and its owner has not kept it in, he must repay ox for ox; the dead animal shall be his own.

³⁷ “If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters or sells it, he must pay back five oxen for the ox, four sheep for the sheep.

³³ The laws of vv. 33–36 establish responsibility in cases of carelessness.

³⁴ The literal translation of ‘money’ is ‘silver’.

³⁵ The literal translation of ‘proceeds’ is ‘silver’.

³⁶ The point of this section (vv. 28–36) seems to be that one must ensure the safety of others by controlling one’s property and possessions. This section pertains to neglect with animals, but the message would have applied to similar situations. The people of God were to take heed to ensure the well-being of others, and if there was a problem, it had to be made right.

³⁷ The NRSV text includes this verse as 22:1; here, we follow the MT (and NJB).

שמות פרק כב

EXODUS 22

א אִם-בְּמַחְתָּרֶת יִמָּצָא הַגֵּנֵב וְהָכָה וְהָיָה לוֹ דָּמִים:
ב אִם-זֶרְחָה הַשֹּׁמֵשׁ עָלָיו דָּמִים לוֹ שְׁלָם יִשְׁלַם אִם-
אֵין לוֹ וְנִמְכָּר בְּגִנְבָתוֹ: ג אִם-הִמָּצָא תִמְצָא בְיָדוֹ
הַגֵּנֵבָה מִשּׁוֹר עַד-חֲמֹר עַד-שֶׁה חַיִּים שְׁנַיִם
יִשְׁלַם: {ס}

ד כִּי יִבְעֶר-אִישׁ שָׂדֶה אוֹ-כֶרֶם וְשָׁלַח אֶת-בְּעִירָה
וּבְעֵר בְּשָׂדֶה אֲחֵר מִיטֵב שָׂדֵהוּ וּמִיטֵב כֶּרְמוֹ
יִשְׁלַם: {ס}

ה כִּי-תִצָּא אֵשׁ וּמִצָּאָה קִצִּים וְנֶאֱכַל גְּדִישׁ אוֹ הַקֶּמֶה
אוֹ הַשָּׂדֶה שְׁלָם יִשְׁלַם הַמִּבְעֵר אֶת-הַבְּעִירָה: {ס}

ו כִּי-יִתֵּן אִישׁ אֶל-רֵעֵהוּ כֶּסֶף אוֹ-כֶלִים לְשֹׁמֵר וְגִנֵּב
מִבֵּית הָאִישׁ אִם-יִמָּצָא הַגֵּנֵב יִשְׁלַם שְׁנַיִם: ז אִם-לֹא
יִמָּצָא הַגֵּנֵב וְנִקְרַב בְּעַל-הַבַּיִת אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים אִם-לֹא

1 "If a thief is caught breaking in and is beaten to death, no blood guilt is incurred; 2 if it was after dawn, there shall be blood guilt. He must make restitution; if he has nothing, he must be sold for his theft.

3 If a stolen animal is found alive in his hands – ox, donkey, or sheep – he must pay double.

4 "If a man grazes his animals in a field or vineyard and lets his beasts graze in another's field, he must make restitution from the best of his own field or vineyard.

5 "If fire spreads and catches in thorns, burning stacked or standing corn or the field, he who started the fire must make full restitution.

6 "If a man gives money or goods to another's keeping and it is stolen from his house, the thief, if found, must repay double. 7 If the thief is not found, the owner of the house must swear before God that he has

EXODUS 22

¹ The verb **בְּמַחְתָּרֶת** ('*breaking in*') means 'digging through' the walls of a house (usually made of mud bricks); the verb is only used a few times with the meaning of dig in (as in houses) or row hard (as in Jonah).

² The NRSV includes the last part of this verse (from '*he must make*') as part of 21:37 (therein 22:1).

³ The thief must pay back one for what he took, and then one for the penalty – his loss as he was inflicting a loss on someone else.

⁴ After '*restitution*', the NJB, with the LXX (*ἀποστείσει ἐκ τοῦ ἀγροῦ αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὸ γέννημα αὐτοῦ· ἐὰν δὲ πάντα τὸν ἀγρὸν καταβοσκήσῃ*), adds, "*for the part of the field that has been grazed in proportion to its yield; but if he has let the whole field be grazed, he must make restitution in proportion.*"

⁵ Thorn bushes were used for hedges between fields; but thorn bushes also burned easily, making the fire spread rapidly.

⁶ The word here translated '*goods*' usually means '*vessels*' but it can have the sense of household goods and articles.

⁷ The literal translation of '*God*' is '*the gods*', possibly meaning '*the judges*' (as NETB).

שָׁלַח יָדוֹ בְּמִלְאֶכֶת רֵעֵהוּ: ^ח עַל־כָּל־דְּבַר־פֶּשַׁע עַל־שׁוֹר עַל־חֲמוֹר עַל־שֶׂה עַל־שְׁלָמָה עַל־כָּל־אֲבִדָּה אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר כִּי־הוּא זֶה עַד הָאֱלֹהִים יָבֹא דְבַר־שְׁנֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר יִרְשִׁיעַן אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁלַם שְׁנַיִם לְרֵעֵהוּ: {ס}

^ט כִּי־יִתֵּן אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ חֲמוֹר אוֹ־שׁוֹר אוֹ־שֶׂה וְכָל־בְּהֵמָה לְשֹׂמֵר וּמֵת אוֹ־נִשְׁבֵּר אוֹ־נִשְׁבָּה אֵין רָאָה: ^י שְׂבַעַת יִהְיֶה תִּהְיֶה בֵּין שְׁנֵיהֶם אִם־לֹא שָׁלַח יָדוֹ בְּמִלְאֶכֶת רֵעֵהוּ וּלְקַח בְּעָלָיו וְלֹא יִשְׁלַם: ^{יא} וְאִם־גָּנַב יִגְנֹב מֵעַמּוֹ יִשְׁלַם לְבַעְלָיו: ^{יב} אִם־טָרַף יִטְרֹף יִבְאֶהוּ עַד הִטְרָפָה לֹא יִשְׁלַם: {פ}

^{יג} וְכִי־יִשְׁאַל אִישׁ מֵעַם רֵעֵהוּ וְנִשְׁבֵּר אוֹ־מֵת בְּעָלָיו אֵין־עַמּוֹ שְׁלַם יִשְׁלַם: ^{יד} אִם־בְּעָלָיו עַמּוֹ לֹא יִשְׁלַם אִם־שָׂכִיר הוּא בָּא בְּשָׂכָרוֹ: {ס}

^{טו} וְכִי־יִפְתֶּה אִישׁ בְּתוּלָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־אֲרָשָׁה וְשָׁכַב עִמָּה מִהֵרָנָה לֹא לְאִשָּׁה: ^{טז} אִם־מֵאֵן יִמָּאֵן אָבִיהָ

not laid hands on the neighbour's goods.⁸ In cases of breach of trust involving ox, donkey, sheep, clothing, or any other loss, for which it is claimed, "This is mine," the dispute shall be brought before God. The one whom God condemns must pay double to the other.

⁹ "If a man entrusts to another a donkey, ox, sheep, or any beast whatever, and it dies, is injured, or carried off, without a witness,¹⁰ an oath by Yahweh shall decide between them, whether one man has laid hands on the other's property. The owner shall accept this and he shall not make restitution.¹¹ But if it has been stolen, he must make restitution to the owner.¹² If it has been gored, he must bring it as evidence, and he shall not make restitution.

¹³ "If a man borrows anything from another and it is hurt or dies in the owner's absence, he must make it good.¹⁴ If the owner is with it, he need not make it good; if it was hired, only the hiring fee is due.

¹⁵ "If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed and lies with her, he must pay the dowry and make her his wife.¹⁶ If her father refuses

⁸ The trial would be by judicial verdict, ordeal, prophetic pronouncement or oath.

⁹ The literal translation of 'without a witness' is 'there is no one seeing'.

¹⁰ An alternative translation for the opening of the last sentence reads, "The owner will accept the oath."

¹¹ The point of this verse is that the man should have taken better care of the animal.

¹² The word עֵד ('evidence') actually means 'witness' but the dead animal is a silent witness (i.e., evidence); the word is an adverbial accusative.

¹³ The words 'an animal' are not in the MT and are here supplied in the translation for clarity.

¹⁴ This verse implies that the owner who hired it out was prepared to take the risk, so there would be no compensation.

¹⁵ A betrothed man paid the 'dowry' (מָהָר) to the family of his future wife.

¹⁶ The 2nd half of the chapter records various laws of purity and justice.

לְתַתָּהּ לוֹ בְּסָף יִשְׁקַל כְּמֹהַר הַבְּתוּלֹת: {ס}

יִּמְשָׁפָה לֹא תַחֲיֶה: יִּכְל־שֹׁכֵב עִם־בְּהֵמָה מוֹת יוּמָת: {ס}

יִּזְבַּח לֵאלֹהִים יָחִרִם בְּלִיתִי לַיהוָה לְבַדּוֹ: כִּי וְגַר לֹא־תוֹנֶה וְלֹא תִלְחָצֶנּוּ כִּי־גֵרִים הֵייתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: כֹּא כָל־אֲלֻמָּנָה וַיְתוֹם לֹא תַעֲנוּן: כִּב אִם־עֲנָה תַעֲנֶנָּה אֹתוֹ כִּי אִם־צָעַק יִצְעַק אֵלַי שָׁמַע אֲשַׁמַּע צַעֲקָתוֹ: כג וְחָרָה אַפִּי וְהָרַגְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בַּחֶרֶב וְהָיוּ נְשִׁיכֶם אֲלֻמָּנוֹת וּבְנֵיכֶם יְתֻמִּים: {פ}

כד אִם־בֹּסֵף | תַּלְוֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־הָעֹנִי עִמָּךְ לֹא־תִהְיֶה לוֹ כְּנִשָּׂה לֹא־תִשְׁיָמוֹן עָלָיו גִּשְׁךְ: כה אִם־תִּחְבֹּל תִּחְבֹּל שְׁלֵמַת רֵעֶךָ עַד־בֹּא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ תִּשְׁיָבֶנּוּ לוֹ: כו כִּי הוּא כְּסוּתוֹ לְבִדָּה הוּא שְׁמָלְתוֹ לְעָרוֹ בְּמָה יִשְׁכָּב וְהָיָה כִּי־יִצְעַק אֵלַי וְשָׁמַעְתִּי כִּי־חֲנוּן אֲנִי: {ס}

to let him have her, he must pay the dowry amount for virgins.

¹⁷ “You shall not allow a sorceress to live. ¹⁸ Anyone who lies with an animal must die.

¹⁹ “Anyone who sacrifices to the gods, except Yahweh alone, shall come under the ban. ²⁰ You must not molest the alien or oppress him, for you lived as aliens in the land of Egypt. ²¹ You must not abuse the widow or the orphan; ²² if you abuse them and they cry to me, I will surely hear their cry; ²³ my anger will burn and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will be widows, your children orphans.

²⁴ “If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you must not deal with him as a usurer; you must not lay interest on him.

²⁵ If you take another’s cloak in pawn, you must restore it before sunset; ²⁶ it is all the covering he has to wrap his body in. What else would he sleep in? If he cries to me, I will listen, for I am full of pity.

¹⁷ The ‘sorceress’ was someone who dealt with drugs or herbs for all kinds of purposes, including necromancy.

¹⁸ In place of ‘lies with’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has ‘has intercourse with’.

¹⁹ In place of ‘to the gods, except Yahweh alone’, following the MT, the NJB, LXX (θεοῖς ἑτέροις) and Samaritan Pentateuch have, ‘to other gods’.

²⁰ The ‘alien’ (גֵּר) is a resident foreigner; he lives in the land but has no civic or legal rights.

²¹ The word here translated as ‘abuse’ (תַּעֲנֶנָּה) has a wide range of meanings, such as ‘afflict’, ‘oppress’, ‘humiliate’ & ‘rape’. These victims are at the mercy of the judges, businessmen, or villains; the righteous king/people will not mistreat them (see Is 1:17, Job 31:16–17, 21).

²² The verb ‘hear’ is the normal use of the infinitive absolute with the imperfect tense to emphasise the verb

²³ The punishment takes the form of the *Lex Talionis*: God will destroy them, making their wives widows and their children orphans.

²⁴ As a farming people, Israel frowned upon commercialism (Ho 12:7–8) and on the exaction of interest from another Israelite (Lv 25:35–38).

²⁵ A loan with a garment as security could only be for a single day, lest one of the poor suffer (Dt 24:12–13, Am 2:8).

²⁶ The cloak was a night covering when sleeping; thus, it was property that could not be taken and not given back – the last possession.

כז אֱלֹהִים לֹא תִקְלַל וְנָשִׂיא בְעַמֶּךָ לֹא תֹאָר:
 כח מִלֵּאֲתֶךָ וְדַמְעֶךָ לֹא תֵאַחַר בְּכֹר בְּנֶיךָ תִּתֵּן-לִי:
 כט בֶּן-תַּעֲשֶׂה לְשֹׂרֶךָ לְצֹאֲנֶךָ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים יִהְיֶה עִם-
 אִמּוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי תִתְּנוּ-לִי: ל' וְאֲנָשֵׁי-קֹדֶשׁ תִּהְיוּ לִי
 וּבָשָׂר בַּשָּׂדֶה טָרְפָה לֹא תֹאכְלוּ לְכָלֵב תִּשְׁלַכּוּ
 אֹתוֹ: {ס}

²⁷ “You shall not revile God nor curse a ruler of your people. ²⁸ Do not delay making offerings from your surplus. You must give me the firstborn of your sons; ²⁹ you must do the same with your sheep and oxen: it must stay with its mother for seven days; on the eighth day, you must give it to me. ³⁰ You shall be my holy men. You must not eat meat torn by wild beasts; you must throw it to the dogs.

²⁷ The two verbs in this verse are synonyms: קָלַל ('revile') means 'treat lightly' and אָר means 'curse'.

²⁸ In place of 'your surplus' (here following the MT), the NJB & NJPS have 'the abundance of your harvest and your winepress' (referring to the religious dues payable on the products of the soil).

²⁹ The NJB has 'the firstborn' in place of the 1st occurrence of the pronoun 'it', here following the MT.

³⁰ Flesh torn by beasts was considered unclean because it was not properly drained of blood.

שמות פרק כג

EXODUS 23

- א לֹא תִשָּׂא שְׁמַע שׁוֹא אֶל-תִּשְׁת יָדְךָ עַם-רָשָׁע לְהִיט
עַד חֹמֶס: ב לֹא-תִהְיֶה אַחֲרֵי-רַבִּים לְרַעַת וְלֹא-תִעֲנֶה
עַל-רֹב לְנֹטֶת אַחֲרֵי רַבִּים לְהִטֹּת: ג וְדָל לֹא תִהְדָּר
בְּרִיבוֹ: {ס}
- ד כִּי תִפְגַּע שׁוֹר אֹיְבֶךָ אוֹ חֲמֹר תִּעָּה הָשֵׁב תְּשִׁיבֵנּוּ
לּוֹ: {ס}
- ה כִּי-תִרְאֶה חֲמֹר שֹׁנֵא רֹבֵץ תַּחַת מִשְׁאוֹ וְחִדְלָהּ
מֵעֲזֹב לוֹ עֲזֹב תִּעֲזֹב עִמּוֹ: {ס}
- ו לֹא תִטֶּה מִשְׁפַּט אֲבִינֶךָ בְּרִיבוֹ: ז מְדַבֵּר-שָׁקֶר תִּרְחֹק
וְנָקִי וְצַדִּיק אֶל-תִּהְדָּג כִּי לֹא-אֶצְדִּיק רָשָׁע: ח וְשֹׁחַד
לֹא תִקַּח כִּי הַשֹּׁחַד יַעֲוֶר פְּקֻחִים וַיְסַלֵּף דְּבָרִי
צַדִּיקִים:
- 1 "You must not make a false report; you must not support the wicked with malicious evidence. 2 You must not follow a crowd in wrongdoing, nor side with the majority to pervert justice. 3 You shall not favour a poor man in his cause. 4 "If you meet your enemy's ox or donkey going astray, you must lead it back. 5 "If you see the donkey of he who hates you fallen under its load, do not pass him by but go and help him with it. 6 "You must not deny justice to your poor in his cause. 7 Keep clear of fraud; do not kill the innocent or upright; for, I will not justify the wicked. 8 You must take no bribe, for a bribe binds clear-sighted men and perverts the words of the upright.

EXODUS 23

- ¹ The literal translation of 'support' is 'join hands with'; 'wicked' (רָשָׁע) is a word that refers to the guilty criminal, the person who is doing something wrong; in the religious setting, it describes the person who is not a member of the covenant and may be involved in all kinds of sin, even though there is the appearance of moral and spiritual stability.
- ² Before 'wrongdoing', the NJB adds 'the cause of'; here, we follow the NRSV.
- ³ The point here is one of false sympathy and honour, the bad sense of the word הִדָּר.
- ⁴ Justice extends even to helping your enemy.
- ⁵ The meaning of the Hebrew for the last phrase is uncertain.
- ⁶ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in their lawsuits."
- ⁷ In place of 'for, I will not justify the wicked', here following the MT, WEBBE & JPS, the NJB has 'and do not acquit the guilty,' following the LXX (καὶ οὐ δοικαίωσεις τὸν ἀσεβῆ), which then adds 'because of bribes' (ἐνεκεν δώρων).
- ⁸ An alternative translation for 'clear-sighted' is 'eye-witness'.

- ^ט וְגֵר לֹא תִלְחָץ וְאַתֶּם יֹדְעֵתֶם אֶת־נַפְשׁ הַגֵּר כִּי־גֵרִים
הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:
- ^י וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים תִּזְרַע אֶת־אֲרָצְךָ וְאַסְפָּתָ אֶת־תְּבוּאָתָהּ:
^{יא} וְהַשְׁבִּיעַתָּ תִּשְׁמְטָנָה וְנִטְשָׁתָה וְאָכְלוּ אֲבִינִי עַמֶּךָ
וַיִּתְּרֵם תֹּאכַל חֵית הַשָּׂדֶה כִּן־תַּעֲשֶׂה לְכַרְמְךָ לְזִיתְךָ:
- ^{יב} שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי תִשְׁבֹּת
לְמַעַן יָנוּחַ שׁוֹרְךָ וַחֲמֹרְךָ וַיִּנָּפֶשׁ בֶּן־אִמָּתְךָ וְהַגֵּר:
- ^{יג} וּבְכָל אֲשֶׁר־אִמַּרְתִּי אֲלֵיכֶם תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְשֵׁם אֱלֹהִים
אַחֲרֵיכֶם לֹא תִזְכִּירוּ לֹא יִשְׁמַע עַל־פִּיךָ:
- ^{יד} שְׁלֹשׁ רָגָלִים תַּחֲג לִי בַשָּׁנָה: ^{טו} אֶת־חַג הַמִּצּוֹת
תִּשְׁמֹר שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תֹּאכַל מִצּוֹת כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתְךָ
לְמוֹעֵד חֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב כִּי־בּו יָצֵאתָ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא־יֵרָאוּ
פָּנֶי רִיָּקָם: ^{טז} וְחַג הַקֹּצִיר בְּכוּרֵי מַעֲשֶׂיךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּזְרַע
- ⁹ “You must not oppress the resident alien; you know how an alien feels, for you lived as aliens in the land of Egypt.
- ¹⁰ “For six years you may sow your land and gather its yield, ¹¹ but the seventh year you must let it rest and lie fallow, so the poor of your people may eat, and let the wild animals eat what they leave. You shall do the same with your vineyard and olive grove.
- ¹² “Six days you shall do your work but stop on the seventh day, so that your ox and your donkey may rest and your home-born slave and the stranger may be refreshed.
- ¹³ “Take notice of all I have told you and do not repeat the name of other gods: let it not be heard from your lips.
- ¹⁴ “Three times a year you are to hold a feast for me. ¹⁵ You must hold the feast of Unleavened Bread: seven days you must eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib; for, in it, you came out of Egypt; no one may appear before me

⁹ The verb translated ‘oppress’ literally means ‘crush’; in this context, this would probably mean with an unfair judgment in the courts

¹⁰ This section concerns religious duties of the people of God as they worship by giving thanks to God for their blessings.

¹¹ The word translated ‘wild animals’ is a general term for animals, usually wild, including predators (cf. v. 29, Gn 2:19–20, Lv 26:22, Dt 7:22, 1S 17:46, Job 5:22–23, Ezk 29:5, 34:5).

¹² Here, the observance of the Sabbath is based upon humanitarian concern (cf. 20:11).

¹³ An alternative translation for ‘repeat’ is ‘honour’.

¹⁴ Other feasts were added later: the religious New Year (Lv 23:24), the Day of Atonement (Lv 16 & 23:27–32) and, after the Exile, Purim (Est 9:24), Dedication (1M 4:59), and the Day of Nicanor (1M 7:49).

¹⁵ This connexion between the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Exodus made it easy to link it with the Passover (see #12:1).

בַּשָּׂדֶה וְחַג הָאָסֶף בְּצֵאת הַשָּׂנָה בְּאֶסְפָּךָ אֶת־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ
מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה: י' שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה יֵרָאֶה כָּל־זְכוּרְךָ
אֶל־פְּנֵי הָאֵדֶן | יְהוָה:

י" לא־תִזְבַּח עַל־חֶמֶן דִּם־זִבְחִי וְלֹא־יֵלֵין חֶלֶב־חֲגִי
עַד־בֹּקֶר: י" ראשִׁית בְּכוּרִי אֲדַמְתֶּךָ תָּבִיא בֵּית יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא־תִבְשֹׁל גְּדִי בַחֲלֵב אִמּוֹ:
{פ}

כ הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי שֹׁלַח מַלְאָךְ לִפְנֶיךָ לְשַׁמְרֶךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ
וְלִהְבִּיאֲךָ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר הִכְנֵתִי: כ" הַשָּׁמֶר מִפְּנֵי
וְשָׁמַע בְּקוֹלוֹ אֶל־תִּמְרָר בּוֹ כִּי לֹא יֵשָׂא לְפִשְׁעֶכֶם כִּי
שָׁמִי בְקִרְבּוֹ: כ" כִּי אִם־שָׁמָּוַע תִּשְׁמַע בְּקוֹלוֹ וְעָשִׂיתָ
כָּל אֲשֶׁר אֲדַבֵּר וְאֵיבִתִּי אֶת־אִבֶּיךָ וְצִרְתִּי אֶת־
צִרְיֶיךָ: כ" כִּי־יֵלֶךְ מַלְאָכִי לִפְנֶיךָ וְהִבִּיאֲךָ אֶל־הָאֱמֹרִי

empty. ¹⁶ And the feast of Harvest, the first fruits of your labour, which you sow in the field; and the feast of Ingathering, at the end of the year when you gather your labour in the fields. ¹⁷ Three times a year, all your men folk must appear before the Lord Yahweh.

¹⁸ "You must not offer leavened bread with the blood of my sacrifice or let the fat of my festival remain until morning. ¹⁹ You must bring the best first fruits of your soil to the house of Yahweh your God. You must not boil a kid in its mother's milk.

²⁰ "I send an angel to precede you, to guard you as you go and bring you to the place I have prepared. ²¹ Revere him and obey what he says. Do not defy him; he will not forgive your wrongdoing; for, my name is in him. ²² If you indeed listen to his voice and do all that I say, I shall be enemy to your enemies, foe to you foes. ²³ When my angel goes before you and leads you to the Amorite, the Hittite, the

¹⁶ After 'Harvest', the NJB adds the explanatory clause 'you are to hold'; here, we follow the MT.

¹⁷ Here the divine Name reads in Hebrew הָאֵדֶן יְהוָה, which, if rendered according to the traditional scheme of 'LORD' for 'Yahweh' would result in 'Lord LORD'; most English versions therefore render this phrase 'Lord GOD'.

¹⁸ 34:25 says explicitly that this refers to the Passover, but in both cases, the prescription is given after the religious calendar (vv. 14–17, 34:18–23), neither of which deals with the Passover. This latter was celebrated as a family festival until the Deuteronomic reforms (see Dt 16:5–6).

¹⁹ It was a Canaanite custom, known from the Ras Shamra texts, to boil kids in their mothers' milk.

²⁰ The 'angel' appears to be distinguished from God himself (see #Gn 16:7), though he performs Yahweh's function. It is a guardian angel (Gn 24:7, Nb 20:16), such as figures later in the Book of Tobit (see #Tb 5:4).

²¹ 'Do not defy him' follows the LXX (μὴ ἀπειθεῖς αὐτῷ); the MT reads 'do not make him bitter'. The 'name' represents the person himself.

²² The infinitive absolute in 'if you listen carefully' does not add as great an emphasis as normal but emphasises the condition being set forth.

²³ In place of 'blot them out', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'exterminate these'.

וְהַחֲתִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי הַחִוִּי וְהִיבּוּסִי וְהַכְּחַדְתִּיו:
כד לֹא־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לֵאלֹהֵיהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם וְלֹא תַעֲשֶׂה
כְּמַעֲשֵׂיהֶם כִּי הָרַס תְּהַרְסֵם וְשִׁבֵּר תִּשְׁבֹּר מִצִּבְתֵּיהֶם:
כה וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּבִרְךְ אֶת־לֶחֶמְךָ וְאֶת־
מִימֶיךָ וְהִסְרֹתִי מִחֲלָה מִקִּרְבְּךָ: {ס}

כו לֹא תִהְיֶה מְשַׁכֵּלָה וְעִקְרָה בְּאַרְצְךָ אֶת־מִסְפַּר יָמֶיךָ
אִמְלָא: **כז** אֶת־אֵימָתִי אֲשַׁלַּח לִפְנֶיךָ וְהִמָּתִי אֶת־כָּל־
הָעָם אֲשֶׁר תִּבְּא בָהֶם וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־כָּל־אִיְבֶיךָ אֵלֶיךָ
עָרְף: **כח** וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אֶת־הַצִּרְעָה לִפְנֶיךָ וְגִרְשָׁה אֶת־
הַחִוִּי אֶת־הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְאֶת־הַחֲתִי מִלִּפְנֶיךָ: **כט** לֹא אֶגְרָשְׁנוּ
מִפְּנֶיךָ בִּשְׁנָה אַחַת פֶּן־תִּהְיֶה הָאָרֶץ שְׂמֵמָה וְרִבָּה
עָלֶיךָ חֵית הַשָּׂדֶה: **ל** מַעַט מַעַט אֶגְרָשְׁנוּ מִפְּנֶיךָ עַד
אֲשֶׁר תִּפְּרָה וְנָחֳלַת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ: **לא** וְשִׁתִּי אֶת־גִּבְלֶיךָ
מִיַּם־סוּף וְעַד־יָם פְּלִשְׁתִּים וּמִמִּדְבָּר עַד־הַנָּהָר כִּי־

Perizzite, the Canaanite, the Hivite, the Jebusite; and I shall blot them out. ²⁴ You must not bow down to their gods, nor worship them, nor do as they do: you must utterly destroy them and smash their standing-stones. ²⁵ You are to worship Yahweh your God and he will bless your bread and water, and remove sickness from among you.

²⁶ "No one shall miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you your full term of life. ²⁷ I will send panic before you; I will discomfit all the people you meet; I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. ²⁸ I will send hornets before you to drive Hivite, Canaanite and Hittite from before you. ²⁹ I will not drive them out before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and wild animals multiply against you. ³⁰ Little by little, I will drive them out before you until you multiply and inherit the land. ³¹ For your border, I shall fix the Sea of Reeds and the Philistine Sea, the desert and the river; yes, I

²⁴ In the Canaanite cult, 'standing-stones' (מִצְבֹּתֵיהֶם) were symbols of the male divinity. The Law forbade their worship (see also 34:13, Lv 26:1, Dt 7:5, 12:3 & 16:22), so also did the prophets (Ho 3:4, 10:1, Mi 5:12). The religion of the Patriarchs accepted them (see Gn 28:18 & 22).

²⁵ In place of 'he will bless', here following the MT, the NJB & NRSV, following the LXX (εὐλογῆσω) has 'I shall bless'.

²⁶ No one will die prematurely: this applies to the individual or the nation; the plan of God to bless was grand, if the people would obey.

²⁷ The literal translation of 'I will make all your enemies turn and run from you' is 'I will give all your enemies to you (as) a back'.

²⁸ 'Hornets' (as NJB) could also be translated as 'pestilence' (as NRSV); the Hebrew meaning is uncertain.

²⁹ The literal translation of 'wild animals' is 'beasts of the field'.

³⁰ The explanation given here for the slowness of the conquest is the same as in Dt 7:22: other explanations were also given (see #Jg 2:6).

³¹ The 'desert and the river' refer to, respectively, the Arabian Desert and the River Euphrates. Thus, the area here delineated extends from the Gulf of Aqaba – the Mediterranean – Sinai – the Euphrates: the ideal limits of the empire of David and Solomon (1K 5:1). For other descriptions of the Promised Land, see #Nb 34:1 and Jg 20:1.

אֶתְּנֶנּוּ בְיָדְכֶם אֶת יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ וְגִרְשָׁתֶמוּ מִפְּנֵיךָ: ^{לֵב} לֹא-
 תִּכְרֹת לָהֶם וּלְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם בְּרִית: ^{לֵב} לֹא יֵשְׁבוּ בָאָרֶץ
 פֶּן-יִחַטְּיאוּ אֹתָךְ לִי כִּי תַעֲבֹד אֶת-אֱלֹהֵיהֶם כִּי־יִהְיֶה
 לְךָ לְמוֹקֵשׁ:
 {פ} for you!""

³² In place of 'pact', here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have 'covenant'.

³³ The idea of the 'snare' is to lure them to judgment; God is apparently warning about intercourse with the Canaanites, either in worship or in business: They are very syncretistic, and so it would be dangerous to settle among them.

שמות פרק כד

EXODUS 24

א וְאֶל־מֹשֶׁה אָמַר עֲלֶה אֵל־יְהוָה אִתָּהּ וְאַהֲרֹן נָדָב
וְאַבִּיהוּא וְשִׁבְעִים מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם
מֵרֶחֶק: ב וְנָגַשׁ מֹשֶׁה לְבַדּוֹ אֶל־יְהוָה וְהֵם לֹא יִגָּשׁוּ
וְהָעָם לֹא יַעֲלוּ עִמּוֹ:

ג וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וַיְסַפֵּר לָעָם אֵת כָּל־דִּבְרֵי יְהוָה וְאֵת כָּל־
הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים וַיַּעַן כָּל־הָעָם קוֹל אֶחָד וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָל־
הַדִּבְרִים אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה נַעֲשֶׂה: ד וַיִּכְתֹּב מֹשֶׁה אֵת
כָּל־דִּבְרֵי יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁכֶּם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיְבִן מִזְבֵּחַ תַּחַת הָהָר
וּשְׁתֵּים עָשָׂר מַצֵּבָה לְשִׁנָּיִם עֹשֹׂר שְׁבִטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
ה וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־נְעָרֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּזְבְּחוּ
זִבְחִים שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה פָּרִים: ו וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה חֹצֵי הַדָּם
וַיִּשֶׂם בְּאַגְנֹת וַחֲצֵי הַדָּם זָרַק עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: ז וַיִּקַּח סֵפֶר
הַבְרִית וַיִּקְרָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר

¹ To Moses he had said, "Come up to Yahweh, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel and worship at a distance. ² Moses alone may approach Yahweh; the other must not, nor must the people go up with him."

³ Moses went and told the people all Yahweh's words and all the laws, and all the people answered with one voice, "All the words Yahweh has spoken we will do!" ⁴ Moses wrote all Yahweh's words and, early next morning, he built an altar at the foot of the mountain, with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵ He sent young Israelites to give high-offerings and to slaughter oxen to Yahweh as peace offerings. ⁶ Moses took half the blood and put it in basins and half he cast on the altar; ⁷ then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the listening people, and they said, "We will do all that

EXODUS 24

- ¹ The narrative of this chapter combines two accounts of the Covenant. **1:** vv. 1-2 & 9-11, in which the Covenant is sealed with a meal. **2:** vv. 3-8, in which the essential element is the sprinkling of the blood over the altar and people. A third account appears in Ch. 34.
- ² The verb, 'approach', is the perfect tense with a *vav* consecutive; it and the preceding perfect tense follow the imperative, and so have either a force of instruction, or, as taken here, is the equivalent of an imperfect tense (of permission).
- ³ The 'words', alone mentioned in what follows, refer to the Decalogue (see 20:1ff), called the 'Book of the Covenant' in v. 7.
- ⁴ The participation of all the people is symbolised by twelve 'pillars', one for each tribe.
- ⁵ The term, 'high-offerings' translates עֹלָה, connecting it to a name for God (עֶלְיֹון - 'Most High God') - the offering was for God alone.
- ⁶ The people and God will be united by blood: half was spattered on the altar and the other half spattered on/toward the people (v. 8).
- ⁷ The 'Book' would be the scroll just written containing the laws of Chs 20-23; on the basis of this scroll, the Covenant would be concluded here.

יְהוָה נִעְשָׂה וְנִשְׁמַע: ^ח וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַדָּם וַיִּזְרֹק
עַל־הָעָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה דַם־הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת יְהוָה
עִמָּכֶם עַל כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה:

^ט וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן נָדָב וַאֲבִיהוּא וְשִׁבְעִים מִזִּקְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^י וַיֵּרְאוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַתַּחַת רַגְלָיו
כְּמַעֲשֵׂה לַבִּנְתַּת הַסַּפִּיר וּכְעֶצֶם הַשָּׁמַיִם לְטָהָר: ^{יא} וְאֵל־
אַצִּילִי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא שָׁלַח יָדוֹ וַיַּחֲזֹז אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים
וַיֹּאכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתּוּ: {ס}

^{יב} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה עֲלֵה אֵלַי הַהָרָה וְהִיָּה־שָׁם
וְאֶתְּנָה לְךָ אֶת־לְחַת הָאֲבָן וְהַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוָה אֲשֶׁר
כָּתַבְתִּי לְהוֹרֹתָם: ^{יג} וַיָּקָם מֹשֶׁה וַיהוֹשֻׁעַ מִשְׁרָתוֹ וַיַּעַל
מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָר הָאֱלֹהִים: ^{יד} וְאֵל־הַזִּקְנָיִם אָמַר שְׁבוּ־לָנוּ
בָּזֶה עַד אֲשֶׁר־נָשׁוּב אֵלֵיכֶם וְהָיָה אַהֲרֹן וְחוּר עִמָּכֶם
מִי־בַעַל דְּבָרִים יִגֹּשׁ אֱלֹהִים:

Yahweh has decreed; we will obey.” ⁸ Then Moses took the blood, cast it on the people, and said, “See the blood of the Covenant that Yahweh has made with you, containing all these rules.”

⁹ Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel, ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel. Beneath his feet, there was something like a sapphire pavement, pure as the heavens themselves. ¹¹ He laid no hand on these notables of the Israelites; they gazed on God. They ate and they drank.

¹² Yahweh said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and stay there; I will give you the stone tablets, the law and the commandments, which I have written to teach them.” ¹³ Moses set out with his servant Joshua and they went up the Mountain of God. ¹⁴ He said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we come back to you; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them.”

⁸ Moses, being the mediator between God and the people, symbolically unites them by sprinkling the blood of the same victims first on the altar, which represents Yahweh, and then on the people.

⁹ The people did not take part, but were represented by the seventy ‘elders’, or chief men. Moses, the Covenant mediator, was accompanied by the priestly family, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu (6:14–25, Lv 10:1–3).

¹⁰ The leaders did not see God directly; they saw only the lower part of the heavenly throne-room – the sapphire pavement (the firmament), above which Yahweh was enthroned (compare Is 6:1, Ezk 1:1, 26–28). An alternative for ‘sapphire’ is ‘lapis lazuli’.

¹¹ Unharmful by divine holiness (see 3:6), the leaders partook of the covenant meal (18:12).

¹² Some scholars assign v. 12–15^a and 18^b seem to the Elohistic tradition and vv. 15^b–18^a (a parallel account) to the Priestly tradition.

¹³ ‘They went up’ follows the LXX (ἀνέβησαν); the MT reads ‘Moses went up’.

¹⁴ This verse sets the stage for the episode of Ch. 32.

¹⁵ וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָהָר וַיִּכַּס הָעָנָן אֶת־הָהָר: ¹⁶ וַיֵּשְׁכֹן
 כְּבוֹד־יְהוָה עַל־הָר סִינַי וַיִּכַּסְהוּ הָעָנָן שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים
 וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִתּוֹךְ הָעָנָן: ¹⁷ וַיִּמְרָא
 כְּבוֹד יְהוָה כְּאֵשׁ אֹכֶלֶת בְּרֹאשׁ הָהָר לְעֵינֵי בְנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל: ¹⁸ וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה בְּתוֹךְ הָעָנָן וַיַּעַל אֶל־הָהָר וַיְהִי
 מֹשֶׁה בָּהָר אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה:
 {פ}

¹⁵ Then Moses went up the mountain and the cloud covered the
 mountain; ¹⁶ the glory of Yahweh settled on Mount Sinai; for six
 days, the cloud covered it; on the seventh day, he called to Moses out
 of the cloud. ¹⁷ To the eyes of the Israelites, the glory of Yahweh was
 like a devouring fire on the mountaintop. ¹⁸ Moses entered the cloud.
 He went up the mountain and stayed there for forty days and forty
 nights.

¹⁵ The *NJB* lacks the conjunctions ‘then’ and ‘and’; here, we follow the *NRSV*.

¹⁶ The ‘glory of Yahweh’ is the manifestation of God’s presence (see #13:22); it is a fire clearly distinguished (here and in 40:34–35) from the cloud that accompanies and surrounds it. The fire and the cloud are images borrowed from the great theophanies, which occur with a thunderstorm for their setting (see footnote to 19:16) but they have a more profound significance: the brilliant light (which needs no storm for its appearance, 33:22, and which later leaves its glow on the face of Moses, 34:29) stands for God’s unapproachable majesty. It fills the newly erected Tent (40:34–35) and later takes possession of Solomon’s Temple (1K 8:10–11). On the eve of the destruction of Jerusalem, Ezekiel sees the glory leaving the city (Ezk 9:3, 10:4, 18–19, 11:22–23); later, he sees it returning to the new Temple (Ezk 43:1ff); for Ezekiel, the ‘glory’ assumes a shining, human form (Ezk 1:26–28). In other texts, particularly the Psalms, the ‘glory of Yahweh’ simply expresses God’s majesty and the honour due to him, often with eschatological overtones; or else, it indicates God’s miraculous power (15:7; cf. the ‘glory of Jesus’ in Jn 2:11 & 11:40).

¹⁷ In place of ‘eyes of the’, here following the *MT*, the *NJB* has ‘watching’.

¹⁸ Compare the latter part of this verse with the forty days’ journey of Elijah to Sinai (1K 19:8) and Christ’s forty days in the desert (Mt 4:2ff).

שמות פרק כה

EXODUS 25

א וידבר יהוה אל-משה לאמר: ב דבר אל-בני ישראל ויקחו-לי תרומה מאת כל-איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את-תרומתי: ג וזאת התרומה אשר תקחו מאתם זהב וכסף ונחשת: ד ותכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני ושש ועזים: ה ועלת אילם מאדמים ועלת תחשים ועצי שטים: ו שמן למאור בשמים לשמן המשחה ולקטרת הסמים: ז אבני-שפה ואבני מלאים לאפוד ולחשן: ח ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי

¹ Yahweh spoke to Moses: ² "Tell the Israelites to set aside an offering for me; you shall accept this offering from all whose heart prompts them to give it. ³ You shall accept from them the following offerings: gold, silver and bronze; ⁴ blue, purple and scarlet yarns, fine linen, goats' hair; ⁵ rams' skins dyed red, fine leather, acacia wood; ⁶ oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for fragrant incense; ⁷ onyx stones and gems to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. ⁸ Make me a sanctuary so that I may reside among them. ⁹ You will make it

EXODUS 25

- ¹ When the text uses the formula, "Yahweh spoke to Moses," it is asserting the divine authority behind the religious institutions of Israel.
- ² The 'offering' (תרומה) is perhaps better understood as a 'contribution' (as NJB), since it was a freewill offering; here, we follow the NRSV & NETB. There is some question about the etymology of the word: the traditional meaning of 'heave-offering' derives from the idea of 'elevation', a root meaning 'to be high' lying behind the word.
- ³ The pronoun 'you' is here plural.
- ⁴ The 'blue' refers to dye made from shellfish: it has a dark blue or purple, almost violet colour; no significance for the colour is attached. Likewise, 'purple' dye was imported from Phoenicia, where it was harvested from the shellfish or snail; it is a deep purple-red colour. 'Scarlet' was made from the eggs and bodies of the worm *coccus ilicus*, which is found with the holly plant – so Hebrew 'worm of brilliance'; the powder made from the dried maggots produces a bright red-yellow colour
- ⁵ The phrase 'fine leather' (תחשים) literally translates as 'Tahash skin'; the precise meaning is uncertain (the WEBBE has 'sea cow hide'). The Arabic *tuhās* or *duhas* is a dolphin, and so some think the porpoise is meant – something like a dolphin or porpoise (cf. NASB), which are common in the Red Sea; their skins are used for clothing by the Bedouin.
- ⁶ The NJB lacks 'for' before 'fragrant', here following the NRSV & NETB.
- ⁷ The NJB has 'pectoral' in place of 'breastplate', here following the NRSV & NETB.
- ⁸ The MT opens with, "They will make me..." Following the LXX & Peshitta, singulars are also corrected to plurals in vv. 9, 10 & 19.
- ⁹ The expression 'the design of the Tabernacle' (תבנית המשכן) has been the source of much inquiry; the word rendered 'design' is related to the verb 'to build'; it suggests a model. Here, Moses is being shown something on the mountain that should be the pattern of the earthly sanctuary.

בְּתוֹכָם: ט כָּל אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מֵרָאָה אוֹתָךְ אֶת תְּבִנֹת
הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֵת תְּבִנֹת כָּל־כֵּלָיו וְכֵן תַּעֲשֶׂה: {ס}

י וַעֲשׂוּ אֲרוֹן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים אֲמָתִים וַחֲצִי אַרְכּוֹ וְאִמָּה
וַחֲצִי רָחְבּוֹ וְאִמָּה וַחֲצִי קִמְתּוֹ: יא וְצִפִּיתָ אוֹתוֹ זָהָב
טָהוֹר מִבַּיִת וּמִחוּץ תִּצְפֹּנוּ וַעֲשִׂיתָ עָלָיו זֶרֶזָהָב סָבִיב:
יב וְיִצְקָתָ לוֹ אַרְבַּע טַבַּעֲתֵי זָהָב וְנִתְּתָה עַל אַרְבַּע
פְּעֻמָּתָיו וְשִׁתִּי טַבַּעֲתֵי עַל־צִלְעוֹ הָאַחַת וְשִׁתִּי טַבַּעֲתֵי
עַל־צִלְעוֹ הַשֵּׁנִית: יג וַעֲשִׂיתָ בְּדֵי עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וְצִפִּיתָ
אוֹתָם זָהָב: יד וְהִבַּאתָ אֶת־הַבָּדִים בְּטַבַּעֲתֵי עַל צִלְעֹת
הָאֲרוֹן לִשְׂאת אֶת־הָאֲרוֹן בָּהֶם: טו בְּטַבַּעֲתֵי הָאֲרוֹן יִהְיוּ
הַבָּדִים לֹא יִסָּרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ: טז וְנִתְּתָה אֶל־הָאֲרוֹן אֶת הָעֵדוּת
אֲשֶׁר אֶתֵּן אֵלֶיךָ:

all according to the design of the Tabernacle and the design for its furnishings that I shall now show you.

¹⁰ “You are to make me an ark of acacia wood, two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits high.

¹¹ You are to plate it, inside and out, with pure gold, and decorate it all round with a gold moulding. ¹² You will cast four gold rings for the Ark and fix them to its four feet: two rings on one side and two rings on the other. ¹³ You will also make poles of acacia wood plated with gold ¹⁴ and pass the poles through the rings on the sides of the Ark, in order to carry the Ark. ¹⁵ The poles must remain in the rings of the Ark and not be withdrawn. ¹⁶ Inside the Ark, you will place the Covenant that I shall give you.

¹⁰ The Ark (אֲרוֹן) was a rectangular chest (115cm x 70cm x 70cm), carried on wooden poles. For its history, see especially Jos 3:3 & 6:4ff, 1S 4–6, 2S 6 and 1K 8:1–9. It disappeared in the sack of Jerusalem (or perhaps during Manasseh’s wicked reign) and was never remade (see Jr 3:16). Constructed by Moses himself, according to tradition (Dt 10:3), it was stationed at Shiloh during the days of the tribal confederacy (1S 3–6) and was eventually brought by David to Jerusalem (2S 6). A ‘cubit’ is the length from the tip of the middle finger to the elbow on a man’s arm, or about 46 centimetres.

¹¹ The word זָרָה (‘moulding’) is used only in Exodus and seems to describe something on the order of a crown moulding, an ornamental border running at the top of the chest on all four sides; there is no indication of its appearance or function.

¹² The NJB has ‘supports’ in place of ‘feet’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹³ The NJB has ‘shafts’ in place of ‘poles’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁴ In place of ‘in order to carry the Ark’, here following NETB, the NJB has ‘to carry the Ark by these’.

¹⁵ The NRSV has ‘taken from it’ in place of ‘withdrawn’, here following the NJB.

¹⁶ ‘Covenant’ translates עֵדוּת which, properly speaking, following other Middle Eastern parallels, means the stipulations in a treaty, imposed by an overlord on his vassal. Here, the ‘Covenant’ is the Decalogue, written on stone tablets sometimes called ‘tablets of the Covenant’ (31:18, 32:15, 34:29). Consequently, the Ark is called the ‘Ark of the Covenant’ (25:22, 26:33, 40:21).

יז וַעֲשִׂיתָ כִּפְּרֶת זָהָב טְהוֹר אַמְתִּים וְחָצִי אַרְפֶּה וְאַמָּה
וְחָצִי רַחְבָּהּ: יח וַעֲשִׂיתָ שְׁנַיִם כְּרֻבִּים זָהָב מְקֻשָּׁה
תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם מִשְׁנֵי קְצוֹת הַכִּפְּרֶת: יט וַעֲשֶׂה כְרוֹב
אֶחָד מְקַצֵּה מִזֶּה וְכְרוֹב־אֶחָד מְקַצֵּה מִזֶּה מִן־הַכִּפְּרֶת
תַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הַכְּרֻבִּים עַל־שְׁנֵי קְצוֹתָיו: כ וְהָיוּ הַכְּרֻבִּים
פְּרָשֵׁי כְנָפַיִם לְמַעַל סִכְכִּים בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם עַל־הַכִּפְּרֶת
וּפְנֵיהֶם אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו אֶל־הַכִּפְּרֶת יִהְיוּ פְנֵי הַכְּרֻבִּים:
כא וְנָתַתָּ אֶת־הַכִּפְּרֶת עַל־הָאֹרֶן מִלְּמַעַל וְאֶל־הָאֹרֶן
תָּתַן אֶת־הָעֵדֻת אֲשֶׁר אֶתָּן אֵלֶיךָ: כב וְנוֹעַדְתִּי לָךְ שָׁם
וְדִבַּרְתִּי אִתָּךְ מֵעַל הַכִּפְּרֶת מִבֵּין שְׁנֵי הַכְּרֻבִּים אֲשֶׁר

17 “Then you are to make a mercy seat, of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. 18 For the two ends of the mercy seat, you are to make two golden Cherubim; you are to make them of beaten gold. 19 Make one cherub for one end and one for the other; put them at the two ends of the mercy seat, making one piece with it. 20 The Cherubim are to have their wings spread upwards so that they overshadow the mercy seat. They must face one another, their faces towards the mercy seat. 21 You must put the mercy seat on top of the Ark, and in the Ark you must put the Covenant that I shall give you. 22 There I will meet you; there, from above the mercy seat,

17 ‘Mercy seat’ is the accepted translation of כִּפְּרֶת, from the root ‘to cover’ (but also, ‘to perform the atonement’, or ‘to obliterate’).

18 The word ‘Cherubim’ (כְּרֻבִּים) corresponds to the Babylonian ‘karibu’: half-human, half-animal spirits guarding the gates of temples and palaces. In Biblical descriptions and Middle Eastern iconography, the ‘great winged creatures’ were winged sphinxes. Winged creatures played no part in the cult in the desert, and do not seem to occur in the cult of Yahweh earlier than the stay of the Ark at Shiloh, where Yahweh was entitled, ‘He who is enthroned on the great winged creatures’ (1S 4:4, 2S 6:2, and see 2K 19:15, Ps 80:1 & 99:1) and is said to ‘ride on the winged creatures’ (2S 22:11, and see Ps 18:10). In Solomon’s Temple, they formed a frame for the Ark and disappeared when the Ark disappeared. In the post-exilic Temple, two little figures of winged creatures were attached to the mercy seat (see #17).

19 The cherubim were to be permanently fastened to the mercy seat, and not separated.

20 ‘Overshadow’ here has the sense of guarding (see 1K 8:7, 1Ch 28:18; see also the account in Gn 3:24). The cherubim then signify two things here: by their outstretched wings they form the throne of God who sits above the Ark (with the Law under his feet), and by their overshadowing and guarding they signify this as the place of atonement where people must find propitiation to commune with God. Until then, they are barred from his presence.

21 The NJB has ‘Testimony’ here in place of ‘Covenant’.

22 Here then is the main point of the Ark of the Covenant, and the main point of all worship – meeting with God through atonement. The text makes it clear that here God would meet with Moses (‘you’ is singular) and then he would speak to the people – he is the mediator of the covenant. The verb here is not the word that means ‘to meet by chance’ (as in 3:18), but ‘to meet’ by appointment for a purpose (וְנוֹעַדְתִּי).

עַל־אֲרוֹן הָעֵדֻת אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אֶצִּוֶה אוֹתָךְ אֶל־בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל: {פ}

כג וַעֲשִׂיתָ שֻׁלְחָן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים אֲמָתִים אַרְבֹּו וְאַמָּה רֶחֱבֹו
וְאַמָּה וַחֲצִי קִמָּתוֹ: כד וְצִפִּיתָ אוֹתוֹ זָהָב טָהוֹר וְעָשִׂיתָ
לֹו זֶרֶזָהָב סָבִיב: כה וְעָשִׂיתָ לֹו מִסְגֶּרֶת טֶפַח סָבִיב
וְעָשִׂיתָ זֶרֶזָהָב לְמִסְגֶּרֶתוֹ סָבִיב: כו וְעָשִׂיתָ לֹו אַרְבַּע
טִבְעֹת זָהָב וְנָתַתָּ אֶת־הַטִּבְעֹת עַל אַרְבַּע הַפָּאֵת
אֲשֶׁר לְאַרְבַּע רַגְלָיו: כז לַעֲמֹת הַמִּסְגֶּרֶת תִּהְיֶין
הַטִּבְעֹת לְבָתִּים לְבָדִים לְשֹׂאת אֶת־הַשֻּׁלְחָן:
כח וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַבָּדִים עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וְצִפִּיתָ אוֹתָם זָהָב
וְנִשְׂאֲבָם אֶת־הַשֻּׁלְחָן: כט וְעָשִׂיתָ קְעָרָתָיו וְכַפָּתָיו

from between the two Cherubim that are on the Ark of the Covenant,
I shall give you all my commands for the Israelites.

²³ “You are to make a table of acacia wood, two cubits long, one cubit
wide, and one and a half cubits high. ²⁴ You are to plate it with pure
gold and make a gold moulding all round it. ²⁵ You are to fit it with
a rim, one hand’s breadth wide, and decorate this rim with a golden
moulding. ²⁶ You are to make for it four gold rings and fix these at
the four corners where the four legs are. ²⁷ The rings must be close to
the rim: places for the poles for carrying the table. ²⁸ You are to make
the shafts of acacia wood and plate them with gold. The table is to be
carried by these. ²⁹ You are to make dishes for it, cups for it, jars for

²³ The ‘Table of Bread’ was to be a standing acknowledgment that Yahweh was the giver of daily bread; it was called the ‘*bread of the Presence*’ (v. 30) because it was set out in his presence. The theology of this is that God provides; and the practice of this is that the people must provide for constant thanks. So, if the Ark spoke of communion through propitiation, the table speaks of dedicatory gratitude.

²⁴ The 1st instance of ‘gold’ is an adverbial accusative of material.

²⁵ There is some debate as to the meaning of מִסְגֶּרֶת (‘rim’ – here following the NRSV; the NJB has ‘struts’ and NETB has ‘frame’). This does not seem to be a natural part of the table and its legs; the drawing on the Arch of Titus shows two cross-stays in the space between the legs, about halfway up. It might have been nearer the top, but the drawing of the table from the arch shows it half-way up. This frame was then decorated with the moulding as well.

²⁶ The literal translation of ‘fix’ is ‘give’.

²⁷ The literal translation of ‘places’ is ‘houses’; perhaps ‘*housings*’ would be a better translation.

²⁸ The verb ‘to be carried’ is the Niphal perfect with the *vav* consecutive, showing here the intended result: ‘so that (the table) might be carried (by them)’. The noun, ‘the table’, is introduced by what looks like the sign of the accusative, but here it serves to introduce or emphasise the nominative

²⁹ The suffixes on the four nouns (dishes, cups, jars & bowls) are genitives indicating the direct object – plates for it, i.e., the table. It is also possible to take them simply as possessive genitives.

וְקִשּׁוֹתָיו וּמִנְקִיתָיו אֲשֶׁר יִסֹּךְ בָּהֶן זָהָב טָהוֹר תַּעֲשֶׂה
אֹתָם: ^ל וְנָתַתָּ עָלֶיהֶן שֶׁלֶחֶן לֶחֶם פָּנִים לִפְנֵי תַמִּיד: {פ}

^{לא} וְעָשִׂיתָ מִנֶּרֶת זָהָב טָהוֹר מְקֻשָּׁה תַּעֲשֶׂה הַמִּנּוֹרָה
יִרְכָּה וְקֹנָה גְבִיעֶיהָ בַּפִּתְרִיהָ וּפְרָחֶיהָ מִמֶּנָּה יִהְיוּ:
^{לב} וְשֵׁשׁ קָנִים יֵצְאוּ מִצְדֶּיהָ שְׁלֹשָׁה קָנֵי מִנֶּרֶת
מִצְדֶּה הָאֶחָד וְשְׁלֹשָׁה קָנֵי מִנֶּרֶת מִצְדֶּה הַשֵּׁנִי:
^{לג} שְׁלֹשָׁה גְבָעִים מְשֻׁקָּדִים בַּקֶּנֶה הָאֶחָד בַּפֶּתֶר וּפְרָח
וְשְׁלֹשָׁה גְבָעִים מְשֻׁקָּדִים בַּקֶּנֶה הָאֶחָד בַּפֶּתֶר וּפְרָח
בֶּן לְשֵׁשֶׁת הַקָּנִים הַיֵּצְאוּ מִן־הַמִּנּוֹרָה: ^{לד} וּבַמִּנּוֹרָה
אַרְבָּעָה גְבָעִים מְשֻׁקָּדִים בַּפִּתְרִיהָ וּפְרָחֶיהָ: ^{לה} וּכְפֶתֶר
תַּחַת שְׁנֵי הַקָּנִים מִמֶּנָּה וּכְפֶתֶר תַּחַת שְׁנֵי הַקָּנִים
מִמֶּנָּה וּכְפֶתֶר תַּחַת־שְׁנֵי הַקָּנִים מִמֶּנָּה לְשֵׁשֶׁת הַקָּנִים
הַיֵּצְאוּ מִן־הַמִּנּוֹרָה: ^{לו} כַּפִּתְרֵיהֶם וְקִנְתָּם מִמֶּנָּה יִהְיוּ
כֻּלָּהּ מְקֻשָּׁה אַחַת זָהָב טָהוֹר: ^{לז} וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת־נִרְתֵּיהָ
שְׁבָעָה וְהָעֵלָה אֶת־נִרְתֵּיהָ וְהָאִיר עַל־עֵבֶר פָּנֶיהָ:

it and libation bowls for it; you are to make these of pure gold. ³⁰ On the table, before me, you must place the bread of the Presence.

³¹ “You are to make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand must be of beaten gold; its base, stem, cups, buds, and petals must be one piece with it. ³² Six branches must extend from its sides: three from one side and three from the other. ³³ One branch is to carry three cups made like almond flowers, each with its bud and petals; the next branch, too, is to carry three cups made like almond flowers, each with its bud and petals, and so for all six branches extending from the lampstand. ³⁴ On the lampstand shall be four cups made like almond flowers, each with its bud and petals, ³⁵ thus: one bud under the first two branches extending from the lampstand, one under the next pair, one under the last pair, for the six branches extending from the lampstand. ³⁶ The buds and the branches must be of one piece with it, and the whole made from one piece of beaten gold. ³⁷ You are

³⁰ ‘Bread of the Presence’ literally translates as ‘loves of the face’ (i.e. Yahweh’s personal loaves, on which see Lv 24:5–9, 1S 21:5).

³¹ Clearly the point here is to provide light in the tent for access to God. He provided for his worshipers a light for the way to God, but he also wanted them to provide oil for the lamp to ensure that the light would not go out.

³² In place of ‘its sides’, here following the NJB, NETB has ‘sides of the lampstand’ and the NRSV adds 2 instances of this noun later in the sentence.

³³ In place of ‘the next’, here following NETB, the MT repeats ‘one’; ‘the one ... the one’ means ‘one ... next’ in the distributive sense.

³⁴ After ‘lampstand’, the NRSV & NJB add ‘itself’; here, we follow NETB.

³⁵ Throughout this paragraph, NETB uses ‘bud’ in place of ‘calyx’, here following the NJB.

³⁶ The NJB has ‘lampstand’ in place of ‘it’, here following the MT & NRSV.

³⁷ The word נִרְתִּיהָ (‘lamps’) probably refers to the small saucer-like pottery lamps that are made very simply with the rim pinched over to form a place to lay the wick; the bowl is then filled with olive oil as fuel.

לח ומלקחיה ומחתתיה זהב טהור: ^{לט} כפר זהב טהור
יעשה אתה את כל־הכלים האלה: ^מ וראה ועשה
בתבניתם אשר־אתה מראה בהר:
{ס}

to make its seven lamps and set them so that they give light to the
area in front of it. ³⁸ The snuffers and trays must be of pure gold. ³⁹ It,
and all these utensils, shall be made from a talent of pure gold. ⁴⁰ Be
sure to make them after the pattern shown to you on the mountain.

³⁸ 'Snuffers' refers to something like small tongs or tweezers used to pull up and trim the wicks; 'trays' refers to fire-pans or censers.

³⁹ The amount of gold required is huge – over 30 Kg (965 Troy ounces)!

⁴⁰ The ancients believed that earthly temples and their cultic equipment were made according to the 'pattern' or prototype of heavenly models (v. 9, 26:30, 27:8).

EXODUS 26

שמות פרק כו

א וְאֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן תַּעֲשֶׂה עֹשֶׂר יְרִיעֹת שֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזֹר וּתְכֵלֶת
וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתִלְעַת שְׁנֵי כִרְבִּים מַעֲשֶׂה חֹשֶׁב תַּעֲשֶׂה
אֹתָם: ב אֶרְדָּא הִירִיעָה הָאֶחָת שְׁמֹנֶה וְעֶשְׂרִים בְּאַמָּה
וְרֹחַב אַרְבַּע בְּאַמָּה הִירִיעָה הָאֶחָת מִדָּה אֶחָת לְכָל־
הִירִיעֹת: ג חֲמֵשׁ הִירִיעֹת תַּהְיֶינָן חִבְרֹת אִשָּׁה אֶל־
אֶחָתָהּ וְחֲמֵשׁ יְרִיעֹת חִבְרֹת אִשָּׁה אֶל־אֶחָתָהּ:
ד וְעָשִׂיתָ לָלֶאֱת תְּכֵלֶת עַל שִׁפְת הִירִיעָה הָאֶחָת
מִקְצֶה בַּחֲבֵרֶת וְכֵן תַּעֲשֶׂה בְּשִׁפְת הִירִיעָה הַקִּיצוֹנָה
בַּמַּחְבֶּרֶת הַשְּׁנִיָּת: ה חֲמִשִּׁים לָלֶאֱת תַּעֲשֶׂה בִירִיעָה
הָאֶחָת וְחֲמִשִּׁים לָלֶאֱת תַּעֲשֶׂה בְּקֶצֶה הִירִיעָה אֲשֶׁר
בַּמַּחְבֶּרֶת הַשְּׁנִיָּת מִקְבִּילֹת הַלָּלֶאֱת אִשָּׁה אֶל־
אֶחָתָהּ: ו וְעָשִׂיתָ חֲמִשִּׁים קְרָסִי זָהָב וְחִבְרַתְּ אֶת־
הִירִיעֹת אִשָּׁה אֶל־אֶחָתָהּ בְּקְרָסִים וְהָיָה הַמִּשְׁכָּן
אַחָד:

¹ “Moreover, the Dwelling you are to make with ten curtains: of finely woven linen, of blue material, purple shade and crimson, and of scarlet stuffs; you are to have these curtains finely brocaded with Cherubim. ² The length of each curtain is to be twenty-eight cubits, the width of each curtain is to be four cubits; all the curtains shall be of the same size. ³ Five of the curtains must be coupled together, one to another and the other five shall be coupled together. ⁴ You must attach loops of blue material to the border of the last curtain in one set, and do the same for the border of the last curtain in the other set. ⁵ You are to put fifty loops on the first curtain and, matching them one by one, fifty loops on the border of the last curtain in the second set; ⁶ and you are to make fifty gold clasps and couple the curtains together with the clasps. In this way the Dwelling will be a unified whole.

EXODUS 26

- ¹ ‘Dwelling’ (מִשְׁכָּן) is the word proper for the sanctuary in the desert; it is normally used without further qualification, though ‘Dwelling of the Covenant’ (see #25:16) or ‘Dwelling of the Tent of Meeting’ is sometimes found. The description, though hard to grasp in detail, is of a collapsible sanctuary appropriate to tribal movements of the nomadic period.
- ² In place of ‘each curtain’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has ‘a single sheet’, and omits the 2nd occurrence. A cubit is the length from the tip of the middle finger to the elbow on a man’s arm, or about 46 centimetres.
- ³ The literal translation of ‘one to another’ is ‘a woman to her sister’ (in Hebrew, ‘curtain’ is a feminine noun).
- ⁴ The NJB has ‘purple stuffs’ in place of ‘blue material’, here following the NRSV.
- ⁵ See #3 on the literal translation of the phrase ‘one by one’.
- ⁶ So, two great hangings form a roof for the Dwelling; this covering has another of stronger material (vv. 7–13), and yet another (v. 14).

^ז וַעֲשִׂיתָ יְרִיעֹת עֲזִים לְאַהֲלֵי עַל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן עֲשִׂיתָ עֲשָׂרָה יְרִיעֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם: ^ח אַרְבָּע הַיְרִיעָה הָאֶחָת שְׁלֹשִׁים בְּאַמָּה וְרֹחֵב אַרְבַּע בְּאַמָּה הַיְרִיעָה הָאֶחָת מִדָּה אֶחָת לַעֲשֹׂתִי עֲשָׂרָה יְרִיעֹת: ^ט וְחִבַּרְתָּ אֶת־חֲמֵשׁ הַיְרִיעֹת לְבָד וְאֶת־שֵׁשׁ הַיְרִיעֹת לְבָד וְכִפַּלְתָּ אֶת־הַיְרִיעָה הַשְּׁשִׁית אֶל־מֹול פְּנֵי הָאֹהֶל: ^י וַעֲשִׂיתָ חֲמִשִּׁים לִלְאֹת עַל שְׂפַת הַיְרִיעָה הָאֶחָת הַקִּיצָנָה בַּחֲבֵרֶת וְחֲמִשִּׁים לִלְאֹת עַל שְׂפַת הַיְרִיעָה הַחֲבֵרֶת הַשְּׁנִיָּת: ^{יא} וַעֲשִׂיתָ קְרָסִי נְחֹשֶׁת חֲמִשִּׁים וְהִבַּאתָ אֶת־הַקְּרָסִים בְּלִלְאֹת וְחִבַּרְתָּ אֶת־הָאֹהֶל וְהָיָה אֶחָד: ^{יב} וְסִרַח הָעֵדֹף בִּירִיעֹת הָאֹהֶל חֲצִי הַיְרִיעָה הָעֹדֶפֶת תִּסְרַח עַל אַחֲרֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן: ^{יג} וְהָאֹמָה מִזֶּה וְהָאֹמָה מִזֶּה בְּעֵדֹף בְּאַרְבָּע יְרִיעֹת הָאֹהֶל יִהְיֶה סְרוּחַ עַל־צִדֵּי

⁷ “You are to make curtains of goats’ hair to form a tent over the Dwelling; you will make eleven of these curtains. ⁸ The length of a single curtain is to be thirty cubits, the width of each curtain four cubits, the eleven curtains to be all of the same size. ⁹ You must couple five of these curtains together into one set, and six curtains into another set; the sixth curtain you will fold double over the front of the tent. ¹⁰ You must attach fifty loops to the border of the last curtain in one set, and do the same for the border of the last curtain in the second set. ¹¹ You must make fifty bronze clasps and put them into the loops, to draw the tent together and make it a unified whole. ¹² “The half of the extra curtain of the tent left overhanging is to hang over the back of the Dwelling. ¹³ The extra cubit on one side and the cubit on the other side along the length of the tent curtains shall hang

⁷ There were two sets of curtains and two sets of coverings that went over the wood building to make the Tabernacle or Dwelling Place. From inside, the curtains of fine linen described above could only be seen by the priests; above that will be the curtain of goats’ hair. Then, over that were the coverings, an inner covering of rams’ skins dyed red, and an outer covering of fine leather. The movement is from the inside to the outside because it is God’s dwelling place; the approach of the worshiper would be the opposite.

⁸ The dimensions of these curtains were 13.7 × 1.7 metres.

⁹ The text seems to describe this part as being in front of the Tabernacle, hanging down to form a valence at the entrance.

¹⁰ This set of curtains will be drawn together with loops and clasp similar to the first set, described in vv. 5–6.

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘*unified whole*’ (here following the NJB – the NRSV has ‘*one whole*’) is ‘*one*’.

¹² The NRSV, translating this verse more literally, reads, “*The part that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remains, shall hang over the back of the Tabernacle.*”

¹³ To the north and to the south, since the tent curtains were thirty cubits long, there were ten cubits left over on each side; these covered the nine cubits of the curtains of the Tabernacle and also the bottom cubit of the boards, which the Tabernacle curtains did not suffice to cover.

הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִזֶּה וּמִזֶּה לְכַסְתּוֹ: י^ד וַעֲשִׂיתָ מִכְסֵּה לְאַהֲלֵי
עֶרְתָּ אֵילָם מְאֻדָּמִים וּמִכְסֵּה עֶרְתָּ תַּחְשִׁים
מִלִּמְעָלָה: {פ}

טו וַעֲשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַקְּרָשִׁים לַמִּשְׁכָּן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים עֲמֻדִים:
טז עֶשֶׂר אַמּוֹת אַרְבֶּה הַקֶּרֶשׁ וְאַמָּה וַחֲצִי הָאַמָּה רָחֵב
הַקֶּרֶשׁ הָאֶחָד: יז שְׁתֵּי יָדוֹת לַקֶּרֶשׁ הָאֶחָד מִשְׁלָבֶת
אִשָּׁה אֶל־אַחֲתָהּ בֵּן תַּעֲשֶׂה לְכֹל קְרָשֵׁי הַמִּשְׁכָּן:
יח וַעֲשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַקְּרָשִׁים לַמִּשְׁכָּן עֲשָׂרִים קֶרֶשׁ לַפָּאֵת
נִגְבָּה תִּימְנָה: יט וְאַרְבָּעִים אֲדָנִי־כֶסֶף תַּעֲשֶׂה תַּחַת
עֲשָׂרִים הַקֶּרֶשׁ שְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת־הַקֶּרֶשׁ הָאֶחָד לְשְׁתֵּי
יָדָיו וּשְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת־הַקֶּרֶשׁ הָאֶחָד לְשְׁתֵּי יָדָיו:
כ וּלְצֹלַע הַמִּשְׁכָּן הַשְּׁנִיָּת לַפָּאֵת צִפּוֹן עֲשָׂרִים קֶרֶשׁ:
כא וְאַרְבָּעִים אֲדָנִיהֶם כֶּסֶף שְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת הַקֶּרֶשׁ
הָאֶחָד וּשְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת הַקֶּרֶשׁ הָאֶחָד: כב וּלִירְכָתִי
הַמִּשְׁכָּן יָמָּה תַּעֲשֶׂה שֵׁשָׁה קְרָשִׁים: כג וּשְׁנֵי קְרָשִׁים

over the sides of the Dwelling as a covering for it. ¹⁴ “For the tent you will further make a covering of rams’ skin dyed red, and a covering of fine leather to spread over this.

¹⁵ “You are to make upright frames of acacia wood for the Dwelling. ¹⁶ Each frame is to be ten cubits in length and one and a half cubits in width. ¹⁷ Each frame must be fitted with twin pegs; for all the frames of the Dwelling, you must do this. ¹⁸ You are to make the frames for the Dwelling: twenty frames for the southern side, facing the south country. ¹⁹ You are to make forty silver sockets for putting under the twenty frames thus: two sockets under the first frame to receive its two pegs, and two sockets under another frame to receive its two pegs. ²⁰ The second side of the Dwelling, on the north, is to have twenty frames ²¹ supported by their forty silver sockets, two sockets under one frame and two sockets under the next frame. ²² For the back of the Dwelling, facing west, you must make six frames. ²³ You

¹⁴ See #25:5 on the meaning of the phrase ‘fine leather’.

¹⁵ ‘Frames’ (הַקְּרָשִׁים) could also be translated as ‘boards’ or ‘beams’.

¹⁶ The dimensions correspond to approximately 4.6 × 0.7 metres.

¹⁷ Each base must have had two mortises into which the ‘pegs’ (literally, ‘hands’) fitted at the foot of each frame.

¹⁸ The NRSV & NETB omit ‘facing the south country’, here following the MT & NJB.

¹⁹ In place of ‘sockets’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘bases’.

²⁰ In place of ‘second’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has ‘other’.

²¹ The NJB has ‘another’ in place of ‘the next’, here following the NRSV.

²² For ‘west’, one could also read ‘westward’ or ‘towards the sea’.

²³ The literal translation of ‘at the back’ is ‘on the two back sides’.

תַּעֲשֶׂה לַמִּקְצַעַת הַמִּשְׁכָּן בִּירְכָתַיִם: כִּד וַיְהִיו תְּאֵמָם מְלֻמָּטָה וַיַּחֲדּוּ יֵהִיו תְּמִים עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ אֶל־הַטֹּבַעַת הָאַחַת בֶּן יֵהִי לַשְּׁנֵיָהֶם לִשְׁנֵי הַמִּקְצַעַת יֵהִיו: כֵּה וַהֲיוּ שְׁמֹנֶה קְרָשִׁים וְאַדְנֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף שֶׁשָּׁה עֶשֶׂר אֲדָנִים שְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת הַקָּרֶשׁ הָאֶחָד וְשְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת הַקָּרֶשׁ הָאֶחָד:

כֹּו וַעֲשִׂיתָ בְּרִיחִם עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים חֲמֵשָׁה לְקָרְשֵׁי צֹלַע־הַמִּשְׁכָּן הָאֶחָד: כֹּו וְחֲמֵשָׁה בְּרִיחִם לְקָרְשֵׁי צֹלַע־הַמִּשְׁכָּן הַשֵּׁנִית וְחֲמֵשָׁה בְּרִיחִם לְקָרְשֵׁי צֹלַע הַמִּשְׁכָּן לִירְכָתַיִם יָמָה: כֵּה וְהַבְּרִיחַ הַתִּיכֹן בְּתוֹךְ הַקְּרָשִׁים מִבֶּרֶחַ מִן־הַקֶּצֶה אֶל־הַקֶּצֶה: כֵּט וְאֶת־הַקְּרָשִׁים תַּצְפֶּה זָהָב וְאֶת־טֹבַעְתֵּיהֶם תַּעֲשֶׂה זָהָב בְּתִים לְבְּרִיחִם וְצִפִּיתָ אֶת־הַבְּרִיחִם זָהָב: ל וְהִקַּמְתָּ אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן כַּמִּשְׁפָּטוֹ אֲשֶׁר הָרְאִיתָ בָּהָר: {ס}

לֹא וַעֲשִׂיתָ פָּרֹכֶת תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר מַעֲשֶׂה חֹשֶׁב יַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָהּ כְּרֻבִים: לֵב וְנָתַתָּהּ

are to make two frames for the corners at the back of the Dwelling.

²⁴ These must be coupled at the bottom, and right up to the top, to the level of the first ring; this for the two frames that must form the two corners. ²⁵ Thus, there will be eight frames with their sixteen silver sockets: two sockets under the first frame and two sockets under the next frame.

²⁶ “You are to make bars of acacia wood: five for the frames on one side of the Dwelling, ²⁷ five for the frames on the second side of the Dwelling, and five for the frames that form the west end of the Dwelling. ²⁸ The middle bar, fixed halfway up, is to run from end to end. ²⁹ You shall overlay the frames with gold, and with gold rings on them to take the bars, which you are to overlay with gold. ³⁰ This is how you are to erect the Dwelling according to the plan for it that was shown to you on the mountain.

³¹ “You are to make a veil of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and of finely woven linen; it shall be finely embroidered with Cherubim.

²⁴ The word here translated as ‘right’ is, in the MT, literally ‘perfect’, or, in the LXX (κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ) and Peshitta, ‘according to the same’.

²⁵ The NJB has ‘another’ in place of ‘the next’, here following the NRSV.

²⁶ In place of ‘bars’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘crossbars’.

²⁷ In place of ‘second’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has ‘other’.

²⁸ The NJB has ‘one end to the other’ in place of ‘end to end’, here following the NRSV.

²⁹ In place of ‘bars’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘crossbars’.

³⁰ The noun מִשְׁפָּט (‘plan’) is often translated ‘judgment’ or ‘decision’ in other contexts.

³¹ In place of ‘blue, purple and crimson’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘violet-purple, red-purple and crimson’.

אֹתָהּ עַל־אַרְבָּעָה עַמּוּדֵי שֹׁטִים מְצֻפִּים זָהָב וְוִיָּהֶם
 זָהָב עַל־אַרְבָּעָה אֲדָנֵי־כֶסֶף: ^{לג} וְנָתַתָּה אֶת־הַפָּרֹכֶת
 תַּחַת הַקָּרְסִים וְהִבֵּאתָ שָׁמָּה מִבֵּית לַפָּרֹכֶת אֶת אֲרוֹן
 הָעֵדוּת וְהִבְדִּילָהּ הַפָּרֹכֶת לָכֶם בֵּין הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּבֵין קֹדֶשׁ
 הַקִּדְשִׁים: ^{לד} וְנָתַתָּ אֶת־הַכִּפֹּרֶת עַל אֲרוֹן הָעֵדוּת
 בְּקֹדֶשׁ הַקִּדְשִׁים: ^{לה} וְשַׁמַּתָּ אֶת־הַשֻּׁלְחָן מִחוּץ לַפָּרֹכֶת
 וְאֶת־הַמִּנְרָה נֹכַח הַשֻּׁלְחָן עַל צֶלַע הַמִּשְׁכָּן תִּימָנָהּ
 וְהַשֻּׁלְחָן תִּתֵּן עַל־צֶלַע צָפוֹן: ^{לו} וְעָשִׂיתָ מִסָּךְ לַפֶּתַח
 הָאֹהֶל תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מְשֻׁזָּר
 מַעֲשֵׂה רֶקֶם: ^{לז} וְעָשִׂיתָ לַמִּסָּךְ חֲמִשָּׁה עַמּוּדֵי שֹׁטִים
 וְצִפִּיתָ אֹתָם זָהָב וְוִיָּהֶם זָהָב וְיָצַקְתָּ לָהֶם חֲמִשָּׁה אֲדָנֵי
 נְחֹשֶׁת: {ס}

³² You are to hang it on four posts of acacia plated with gold, fixed with gold hooks set in four silver sockets. ³³ You must hang the veil from the clasps and there behind the veil you must place the Ark of the Covenant, and the veil will serve you to separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy. ³⁴ The mercy seat you must put on the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place. ³⁵ The table you must set outside the veil, and the lampstand on the south side of the Dwelling, opposite the table. You must put the table on the north side. ³⁶ For the door of the Tent, you are to make a screen of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and finely woven linen, the work of a skilled weaver. ³⁷ For the screen, you are to make five posts of acacia plated with gold, with gold hooks; you are to cast five bronze sockets for them.

³² The NRSV has 'pillars' in place of 'posts', here following the NJB.

³³ The veil shut off the Holy of Holies, Yahweh's dwelling-place, from the worshippers. Only the High Priest entered this sanctuary, and then only once a year on the Day of Atonement (Lv 16, see Heb. 9:6-14). The same division between Holy Place and Holy of Holies existed in Solomon's Temple (1K 6:16) and the veil was also to be found in Herod's Temple (Mt 27:51ff).

³⁴ In place of 'mercy seat', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'propitiatory lid'.

³⁵ The literal translation of 'south side of the Dwelling' is 'the side of the Dwelling facing south'.

³⁶ See #31 on alternative translation of the colours listed here.

³⁷ In all the details of this chapter, the reader should pay attention to the overall message rather than engage in speculation concerning the symbolism of the details.

שמות פרק כז

EXODUS 27

א וַעֲשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים חֲמֵשׁ אַמּוֹת אָרְזָה
וְחֲמֵשׁ אַמּוֹת רֹחַב רְבֹועַ יְהִיָּה הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וּשְׁלֹשׁ אַמּוֹת
קִמְתּוֹ: ב וַעֲשִׂיתָ קַרְנֹתָיו עַל אַרְבַּע פְּנֵתָיו מִמָּנוֹ תְּהִיֵּין
קַרְנֹתָיו וְצִפִּיתָ אֹתוֹ נְחֹשֶׁת: ג וַעֲשִׂיתָ סִירְתּוֹ לְדַשְׁנוֹ
וְיָעִיֹ וּמִזְרָקָתּוֹ וּמִזְלָגָתּוֹ וּמַחְתָּתּוֹ לְכָל־כֵּלָיו תַּעֲשֶׂה
נְחֹשֶׁת: ד וַעֲשִׂיתָ לוֹ מִכְבָּר מַעֲשֶׂה רֶשֶׁת נְחֹשֶׁת
וְעִשִׂיתָ עַל־הָרֶשֶׁת אַרְבַּע טַבַּעַת נְחֹשֶׁת עַל אַרְבַּע
קְצוֹתָיו: ה וְנָתַתָּה אֹתָהּ תַּחַת כַּרְכָּב הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִלְמָטָה
וְהִיתָה הָרֶשֶׁת עַד חֲצֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: ו וַעֲשִׂיתָ בַדִּים לַמִּזְבֵּחַ
בְּדֵי עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וְצִפִּיתָ אֹתָם נְחֹשֶׁת: ז וְהוּבֵא אֶת־בְּדָיו
בְּטַבַּעַת וְהָיוּ הַבַּדִּים עַל־שְׁתֵּי צִלְעֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בְּשֵׁאת

¹ “You are to make to altar of acacia, five cubits long and five cubits wide, a square three cubits high. ² At its four corners, you are to put horns, the horns to be of one piece with it, plating it with bronze. ³ You are to make pans for it, for the ashes, shovels, sprinkling basins, hooks, fire pans; you must make all the vessels for the altar out of bronze. ⁴ You are also to make a grating for it of bronze network, and on the four corners of this, fix four bronze rings. ⁵ This grating you must set under the altar’s ledge, below, so that it comes halfway up the altar; ⁶ and for the altar, you are to make poles of acacia wood and plate them with bronze. ⁷ The poles are to be put through the rings, so that the poles are on either side of the altar, for carrying it.

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- ¹ This is the more important altar (~2.3×2.3×1.4 m), for the burnt offering (see #1K 8:64), as opposed to the altar of incense (30:1–10).
- ² The ‘horns’ jutted out from the four corners of the altar and were considered a particularly sacred part of it. Like the horns on the altar of incense (30:10), they were smeared with the blood of sacrifice (29:12). By laying hold of them, a criminal could put himself beyond the reach of punishment (1K 1:50, 2:28).
- ³ The word translated ‘the ashes’ literally means ‘its fat’, but sometimes reflects ‘fatty ashes’; the fat would run down and mix with the ashes, and this had to be collected and removed.
- ⁴ The noun מִכְבָּר (‘grating’) is related to the word that means a ‘sieve’; this formed a vertical support for the ledge, resting on the ground and supporting its outer edge.
- ⁵ The word translated ‘comes’ is the verb ‘to be’, here the perfect tense with the *vav* consecutive; it is ‘and it will be’ or ‘that it may be’, or here ‘that it may come’ halfway up.
- ⁶ The NJB has ‘shafts’ in place of ‘poles’, here following the NRSV & NETB.
- ⁷ The verb ‘put’ is the Hophal perfect with the *vav* consecutive: וְהוּבֵא, ‘and it will be brought’; the particle אֶת here introduces the subject of the passive verb (see a similar use in 21:28: ‘and its flesh will not be eaten’).

אֶתֹ: ^ח נָבֹב לַחַת תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר הָרָאָה אֶתֹ
בְּהָר בֶּן יַעֲשֹׁ: {ס}

^ט וַעֲשִׂיתָ אֶת חֲצֵר הַמִּשְׁכָּן לַפָּאֵת נֹגֵב־תִּימָנָה קִלְעִים
לְחֲצֵר שֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר מֵאָה בָּאֵמָה אֶרְדָּ לַפָּאֵה הָאֶחָת:
^י וְעַמֻּדָיו עֲשִׂיִּים וְאֲדָנִיָּהֶם עֲשִׂיִּים נְחֹשֶׁת וְוֵי הָעַמֻּדִים
וְחֻשְׁקֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף: ^{יא} וְכֵן לַפָּאֵת צִפּוֹן בָּאֶרְדָּ קִלְעִים
מֵאָה אֶרְדָּ וְעַמֻּדוֹ עֲשִׂיִּים וְאֲדָנִיָּהֶם עֲשִׂיִּים נְחֹשֶׁת וְוֵי
הָעַמֻּדִים וְחֻשְׁקֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף: ^{יב} וְרֹחֵב הַחֲצֵר לַפָּאֵתִים
קִלְעִים חֲמִשִּׁים אֵמָה עַמֻּדֵיהֶם עֲשִׂיִּים וְאֲדָנִיָּהֶם
עֲשִׂיִּים: ^{יג} וְרֹחֵב הַחֲצֵר לַפָּאֵת קִדְמָה מִזְרָחָה חֲמִשִּׁים
אֵמָה: ^{יד} וְחֲמֵשׁ עֲשָׂרָה אֵמָה קִלְעִים לַכֶּתֶף עַמֻּדֵיהֶם
שְׁלֹשָׁה וְאֲדָנִיָּהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה: ^{טו} וְלַכֶּתֶף הַשְּׂנִית חֲמֵשׁ
עֲשָׂרָה קִלְעִים עַמֻּדֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה וְאֲדָנִיָּהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה:

⁸ You are to make the altar hollow, of boards; you will make it as you were shown on the mountain.

⁹ “You are to make the court of the Dwelling. On the south side, the court’s hangings are to be of finely woven linen, a hundred cubits long for one side. ¹⁰ Its twenty bronze posts are to be set in twenty bronze bases with hooks and rods of silver. ¹¹ Also, for the north side there are to be hangings a hundred cubits long and twenty posts set in twenty bronze bases, with hooks and rods of silver. ¹² For the width of the court on the west side, there are to be fifty cubits of hangings, with ten posts set in ten bases; ¹³ the width of the court on the east side facing east is to be fifty cubits. ¹⁴ On one side there are to be fifteen cubits of hangings, with three posts set in three bases; ¹⁵ and on the other side there are to be fifteen cubits of hangings, with

⁸ Nothing is said about the top of the altar; some commentators suggest, in view of the previous instruction for making an altar out of earth and stone, that when this one was to be used it would be filled up with dirt clods and the animal burnt on the top of that: if the animal was burnt inside it, the wood would quickly burn.

⁹ The ‘court’ was consecrated space around the sanctuary. This text describes it as enclosed by wooden uprights and curtaining; it corresponds to the courts of the Temple of Jerusalem (1K 6:36, Ezk 40, Mt 21:12ff, Ac 21:27–30).

¹⁰ In place of ‘bands’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘rods’; these bands have been thought by some to refer to connecting rods joining the tops of the posts, but it is more likely that they are bands or bind rings surrounding the posts at the base of the capitals (see 38:17).

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘so too’ (as NJB – the NRSV has ‘likewise’) is ‘and thus’.

¹² The NJB has ‘carried on’ in place of ‘with’, here following the NRSV.

¹³ In place of ‘on the east side facing east’, here following the MT, the NRSV has ‘on the front to the east’.

¹⁴ After ‘side’, the NJB adds ‘of the gate’; these words are parenthesised in NJPS, and are missing from the MT.

¹⁵ The literal translation of ‘side’ is ‘shoulder’ (as also in v. 14).

וּלְשַׁעַר הַחֲצֵר מִסָּדָן | עֲשָׂרִים אַמָּה תְּכַלֵּת וְאַרְגָּמָן
וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר מַעֲשֶׂה רֶקֶם עֲמֻדֵיהֶם
אַרְבָּעָה וְאַדְנִיָּהֶם אַרְבָּעָה: ¹⁶ כָּל-עֲמוּדֵי הַחֲצֵר סָבִיב
מִחֲשָׁקִים כֶּסֶף וְוִיָּהֶם כֶּסֶף וְאַדְנִיָּהֶם נְחֹשֶׁת: ¹⁷ י"ח אֲרָד
הַחֲצֵר מֵאָה בְּאַמָּה וְרֹחַב | חֲמִשִּׁים בְּחֲמִשִּׁים וְקָמָה
חֲמִשׁ אַמּוֹת שֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר וְאַדְנִיָּהֶם נְחֹשֶׁת: ¹⁸ לְכֹל כְּלֵי
הַמִּשְׁכָּן בְּכֹל עֲבֹדָתוֹ וְכָל-יִתְדֹתָיו וְכָל-יִתְדֹת הַחֲצֵר
נְחֹשֶׁת: {ס}

כִּי וְאַתָּה תִּצְוֶה | אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָקֻחוּ אֵלֶיךָ שֶׁמֶן זֵית
זָךְ כִּתִּית לַמָּאֹר לְהַעֲלֹת נֵר תָּמִיד: ¹⁹ כֹּא בְּאַהֲלֵ מוֹעֵד
מִחוּץ לַפָּרֹכֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל-הָעֵדוּת יַעֲרֹךְ אֹתוֹ אֶהְיֶן וּבְנֵי
מִעֶרֶב עַד-בֹּקֶר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתָם מֵאֵת
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס}

three posts set in three bases. ¹⁶ The gate to the court is to be a screen of twenty cubits, of blue, purple, and crimson, and finely woven linen, the work of an embroiderer, with four posts in four bases. ¹⁷ All the posts around the court are to be banded with silver; their hooks of silver, their bases of bronze. ¹⁸ The court is to be a hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide, and five cubits high, of finely woven linen, and their bases of bronze. ¹⁹ All the utensils for any use in the Dwelling, all its pegs and those of the court, must be bronze.

²⁰ "You are to order the Israelites to bring pure olive oil for the light, and to keep a flame burning there regularly. ²¹ In the Tent of Meeting, outside the veil that is before the Covenant, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening to morning before Yahweh. This is a perpetual decree for all generations of Israelites.

¹⁶ In place of 'blue, purple and crimson', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'violet-purple, red-purple and crimson'.

¹⁷ The NJB has 'connected with silver rods' in place of 'banded with silver', here following the NRSV.

¹⁸ The phrase 'fifty cubits' follows the Samaritan Pentateuch; the MT has 'fifty by fifty'. Before 'to be made', the NJB, following 38:16, adds 'all the hangings are'.

¹⁹ Though the court may not interest current readers very much, it did interest the Israelites. Here, the sacrifices were made, the choirs sang, the believers offered their praises, they had their sins forgiven, they came to pray, they appeared on the holy days, and they heard from God. It was sacred because God met them there; they left the 'world', so to speak, and came into his presence.

²⁰ The lamp (25:31–37, Lv 24:1–3) was to burn as a sign of God's presence. The word translated 'regularly' (as NRSV & NETB) can mean 'continually' (as WEBBE) or 'perpetually' (as NJB) but, in this context, as well as in the passages on the sacrifices, since each morning things were cleaned and restored, 'regularly' may be better.

²¹ The LXX has mistakenly rendered 'the Tent of Meeting' as 'the Tent of the Covenant' (τῇ σκηνῇ τοῦ μαρτυρίου).

שמות פרק כח

א וְאַתָּה הַקָּרֵב אֵלֶיךָ אֶת־אַהֲרֹן אָחִיךָ וְאֶת־בָּנָיו אֲתוֹ
מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְכַהֲנוֹ-לִי אֶהְרֹן נָדָב וַאֲבִיהוּא
אֶלְעָזָר וְאִיתָמָר בְּנֵי אֶהְרֹן: ב וְעָשִׂיתָ בְּגָדֵי־קֹדֶשׁ
לְאַהֲרֹן אָחִיךָ לְכָבוֹד וּלְתִפְאֶרֶת: ג וְאַתָּה תְּדַבֵּר אֶל־
כָּל־חַכְמֵי־לֵב אֲשֶׁר מִלֹּאֲתִי רוּחַ חֲכָמָה וְעָשׂוּ אֶת־
בְּגָדֵי אֶהְרֹן לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ לְכַהֲנוֹ-לִי: ד וְאֵלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר
יַעֲשׂוּ חֹשֶׁן וְאַפֹּד וּמַעֲלִיל וּכְתָנֶת תְּשַׁבֵּץ מִצְנֶפֶת
וְאַבְנֶט וְעָשׂוּ בְּגָדֵי־קֹדֶשׁ לְאַהֲרֹן אָחִיךָ וּלְבָנָיו לְכַהֲנוֹ-
לִי: ה וְהֵם יִקְחוּ אֶת־הַזָּהָב וְאֶת־הַתְּכֵלֶת וְאֶת־
הָאַרְגָּמָן וְאֶת־תּוֹלַעַת הַשָּׁנִי וְאֶת־הַשֵּׁשׁ: {פ}
ו וְעָשׂוּ אֶת־הָאֶפֶד זָהָב תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן תּוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי
וְשֵׁשׁ מְשֻׁזָּר מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב: ז שְׁתֵּי כְתֹפֶת חִבְרֹת יִהְיֶה־

EXODUS 28

¹ “From among the Israelites summon your brother Aaron and his sons to be priests in my service: Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, sons of Aaron. ² For Aaron your brother you are to make sacred vestments for his glorious adornment. ³ You are to instruct all with ability, whose skill I have given them, to make Aaron’s vestments for his consecration to my priesthood. ⁴ These are the vestments they must make: a breast-piece, an ephod, a robe, a fitted tunic, a turban and a belt. When they make sacred vestments for your brother Aaron and his sons to be priests in my service, ⁵ they must use gold, blue, purple and scarlet yarns, and fine linen.

⁶ “They are to make the ephod of gold, blue, purple and scarlet yarns, and fine linen, skilfully worked. ⁷ It must have two shoulder straps

EXODUS 28

- ¹ Apparently, the Levites first practised their priestly office at Kadesh (Dt 33:8–10). Those of Aaron’s line (6:14–25, compare Nb 8:5–26, Dt 18:1) are here designated to officiate at the altar of the central shrine (i.e. the Tent of Meeting and later the Jerusalem Temple).
- ² In place of ‘for his glorious adornment’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘to give him dignity and magnificence’; the literal translation is ‘for glory and beauty’ (לְכָבוֹד וּלְתִפְאֶרֶת).
- ³ The literal translation of ‘all with ability’ is ‘all who are wise of heart’.
- ⁴ In place of ‘fitted’ (תְּשַׁבֵּץ), here following NETB, the NJB has ‘embroidered’ and the NRSV has ‘chequered’; the word appears only in this verse.
- ⁵ See #25:4 regarding the coloured dyes used by the Israelites.
- ⁶ The OT uses the name ‘ephod’ for 3 different objects. **1:** An instrument of divination, used for consulting Yahweh (see #1S. 2:28). **2:** the loincloth (‘ephod bad’) worn by ministers (see #1S. 2:18). **3:** the breastplate of the High Priest, held in position by a belt and shoulder straps.
- ⁷ In the phrase, ‘join it together’, the Pual perfect with the *vav* consecutive provides the purpose clause; it follows the use of the active participle (‘fitted’).

לֹא אֶל־שְׁנֵי קְצוֹתָיו וְחִבֵּר: ^ח וְחֹשֶׁב אֲפָדְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו
כַּמַּעֲשָׂהוּ מִמֶּנּוּ יִהְיֶה זֶהָב תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי
וְשֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר: ^ט וְלָקַחְתָּ אֶת־שְׁתֵּי אַבְנֵי־שֹהַם וּפְתַחְתָּ
עֲלֵיהֶם שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^י שֵׁשָׁה מִשְׁמָתָם עַל הָאֶבֶן
הָאֶחָת וְאֶת־שְׁמוֹת הַשֵּׁשָׁה הַנּוֹתָרִים עַל־הָאֶבֶן
הַשֵּׁנִית כְּתוֹלְדָתָם: ^{יא} מַעֲשֵׂה חֲרָשׁ אֶבֶן פְּתוּחֵי חֹתָם
תִּפְתַּח אֶת־שְׁתֵּי הָאֲבָנִים עַל־שְׁמַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
מִסִּבַּת מִשְׁבָּצוֹת זָהָב תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם: ^{יב} וְשִׁמְתָּ אֶת־
שְׁתֵּי הָאֲבָנִים עַל כְּתָפְתָהּ הָאֶפֶד אֲבָנֵי זָכָרָן לִבְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִשְׂאָ אֹהֶלָן אֶת־שְׁמוֹתָם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה עַל־שְׁתֵּי
כְּתָפָיו לְזָכָרָן: {ס}

^{יג} וְעָשִׂיתָ מִשְׁבָּצַת זָהָב: ^{יד} וְשְׁתֵּי שְׂרָשְׁרוֹת זָהָב טָהוֹר
מִגְבֵּלֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם מַעֲשֵׂה עֵבֶת וְנִתְּתָהּ אֶת־
שְׂרָשְׁרוֹת הָעֵבֶתָת עַל־הַמִּשְׁבָּצַת: {ס}

^{טו} וְעָשִׂיתָ חֹשֶׁן מִשְׁפָּט מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב כַּמַּעֲשֵׂה אֶפֶד
תַּעֲשֶׂנוּ זָהָב תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר

fitted to it to join it together. ⁸ The woven band on it to hold it is to be of similar workmanship and form one piece with it: this must be of gold, blue, purple and scarlet yarns, and fine linen. ⁹ You will take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, ¹⁰ six of their names on one stone, the remaining six on the other, in the order of their birth. ¹¹ As a gem-cutter engraves signets, you are to engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel, and mount them in settings of gold mesh. ¹² You are to fasten the two stones commemorating the sons of Israel to the shoulder straps of the ephod. In this way, Aaron will bear their names on his shoulders in the presence of Yahweh, to commemorate them.

¹³ “You must also make settings of gold filigree, ¹⁴ and two chains of pure gold; you must make them like twisted cord; you are to attach these cord-like chains to the settings.

¹⁵ “You are to make the breastplate of judgement, finely brocaded, of the same workmanship as the ephod. You are to make it of gold, blue,

⁸ ‘Band’ translates חֹשֶׁב; since the entire ephod was of the same material, and this was of the same piece, it is unclear why this is singled out as ‘of similar workmanship’; it is this sash that attaches the ephod to the priest’s body, at the upper border of the ephod and clasped at the back.

⁹ Although בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל is normally translated ‘Israelites’, here a literal translation is used, as it refers to the 12 tribes – the actual ‘sons of Israel’.

¹⁰ The literal translation of ‘in the order of their birth’ is ‘according to their begettings’ (a major word in the Book of Genesis).

¹¹ Expert stone or gem engravers were used to engrave designs and names in identification seals of various sizes; it was work of skilled artisans.

¹² This was to be a perpetual reminder that the priest ministers on behalf of the twelve tribes of Israel: their names would always be borne.

¹³ In place of ‘settings of gold filigree’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘golden rosettes’.

¹⁴ The NJB has ‘of’ in place of ‘like’, here following the NRSV.

¹⁵ ‘Breastplate of judgement’ translates חֹשֶׁן מִשְׁפָּט; the first word is of uncertain etymology.

תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ: טז רְבֹועַ יִהְיֶה כְּפֹל זֶרֶת אַרְכּוֹ וְזֶרֶת רַחְבּוֹ: יז וּמְלֹאת בּוֹ מְלֵאת אֲבֵן אַרְבַּעַה טוּרִים אֶבֶן טוּר אָדָם פִּטְדָה וּבִרְקַת הַטּוּר הָאֶחָד: יח וְהַטּוּר הַשֵּׁנִי נִפְךְ סַפִּיר וַיְהִלֵּם: יט וְהַטּוּר הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לֶשֶׁם שְׁבוֹ וְאַחֲלָמָה: כ וְהַטּוּר הָרְבִיעִי תַרְשִׁישׁ וְשֹהֶם וַיִּשְׁפָּה מִשְׁבָּצִים זָהָב יִהְיוּ בְּמִלּוֹאֲתָם: כא וְהָאֲבָנִים תְּהִיֶּינָן עַל־שְׁמַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁתֵּים עָשָׂרָה עַל־שְׁמַתָּם פְּתוּחֵי חוֹתָם אִישׁ עַל־שְׁמוֹ תְּהִיֶּינָן לִשְׁנֵי עָשָׂר שְׁבָט: כב וַעֲשִׂיתָ עַל־הַחֹשֶׁן שְׁרֶשֶׁת גְּבֻלַת מַעֲשֶׂה עֲבַת זָהָב טְהוֹר: כג וַעֲשִׂיתָ עַל־הַחֹשֶׁן שְׁתֵּי טַבְּעוֹת זָהָב וְנָתַתָּ אֶת־שְׁתֵּי הַטַּבְּעוֹת עַל־שְׁנֵי קְצוֹת הַחֹשֶׁן: כד וְנָתַתָּה אֶת־שְׁתֵּי עֲבַתֹת הַזָּהָב עַל־שְׁתֵּי הַטַּבְּעוֹת אֶל־קְצוֹת

purple and scarlet yarns, and fine linen. ¹⁶ It is to be square and doubled, a span long and a span wide. ¹⁷ In this, you are to set four rows of stones. A carnelian, topaz, and emerald, for the first row; ¹⁸ a garnet, sapphire and diamond the second row; ¹⁹ the third row: a hyacinth, a ruby and an amethyst; ²⁰ the fourth row: a beryl, a carnelian and a jasper. These are to be mounted in gold settings. ²¹ There shall be twelve stones with names corresponding to the names of the sons of Israel; they shall be like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes. ²² For the breastplate, you will make chains of pure gold like cords, ²³ and on the breastplate, you must make two gold rings and fix them to its two edges. ²⁴ You must fasten the two gold cords to the two rings at the edges of the breastplate. ²⁵ The two

¹⁶ A 'span' (זֶרֶת) was about 23 cm – the length from the tip of a man's thumb to the tip of his little finger when his hand is stretched out.

¹⁷ The identities of several of the stones of vv. 17–20 are uncertain; in place of 'topaz', the NRSV has 'chrysolite'; and in place of 'carnelian' (following the NRSV), the NJB has 'sard' and NETB has 'ruby'.

¹⁸ The NRSV reads: "... a turquoise, a sapphire (or lapis lazuli) and a moonstone ..."

¹⁹ The NRSV reads: "... a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst ..." These are the stones mentioned in Ezk 28:13 that were to be found in Eden.

²⁰ The NRSV reads: "... a beryl, an onyx and a jasper ..."

²¹ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "They are to bear the names of the sons of Israel and, like the names on them, are to be twelve in number, engraved like seals, each with the name of one of the twelve tribes."

²² Before 'like', the NJB & NRSV add 'twisted'; here, we follow NETB.

²³ Vv. 23–28 of the MT (as here) are abridged in the LXX and placed after v. 29:

καὶ θήσεις ἐπὶ τὸ λογεῖον τῆς κρίσεως τοὺς κροσσούς· τὰ ἀλυσιδωτὰ ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρων τῶν κλιτῶν τοῦ λογεῖου ἐπιθήσεις καὶ τὰς δύο ἀσπιδίσκας ἐπιθήσεις ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρους τοὺς ὤμους τῆς ἐπωμίδος κατὰ πρόσωπον.

²⁴ In place of 'edges', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'corners' and NETB has 'ends'.

²⁵ The NJB and NETB add 'other' before the first occurrence of the word 'two'; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

הַחֹשֶׁן: כֹּה וְאֵת שְׁתֵּי קְצוֹת שְׁתֵּי הָעֲבֹתֹת תִּתֵּן עַל־
 שְׁתֵּי הַמִּשְׁבָּצוֹת וְנִתְּתָה עַל־כְּתָפוֹת הָאֶפֶד אֶל־מֹול
 פָּנָיו: כֹּי וַעֲשִׂיתָ שְׁתֵּי טַבָּעוֹת זָהָב וְשִׁמְתָּ אֹתָם עַל־שְׁנֵי
 קְצוֹת הַחֹשֶׁן עַל־שְׁפָתָו אֲשֶׁר אֶל־עֵבֶר הָאֶפֶד בֵּיתָה:
 כֹּי וַעֲשִׂיתָ שְׁתֵּי טַבָּעוֹת זָהָב וְנִתְּתָה אֹתָם עַל־שְׁתֵּי
 כְּתָפוֹת הָאֶפֶד מִלְּמַטָּה מִמֹּול פָּנָיו לְעֹמֶת מַחְבְּרָתָו
 מִמֶּעַל לְחֹשֶׁב הָאֶפֶד:

כֹּח וְיִרְכָּסוּ אֶת־הַחֹשֶׁן מִטַּבָּעָתָו אֶל־טַבָּעַת הָאֶפֶד
 בְּפִתְלֵי תְּכֵלֶת לִהְיוֹת עַל־חֹשֶׁב הָאֶפֶד וּלְא־יִזְח
 הַחֹשֶׁן מֵעַל הָאֶפֶד: כֹּט וְנָשָׂא אֹהֶרֶן אֶת־שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי־
 יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּחֹשֶׁן הַמִּשְׁפָּט עַל־לְבָו בָּבֹאוֹ אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ
 לְזִכְרוֹן לִפְנֵי־יְהוָה תָּמִיד: ל וְנִתְּתָ אֶל־חֹשֶׁן הַמִּשְׁפָּט
 אֶת־הָאוּרִים וְאֶת־הַתְּמִיִּם וְהָיוּ עַל־לֵב אֹהֶרֶן בָּבֹאוֹ
 לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְנָשָׂא אֹהֶרֶן אֶת־מִשְׁפַּט בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־
 לְבָו לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תָּמִיד:
 {ס}

ends of the two cords you must fasten to the two settings, and so attach them to the shoulder straps on the front of the ephod. ²⁶ You are to make two gold rings and fix them to the ends of the breastplate, on the inner hem, next to the ephod. ²⁷ You are to make two more gold rings and fix them low down on the front of the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod, close to the join, above the decorated band of the ephod.

²⁸ “You must bind the breastplate with a blue cord through its rings and those of the ephod, so that it will sit on the woven band and not swing from the ephod. ²⁹ So, in the breastplate of judgement, when Aaron enters the sanctuary, he will bear the names of the sons of Israel on his heart as a continual reminder before Yahweh. ³⁰ To the breastplate of judgement, you will add the Urim and the Thummim, and these will be on Aaron’s heart when he goes before Yahweh. So, Aaron will always bear the Israelites’ judgement on his heart before Yahweh.

²⁶ The NJB reads ‘lower corners’ in place of ‘ends’, here following the NSRV.

²⁷ In place of ‘decorated band’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘woven band’ and NETB has ‘waistband’.

²⁸ In place of ‘blue cord’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘ribbon of violet-purple’.

²⁹ So, Aaron will have the names of the tribes on his shoulders (v. 12) which bear the weight and symbol of office (see Is 9:6, 22:22), and on his heart (implying that they have a constant place in his thoughts: Dt 6:6). Thus, he was to enter the presence of God as the nation’s representative, ever mindful of the nation’s interests, and ever bringing the remembrance of it before God.

³⁰ The ‘Urim’ (וּרִים) and ‘Thummim’ (תְּמִיִּם) were the means of judging the Israelites; that is to say, by prophecy (see #6).

לֹא וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת־מַעֲלֵל הָאֵפֹד כָּלִיל תְּכֵלֶת: ^לב וְהָיָה פִּי־
 רֹאשׁוֹ בְּתוֹכּוֹ שֶׁפָּה יִהְיֶה לְפִיו סָבִיב מַעֲשֵׂה אֲרָג כַּפֵּי
 תַּחֲרָא יִהְיֶה־לּוֹ לֹא יִקְרַע: ^לג וְעָשִׂיתָ עַל־שׁוּלְיוֹ רִמְנֵי
 תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי עַל־שׁוּלְיוֹ סָבִיב וּפַעֲמָנֵי
 זָהָב בְּתוֹכָם סָבִיב: ^לד פַּעֲמָן זָהָב וְרִמְזֵן פַּעֲמָן זָהָב
 וְרִמְזֵן עַל־שׁוּלֵי הַמַּעֲלֵל סָבִיב: ^לה וְהָיָה עַל־אַהֲרֹן
 לְשֵׁרֶת וּנְשָׁמַע קוֹלּוֹ בְּבָאוֹ אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
 וּבִצְאָתוֹ וְלֹא יָמוּת: {ס}

לֹא וְעָשִׂיתָ צִיץ זָהָב טָהוֹר וּפִתְחָתָהּ עָלָיו פִּתּוּחֵי חֹתֶם
 קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה: ^לו וְשָׂמַתָּ אֹתוֹ עַל־פֶּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת וְהָיָה עַל־
 הַמִּצְנֶפֶת אֶל־מֹול פְּנֵי־הַמִּצְנֶפֶת יִהְיֶה: ^לז וְהָיָה עַל־
 מִצַּח אַהֲרֹן וְנָשָׂא אַהֲרֹן אֶת־עוֹן הַקֹּדָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר
 יִקְדִּישׁוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְכָל־מִתְּנַת קֹדְשֵׁיהֶם וְהָיָה עַל־

³¹ “You are to make the robe of the ephod all of blue. ³² In the centre, it must have a hole for the head, to have round it a border woven like the neck of a coat of mail to keep it from being torn. ³³ The lower hem you are to decorate with pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet yarns with golden bells between: ³⁴ a gold bell and a pomegranate, all round the hem of the robe. ³⁵ Aaron is to wear it when he officiates, so the sound shall be heard when he enters the sanctuary before Yahweh, or leaves it; thus, he will not die.

³⁶ “You are to make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, “Holy to Yahweh,” as a man engraves a seal. ³⁷ You will fasten this to the turban with a blue cord; it shall be on the front of the turban. ³⁸ Aaron is to wear it on his brow, and so bear any guilt incurred in what the Israelites donate in any of their sacred offerings; it must always be

³¹ The ‘robe’ (מַעֲלֵל) was a long one worn over the ephod, perhaps open down the front, with sleeves; it was made of finer material than ordinary cloaks because it was to be worn by people in positions of rank.

³² The meaning of the phrase here translated as ‘coat of mail’ (כַּפֵּי תַּחֲרָא) is uncertain.

³³ After ‘yarns’, the LXX (καὶ βύσσου κεκλωσμένης) and Samaritan Pentateuch add ‘and finely woven linen’, as does the NJB; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

³⁴ The MT repeats ‘a gold bell and a pomegranate’, indicating the alternating arrangement.

³⁵ This verse alludes to a widespread primitive notion that the sound of bells drove off demons.

³⁶ The engraving was a perpetual reminder of the holiness that was due the Yahweh, how that all the clothing, the furnishings, and the activities were to come under that description. This corresponded to the symbolism for the whole nation of binding the law between the eyes. It was to be a perpetual reminder of commitment.

³⁷ In place of ‘blue cord’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘ribbon of purple’.

³⁸ The High Priest, being consecrated to God, expiated involuntary ritual shortcomings in his own person.

מִצָּחוֹ תְּמִיד לְרָצוֹן לָהֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: ^לוְשִׁבְצָתָהּ
הַכְּתָנֶת שֶׁשׁ וְעֵשִׂיתָ מְצֻנֶּפֶת שֶׁשׁ וְאַבְנֶט תַּעֲשֶׂה
מַעֲשֵׂה רֶקֶם: ^מוְלִבְנֵי אֶהְרֹן תַּעֲשֶׂה כְּתָנֹת וְעֵשִׂיתָ
לָהֶם אַבְנֵטִים וּמִגְבָּעוֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה לָהֶם לְכָבוֹד
וּלְתַפְאֲרָתָם: ^{מא}וְהַלְבַּשְׁתָּ אֹתָם אֶת־אֶהְרֹן אֶחָיד וְאֶת־
בָּנָיו אֹתָם וּמִשְׁחָתָם אֹתָם וּמִלֵּאתָ אֶת־יָדָם וְקִדַּשְׁתָּ
אֹתָם וְכִהְנֹוּ לִי: ^{מב}וְעֵשִׂה לָהֶם מְכַנְסֵי־בָד לְכִסּוֹת
בְּשָׂר עֲרוֹה מִמֶּתְנִים וְעַד־יָרְכִים יִהְיוּ: ^{מג}וְהָיוּ עַל־
אֶהְרֹן וְעַל־בָּנָיו בְּבֹאֵם אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד אֹו בְּגִשְׁתֶּם
אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לְשֵׁרֵת בְּקֹדֶשׁ וְלֹא־יִשָּׂאוּ עוֹן וּמָתוּ חֻקַּת
עוֹלָם לֹו וּלְזֶרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו: {ס}

on his brow, so that they may be accepted before Yahweh. ³⁹ The tunic you must weave of fine linen, and make a turban of fine linen, and a sash, the work of a skilled embroiderer. ⁴⁰ For Aaron's sons you are to make tunic, girdle and headdress for their glorious adornment. ⁴¹ You will put these on your brother Aaron and his sons; and you will anoint, invest and consecrate them to serve me as priests. ⁴² You are to make them linen breeches to cover their naked flesh from loin to thigh. ⁴³ Aaron and his sons must wear these when they go into the Tent of Meeting or when they approach the altar to serve in the sanctuary, or they will bring guilt on themselves and die; this is an irrevocable ordinance for Aaron and his seed after him.

³⁹ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "You shall make the chequered tunic of fine linen, and you shall make a turban of fine linen, and you shall make a sash embroidered with needlework."

⁴⁰ This verse anticipates 29:1 and extends to ordinary priests the anointing reserved to the High Priest (29:7 and Lv. 8:12). It is a later addition.

⁴¹ The literal translation of 'invest them' is 'you will fill their hands'. Portions of the victim that the new priest was about to offer were placed in his hands (29:9, 32:29, Lv 8:27-28, Jg 17:5, 12, 1K 13:33).

⁴² The 'breeches' were for modesty's sake. For the same reason, the Book of the Covenant forbade altars with steps (20:26), though there was to be one in the Temple.

⁴³ So, the priests were to make intercession for the people, give decisions from God's revealed will, enter his presence in purity, and represent holiness to Yahweh. The clothing of the priests provided for these functions, but in a way that brought honour and dignity: he was, therefore, to serve in purity, holiness, and fear (Malachi). There is much that can be derived from this chapter to form principles of spiritual leadership; but the overall point can be worded this way: Those whom God selects to minister to the congregation through intercessory prayer, divine counsel, and sacrificial worship, must always represent the holiness of Yahweh in their activities and demeanour.

EXODUS 29

שמות פרק כט

א וְזֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־תַּעֲשֶׂה לָהֶם לְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתָם לִכְהֵן לִי לֶקַח פֶּר אֶחָד בֶּן־בָּקָר וְאֵילִם שְׁנַיִם תְּמִימִם: ^ב וְלֶחֶם מִצּוֹת וְחֻלֹּת מִצַּת בָּלוּלָת בַּשֶּׁמֶן וּרְקִיקֵי מִצּוֹת מִשְׁחִים בַּשֶּׁמֶן סֵלֶת חֲטִיִּם תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם: ^ג וְנָתַתָּ אוֹתָם עַל־סֵל אֶחָד וְהִקְרַבְתָּ אֹתָם בַּסֵּל וְאֶת־הַפֶּר וְאֵת שְׁנֵי הָאֵילִם:

ד וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו תִּקְרִיב אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְרָחַצְתָּ אֹתָם בַּמַּיִם: ^ה וְלִקַּחְתָּ אֶת־הַבְּגָדִים וְהַלְבַּשְׁתָּ אֶת־אַהֲרֹן אֶת־הַכֹּתֶנֶת וְאֵת מַעֲלֵי הָאֵפֹד וְאֶת־הָאֵפֹד וְאֶת־הַחֹשֶׁן וְאֵפַדְתָּ לוֹ בַּחֹשֶׁב הָאֵפֹד: ^ו וְשַׂמְתָּ הַמִּצְנֶפֶת עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ וְנָתַתָּ אֶת־גִּזְרֵי הַקֶּדֶשׁ עַל־הַמִּצְנֶפֶת: ^ז וְלִקַּחְתָּ אֶת־שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וַיִּצְקֶתָ עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ וּמִשַּׁחְתָּ אוֹתוֹ:

¹ “This is the ritual you must use for them when you consecrate them to serve me in the priesthood. Take one young bull and two rams without blemish, ² unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil, made from fine flour. ³ You must put these into a basket and present them in the basket, at the same time as the young bull and the two rams.

⁴ “You shall bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and bathe them with water. ⁵ And you shall take the vestments and clothe Aaron in the tunic, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the skilfully woven band of the ephod. ⁶ You shall put the turban on his head, and on the turban fix the holy diadem; ⁷ and then you shall take the anointing oil and pour it on his head, and so anoint him.

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- ¹ The word תְּמִימִם (*‘without blemish’*) means ‘perfect’: the animals could not have diseases or be crippled or blind (see MI 1).
- ² The *‘fine flour’* is here an adverbial accusative, explaining the material from which these items were made; the flour is to be finely sifted, and from the wheat, not the barley, which was often the material used by the poor.
- ³ The verb הִקְרַבְתָּ (*‘present’*) is a Hiphil meaning to ‘bring near’ to the altar, or, to offer something to God.
- ⁴ This instruction is for a complete bath, as opposed to the ablutions of 30:19–21, to confer the ritual purity required.
- ⁵ The Hiphil form הַלְבַּשְׁתָּ (*‘clothe’*) takes double accusatives; so, the sign of the accusative is with Aaron, and then with the articles of clothing. The translation treats Aaron as the direct object, and the articles as indirect objects, because Aaron receives the prominence in the verse.
- ⁶ The term *‘holy diadem’* does not appear in Ch. 28 but it can only refer to the platelet that was tied around the turban with the inscription on it. Here it refers to a diadem that is distinctly set apart for this service.
- ⁷ The anointing of the High Priest (Lv 16:32, 1S 24:6, Ps 2:2, 133:2) follows the ancient rite of anointing the king’s head with oil.

ח וְאֶת־בָּנָיו תִּקְרִיב וְהִלַּבְשָׁתָם כִּתְנֹת: ט וְחָגַרְתָּ אֹתָם
אֲבָנֹת אֹהֶלֶן וּבָנָיו וְחִבַּשְׁתָּ לָהֶם מִגְבָּעֹת וְהִיתָה לָהֶם
כִּהֲנָה לְחֻקַּת עֹלָם וּמִלֵּאת יָד־אֹהֶלֶן וִיד־בָּנָיו:

י וְהִקְרַבְתָּ אֶת־הַפָּר לִפְנֵי אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְסָמַךְ אֹהֶלֶן
וּבָנָיו אֶת־יְדֵיהֶם עַל־רֹאשׁ הַפָּר: יא וְשַׁחֲטָה אֶת־הַפָּר
לִפְנֵי יְהוָה פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: יב וְלָקַחְתָּ מִדָּם הַפָּר
וְנָתַתָּה עַל־קַרְנֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בְּאֶצְבָּעְךָ וְאֶת־כָּל־הַדָּם
תִּשְׁפֹךְ אֶל־יֶסוֹד הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: יג וְלָקַחְתָּ אֶת־כָּל־הַחֵלֶב
הַמְכֻסָּה אֶת־הַקֶּרֶב וְאֶת הַיִּתְרֹת עַל־הַכֶּבֶד וְאֶת שְׁתֵּי
הַכְּלָיִת וְאֶת־הַחֵלֶב אֲשֶׁר עָלֵיהֶן וְהִקְטַרְתָּ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ:
יד וְאֶת־בֶּשֶׂר הַפָּר וְאֶת־עֹרֹו וְאֶת־פִּרְשׁוֹ תִשְׂרֹף בָּאֵשׁ
מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה חֲטָאת הוּא:

טו וְאֶת־הָאֵיל הָאֶחָד תִּקַּח וְסָמְכוּ אֹהֶלֶן וּבָנָיו אֶת־
יְדֵיהֶם עַל־רֹאשׁ הָאֵיל: טז וְשַׁחֲטָה אֶת־הָאֵיל וְלָקַחְתָּ

8 “And bring his sons and put tunics on them. 9 Pass the girdles round them and tie headbands on them; and, by perpetual ordinance, the priesthood will be theirs; so shall you ordain Aaron and his sons.

10 “You are to bring the bull in front of the Tent of Meeting. Aaron and his sons are to lay their hands on its head; 11 and slaughter the bull before Yahweh at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 12 Then take some of its blood and with your finger put it on the horns of the altar. Next, pour out the rest of the blood at the foot of the altar; 13 and then take all the fat that covers the entrails, the lobe that is over the liver, the two kidneys with their covering fat, and burn them on the altar. 14 As for the bull’s flesh, its skin and its dung, you must burn them outside the camp, for it is a sin offering.

15 “And you are to take one ram; Aaron and his sons are to lay their hands on its head. 16 You are to kill the ram, take its blood and pour

8 The NJB uses ‘next’ for the opening conjunction and the NRSV uses ‘then’; here, we follow the MT.

9 After ‘them’, the MT repeats ‘Aaron and his sons’; neither the LXX nor Lv 8:13 include this, suggesting that it may be a later gloss in the text. The literal translation of ‘ordain’ is ‘fill the hand of’.

10 Laying their hands on the bull’s head makes the sacrifice their own; also, it may indicate that the animal is a substitute for them as well.

11 The NJB omits the opening conjunction, making this verse a separate sentence.

12 The horns of the altar (27:2) were its most sacred parts (1K 1:50, Am 3:14). On the efficacy of blood for the expiation of sin, see #Lv 1:5.

13 In place of ‘lobe’, here following NETB, the NJB has ‘fatty mass’; this may refer to the appendix.

14 These items are to be burnt because there is no priesthood yet; once they are installed, then the sin/purification offering is to be eaten by the officiating priests as a sign that the offering was received: but priests could not consume their own sin offering.

15 In place of ‘one ram’, here following NETB, the NJB & NRSV have ‘one of the rams’.

16 In place of ‘around’, here following the WEBBE, the NRSV has ‘on all sides of’, the NJB has ‘the surrounds of’ and NETB has ‘all around on’.

אֶת־דָּמּוֹ וְזָרַקְתָּ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: י¹⁷ וְאֶת־הָאֵיל
תִּנְתַּח לְנִתְחָיו וְרַחֲצָתָ קִרְבּוֹ וְכַרְעָיו וְנָתַתָּ עַל־נִתְחָיו
וְעַל־רַאשׁוֹ: י¹⁸ וְהִקְטַרְתָּ אֶת־כָּל־הָאֵיל הַמִּזְבֵּחַה עֲלֶיהָ
הוּא לַיהוָה רִיחַ נִיחֻחַ אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה הוּא:

י¹⁹ וְלִקַּחְתָּ אֶת הָאֵיל הַשְּׁנִי וְסָמַדְתָּ אֹהֶרֶן וּבָנָיו אֶת־
יְדֵיהֶם עַל־רֹאשׁ הָאֵיל: כ²⁰ וְשַׁחֲטָתָ אֶת־הָאֵיל וְלִקַּחְתָּ
מִדָּמּוֹ וְנִתְתָּה עַל־תֵּנוּף אֶזְנוֹ אֹהֶרֶן וְעַל־תֵּנוּף אֶזְנוֹ בָּנָיו
הַיְמָנִית וְעַל־בֵּהֶן יָדָם הַיְמָנִית וְעַל־בֵּהֶן רַגְלָם הַיְמָנִית
וְזָרַקְתָּ אֶת־הַדָּם עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: כא²¹ וְלִקַּחְתָּ מִן־
הַדָּם אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וּמִשְׁמֵן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְהִזִּיתָ עַל־
אֹהֶרֶן וְעַל־בְּגָדָיו וְעַל־בָּנָיו וְעַל־בְּגָדֵי בָנָיו אֹתָם וְקֹדֶשׁ
הוּא וּבְגָדָיו וּבָנָיו וּבְגָדֵי בָנָיו אֹתָם:

כב²² וְלִקַּחְתָּ מִן־הָאֵיל הַחֵלֶב וְהָאֵלֶּה וְאֶת־הַחֵלֶב
הַמְכֻסָּה אֶת־הַקֶּרֶב וְאֶת יִתְרַת הַכְּבֵד וְאֶת שְׁתֵּי
הַכְּלִית וְאֶת־הַחֵלֶב אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיהֶן וְאֶת שׁוֹק הַיָּמִין כִּי
אֵיל מִלֵּאִים הוּא: כג²³ וְכָכַר לֶחֶם אֶחָת וְחֻלֵּת לֶחֶם שֶׁמֶן

it around the altar. ¹⁷ Next, divide the ram in pieces, wash the entrails
and legs, and put them with its parts and head. ¹⁸ Then burn the
whole ram on the altar. This will be a burnt offering, whose odour
will appease Yahweh, an offering by fire in honour of Yahweh.

¹⁹ “And you are to take the other ram; Aaron and his sons are to lay
their hands on its head. ²⁰ You are to kill the ram, take some of its
blood and put it on the tip of Aaron’s right ear, on the tips of his sons’
right ears, the thumbs of their right hands, and the big toes of their
right feet, and pour out the rest around the altar. ²¹ Then take some
of the blood on the altar, and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle
it on Aaron and his clothes and on his sons and their clothes: so that
he and his clothes will be holy and his sons and their clothes.

²² “You are to take the fat of the ram: the tail, the fat that covers the
entrails, the lobe that is over the liver, the two kidneys with their
covering fat and the right thigh (for this is a ram of ordination), ²³ and
a loaf of bread, a cake of bread made with oil, and a wafer from the

¹⁷ The NJB has ‘on top of the pieces’ in place of ‘with its parts’, here following the NRSV.

¹⁸ The phrase, ‘whose fragrance will appease Yahweh’, is an anthropomorphism expressing the satisfaction that God finds in the offering made to him (see Gn 8:21, Lv 1:9 & Nb 28:2).

¹⁹ The NJB translates the opening conjunction as ‘next’ and the NRSV omits it altogether; here, we follow the MT.

²⁰ The MT lacks the adjective, ‘right’, before ‘ear’, here following the LXX (τοῦ δεξιῶν).

²¹ The LXX inserts this verse into v. 20 and the Samaritan Pentateuch places it after v. 28.

²² The ‘lobe’ probably refers to the appendix (see #13).

²³ NETB opens this verse with ‘and one round flat cake of bread, one perforated cake of oiled bread’.

אֶחָת וְרָקִיק אֶחָד מִסֵּל הַמִּצּוֹת אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:
כד וְשִׁמַּת הַכֹּל עַל כַּפֵּי אֹהֶלֶן וְעַל כַּפֵּי בָנָיו וְהִנִּיף
אֹתָם תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: כה וְלָקַחְתָּ אֹתָם מִיָּדָם
וְהִקְטַרְתָּ הַמִּזְבֵּחַה עַל־הָעֹלָה לְרִיחַ נִיחּוֹחַ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
אֲשֶׁה הוּא לַיהוָה:

כו וְלָקַחְתָּ אֶת־הַחֹזֶה מֵאֵיל הַמִּלֻּאִים אֲשֶׁר לְאֹהֶלֶן
וְהִנִּיפְתָּ אֹתוֹ תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְהָיָה לְךָ לְמִנְחָה:
כז וְקִדַּשְׁתָּ אֹתוֹ תְּזֶה הַתְּנוּפָה וְאֵת שׁוֹק הַתְּרוּמָה
אֲשֶׁר הוֹנֵף וְאֲשֶׁר הוֹרֵם מֵאֵיל הַמִּלֻּאִים מֵאֲשֶׁר
לְאֹהֶלֶן וּמֵאֲשֶׁר לְבָנָיו: כח וְהָיָה לְאֹהֶלֶן וּלְבָנָיו לְחֶקֶד
עוֹלָם מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי תְרוּמָה הוּא וְתְרוּמָה יִהְיֶה
מֵאֵת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִזִּבְחֵי שְׁלָמֵיהֶם תְּרוּמָתָם לַיהוָה:
כט וּבִגְדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר לְאֹהֶלֶן יִהְיוּ לְבָנָיו אַחֲרָיו
לְמִשְׁחָה בָהֶם וּלְמִלֻּאֲבָם אֶת־יָדָם: ל שִׁבְעַת יָמִים

basket of unleavened bread set before Yahweh; ²⁴ and put all these into Aaron's hands and those of his sons and make the gesture of offering before Yahweh. ²⁵ Then you are to take them back and burn them on the altar, on top of the burnt offering of pleasing odour before Yahweh; it is a burnt offering to Yahweh.

²⁶ "You are to take the breast of the ram of Aaron's ordination and make the gesture of offering before Yahweh; it is to be your portion.

²⁷ You are to consecrate the breast thus offered and the thigh set aside from the ram of ordination of Aaron and his sons. ²⁸ This will be what Aaron and his sons are to receive as their portion forever from the Israelites: it is the portion set aside, a portion the Israelites are to set aside from their peace offerings, the portion they owe to Yahweh.

²⁹ "Aaron's sacred clothes are to pass to his sons after him, and they will wear them for their anointing and ordination. ³⁰ The son of

²⁴ The 'gesture of offering' consisted of holding the object forward and then withdrawing it, symbolising its presentation to God before its reversion to the priest.

²⁵ The literal translation of 'burn' is 'turn to (sweet) smoke'.

²⁶ In place of 'make the gesture of offering', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'raise it as an elevation offering' and NETB has 'wave it as a wave offering' (see also #24).

²⁷ Before 'from', the NJB includes the words 'the breast that has been offered and the thigh that has been set aside'.

²⁸ Throughout this verse, the NRSV has 'offering' in place of 'portion' (here following the NJB).

²⁹ The literal translation of 'ordination' is 'for filling the hands'; the verb form is the Piel infinitive construct with the *lamed* preposition.

³⁰ 'Seven days' is an adverbial accusative of time: the ritual of ordination is to be repeated for seven days, and so they are to remain there in the court in full dress.

יִלְבָּשׁם הַכֹּהֵן תַּחֲתָיו מִבְּגָדָיו אֲשֶׁר יָבֹא אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
לְשֵׁרֶת בִּקְדָּשׁ:

לֹא וְאֵת אֵיל הַמִּלֻּאִים תִּקַּח וּבִשַׁלְתָּ אֶת־בִּשְׂרוֹ בַּמָּקָם
קָדֵשׁ: ^{לג} וְאָכַל אֹהֶרֶן וּבָנָיו אֶת־בִּשְׂרֵי הָאֵיל וְאֶת־
הַלֶּחֶם אֲשֶׁר בַּסֵּל פָּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: ^{לד} וְאָכְלוּ אֹתָם
אֲשֶׁר כִּפָּר בָּהֶם לְמַלֵּא אֶת־יָדָם לְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתָם וְזָר לֹא־
יֹאכַל בִּי־קָדֵשׁ הֵם: ^{לה} וְאִם־יֻתֵּר מִבִּשְׂרֵי הַמִּלֻּאִים וּמִן־
הַלֶּחֶם עַד־הַבֹּקֶר וְשִׂרְפָתָהּ אֶת־הַנוֹתֵר בָּאֵשׁ לֹא יֹאכַל
בִּי־קָדֵשׁ הוּא: ^{לו} וְעָשִׂיתָ לְאֹהֶרֶן וּלְבָנָיו כַּכָּה כָּל
אֲשֶׁר־צִוִּיתִי אֹתָךְ שִׁבַּעַת יָמִים תִּמְלֵא יָדָם:

לז וּפָר חֲטָאת תַּעֲשֶׂה לַיּוֹם עַל־הַכִּפּוּרִים וְחֲטָאת עַל־
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בַּכִּפּוּר עָלָיו וּמִשַּׁחַת אֹתוֹ לְקַדְּשׁוֹ: ^{לח} שִׁבַּעַת
יָמִים תִּכַּפֵּר עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְקִדַּשְׁתָּ אֹתוֹ וְהָיָה הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
קָדֵשׁ קְדָשִׁים כָּל־הַנִּגַּע בַּמִּזְבֵּחַ יִקְדָּשׁ: {ס}

Aaron who succeeds him in the priesthood and enters the Tent of Meeting to serve in the sanctuary must wear them for seven days.

³¹ “You are to take the ram of ordination and boil its flesh in a holy place. ³² Aaron and his sons will eat the meat of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, at the door of the Tent of Meeting. ³³ They are to eat what was used for atonement, to ordain and consecrate them; no layman may eat them: they are holy. ³⁴ If any of the meat for the ordination, or the bread, remains until morning, you must burn the remainder with fire: it is not to be eaten, it is holy. ³⁵ For Aaron and his sons, you are to do exactly as I have commanded you: through seven days you shall ordain them.

³⁶ “Every day you must offer a bull as a sin offering for atonement; you will cleanse the altar by making atonement for it; then you must anoint it, to sanctify it. ³⁷ Seven days, you must atone for the altar and sanctify it; it will be most holy and whatever touches it will be holy.

³¹ The ‘*holy place*’ must be in the courtyard of the sanctuary; Lv 8:31 says it is to be cooked at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting (and see # 32).

³² Here, it says the meat will be eaten at the ‘*entrance to the Tent of Meeting*’ as well as cooked there; this, then, becomes a communion sacrifice, a peace offering which was a shared meal: the significance of eating the communal meal in a holy place was meant to signify that the worshipers and the priests were at peace with God.

³³ The literal translation of ‘*layman*’ (זָר) is ‘*stranger*’ or ‘*alien*’ but, in this context, it means anyone who is not a priest

³⁴ The verb translated ‘*it is not to be eaten*’ is the Niphal imperfect negated; it expresses the prohibition against eating this, but in the passive voice.

³⁵ Leviticus makes it clear that, for the period of ‘*seven days*’, they are not to leave the sanctuary.

³⁶ It is difficult to understand how this verse is to be harmonised with the other passages: The ceremony in the earlier passages deals with atonement made for the priests, for people; but here, it is the altar that is being sanctified.

³⁷ The last clause states an unusual principle, meant to preserve the sanctity of the altar.

לח וְזֶה אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כְּבָשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה
שְׁנַיִם לַיּוֹם תָּמִיד: לט אֶת־הַכֶּבֶשׂ הָאֶחָד תַּעֲשֶׂה
בַּבֹּקֶר וְאֶת הַכֶּבֶשׂ הַשֵּׁנִי תַעֲשֶׂה בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים:
מ וְעֹשֹׁן סֹלֶת בָּלוּל בְּשֶׁמֶן כְּתִית רֹבַע הֵהִין וְנִסָּךְ
רְבִיעֵת הֵהִין יַיִן לְכֶבֶשׂ הָאֶחָד: מא וְאֶת הַכֶּבֶשׂ הַשֵּׁנִי
תַעֲשֶׂה בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים כְּמִנְחַת הַבֹּקֶר וּכְנִסְכָּהּ תַעֲשֶׂה־
לָהּ לָרִיחַ נִיחָח אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה: מב עֹלֶת תָּמִיד לְדֶרֶתִיכֶם
פֶּתַח אֹהֶל־מוֹעֵד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר אוֹמֵד לָכֶם שָׁמָּה
לְדַבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ נָשָׂם:

מג וְנִעַדְתִּי שָׁמָּה לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִקְדַּשׁ בְּכַבְדִּי:
מד וְקִדַּשְׁתִּי אֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן
וְאֶת־בָּנָיו אֶקְדָּשׁ לְכַהֵן לִי: מה וּשְׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִיִּיתִי לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים: מו וַיִּדְעוּ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה

³⁸ “This is what you are to offer on the altar: two yearling lambs regularly each day. ³⁹ One lamb you must offer in the morning, the other at dusk. ⁴⁰ With one lamb, you must offer a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a quarter of a hin of purest oil and, for a libation, a quarter of a hin of wine. ⁴¹ The other lamb you must offer at dusk; do this with the same oblation and libation as in the morning, as a pleasing odour, a burnt offering to Yahweh. ⁴² It shall be a perpetual high-offering for all generations, at the door to the Tent of Meeting before Yahweh, where I shall meet you and speak to you.

⁴³ “I will meet the Israelites in the place sanctified by my glory. ⁴⁴ I will sanctify the Tent of Meeting and the altar; I will sanctify Aaron too, and his sons, to be priests in my service. ⁴⁵ I will dwell among the Israelites, and I will be their God. ⁴⁶ And they will know that it is

³⁸ In place of ‘regularly each day’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘each day in perpetuity’.

³⁹ The literal translation of ‘at dusk’ is ‘between the evenings’ (a phrase meaning ‘twilight’).

⁴⁰ An ‘ephah’ (the word is not actually given in the MT) would be about 45 litres (see Nb 15:2–10); a ‘hin’ was about 7.5 litres.

⁴¹ The NJB has ‘an appeasing fragrance’ in place of ‘a pleasing odour’, here following the NRSV.

⁴² In the phrase, ‘where I shall meet you’, the Samaritan Pentateuch and LXX (ἐν οἷς γνωσθήσονται σοι) use the singular form of the pronoun, whereas the MT uses the plural form. The term, ‘high-offerings’ translates עֹלָה, connecting it to a name for God (עֶלְיוֹן – ‘Most High God’).

⁴³ The tabernacle, as well as the priests and the altar, will be sanctified by the power of Yahweh’s presence; the reference here is to when Yahweh enters the sanctuary in all his glory (see #40:34).

⁴⁴ This verse affirms the same point as the previous, but now with an active verb: ‘I will sanctify’; this verse, then, probably introduces the conclusion of the chapter.

⁴⁵ In place of ‘dwell among’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘remain with’.

⁴⁶ The NJB adds ‘so’ after the opening ‘and’ of this verse; here, we follow the NRSV & NETB.

אֱלֹהֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְשֹׁכְנִי
בְּתוֹכָם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם: {פ} I, Yahweh their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt to
dwell among them: I, Yahweh their God.

שמות פרק ל

א וְעָשִׂיתָ מִזְבֵּחַ מִקְטָר קֹטֶרֶת עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ:
ב אֹמֶה אָרְכּוֹ וְאֹמֶה רָחְבּוֹ רְבֹועַ יְהִיָּה וְאַמְתִּים קִמָּתוֹ
מִמֶּנּוּ קִרְנָתָיו: ג וְצִפִּיתָ אֹתוֹ זָהָב טָהוֹר אֶת־גִּגּוֹ וְאֶת־
קִירָתוֹ סָבִיב וְאֶת־קִרְנָתָיו וְעָשִׂיתָ לוֹ זָר זָהָב סָבִיב:
ד וְשָׂתִי טַבַּעַת זָהָב תַּעֲשֶׂה־לּוֹ מִתַּחַת לְזָרוֹ עַל שְׁתֵּי
צִלְעָתָיו תַּעֲשֶׂה עַל־שְׁנֵי צַדָּיו וְהָיָה לְבַתִּים לְבָדִים
לְשִׂאת אֹתוֹ בַּהֲמָה: ה וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַבָּדִים עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים
וְצִפִּיתָ אֹתָם זָהָב: ו וְנָתַתָּה אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי הַפָּרֹכֶת אֲשֶׁר
עַל־אֹרֶן הָעֵדֻת לִפְנֵי הַכֹּפֶרֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָעֵדֻת אֲשֶׁר
אוֹעֵד לָךְ שָׁמָּה: ז וְהִקְטִיר עָלָיו אֹהֶלֶן קֹטֶרֶת סַמִּים
בַּבֹּקֶר בַּבֹּקֶר בְּהִיטִיבוֹ אֶת־הַנֶּחֱרֵת יִקְטִירֶנָּה:
ח וּבַהֲעֵלֹת אֹהֶלֶן אֶת־הַנֶּחֱרֵת בֵּין הָעֲרֵבִים יִקְטִירֶנָּה
קֹטֶרֶת תָּמִיד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם: ט לֹא־תֵעָלוּ עָלָיו
קֹטֶרֶת זָרָה וְעֹלָה וּמִנְחָה וְנִסֵּךְ לֹא תִסְכּוּ עָלָיו: י וְכִפֹּר

EXODUS 30

1 "You must make an altar to burn incense; you are to make it of acacia. 2 It is to be square, a cubit long, a cubit wide and two cubits high; its horns are to be of one piece with it. 3 You must plate with pure gold its top, its sides, and its horns, with a gold moulding all round. 4 You must fix two gold rings under the moulding on its two sides: these are for the poles to carry it. 5 These poles you must make of acacia and plate with gold. 6 You must set it up before the veil by the Ark of the Covenant, opposite the mercy seat above the Covenant, where I will meet you. 7 Aaron must burn fragrant incense on it each morning when he trims the lamps; 8 and, at dusk, when Aaron lights the lamps, he must burn it, a perpetual incense to Yahweh for all generations. 9 You must offer no profane incense on it: no high-offering, no oblation; and you must pour no libation on it. 10 Once a year, Aaron is to perform the rite of atonement on one of its horns;

EXODUS 30

- 1 This was a separate altar from the *high altar* of 27:1; in Solomon's Temple, it stood in front of the Holy of Holies (1K 6:20-21).
- 2 Literally translated, this verse ends, "and its horns from it."
- 3 The literal translation of 'top' is 'roof'. The Ark of the Covenant had a similar moulding (25:11).
- 4 Since this is a small altar, it needed only two rings, one on either side, in order to carry the object.
- 5 In place of 'plate', here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have 'overlay'.
- 6 NETB places the clause 'opposite ... Covenant' in parentheses.
- 7 The point of the little golden altar of incense is for intercessory prayer and, on the Day of Atonement, for blood-applied atonement.
- 8 The literal translation of 'at dusk' (here following JPS) is 'between the two evenings'.
- 9 The term, 'high-offerings' translates עֹלָה, connecting it to a name for God (עֶלְיוֹן - 'Most High God') - the offering was for God alone.
- 10 For the last sentence, here following the MT, NRSV & NETB, the NJB has, "This altar of supreme holiness is to be consecrated to Yahweh."

אֶהְרֹן עַל־קִרְבָּנָיו אֶחָת בַּשָּׁנָה מִדָּם חֹטֵאת הַכִּפָּרִים
אֶחָת בַּשָּׁנָה יִכַּפֵּר עָלֵיו לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם קֹדֶשׁ־קֳדָשִׁים הוּא
לַיהוָה: {פ}

י^א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: י^ב כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת־רֹאשׁ
בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם וְנָתַנּוּ אִישׁ כָּפָר נַפְשׁוֹ לַיהוָה
בַּפֶּקֶד אַתֶּם וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה בָהֶם גִּגִּף בַּפֶּקֶד אַתֶּם: י^ג זֶה
יִתְּנוּ כָל־הָעֶבֶר עַל־הַפְּקָדִים מַחְצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בַּשֶּׁקֶל
הַקֹּדֶשׁ עֶשְׂרִים גֵּרָה הַשֶּׁקֶל מַחְצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל תְּרוּמָה
לַיהוָה: י^ד כָּל הָעֶבֶר עַל־הַפְּקָדִים מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה
וּמִמֶּלֶךְ יִתֵּן תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה: ט^ו הָעֶשִׂיר לֹא־יִרְבֶּה וְהַדֹּל
לֹא יִמְעִיט מִמַּחְצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל לַתֵּת אֶת־תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה
לְכַפֵּר עַל־נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם: ט^ז וְלִקְחַתָּ אֶת־כֶּסֶף הַכִּפָּרִים
מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנָתַתָּ אֹתוֹ עַל־עֲבֹדַת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
וְהָיָה לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְזִכְרוֹן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְכַפֵּר עַל־
נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם: {פ}

with the blood of the sacrifice offered for sin, he is to perform the rite of atonement once a year; you shall do the same for all generations. It is most holy to Yahweh.”

¹¹ Yahweh spoke to Moses: ¹² “When you take a census and make a register of Israelites, each is to pay Yahweh a ransom for his life, when numbering them, so that no plague comes on them when numbering them. ¹³ Everyone subject to the census must pay half a shekel, reckoning by the sanctuary shekel, twenty gerahs to the shekel: a half-shekel as an offering to Yahweh. ¹⁴ Everyone subject to the census, twenty years old and over, must pay the sum set aside for Yahweh. ¹⁵ The rich is not to give more, nor the poor less, than half a shekel as payment of the sum set aside of Yahweh, the ransom for your lives. ¹⁶ You will devote this ransom money given to you by the Israelites to the service of the Tent of Meeting. It will remind Yahweh of the Israelites and will be the ransom for your lives.”

¹¹ The passage of vv. 11–16, though often debated by scholars, is actually fairly easy to outline: **1** every covenant member must give a ransom for his life to avoid death (11–12); **2** the ransom is the same for all, whether rich or poor (13–15); and **3** the ransom money supports the sanctuary as a memorial for the ransomed (16).

¹² The NJB, following the LXX, omits the 1st instance of ‘when numbering them’; here, we follow the MT & JPS.

¹³ The ‘sanctuary shekel’ appears only here, 38:24–26, Lv 5:15, 27:25, Nb 3:47 & 18:16. It was perhaps the old shekel, worth one-fiftieth of a *mina* and weighing approximately 1.13 grams, whereas the shekel in use later had fallen to one-sixtieth of a *mina* (see Ezk 45:12).

¹⁴ Literally translated, this verse opens, “Everyone who crosses over to those numbered.”

¹⁵ Rich and poor are equal before God.

¹⁶ The idea of ‘service’ is maintenance and care of the sanctuary service, meaning the morning and evening sacrifices and the other elements to be used.

י' וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: י" וְעָשִׂיתָ כִּיֹּזֶר נְחֹשֶׁת
 וְכִנּוֹ נְחֹשֶׁת לְרַחֲצָהּ וְנָתַתָּ אֹתוֹ בֵּין־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּבֵין
 הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְנָתַתָּ שָׁמָּה מִיָּם: יט וְרָחֲצוּ אֹהֶרֶן וּבָנָיו מִמֶּנּוּ
 אֶת־יְדֵיהֶם וְאֶת־רַגְלֵיהֶם: כ בְּבֹאֵם אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
 יִרְחֲצוּ־מִיָּם וְלֹא יָמָתוּ אוֹ בְּגִשְׁתֶּם אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לְשֵׁרֶת
 לְהִקְטִיר אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה: כא וְרָחֲצוּ יְדֵיהֶם וְרַגְלֵיהֶם וְלֹא
 יָמָתוּ וְהָיְתָה לָהֶם חֻק־עוֹלָם לֹא וְלִזְרָעוֹ לְדֹרֹתָם:
 {פ}

כב וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: כג וְאַתָּה קַח־לָךְ
 בְּשָׂמִים רֹאשׁ מֵר־דָּרוֹר חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת וּקְנָמֶן־בֶּשֶׂם
 מִחֲצִיתוֹ חֲמִשִּׁים וּמֵאֲתָיִם וּקְנֵה־בֶשֶׂם חֲמִשִּׁים
 וּמֵאֲתָיִם: כד וְקֹדֶה חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְשֶׁמֶן
 זַיִת הֵינִי: כה וְעָשִׂיתָ אֹתוֹ שֶׁמֶן מִשְׁחַת־קֹדֶשׁ רָקָח
 מִרְקַחַת מַעֲשֶׂה רָקָח שֶׁמֶן מִשְׁחַת־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה:

¹⁷ Yahweh spoke to Moses: ¹⁸ "You must make a bronze basin on a bronze base, for washing. Set it between the Tent of Meeting and the altar and put water in it. ¹⁹ In it, Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and feet. ²⁰ When they enter the Tent of Meeting, they must wash in water lest they die, or when they come near the altar to minister, or to make an offering by fire to Yahweh. ²¹ They must wash their hands and feet lest they die. This is a lasting ordinance for them and their seed for all generations."

²² Yahweh spoke to Moses: ²³ "Take the choicest spices: of liquid myrrh five hundred shekels, of fragrant cinnamon, half as much, two hundred and fifty, and of scented cane two hundred and fifty; ²⁴ of cassia five hundred (reckoning by the sanctuary shekel) and one hin of olive oil; ²⁵ and you shall make of these a sacred anointing oil blended as by the perfumer; it shall be a holy anointing oil. ²⁶ With

¹⁷ This passage can be divided into 3 sections: instructions (17–18), rules for washing (19–20), and a reminder that this is a perpetual statute.

¹⁸ The metal for this object was obtained from the women, from their mirrors (see 38:8).

¹⁹ The phrase, 'in it', refers to the *water* in the basin.

²⁰ The literal translation of 'an offering by fire' is simply 'fire'.

²¹ Literally translated, 'for all generations' reads 'according to their generations'.

²² Some scholars consider the directives of this section to be late additions.

²³ 'Myrrh' is an aromatic substance that flows from the bark of certain trees in Arabia and Africa and then hardens; the hardened globules of the gum appear also to have been ground into a powder that would have been easy to store and would have been poured from a container.

²⁴ A 'hin' was equal to about 4½ litres.

²⁵ For this verse, the NJB reads, "These you are to compound into holy anointing oil, such a blend as the perfumer might make; it is to be holy anointing oil."

²⁶ The NJB & NETB have 'Testimony' in place of 'Covenant', here following the NRSV.

כו וּמִשַּׁחְתָּ בּוֹ אֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת אֲרוֹן הָעֵדֻת:
 כז וְאֶת־הַשֻּׁלְחָן וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו וְאֶת־הַמִּנְחָה וְאֶת־כְּלֵיהָ
 וְאֶת מִזְבַּח הַקְּטֹרֶת: כח וְאֶת־מִזְבַּח הָעֹלָה וְאֶת־כָּל־
 כֵּלָיו וְאֶת־הַכִּיֹּר וְאֶת־כַּנּוֹ: כט וְקִדַּשְׁתָּ אֹתָם וְהָיוּ קֹדֶשׁ
 קְדָשִׁים כָּל־הַנֹּגֵעַ בָּהֶם יִקְדָּשׁ: ל וְאֶת־אֹהֶלן וְאֶת־בְּגֵיו
 תִּמְשַׁח וְקִדַּשְׁתָּ אֹתָם לְכַהֵן לִי: לא וְאֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 תְּדַבֵּר לֵאמֹר שֶׁמֶן מִשַּׁח־תִּקְדָּשׁ יִהְיֶה זֶה לִי
 לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם: לב עַל־בָּשָׂר אָדָם לֹא יִסָּךְ וּבַמִּתְכַּנְתּוֹ לֹא
 תַעֲשׂוּ כָמֹהוּ קֹדֶשׁ הוּא קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם: לג אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
 יִרְקַח כָּמֹהוּ וְאֲשֶׁר יִתֵּן מִמֶּנּוּ עַל־זֶרַע וְנִכְרַת
 מֵעַמּוֹ: {ס}

לד וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה קַח־לָךְ סָמִים נָטָף | וּשְׁחַלֵּת
 וְחִלְבֵּנָה סָמִים וְלִבְנָה זָכָה בָּד בָּבֶד יִהְיֶה: לה וַעֲשִׂיתָ
 אֹתָהּ קְטֹרֶת רֶקַח מַעֲשֵׂה רֶקַח מִמֶּלֶח טָהוֹר קֹדֶשׁ:
 לו וּשְׁחַקֵּת מִמֶּנָּה הִדֵּק וְנָתַתָּה מִמֶּנָּה לִפְנֵי הָעֵדֻת

it, you are to anoint the Tent of Meeting, the Ark of the Covenant,
 27 the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and all its utensils, the
 altar of incense, 28 the altar of high-offerings with all its utensils, and
 the basin with its base. 29 You are to sanctify them so they will be
 most holy; whatever touches them will be holy. 30 And you must
 anoint Aaron and his sons and sanctify them, so they may serve me
 as priests. 31 Then you are to say to the Israelites, "This shall be my
 holy anointing oil for all generations. 32 It must not be applied to the
 body, nor are you to make any other of the same mixture; it is holy
 and must be holy to you. 33 Whoever copies the composition of it or
 uses it on a layman shall be cut off from his people."

34 Yahweh said to Moses, "Take sweet spices: storax, onycha, galban-
 um, sweet spices and pure frankincense in equal parts, 35 and
 compound an incense, blended as by a perfumer, salted, pure and
 holy. 36 Crush a part of it into a fine powder and put some of this in

27 In place of 'utensils', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'furnishings' (1st instance) and 'accessories' (2nd instance).

28 The term, 'high-offerings' translates עֹלָה, connecting it to a name for God (עֶלְיוֹן – 'Most High God') – the offering was for God alone.

29 In place of 'be most holy', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'excel in holiness'.

30 The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with 'be priests in my service'.

31 In place of 'throughout your generations', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'from generation to generation'.

32 Without an expressed subject, the verb 'applied' may be treated as a passive. Any common, personal use would be a complete desecration.

33 The rabbinic interpretation of the phrase 'cut off' is a penalty imposed by heaven: life will be cut short and the person could die childless.

34 The formula for the incense, as for the oil (vv. 22–25) was a priestly secret.

35 מִמֶּלֶח ('salted') is a passive participle; since there is no meaning like that for the Pual form, the word could be taken as 'mixed' (as Tg Onqelos).

36 The literal translation of 'crush' (here following the NJB) is 'beat' (as NRSV & NETB).

בְּאֶהֱל מוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר אֶנְעֵד לָךְ שָׁמָּה קֹדֶשׁ קֹדָשִׁים
תִּהְיֶה לָכֶם: 37 וְהִקְטַרְתָּ אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה בְּמִתְכַנְּתָהּ לֹא
תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ תִּהְיֶה לָךְ לַיהוָה: 38 אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-
יַעֲשֶׂה כְּמוֹהָ לְהַרְיֵחַ בָּהּ וְנִכְרַת מֵעַמּוֹ:
{ס}

front of the Covenant in the Tent of Meeting, where I shall meet with
you. You must regard it as most holy. ³⁷ You are not to make any
incense of similar composition for your own use. You must consider
it holy to Yahweh. Whoever copies it shall be cut off from his
people.”

³⁷ On the phrase ‘cut off’, see #33.

שמות פרק לא

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב רֹאה קִרְאתִי בְשֵׁם
בְּצַלְאֵל בֶּן־אוּרִי בֶן־חֹר לְמִטֵּה יְהוּדָה: ג וְאִמְלֵא אֹתוֹ
רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בְּחָכְמָה וּבִתְבוּנָה וּבְדַעַת וּבְכָל־מְלָאכָה:
ד לַחֲשֹׁב מַחֲשָׁבֹת לַעֲשׂוֹת בַּזָּהָב וּבַכֶּסֶף וּבַנְּחֹשֶׁת:
ה וּבַחֲרֹשֶׁת אֲבֹן לְמִלֵּאת וּבַחֲרֹשֶׁת עֵץ לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּכָל־
מְלָאכָה: ו וְאֲנִי הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי אֹתוֹ אֶת אֹהֲלִיאָב בֶּן־
אֲחִיסָמֶךְ לְמִטֵּה־דָן וּבִלְבַּב כָּל־חָכְמָה לֵב נָתַתִּי חָכְמָה
וַעֲשׂוּ אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִךָ: ז אֵת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֵת־
הָאָרֶץ לַעֲדוֹת וְאֵת־הַכַּפֹּרֶת אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו וְאֵת כָּל־כְּלֵי
הָאֹהֶל: ח וְאֵת־הַשְּׁלֶחָן וְאֵת־כְּלָיו וְאֵת־הַמִּנְחָה
הַטְּהֹרָה וְאֵת־כָּל־כְּלֵיהָ וְאֵת מִזְבַּח הַקְּטֹרֶת: ט וְאֵת־
מִזְבַּח הָעֹלָה וְאֵת־כָּל־כְּלָיו וְאֵת־הַכִּיּוֹר וְאֵת־כַּנּוֹ:

EXODUS 31

¹ Yahweh spoke to Moses, ² "See, I have singled out Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. ³ I have filled him with the spirit of God, in skill, perception, and knowledge of every kind of craft: ⁴ to make artistic designs and work in gold, silver and bronze; ⁵ in cutting stones to be set, in carving wood, in every kind of craft. ⁶ And I give him a partner, Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and to all the men who have skill I have given more, so they may make all I have commanded you: ⁷ the Tent of Meeting; the Ark of the Covenant; the mercy seat that covers it, and all the furnishings of the tent; ⁸ the table and all its utensils; the pure lamp-stand and all its accessories; the altar of incense; ⁹ the altar of high-offerings with all its utensils; the basin with its stand; ¹⁰ the sumptuous vestments,

EXODUS 31

- ¹ Literally translated, this verse reads, "And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying."
² The literal translation of 'singled out' is 'called by name'; 'Bezalel' (בְּצַלְאֵל) is also mentioned in 1Ch 2:20.
³ The 'spirit of God' was considered the source of outstanding gifts, considered as a sharing to some degree in divine wisdom.
⁴ 'To make artistic designs' translates לַחֲשֹׁב מַחֲשָׁבֹת ('to devise devices'); the infinitive emphasises that Bezalel will be able to design or plan works that are artistic or skilful.
⁵ An alternative reading for 'in cutting stones to be set' is 'in cutting and setting stones'.
⁶ 'Oholiab' (אֹהֲלִיאָב) is otherwise unknown.
⁷ The literal translation of 'furnishings' is 'vessels'.
⁸ The NJB here repeats 'furnishings' in place of 'utensils', here following the NRSV.
⁹ The term, 'high-offering' translates עֹלָה, connecting it to a name for God (עֶלְיוֹן - 'Most High God') - the offering was for God alone.
¹⁰ In place of 'sumptuous', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'finely woven'.

וְאֵת בְּגָדֵי הַשָּׂרָד וְאֵת־בְּגָדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְאַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן
וְאֵת־בְּגָדֵי בָנָיו לְכַהֵן: יָא וְאֵת שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְאֵת־
קְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים לְקַדֵּשׁ כָּל אֲשֶׁר־צִוִּיתִךָ יַעֲשׂוּ: {פ}
יב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: יג וְאַתָּה דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר אַךְ אֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ כִּי אוֹת הוּא
בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם לִדְעַת כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה מְקַדְּשְׁכֶם:
יד וְשִׁמְרַתֶּם אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת כִּי קֹדֶשׁ הוּא לָכֶם מִחֻלְלֶיהָ
מוֹת יוֹמָת כִּי כָל־הָעֹשֶׂה בָּהּ מְלָאכָה וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ
הַהוּא מִקֶּרֶב עַמִּיהָ: טו שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים יַעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה
וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת שַׁבְּתוֹן קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה כָּל־הָעֹשֶׂה
מְלָאכָה בַּיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת מוֹת יוֹמָת: טז וְשִׁמְרוּ בְנֵי־
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לְדֹרֹתָם
בְּרִית עוֹלָם: יז בֵּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹת הוּא לְעָלָם

sacred vestments for Aaron the priest, and vestments for his sons, for the priestly functions;¹¹ the anointing oil and the fragrant incense for the Sanctuary. In this, they are to do exactly as I have directed you."

¹² Yahweh said to Moses, ¹³ "Tell the Israelites, "You must keep my Sabbaths, because the Sabbath is a sign between myself and you for all generations to show that I, Yahweh, sanctify you. ¹⁴ You must keep the Sabbath; you shall hold it sacred. Whoever profanes it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day shall be cut off from his people. ¹⁵ Six days shall work be done, but the seventh must be a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to Yahweh. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death. ¹⁶ The Israelites are to keep the Sabbath, observing it throughout their generations: as a perpetual covenant. ¹⁷ Between myself and the Israelites the Sabbath

¹¹ The NSRV & NETB have 'holy place' instead of 'Sanctuary', here following the NJB.

¹² There are some questions about the arrangement of the book. The placement of vv. 12–17 should come as no surprise: after the instructions and preparation for work, a Sabbath day when work could not be done had to be legislated; in all that they were going to do, they must not violate the Sabbath.

¹³ The Sabbath day is a day of complete cessation; no labour or work could be done. The point here is that God's covenant people must faithfully keep the sign of the covenant as a living commemoration of the finished work of Yahweh, and as an active part in their sanctification.

¹⁴ The clause 'whoever profanes it' is all from one word (מְחַלְלֶיהָ), the Piel plural participle with a 3F suffix (literally, 'defilers of it'). This form serves as the subject of the sentence; treating the Sabbath like an ordinary day would profane it, make it common.

¹⁵ The expression 'Sabbath of complete rest' translates שַׁבְּת שַׁבְּתוֹן; the 2nd noun, the modifying genitive, is an abstract noun: the repetition provides the superlative idea that complete rest is the order of the day.

¹⁶ The NJB has 'from generation to generation' in place of 'throughout their generations', here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁷ In place of 'was refreshed', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'drew breath'.

כִּי־שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ
 וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת וַיִּנָּפֶשׁ: {ס} is a sign forever that, in six days, Yahweh made the heavens and the
 וַיִּתֵּן אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כְּבִלְתּוֹ לְדַבֵּר אֵתוֹ בְּהַר סִינַי שְׁנֵי לָחַת הָעֵדֻת לִפְנֵי אֵבֶן כְּתָבִים בְּאֶצְבָּע אֱלֹהִים: 18 When he finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, he gave
 Moses two tablets of the Covenant, stone tablets inscribed by the
 finger of God.

¹⁸ The tablets were inscribed with the Decalogue, called the Covenant (see #25:16), which contained the stipulations of the Law. Ancient Eastern treaties were similarly inscribed on tablets or on steles and preserved in a shrine.

שמות פרק לב

EXODUS 32

א וַיֵּרָא הָעָם כִּי־בָשַׁשׁ מֹשֶׁה לָרֶדֶת מִן־הָהָר וַיִּקְהָל
הָעָם עַל־אַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו קוּם | עֲשֵׂה־לָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים
אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ כִּי־זֶה | מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֵעֲלָנוּ
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מַה־הָיָה לוֹ: ב וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים
אֶהְיֶה לָּהֶם | וַיִּתְּפֹקֻם אֱלֹהִים: ג וַיִּתְּפֹקוּ כָל־הָעָם אֶת־נִזְמֵי
הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל־אַהֲרֹן: ד וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם
וַיִּצֶר אוֹתוֹ בַּחֶרֶט וַיַּעֲשֵׂהוּ עֵגֶל מִסַּכָּה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֵעֲלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: ה וַיֵּרָא
אֶהְיֶה לָּהֶם | וַיִּבְנוּ מִזְבֵּחַ לִפְנֵי וַיִּקְרָא אֶהְיֶה לָּהֶם | וַיֹּאמֶר חָג לַיהוָה
מָחָר: ו וַיִּשְׁפְּלוּ מִמַּחֲרֹת וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּגְשׁוּ שְׁלָמִים

1 When the people saw that Moses delayed coming down the mountain, they gathered round Aaron and said to him, "Come, make us gods to go before us; this Moses, the man who brought us up from Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." 2 Aaron said to them, "Take the gold rings from the ears of your wives, your sons, and daughters, and bring them to me." 3 All the people took the gold rings from their ears and brought them to Aaron. 4 He took the gold from them, melted it down and cast an effigy of a calf. They cried, "Here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up from Egypt!" 5 Seeing this, Aaron built an altar before it and said, "Tomorrow will be a feast to Yahweh." 6 Early the next day, they made high-offerings

EXODUS 32

- ¹ The meaning of the verb here translated as 'delayed' is properly 'caused shame', meaning that Moses caused disappointment because he was not coming back (see also Jg 5:28 for the delay of Sisera's chariots). In place of 'gods', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'a god'; the plural translation is required here (although the form itself could be singular in meaning) because the verb that follows is plural.
- ² Some argue that Aaron simply did not have the resolution that Moses did and, wanting to keep peace, he gave in to the crowd. Possibly, Aaron's request for the gold was a form of procrastination but the people quickly obliged, so he had no alternative but to enact the plan.
- ³ In place of 'all the people', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'they'.
- ⁴ Alternatively: "He took them from their hands and fashioned the metal, with a graving tool, into an effigy of a calf." The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.
- ⁵ 'Feast' translates חָג, the pilgrim's festival; this was the word used by Moses for their pilgrimage into the wilderness. Aaron seems here to be trying to do what Moses had intended they do: make a feast to Yahweh at Sinai, but his efforts will not compete with the idol.
- ⁶ The eating and drinking accompanied a festival to Yahweh, a dedication of the new cultic symbol (2S 6:17-19). The NJB has 'amuse themselves' in place of 'revel', here following the NRSV. The term, 'high-offerings' translates עֹלָה, connecting it to a name for God (עֶלְיוֹן - 'Most High God').

וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֵאכֹל וּשְׂתוֹ וַיִּקְמוּ לַצַּחֲקִים:
{פ}

וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵּדָרֹד כִּי שָׁחַת עַמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר
הָעֲלִיתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: ^ח סָרוּ מִהֵר מִן-הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר
צִוִּיתָם עָשׂוּ לָהֶם עֵגֹל מִסֶּכֶה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ-לּוֹ וַיִּזְבְּחוּ-לּוֹ
וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הָעֲלוּךָ מֵאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם: ^ט וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה רְאִיתִי אֶת-הָעָם
הַזֶּה וְהִנֵּה עֹסֵק-שֶׁה-עֲרֹף הוּא: ^י וְעַתָּה הִנֵּיחָה לִּי
וַיַּחֲרֹאֲפֵי בָהֶם וְאָכְלָם וְאַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָךְ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל:

^{יא} וַיַּחֲלֵ מֹשֶׁה אֶת-פָּנָיו יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו וַיֹּאמֶר לָמָּה יְהוָה
יַחֲרֶה אַפֶּךָ בְּעַמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּכַחַ

and peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, then
got up to revel.

⁷ And Yahweh said to Moses, “Go down now! Your people whom
you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly. ⁸ They have quickly
turned from the way I commanded them; they have cast themselves
an image of a calf, worshipped it, sacrificed to it, and said, “Here are
your gods, Israel, who brought you up from Egypt!” ⁹ Yahweh said
to Moses, “I know these people, how obstinate they are! ¹⁰ Leave me,
now, so my anger can blaze against them and consume them; and I
shall make a great nation from you.”

¹¹ Moses implored Yahweh his God, saying, “Yahweh, why does
your wrath blaze out against your people, whom you brought out of

⁷ By giving the people to Moses in this way, God is saying that they have no longer any right to claim him as their God, since they have shared his honour with another. This is God’s ‘tit-for-tat’ response to their “Here are your gods” (v. 4). The use of these pronoun changes also would form an appeal to Moses to respond, since Moses knew that God had brought them up from Egypt.

⁸ The verb ‘turned from’ is a perfect tense, reflecting the present perfect nuance (‘they have turned from’) and are still disobedient; but the verb is modified with the adverb (actually a Piel infinitive absolute), ‘quickly’: it has only been a couple of weeks or so since they heard the voice of God prohibiting this.

⁹ The verse is not present in the LXX.

¹⁰ God directs Moses *not to intercede* for the people; the Jewish interpretation is that there is a profound paradox in God’s words: he vows the severest punishment, but then suddenly conditions it on Moses agreement. He allows himself to be persuaded – that is what a mediator is for; God could have slammed the door (as when Moses wanted to go into the Promised Land). Moreover, by alluding to the promise to Abraham, God gave Moses the strongest reason to intercede.

¹¹ Moses is represented as the great mediator: at the time of the plagues (5:22–23, 8:4, 9:28, 10:17); on behalf of his sister Miriam (Nb 12:13); and especially on behalf of the people on their journey through the desert (11–14, 30–32, Nb 11:2, 14:13–19, 16:22, 21:7, Dt 9:25–29). This function is also recalled by Ps 99:6, 106:23, Si 45:3 and Jr 15:1 (see also #2M 15:14).

גָּדוֹל וּבְיָד חֲזָקָה: יִבְלֶמָה יֹאמְרוּ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר בְּרָעָה
הוֹצִיאָם לְהַרְגֵם אֶתְכֶם בַּהָרִים וּלְכַלְתֶּם מֵעַל פְּנֵי
הָאָדָמָה שׁוֹב מִחֲרוֹן אַפָּי וְהִנַּחְם עַל־הָרָעָה לְעַמִּי:
יִזְכֹּר לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדֶּיךָ אֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לָהֶם בְּךָ וַתְּדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אַרְבֶּה אֶת־זֶרְעֲכֶם
כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכָל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי אֲתָן
לְזֶרְעֲכֶם וְנָחְלוּ לְעֹלָם: יִי וַיִּנָּחֶם יְהוָה עַל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר
דִּבֶּר לַעֲשׂוֹת לְעַמּוֹ:

{פ}

טו וַיֵּרֶד מֹשֶׁה מִן־הָהָר וּשְׁנֵי לַחַת הָעֵדֻת בְּיָדוֹ
לַחַת כְּתָבִים מִשְׁנֵי עֲבְרִיָּהֶם מִזֶּה וּמִזֶּה הֵם כְּתָבִים:
טז וְהַלַּחַת מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים הֵמָּה וְהַמִּכְתָּב מִכְתָּב
אֱלֹהִים הוּא חֲרוּת עַל־הַלַּחַת:
יז וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת־קוֹל הָעָם בְּרָעָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־
מֹשֶׁה קוֹל מִלְחָמָה בַּמַּחֲנֶה: יח וַיֹּאמֶר

Egypt with great power and mighty hand? ¹² Why let the Egyptians say, “It was in treachery that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and wipe them off the face of the earth?” Leave your fierce wrath; repent of this evil against your people. ¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants to whom by your own self you swore, saying: I will make your seed as the stars of heaven and all this land that I promised I will give to your seed and they shall inherit it forever.” ¹⁴ And Yahweh relented over the evil he said he would do to his people.

¹⁵ Moses made his way down the mountain with the two tablets of the Covenant in his hands, tablets inscribed on both sides, inscribed on the front and on the back. ¹⁶ The tablets were the work of God and the writing was God’s writing engraved on the tablets.

¹⁷ When Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting, he told Moses “There is the sound of battle in the camp.” ¹⁸ He said:

¹² The verb ‘repent’ (or ‘relent’), when used of God, is certainly an anthropomorphism; it expresses the deep pain that one would have over a situation. Earlier, God repented that he had made humans (Gn 6:6); here, Moses is asking God to repent/relent over the judgment he was about to bring, meaning that he should be moved by such compassion that there would be no judgment like that.

¹³ In place of ‘Israel’, here following the MT and NRSV, the NJB has ‘Jacob’. The WEBBE has ‘offspring’ in place of ‘seed’.

¹⁴ God is not bound inflexibly to an announced plan but is free to change a course of action in a manner consistent with the divine purpose (Gn 6:5–6, Am 7:3, 6).

¹⁵ The NJB & NETB have ‘Testimony’ in place of ‘Covenant’, here following the NRSV.

¹⁶ After the 1st instance of the word ‘writing’, the NJB adds ‘on them’; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

¹⁷ The NJB omits the opening ‘when’, here following the NRSV.

¹⁸ Literally translated, this poem (here following the NJB) reads,

אֵין קוֹל עֲנוֹת גְּבוּרָה
וְאֵין קוֹל עֲנוֹת חֲלוּשָׁה
קוֹל עֲנוֹת אֲנָכִי שִׁמְעִי:

"No song of victory is this sound,
no wailing for defeat this sound,
it is the sound of chanting that I hear."

^ט וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר קָרַב אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיֵּרָא אֶת־הָעֵגֶל
וּמַחֲלֹת וַיַּחַר־אָף מֹשֶׁה וַיִּשְׁלֹךְ מִיָּדוֹ אֶת־הַלְחָת
וַיִּשְׁבֹּר אֶת־תַּחַת הָהָר: ^כ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָעֵגֶל אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ
וַיִּשְׂרֹף בָּאֵשׁ וַיִּטְחֶנּוּ עַד אֲשֶׁר־דָּק וַיִּזֹּר עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם
וַיִּשְׁק אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^{כא} וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן מֶה־
עָשָׂה לָךְ הָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי־הִבֵּאתָ עָלָי חַטָּאת גְּדוֹלָה:
^{כב} וַיֹּאמֶר אַהֲרֹן אֶל־יָחִיד אָף אֲדֹנָי אֵתָּה יִדְעָתָּ אֶת־
הָעָם כִּי בָרַע הוּא: ^{כג} וַיֹּאמְרוּ לִי עֲשֵׂה־לָנוּ אֱלֹהִים
אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ כִּי־זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מֶה־הָיָה לוֹ: ^{כד} וַאֲמַר לָהֶם
לְמִי זֶהב הִתְפָּרְקוּ וַיִּתְּנוּ־לִי וְאֶשְׁלַכְהוּ בָאֵשׁ וַיֵּצֵא
הָעֵגֶל הַזֶּה:

¹⁹ As he approached the camp and saw the calf and the groups dancing, Moses' anger blazed. He threw down the tablets he was holding and broke them at the foot of the mountain. ²⁰ He took the calf they had made, burned it, ground it into powder, scattered on the water, and made the Israelites drink it. ²¹ To Aaron Moses said, "What did this people do to you, for you to bring so great a sin on them?" ²² "Let not my lord's anger burn hot," Aaron answered. "You know how prone this people is to evil. ²³ They said to me, 'Make us gods to go at our head; this Moses, the man who brought us up from Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.'" ²⁴ So, I said to them, "Who has gold?" and they took it off and brought it to me. I threw it into the fire and out came this calf."

*"This is not the sound of answering might,
and it is not the sound of answering weakness;
it is answering in song that I hear."*

¹⁹ The breaking of the tablets symbolised that the Covenant relationship had been broken.

²⁰ The water thus became the 'water of cursing' (see Nb 5:11-31), but in this case was not administered as an ordeal, unlike the latter text, since the entire people is considered guilty.

²¹ The rebuke of Aaron (see Nb 12) stands in contrast to his priestly prestige and intercessory role as described in Chs. 25-31.

²² Literally translated, this verse ends, "you know this people, that on evil it is."

²³ The NJB has 'a god' in place of 'gods', here following the MT (אֱלֹהִים) & NRSV (see #1).

²⁴ Aaron feebly disclaims responsibility by saying that he did not make the calf: it emerged from the fire by itself.

כה וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָעָם כִּי פָרַע הוּא כִּי־פָרְעָה אַהֲרֹן
 לְשִׁמְצָה בְּקִמְיָהֶם: כו וַיַּעֲמֵד מֹשֶׁה בַּשַּׁעַר הַמַּחֲנֶה
 וַיֹּאמֶר מִי לַיהוָה אֵלַי וַיֹּאסְפוּ אֵלָיו כָּל־בְּנֵי לֵוִי:
 כז וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁימוּ
 אִישׁ־חַרְבּוֹ עַל־יָרְכוֹ עֲבְרוּ וּשׁוּבוּ מִשַּׁעַר לְשַׁעַר
 בַּמַּחֲנֶה וְהָרְגוּ אִישׁ־אֶת־אָחִיו וְאִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ
 אֶת־קָרְבּוֹ: כח וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְנֵי־לֵוִי כַּדְבָר מֹשֶׁה וַיִּפֹּל מִן־
 הָעָם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כַּשְּׁלֹשֶׁת אַלְפֵי אִישׁ: כט וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה
 מֵלֹאן יָדְכֶם הַיּוֹם לַיהוָה כִּי אִישׁ בָּבְנוּ וּבְאָחִיו וּלְתַת
 עֲלֵיכֶם הַיּוֹם בְּרָכָה:

ל וַיְהִי מִמָּחָרָת וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם אַתֶּם חָטֵאתֶם
 חֲטָאָה גְדֹלָה וְעַתָּה אֵעֲלֶה אֶל־יְהוָה אוֹלִי אֲכַפְּרָה
 בְּעַד חֲטֹאתֵיכֶם: לא ויֵשֶׁב מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי
 חָטָא הָעָם הַזֶּה חֲטָאָה גְדֹלָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם אֱלֹהֵי זָהָב:
 לב וְעַתָּה אֲסִיתֵשָׂא חֲטֹאתֶם וְאֲסִיֵּאִן מִחֲנִי נָא

²⁵ When Moses saw the people so out of hand (for Aaron had let them run wild, to the derision of their enemies), ²⁶ Moses stood at the gate of the camp and shouted, “Who is for Yahweh? To me!” And all the sons of Levi rallied to him; ²⁷ and he said to them, “Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, “Each man gird his sword and quarter the camp from gate to gate; and each of you kill your brother, your friend, your neighbour.”” ²⁸ The Levites did what Moses ordered, and about three thousand of the people fell that day. ²⁹ Moses said, “Today, you have consecrated yourselves to Yahweh at the cost of a son or a brother, so he grants you a blessing today.”

³⁰ The next day, Moses said to the people, “You have committed a grave sin. But now I shall go up to Yahweh: perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” ³¹ Moses returned to Yahweh and said, “Alas, this people has committed a grave sin, making for themselves gods of gold. ³² Yet now, if you will only forgive their sin – but if not,

²⁵ ‘Derision’ is from a Hebrew word of uncertain meaning; their foes would have mocked and derided them when they heard that they abandoned the God who led them out of Egypt. The NJB has ‘lapse into idolatry’ in place of ‘run wild’, here following the NRSV.

²⁶ The NJB has ‘he’ in place of ‘Moses’, here following the MT & NRSV.

²⁷ The instructions were probably intended to mean to kill the guilty leaders whether they were brothers, friends or relatives.

²⁸ The NJB and NETB have ‘died’ in place of ‘fell’, here following the MT & NRSV.

²⁹ ‘You have consecrated yourselves’ (literally, ‘you have filled your hands’) follows the LXX (Ἐπληρώσατε τὰς χεῖρας ὑμῶν); the MT reads ‘consecrate yourselves’.

³⁰ The literal translation of ‘you have committed a grave sin’ (as NJB) is ‘you have sinned a great sin’, a cognate accusative.

³¹ As before (v. 30), the cognate accusative is used here: it would literally be ‘this people has sinned a great sin’.

³² The ‘book’ refers to that recording human deeds and describing human fate (see Ps 69:28 & 139:16); Moses means that he wants to die.

מִסְפָּרְךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ: ^לוַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה מִי
אֲשֶׁר חָטָא־לִי אֶמְחֶנּוּ מִסִּפְרִי: ^{לד}וְעַתָּה לֵךְ נִחֵה אֶת־
הָעָם אֶל אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּרְתִּי לְךָ הִנֵּה מִלֹּאכֵי יֵלֵךְ לִפְנֵיךָ
וּבַיּוֹם פִּקְדִי וּפְקַדְתִּי עֲלֵהֶם חֲטֹאתָם: ^{לה}וַיִּגַּף יְהוָה
אֶת־הָעָם עַל אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ אֶת־הָעֵגֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
אַהֲרֹן: {ס}

then blot me out from the book you have written.” ³³ Yahweh answered Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me I shall blot out from my book. ³⁴ Go now, lead the people to the place of which I told you; my angel shall go before you but, on the day I visit, I shall punish them for their sin.” ³⁵ Yahweh plagued the people for moulding the calf, the one that Aaron had made.

³³ In place of ‘*whoever*’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘*the man who*’.

³⁴ The NRSV has ‘*when the day comes for punishment*’ in place of ‘*on the day I visit*’, here following NETB; the NJB has here ‘*on the day of my visitation*’.

³⁵ The verse is difficult because of the double reference to the making of the calf. The NJPS translation tries to reconcile the two by reading ‘*for what they did with the calf that Aaron had made*’; this is not a good translation based on syntactical grounds, and the last three words may be a clumsy secondary addition. Strict chronology is not always kept, and so the plague here may very well refer to the killing of the three thousand.

שמות פרק לג

EXODUS 33

א וַיֹּדְבֵר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵּךְ עֲלֵה מִזֶּה אֶתָּה וְהָעָם
אֲשֶׁר הָעֵלִית מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי
לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלַיַּעֲקֹב וְלֵאמֹר לְזֶרַעְךָ אֶתְנַנֶּה:
ב וְשַׁלַּחְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ מַלְאָךְ וְגִרְשָׁתִי אֶת־הַכְּנַעֲנִי הָאֹמְרִי
וְהַחִתִּי וְהַפְּרִזִּי הַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי: ג אֶל־אֶרֶץ זִבְתַּח־חֶלֶב
וְדָבַשׁ כִּי לֹא אֵעָלֶה בְּקִרְבְּךָ כִּי עִם־קִשָּׁה־עֲרֹף אֶתָּה
פֶּן־אֲכַלְךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ: ד וַיִּשְׁמַע הָעָם אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה
וַיִּתְאַבְּלוּ וְלֹא־שָׂתוּ אִישׁ עֲדוֹן עָלָיו:

ה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֲמַר אֶל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתֶּם
עִם־קִשָּׁה־עֲרֹף רָגַע אֶחָד אֵעָלֶה בְּקִרְבְּךָ וְכִלְיֹתֶיךָ
וְעֵתָה הוֹרֵד עֲדִיךָ מֵעַלְיָךְ וְאַדְעָה מָה אֲעֲשֶׂה־לָּךְ:
ו וַיִּתְנַצְּלוּ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־עֲדֵימָם מֵהָר חוֹרֵב:

ז וּמֹשֶׁה יָקַח אֶת־הָאֹהֶל וַנִּטָּה־לּוֹ מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה
הַרְחֵק מִן־הַמַּחֲנֶה וְקָרָא לוֹ אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַהֲיָה כָּל־

¹ And Yahweh said to Moses, "Go up from this place, with the people that you brought out of Egypt, and go to the land I swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob I would give their seed. ² I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. ³ Go on to a land where milk and honey flow. I will not go amongst you – a headstrong people – lest I consume you on the way. ⁴ When the people heard these stern words, they mourned and no one wore his ornaments.

⁵ For Yahweh said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, "You are an obstinate people. If I go with you for one moment, I shall consume you. Take off your ornaments, then, that I may know what to do to you!"' ⁶ The Israelites stripped themselves of their ornaments from Mount Horeb onwards.

⁷ Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp; he called it the Tent of Meeting. Anyone seeking

EXODUS 33

- ¹ The literal translation of 'go up' is 'go, go up'; the two imperatives underscore the immediacy of the demand.
- ² The accompanying angel is Yahweh's representative, or alter ego (32:34), showing that the people will not be God-forsaken.
- ³ Yahweh himself will not accompany the sinful people, lest divine holiness consume them. This verse continues the command to 'go up' (v. 1), since it begins with 'to a land'; the intervening clauses are therefore parenthetical, but the translation is simplified by supplying the verb.
- ⁴ The people would rather have risked divine discipline than to go without Yahweh.
- ⁵ The verse simply begins 'and Yahweh said'; but it is clearly meant to be explanatory for the preceding action of the people.
- ⁶ Vv. 1-6, seem inconsistent: Yahweh orders the people to do what they have already done of their own accord.
- ⁷ The pronoun in the phrase, 'pitch it (for him)', stands for 'Moses', 'Yahweh' or 'the Ark' (which is masculine in Hebrew).

מִבֶּקֶשׁ יְהוָה יֵצֵא אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה:
 ח וְהָיָה כַּצָּאת מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָאֹהֶל יִקּוּמוּ כָל־הָעָם וְנִצְּבוּ
 אִישׁ פֶּתַח אֹהֶלוֹ וְהִבִּיטוּ אַחֲרֵי מֹשֶׁה עַד־בֹּאוֹ
 הָאֹהֶלָה: ט וְהָיָה כִּבָּא מֹשֶׁה הָאֹהֶלָה יֵרֵד עִמּוֹד הָעֲנָן
 וְעָמַד פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל וְדִבֶּר עִם־מֹשֶׁה: י וְרָאָה כָל־הָעָם
 אֶת־עִמּוֹד הָעֲנָן עָמַד פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל וְקָם כָל־הָעָם
 וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ אִישׁ פֶּתַח אֹהֶלוֹ: יא וְדִבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה
 פָּנִים אֶל־פָּנִים כַּאֲשֶׁר יְדַבֵּר אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ וְשָׁב אֶל־
 הַמַּחֲנֶה וּמִשְׁרָתוֹ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נּוּן נָעַר לֹא יָמִישׁ מִתּוֹךְ
 הָאֹהֶל: {פ}

יב וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוָה רְאֵה אֶתָּה אָמַר אֵלַי הַעַל
 אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאַתָּה לֹא הוֹדַעְתָּנִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־תִּשְׁלַח
 עִמִּי וְאַתָּה אָמַרְתָּ יִדְעִיתִיךָ בִּשְׁם וְגַם־מִצָּאת חֵן
 בְּעֵינַי: יג וְעַתָּה אֲסֵנָא מִצָּאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ הוֹדַעְנִי נָא
 אֶת־דֶּרְכְּךָ וְאִדְעֶךָ לְמַעַן אֶמְצָאֲחֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְרָאָה כִּי

Yahweh would go out to the Tent of Meeting, outside the camp.
 8 Whenever Moses went out to the Tent, all the people would rise, stand at the door of their tents and watch Moses until he reached the Tent; 9 the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance to the Tent, and he would speak with Moses. 10 When they saw the pillar of cloud stationed at the entrance to the Tent, all the people would rise and bow low, each at the door of his tent. 11 Yahweh would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then he would turn back to the camp but the young man who was his servant, Joshua son of Nun, would not leave the Tent.

12 Moses said to Yahweh, "See, you have said to me, "Bring this people up," but you do not let me know who you will send with me. Yet you have said, "I know you by name and you have won my favour." 13 If I have won your favour, please show me your ways, so that I may know you and win your favour; and see that this nation is

8 While the Ark symbolised the nearness and presence of Yahweh, the Tent symbolised divine distance and transcendence; hence, Yahweh used to descend from time to time to meet with Moses.

9 The verbs 'stand' and 'speak' are perfect tenses with *vav* consecutive.

10 All the main verbs in this verse are perfect tenses continuing the customary sequence. The idea is that they would get up (rise) when the cloud was there, and then worship, meaning in part bow down; when the cloud was not there, there was access to seek God.

11 This paragraph appears to be an interpolation from another tradition. According to the main narrative, (v. 20) it would be impossible for Moses to speak *face to face* with Yahweh. Here, Joshua, rather than Aaron the priest, is custodian of the Tent.

12 The phrase 'I know you by name' means, in effect, 'I have chosen you'.

13 The verb 'see' (an imperative) is a request for God to acknowledge this Israel is his people by providing the divine leadership needed; so, Moses' main appeal will be for the people and not himself. To underscore this, he repeats 'see' the way the section opened.

עֲמַךְ הִגִּיז הַזֶּה: ^יוַיֹּאמֶר פָּנֶי יֵלְכוּ וְהִנַּחְתִּי לָךְ:
^{טו}וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אִם־אֵין פָּנֶיךָ הַלְכִים אֶל־תַּעֲלֵנוּ מִזֶּה:
^{טז}וּבִמָּה | יֻדָּע אִפּוֹא כִי־מִצָּאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אָנִי וְעַמֶּךָ
הֲלוֹא בְּלִכְתָּךְ עִמָּנוּ וְנִפְלִינוּ אָנִי וְעַמֶּךָ מִכָּל־הָעַם
אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה:
{פ}

your people.” ¹⁴ He said, “My presence will go with you and I will give you rest.” ¹⁵ He said to him, “If your presence is not going, do not make us leave here. ¹⁶ For, how can it be known that your people and I enjoy your favour, unless you go with us? So, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from all the peoples on the face of the earth.”

^{יז}וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה גַּם אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר
דִּבַּרְתָּ אֲעֲשֶׂה כִי־מִצָּאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶי וְאֶדְעָךָ בְּשֵׁם:
^{יח}וַיֹּאמֶר הִרְאֵנִי נָא אֶת־כְּבוֹדְךָ: ^{יט}וַיֹּאמֶר אָנִי אֶעֱבִיר
כָּל־טוֹבִי עַל־פָּנֶיךָ וְקִרְאתִי בְשֵׁם יְהוָה לְפָנֶיךָ וְחִנַּתִּי
אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֲחֹן וְרַחֲמֹתִי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֶרְחַם: ^כוַיֹּאמֶר
לֹא תוּכַל לִרְאֹת אֶת־פָּנֶי כִּי לֹא־יִרְאֶנִי הָאָדָם וְחָי:

¹⁷ Yahweh said to Moses, “Again I will do as you ask; for, you have won my favour and I know you by name.” ¹⁸ Moses said, “Show me your glory, I pray.” ¹⁹ And he said, “I will let all my goodness pass before you, and I will pronounce before you the name Yahweh. I will be gracious to whom I will, and I show pity to whom I please. ²⁰ He said, “You cannot see my face; for, man cannot see me and live.”

¹⁴ This verse follows a Deuteronomic theme (see Dt 12:10, 25:19, Jos 1:13, 22:4, 23:1 and Ps 95:11), signifying the fulfilment of the promises.

¹⁵ After ‘going’, the NJB adds ‘with us’; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

¹⁶ Israel is a unique people because it undertakes a special historical pilgrimage, with Yahweh leading them into the future (Nb 23:9).

¹⁷ The verb translated ‘know’ is a preterite with the *vav* consecutive, judging from the pointing; it then follows in sequence the verb ‘you have won my favour’, meaning ‘you stand in that favour’, and so it means ‘I have known you’ and still do (equal to the present perfect). The emphasis, however, is on the results of the action, and so ‘I know you’.

¹⁸ Moses now wants to see the glory of Yahweh, more than what he had already seen and experienced; he wanted to see God in all his majesty. The LXX translates this without a word for ‘glory’ or ‘honour’; instead, it uses the pronoun σεαυτοῦ (‘yourself’) – show me the real You.

¹⁹ God’s uttering of his own name to Moses is tantamount to a revelation of his true nature and identity (see 3:13–15 and footnotes thereto).

²⁰ God’s sanctity is so removed from human unworthiness (see #Lv 17:1) that anyone who looks on God (19:21, Lv 16:2, Nb 4:20 & #Nb 6:27), or even hears his voice (20:19, Dt 5:24–26, 18) must perish. For this reason, Moses (3:6), Elijah (1K 19:13) and even the Seraphim (Is 6:2), cover their faces in his presence. Anyone who remains alive after seeing God is overwhelmed with astonishment and gratitude (Gn 32:31, Dt 5:24), and with awe (Jg 6:22–23, 13:22, Is 6:5).

כא וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה הִנֵּה מָקוֹם אֵתִי וְנִצַּבְתָּ עַל-הַצּוּר:
 כב וְהָיָה בְּעֵבֶר כְּבִדִּי וְשִׁמְתִּיךָ בְּנִקְרַת הַצּוּר וְשָׁכַתִּי
 כפי עַלֶיךָ עַד-עֲבָרִי: כג וְהִסַּרְתִּי אֶת-כַּפִּי וְרָאִיתָ אֶת-
 אַחֲרִי וּפָנִי לֹא יֵרָאוּ: {פ}

²¹ Yahweh said, “Here is a place beside me; stand on the rock, ²² and when my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock and shield you with my hand while I pass by. ²³ Then I will take my hand away and you shall see my back; but my face is not to be seen.”

²¹ The deictic particle (*‘here’*) is used here simply to call attention to a place of God’s knowing and choosing.

²² Note the use in 40:3, *‘and you will screen the ark with the veil’*; the glory is covered, veiled from being seen.

²³ The word *‘back’* is actually plural in form (*‘my backs’*), probably an extension plural. The word denotes a locality in general, but that is composed of numerous parts. Since God is a spirit, the meaning of this word could just as easily be rendered *‘after effects’* of his presence; however, while this may indicate just the *‘afterglow’* that he leaves behind him, it was enough to suggest what the full brilliancy of his presence must be (see also Job 26:14).

שמות פרק לד

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה פֶּסֶל־לָךְ שְׁנֵי־לַחַת אֲבָנִים
כְּרָאשֵׁינִים וְכָתַבְתִּי עַל־הַלַּחַת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ
עַל־הַלַּחַת הָרִאשֹׁנִים אֲשֶׁר שָׁבַרְתָּ: ב וְהָיָה נָכוֹן לִבְקָר
וְעֹלִית בִּבְקָר אֶל־הָר סִינִי וְנִצַּבְתָּ לִּי שָׁם עַל־רֹאשׁ
הָהָר: ג וְאִישׁ לֹא־יַעֲלֶה עִמָּךְ וְגַם־אִישׁ אֶל־יִרְאָ בְּכָל־
הָהָר גַּם־הַעֲצָן וְהַבְּקָר אֶל־יִרְעוּ אֶל־מֹול הָהָר הַהוּא:
ד וַיִּפְסֹל שְׁנֵי־לַחַת אֲבָנִים כְּרָאשֵׁינִים וַיִּשְׁכֵּם מֹשֶׁה
בִּבְקָר וַיַּעַל אֶל־הָר סִינִי כַּאֲשֶׁר צֻוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ וַיִּקַּח
בְּיָדוֹ שְׁנֵי לַחַת אֲבָנִים: ה וַיֵּרֶד יְהוָה בְּעָנָן וַיִּתְּיָצֵב עִמּוֹ
שָׁם וַיִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה:

ו וַיַּעֲבֹר יְהוָה | עַל־פָּנָיו וַיִּקְרָא

יְהוָה | יְהוָה
אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן

EXODUS 34

¹ Yahweh said to Moses, "Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones and I will inscribe on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. ² Be ready by morning and come up Mount Sinai at dawn; await my orders there at the top of the mountain. ³ No one must come up with you, or be seen anywhere on the mountain; even the flocks and herds may not graze in front of this mountain." ⁴ So, he cut two tablets of stone like the first and, with the two tablets of stone in his hands, Moses went up the Mount Sinai at dawn, as Yahweh had commanded him. ⁵ Yahweh descended in the cloud and stood with him there; and he pronounced the name 'Yahweh'.

⁶ Yahweh passed before him and proclaimed:

"Yahweh, Yahweh,
a God of tenderness and compassion,

EXODUS 34

- ¹ After 'first ones', the NJB inserts, 'and come up to me on the mountain'; here, we follow the MT.
- ² The word here translated as 'await my orders' is used also in 33:21: Moses was to be at his post when Yahweh wanted to communicate to him.
- ³ The NRSV opens this verse, here following the NJB, with, "No one shall come up with you, and do not let anyone be seen throughout all the mountain."
- ⁴ There is a discrepancy between traditions here: Deuteronomy says that Moses was also to make an ark of acacia wood before the tablets, apparently to put the tablets in until the sanctuary was built.
- ⁵ The NJB, and other commentaries, makes Moses the subject of the 2nd and 3rd verbs, the first because he was told to stand there and this verb suggests he did it, and the last because it sounds like he was worshipping Yahweh. However, it is clear from v. 6 that Yahweh was the subject of the last clause of v. 5 - v. 6 tells how he did it. So, if Yahweh is the subject of the 1st and last clauses of v. 5, it seems simpler that he also be the subject of the 2nd. Moses took his stand, but God stood by him; there is no reason to make Moses the subject of any of the verbs here.
- ⁶ Yahweh fulfils his promise (33:19-23) and reveals his divine attributes: most particularly his faithful love.

אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם
וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת:
נֹצֵר חֶסֶד לְאֲלָפִים ז
נָשָׂא עֲוֹן וּפֶשַׁע וַחֲטָאָה
וְנִקָּה לֹא יִנְקָה
פֶּקֶדוֹ עֲוֹן אֲבוֹת עַל־בָּנִים וְעַל־בְּנֵי בָנִים
עַל־שְׁלֵשִׁים וְעַל־רַבָּעִים:

slow to anger,
rich in kindness and faithfulness.

7 For thousands he maintains his kindness,
forgive faults, transgression, sin;
yet by no means clearing the guilty,
punishing the father's fault in the sons and in the grandsons
to the third and fourth generations."

ח וַיִּמָּהֵר מֹשֶׁה וַיִּקְדֹּ אֶרְצָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה: ט וַיֹּאמֶר אֶם־נָא
מִצְאָתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֲדֹנָי יִלְד־נָא אֲדֹנָי בִּקְרִבְנוּ כִּי עַם־
קָשָׁה־עֲרָף הוּא וְסָלַחְתָּ לַעֲוֹנֵנוּ וּלְחַטֹּאתֵנוּ וְנִחַלְתָּנוּ:

8 Moses quickly bowed down to the ground and worshipped. 9 He said, "If I have won your favour, Lord, let my Lord come with us, I beg. Though they are a headstrong people, forgive us our faults and our sins, and adopt us as your heritage."

י וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי כֹרֶת בְּרִית נֶגֶד כָּל־עַמֶּךָ אֲעִשֶׂה
נִפְלְאוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־נִבְרָאוּ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל־הַגּוֹיִם
וְרָאָה כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־אֵתָהּ בִּקְרִבּוֹ אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה
כִּי־נִוְרָא הוּא אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה עִמָּךְ: יא שְׁמַר־לְךָ אֵת
אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּךָ הַיּוֹם הַנֶּה גֵרֶשׁ מִפְּנֵיךָ אֶת־הָאֹמֹרִי
וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהַפְּרִזִּי וְהַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי: יב הִשְׁמַר לְךָ

10 He said, "I now make a Covenant. Before all your people, I shall work such wonders as have never been worked in any land or in any nation. All the people round you will see Yahweh's work; for, what I shall do with you shall be awesome. 11 Keep what I command you today. I mean to drive out before you the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 12 Take care you

7 After 'thousands', most English translations add an implied 'of generations'; here, we follow the NJB. For the 3rd line, the NJB reads 'yet he lets nothing go unchecked'; here, we follow the NRSV. Note the large opening letter of this verse (which appears in almost all Hebrew MSS).

8 The literal translation of 'quickly bowed' is 'he hurried, he bowed'; the two verbs form a hendiadys.

9 The word translated 'Lord' here (twice) is אֲדֹנָי.

10 The Covenant consists of both promises and commands; it involves no antithesis between 'grace' and 'law'.

11 The covenant duties begin with this command to 'keep' what is being commanded; the actual expression is 'keep for you': the suffix and the preposition form the ethical dative, adding strength to the imperative.

12 Intolerance of pagan forms of worship was motivated by fear of the seductive power of idolatry (see 23:24).

פְּנִיתְכֶם בְּרִית לְיוֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֵתָּה בָּא עָלֶיךָ
פְּנִיָּה לְמוֹקֵשׁ בְּקִרְבְּךָ: ^ג כִּי אֶת־מִזְבְּחֵי תַתְּצוּן
וְאֶת־מַצְבְּתֵי תִשְׁבְּרוּן וְאֶת־אֲשֵׁרֵי תִכְרֹתוּן:

^ד כִּי לֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְאֵל אֲחֵר כִּי יְהוָה קָנָא שְׁמוֹ אֵל
קָנָא הוּא: ^{טו} פְּנִיתְכֶם בְּרִית לְיוֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ וְזָנוּ
אֲחֵרֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְזָבְחוּ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְקָרָא לָךְ וְאָכְלָתָ
מִזְבָּחוֹ: ^{טז} וְלִקַּחְתָּ מִבְּנֹתָיו לְבָנֶיךָ וְזָנוּ בְּנֹתָיו אַחֲרֵי
אֱלֹהֵיהֶן וְהִזְנוּ אֶת־בְּנֶיךָ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶן:

^{יז} אֱלֹהֵי מִסֶּכָּה לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה־לָּךְ:

^{יח} אֶת־חֹג הַמַּצּוֹת תִּשְׁמֹר שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תֹּאכַל מִצּוֹת
אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִךָ לְמוֹעֵד חֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב כִּי בַחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב
יֵצְאתָ מִמִּצְרַיִם:

^{יט} כָּל־פֶּטֶר רֶחֶם לִי וְכָל־מִקְנֶךָ תִּזְכֹּר פֶּטֶר שׁוֹר וְשֵׂה:
^כ וּפֶטֶר חֲמוֹר תַּפְדֶּה בִּשְׂהָ וְאִם־לֹא תַפְדֶּה וְעִרְפָּתוֹ

make no pact with the inhabitants of the land you are about to enter, or this will prove a snare for you. ¹³ You are to tear down their altars, smash their cultic stones and cut down their sacred poles.

¹⁴ “You shall bow down to no other god; for, Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. ¹⁵ Make no pact with the inhabitants of the land, lest they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, then invite you and you eat from their victim. ¹⁶ Or you may take for your sons from their daughters and these may lead your sons astray after their gods.

¹⁷ “You shall make yourselves no god of molten metal.

¹⁸ “You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread: seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib; for, in the month of Abib, you came out of Egypt.

¹⁹ “All that opens the womb is mine: every firstborn male of flock or herd. ²⁰ The firstborn donkey you must redeem with a lamb; if you

¹³ For the ‘cultic stones’, see #23:24. The ‘sacred poles’ (אֲשֵׁרֵי) were emblems of Asherah (Greek: Astarte), goddess of love and fertility, and from her takes their name.

¹⁴ Note the large ר in אֲחֵר, which is as it appears in almost all *Hebrew MSS*.

¹⁵ The worship of Yahweh is compared to lawful wedlock, the worship of false gods to prostitution (see Ezk 16 & 23, Ho 1–3, and Rv 17).

¹⁶ If the people participate in the festivals of the land, then they will intermarry, and that could lead to further involvement with idolatry.

¹⁷ For this verse, here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* reads, “You shall not make cast idols.”

¹⁸ The *NJB* omits ‘seven days’, here following the *MT* & *NRSV*.

¹⁹ In place of ‘opens’, here following the *MT* & *NRSV*, the *NJB* has ‘issues from’.

²⁰ The *NRSV* lacks the last sentence; here, we follow the *MT*, *LXX*, *NJB* & *NETB*.

כָּל בְּכוֹר בְּנֵיךָ תִּפְדֶּה וְלֹא־יֵרָאוּ פָנַי רִיקִם:	do not redeem it, you must break its neck. You must redeem all your firstborn sons. No one is to come before me empty-handed.
כא שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי תִשְׁבֹּת בַּחֲרִישׁ וּבִקְצִיר תִּשְׁבֹּת:	21 "Six days you shall labour, but on the seventh day you shall rest, even at ploughing time and harvest, you shall rest.
כב וְחַג שַׁבְעַת תַּעֲשֶׂה לָּךְ בְּכוּרֵי קֶצֶר חֲטִים וְחַג הָאָסִיף תִּקְוֹפֶת הַשָּׁנָה:	22 "You shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks, of the first fruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year.
כג שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה יֵרָאֶה כָּל־זְכוּרְךָ אֶת־פָּנָי הָאֵלֹהִים יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:	23 "Three times a year all your men folk must present themselves before the Lord Yahweh, the God of Israel.
כד כִּי־אֹרִישׁ גּוֹיִם מִפְּנֶיךָ וְהִרְחַבְתִּי אֶת־גְּבֻלְךָ וְלֹא־יַחְמֹד אִישׁ אֶת־אַרְצְךָ בַּעֲלֹתְךָ לְרֹאוֹת אֶת־פָּנָי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה:	24 "When I have dispossessed the nations for you and extended your frontiers, no one will covet your land, if you present yourselves three times in the year before Yahweh your God.
כה לֹא־תִשְׁחַט עַל־חֶמֶן דָּם־זִבְחִי וְלֹא־יִלִּין לַבֹּקֶר זֶבֶח חַג הַפֶּסַח:	25 "You must not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven, nor is the victim offered at Passover to be left until the morning.
כו רֹאשִׁית בְּכוּרֵי אֲדָמָתְךָ תָּבִיא בֵּית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא־תִבְשֹׁל גְּדִי בַחֲלֵב אִמּוֹ: {פ}	26 "You must bring the best of the first fruits of your soil to the house of Yahweh your God. You must not boil a kid in its mother's milk."

²¹ The NJB lacks the final clause, the repetition of 'you shall rest', here following the MT & NRSV.

²² In place of 'turn of the year', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'close of the year'; the expression refers to the end of the agricultural season.

²³ Here, the divine Name reads הָאֵלֹהִים יְהוָה, which if rendered according to the traditional scheme of 'LORD' for 'Yahweh' would result in 'Lord LORD'; a number of English versions (including the NRSV & NETB) therefore render this phrase 'LORD God'.

²⁴ God will protect their property while the pilgrims are on their way to the central sanctuary.

²⁵ The NJB has 'leavened bread' in place of 'leaven', here following the MT & NRSV.

²⁶ On the last sentence, see #23:19.

כז וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כְּתֹב־לְךָ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים
הָאֵלֶּה כִּי עַל־פִּי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה כָּרַתִּי אִתְּךָ בְּרִית
וְאֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל:

כח וַיְהִי־שָׁם עִם־יְהוָה אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה
לֶחֶם לֹא אָכַל וּמַיִם לֹא שָׁתָה וַיִּכְתֹּב עַל־הַלְּחָת אֶת
דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרִים:

כט וַיְהִי בִרְדַּת מֹשֶׁה מִהָר סִינַי וּשְׁנֵי לַחַת הָעֵדֻת בְּיָד־
מֹשֶׁה בִּרְדָּתוֹ מִן־הָהָר וּמֹשֶׁה לֹא־יָדַע כִּי קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו
בְּדַבְּרוֹ אִתּוֹ: ל וַיֵּרָא אֶהֱרֹן וְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־מֹשֶׁה
וְהִנֵּה קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו וַיִּירָאוּ מִגִּשְׁת אֱלֹהֵי: לא וַיִּקְרָא
אֲלֵהֶם מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ אֵלָיו אֶהֱרֹן וְכָל־הַנְּשֹׂאִים בַּעֲדָה
וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֲלֵהֶם: לב וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן נִגְשׂוּ כָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיֵּצְאוּ אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אִתּוֹ בְּהָר סִינַי: לג וַיְכַל
מֹשֶׁה מִדַּבֵּר אִתָּם וַיִּתֵּן עַל־פָּנָיו מָסוּחַ: לד וּבָבֹא מֹשֶׁה
לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ יָסִיר אֶת־הַמָּסוּחַ עַד־צֵאתוֹ

²⁷ And Yahweh said to Moses, "Put these words into writing, for these represent the terms of the Covenant I am making with you and with Israel."

²⁸ He stayed there with Yahweh for forty days and forty nights, eating and drinking nothing. He inscribed on the tablets the words of the Covenant – the Ten Words.

²⁹ When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Covenant in his hands, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone after speaking with Yahweh. ³⁰ When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin on his face shone and they would not come near him. ³¹ But Moses called to them, so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him; and Moses spoke to them. ³² Then all the Israelites came near, and he told them all that Yahweh had commanded him on Mount Sinai; ³³ and, when Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. ³⁴ Whenever he

²⁷ Moses' special role as covenant mediator is shown by the fact that the Covenant is made with him and, through him, with Israel.

²⁸ The NRSV closes the verse with 'Ten Commandments' in place of 'Ten Words', here following the MT & NJB; the phrase may be a gloss.

²⁹ Vv. 29–35 record a tradition about the radiance of Moses' face, expressed by the verb קָרַן derived from קֶרֶן (horn), hence the literal translation of the Vg, 'his face was horned' (*et ignorabat quod cornuta esset facies sua*). Vv. 29–33 make use of this tradition to describe Moses on his descent from the mountain; vv. 34–35 link it to the Tent of Meeting, in the tradition of 33:7–11.

³⁰ The clause 'the skin of his face shone' is introduced by the deictic particle הִנֵּה; it has the force of pointing to something surprising or sudden.

³¹ In place of 'community', here following the NJB & NETB, the NRSV has 'congregation'.

³² The literal translation of 'told ... commanded' is 'commanded ... spoken to'.

³³ Throughout this section, the actions of Moses and the people are frequentative; the text tells what happened regularly.

³⁴ The form of the verb here translated as 'had been commanded' is the Pual imperfect; however, since the context demands a past tense here, in

וַיֵּצֵא וּדְבַר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת אֲשֶׁר יָצָה: ^לוְרָאוּ
 בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־פְּנֵי מֹשֶׁה כִּי קָרַן עוֹר פְּנֵי מֹשֶׁה
 וַהֲשִׁיב מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמָּסָוָה עַל־פָּנָיו עַד־בָּאוּ לְדַבֵּר
 אִתּוֹ:
 {ס} went in before Yahweh to speak with him, Moses would remove the
 veil until he came out; when he came out, he would tell the Israelites
 what he had been commanded, ³⁵ and the Israelites would see the
 face of Moses radiant; and Moses would put the veil back over his
 face until he returned to speak with Yahweh.

fact a past perfect tense, this is probably an old preterite form without a *vav* consecutive.

³⁵ In place of 'the face of Moses' (which follows the LXX - *πρόσωπον Μωυσῆ*), the MT, repeating v. 30, uses 'the skin of Moses' face'.

שמות פרק לה

EXODUS 35

א וַיִּקְהַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת-כָּל-עֵדֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם
אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אִתְּכֶם: ^ב שֵׁשֶׁת
יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ
שַׁבַּת שַׁבְּתוֹן לַיהוָה כָּל-הָעֹשֶׂה בּוֹ מְלָאכָה יוּמָת:
^ג לֹא-תִבְעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכָל מִשְׁכְּבֵיכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת: {פ}
^ד וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-כָּל-עֵדֶת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר זֶה
הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: ^ה קָחוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם תְּרוּמָה
לַיהוָה כֹּל נָדִיב לִבּוֹ יְבִיאֶהָ אֶת תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה זָהָב
וְכֶסֶף וְנַחֲשֶׁת: ^ו וְתַכְלֵת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְעֹץ
וְעֹזִים: ^ז וְעֹרֹת אֵילִם מְאֻדָּמִים וְעֹרֹת תַּחֲשִׁים וְעֹץ
שִׁטִּים: ^ח וְשֶׁמֶן לַמָּאֹר וּבִשְׂמִים לְשֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה

¹ Moses assembled the whole community of Israelites and said to them, "These are the things Yahweh has ordered you to do: ² Six days shall work be done but the seventh is to be a holy day for you, a day of complete rest to Yahweh; anyone who works on it shall be put to death. ³ You shall light no fire in your homes on the Sabbath day."

⁴ Moses said to all the community of the Israelites, "This is what Yahweh has commanded: ⁵ Take from among you an offering for Yahweh; let all give with a willing heart and bring this offering for Yahweh: gold, silver and bronze; ⁶ blue, purple and scarlet yarns, fine linen, and goats' hair, ⁷ rams' skins dyed red and fine leather, acacia wood, ⁸ oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for fragrant

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¹ Literally translated, this verse ends, "These are the words that Yahweh has commanded you to do them."

² The word translated as 'holy day' is קֹדֶשׁ (literally, 'holiness'); some suggest that the word was transposed, and the line should read: 'a day of complete rest, holy to Yahweh', but the word may simply be taken as a substitution for 'holy day'.

³ Kindling a fire receives special attention here because the people thought that kindling a fire was not a work, but only a preparation for some kind of work; however, the Law makes sure that this too was not done.

⁴ The book now turns to record how all the work of the sanctuary was done. This next unit picks up on the ideas in 31:1–11, but it adds several features. The first part is the instruction of God for all people to give willingly (35:4–19); the next section tells how the faithful brought an offering for the service of the tabernacle (35:20–29); and the next section tells how God set some apart with special gifts (35:30–35), and finally, the narrative reports how the faithful people of God enthusiastically began the work (36:1–7).

⁵ 'Heart' is a genitive of specification, clarifying in what way they might be 'willing'; the heart refers to their will, their choices.

⁶ See #25:4 on the sources of the 'blue', 'purple' and 'scarlet' dyes.

⁷ See #25:5 on the meaning of the phrase translated as 'fine leather'.

⁸ The NJB lacks 'for' before 'fragrant', here following the NRSV & NETB.

וּלְקַטְרֵת הַסַּמִּים: ^ט וְאַבְנֵי־שֹׁהַם וְאַבְנֵי מַלְאִים לְאַפֹּד
וְלַחֹשֶׁן:

י' וְכָל־חֹכֵם־לֵב בְּכֶם יָבֹאוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה
יְהוָה: י"א אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן אֶת־אֹהֶלָו וְאֶת־מִכְסֵּהוּ אֶת־
קַרְסָיו וְאֶת־קַרְשָׁיו אֶת־בְּרִיחָו אֶת־עַמֻּדָיו וְאֶת־
אֲדָנָיו: י"ב אֶת־הָאֹרֶן וְאֶת־בַּדָּיו אֶת־הַכַּפֹּרֶת וְאֶת־
פְּרֻכַת הַמִּסָּךְ: י"ג אֶת־הַשְּׁלֶחֶן וְאֶת־בַּדָּיו וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו
וְאֶת לֶחֶם הַפָּנִים: י"ד וְאֶת־מִנְרַת הַמָּאֹר וְאֶת־כִּלָּיהָ
וְאֶת־נִרְתֶּיהָ וְאֶת שֶׁמֶן הַמָּאֹר: ט"ז וְאֶת־מִזְבַּח הַקְּטֹרֶת
וְאֶת־בַּדָּיו וְאֶת שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְאֶת קְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים
וְאֶת־מִסְךְ הַפֶּתַח הַפֶּתַח הַמִּשְׁכָּן: ט"ח אֶת מִזְבַּח
הָעֹלָה וְאֶת־מִכְבַּר הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ אֶת־בַּדָּיו וְאֶת־
כָּל־כֵּלָיו אֶת־הַכִּיֹּר וְאֶת־כַּנּוֹ: י"ז אֶת קַלְעֵי הַחֹצֵר אֶת־
עַמֻּדָיו וְאֶת־אֲדָנֶיהָ וְאֶת מִסְךְ שַׁעַר הַחֹצֵר: י"ח אֶת־

incense; ⁹ onyx stones and gems to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate.

¹⁰ "Let all who are skilled among you come and make all that Yahweh has commanded: ¹¹ the Dwelling, its tent and its covering, its clasps and its frames, its bars, its pillars and its bases; ¹² the Ark with its poles, the mercy seat and the veil that screens it; ¹³ the table with its poles and all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence; ¹⁴ the lampstand for the light, with its accessories, and its lamps and the oil for the light; ¹⁵ the altar of incense, with its poles, and the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the entrance to the tent; ¹⁶ the altar of burnt offering with its bronze grating, its poles and the utensils for it, and the basin and its stand; ¹⁷ the hangings of the court, its pillars and their bases, and the screen for the gate of the court; ¹⁸ the pegs of the Dwelling and the pegs of the court, and their cords;

⁹ The NJB has 'pectoral' in place of 'breastplate', here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁰ The literal translation of 'skilled' is 'wise of heart'; here also 'heart' would be a genitive of specification, showing that there were those who could make skilful decisions.

¹¹ The NRSV includes the words 'the Dwelling' (therein, 'the Tabernacle') as part of v. 10.

¹² In place of 'the veil that screens it', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'the curtain for the screen' and NETB has 'the veil that conceals'.

¹³ The NJB has 'loaves of offering' in place of 'bread of the Presence', here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁴ The word 'for' after 'lampstand' is not in the MT and has here been added for clarity.

¹⁵ The MT repeats the words 'the entrance'; here, we follow the NJB.

¹⁶ In place of 'utensils' (throughout this section), the NJB has 'furnishings'.

¹⁷ In place of 'gate', here following the NRSV, the NJB & NETB have 'gateway'.

¹⁸ NETB has 'tent pegs' in place of 'pegs' (twice), here following the NJB & NRSV.

יִתְּדֹת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת־יִתְדֹת הַחֹצֵר וְאֶת־מִיתְרֵיהֶם:
יִטְ אֶת־בְּגָדֵי הַשָּׂרָד לְשָׂרֵת בִּקְדָשׁ אֶת־בְּגָדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ
לְאַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן וְאֶת־בְּגָדֵי בָנָיו לְכַהֵן:

כ וַיֵּצְאוּ כָל־עַדֹת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִלִּפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה: כא וַיָּבֹאוּ
כָל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁאָו לִבּוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר נָדְבָה רוּחוֹ אֹתוֹ
הֵבִיאוּ אֶת־תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה לְמִלְאכֶת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּלְכָל־
עֲבֹדָתוֹ וּלְבִגְדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ: כב וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל־הַנָּשִׁים
כָּל | נָדִיב לֵב הֵבִיאוּ חָח וְנִזָּם וְטַבַּעַת וְכוּמָז כָּל־כְּלִי
זָהָב וְכָל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֵנִיף תְּנוּפֶת זָהָב לַיהוָה: כג וְכָל־
אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־נִמְצָא אֹתוֹ תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי
וְשֵׁשׁ וְעִזִּים וְעֹרֹת אֵילִם מְאָדָּמִים וְעֹרֹת תַּחֲשִׁים
הֵבִיאוּ: כד כָּל־מְרִים תְּרוּמַת כֶּסֶף וְנִחֲשֶׁת הֵבִיאוּ אֵת
תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר נִמְצָא אֹתוֹ עֵצִי שֹׁטִים לְכָל־
מִלְאכֶת הָעֲבֹדָה הֵבִיאוּ: כה וְכָל־אִשָּׁה חַכְמַת־לֵב
בִּידֶיהָ טָווּ וַיָּבִיאוּ מִטּוֹה אֶת־הַתְּכֵלֶת וְאֶת־הָאַרְגָּמָן
אֶת־תוֹלַעַת הַשָּׁנִי וְאֶת־הַשֵּׁשׁ: כו וְכָל־הַנָּשִׁים אֲשֶׁר

¹⁹ the woven vestments for ministering in the sanctuary – the sacred vestments for Aaron the priest and the vestments of his sons – for ministering the priestly functions.”

²⁰ Then all the community of Israelites left Moses’ presence; ²¹ and all whose heart prompted them to give, and whose spirit was willing, came, bringing their offering for Yahweh for making the Tent of Meeting, for all its service and for the sacred vestments. ²² They came, men and women, all giving willingly, bringing brooches, rings, bracelets, necklaces, and gold things of every kind, everyone who made a gold offering to Yahweh. ²³ And everyone who owned blue, purple or scarlet yarn, fine linen, goats’ hair, rams’ skins dyed red or fine leather, brought them. ²⁴ All those who could contribute to the collection of silver and bronze brought it as an offering to Yahweh; and everyone who owned acacia wood, suitable for any of the work, brought it. ²⁵ All the skilled women set their hands to spinning, and brought blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and fine linen, from what they

¹⁹ The NJB has ‘sumptuous’ in place of ‘woven’, here following NETB; the NRSV has ‘finely worked’.

²⁰ In place of ‘Israelites’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘Israel’s sons’ (which more literally translates the MT).

²¹ The literal translation of ‘spirit was willing’ is ‘spirit made him willing’; the verb is used for the freewill offering that people brought (Lv 7).

²² The literal translation of ‘men and women’ is ‘men on/after the women’, meaning men with women, to ensure that it was clear that the preceding verse did not mean only men; some suggest that the men came after the women because the latter had taken the initiative.

²³ In place of ‘blue, purple or scarlet yarn’, here following the NRSV/NETB, the NJB has ‘purple stuffs, of violet shade or red, crimson stuffs’.

²⁴ This translation, following NETB, takes ‘offering’ as an adverbial accusative explaining the form or purpose of their bringing things; it could also be rendered as the direct object, but that would seem to repeat without as much difference what had just been said.

²⁵ As in v. 10, ‘skilled’ here translates ‘wise of heart’, which means that the women could make all the right choices about the work.

נָשָׂא לִבָּן אֶתְנָה בַּחֲכָמָה טוֹו אֶת־הָעֵזִים: כו וְהַנָּשִׂאִם
הֵבִיאוּ אֶת אַבְנֵי הַשֹּׁהַם וְאֶת אַבְנֵי הַמִּלֻּאִים לְאַפֹּד
וְלַחֹשֶׁן: כז וְאֶת־הַבֶּשֶׂם וְאֶת־הַשֶּׁמֶן לְמָאֹר וְלִשְׁמֹן
הַמִּשְׁחָה וְלִקְטֹרֶת הַסָּמִים: כט כָּל־אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר
נָדַב לִבָּם אֹתָם לְהֵבִיא לְכָל־הַמְּלָאכָה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה
לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה הֵבִיאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל נִדְבָה
לַיהוָה: {פ}

ל וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רְאוּ קָרָא יְהוָה בְּשֵׁם
בְּצִלְאֵל בֶּן־אֹוֹרִי בֶן־חֹור לְמִטָּה יְהוּדָה: לא וַיִּמְלֵא אֹתוֹ
רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בַּחֲכָמָה בְּתַבּוּנָה וּבְדַעַת וּבְכָל־מְלָאכָה:
לב וְלִחְשֹׁב מַחֲשַׁבֹּת לַעֲשׂוֹת בַּזָּהָב וּבַכֶּסֶף וּבַנְּחֹשֶׁת:
לג וּבַחֲרֹשֶׁת אֲבֹן לְמַלְאָת וּבַחֲרֹשֶׁת עֵץ לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּכָל־
מְלָאכָת מַחֲשַׁבֹּת: לד וְלַהוֹרֹת נָתַן בָּלְבוֹ הוּא
וְאַהֲלִיאֵב בֶּן־אֲחִיסַמֵּךְ לְמִטָּה־דָן: לה מֵלֵא אֹתָם

had spun. ²⁶ All the women willingly used their skill and spun the goats' hair. ²⁷ The leaders brought onyx stones and gems to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate, ²⁸ and the spices and oil for the light, for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense. ²⁹ All the Israelite men and women whose heart moved them to contribute to all the work that Yahweh had ordered through Moses to be done brought their free offering to Yahweh.

³⁰ Moses said to the Israelites, "See, Yahweh has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. ³¹ He has filled him with the spirit of God, with skill, perception and knowledge for every kind of craft: ³² for the art of designing, to work in gold, silver and bronze; ³³ for cutting stones to be set, for carving in wood, for every kind of craft. ³⁴ On him and Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, he has bestowed the gift of teaching. ³⁵ He has filled them with skill

²⁶ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV (more literally following the MT) reads, "all the women whose hearts moved them to use their skill spun the goats' hair."

²⁷ The literal translation of 'to be set in' is 'for the filling of'.

²⁸ NETB has 'olive oil' in place of 'oil'; although this was undoubtedly the oil used, the MT does not specify this.

²⁹ The literal translation of 'through Moses' is 'by the hand of Moses'.

³⁰ Vv. 35:30–36:7 correspond to 31:1–11 (see this chapter's introductory footnote).

³¹ Before 'with skill', the NJB adds 'and endowed him'; here, we follow the NRSV.

³² In place of 'for the art of designing', here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have 'to devise artistic designs'.

³³ The literal translation of 'every kind of craft' is 'every work of thought', meaning every type of work that required implementing a design or plan.

³⁴ The infinitive construct 'to teach' is related to the word Torah, 'instruction', 'guide', 'law'; they will be able to direct others in the work.

³⁵ In place of 'of any kind of artisan or designer', here following the NRSV/NETB, the NJB has 'and to do it with originality'.

חֲכָמַת־לֵב לַעֲשׂוֹת כָּל־מְלָאכַת חָרָשׁ | וְחֹשֶׁבַּ וְרֵקֶם
בַּתְּכֵלֶת וּבְאַרְגָּמָן בְּתוֹלַעַת הַשָּׁנִי וּבִשְׁשׁ וְאַרְגָּ עֲשִׂי
כָּל־מְלָאכָה וְחֹשְׁבֵי מַחְשָׁבֶת:

to carry out all the work of artisan, designer, embroiderer in blue,
purple and scarlet yarns and fine linen, or of a weaver; they are able
to do work of all kinds, of any kind of artisan or designer.”

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שמות פרק לו

א וַעֲשֵׂה בְּצִלָּאֵל וְאַהֲלִיאֵב וְכָל אִישׁ חֹכֵם-לֵב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה חָכְמָה וּתְבוּנָה בְּהִמָּה לַדַּעַת לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-מְלָאכֶת עֲבֹדַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְכָל אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה:

ב וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל-בְּצִלָּאֵל וְאֶל-אַהֲלִיאֵב וְאֶל כָּל-אִישׁ חֹכֵם-לֵב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה חָכְמָה בְּלִבּוֹ כָּל אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאָו לָבוֹ לְקִרְבָּה אֶל-הַמְּלָאכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ: ג וַיִּקְחוּ מִלִּפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל-הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר הֵבִיאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַמְּלָאכֶת עֲבֹדַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ וְהֵם הֵבִיאוּ אֵלָיו עוֹד נְדָבָה בַּבֶּקֶר בַּבֶּקֶר: ד וַיָּבֹאוּ כָל-הַחֹכְמִים הָעֹשִׂים אֶת כָּל-מְלָאכֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ אִישׁ-אִישׁ מִמְּלָאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר-הֵמָּה עֹשִׂים: ה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר מְרִבִּים הָעָם לְהֵבִיא מִדֵּי הָעֲבֹדָה לַמְּלָאכָה אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ: ו וַיֹּצֵא מֹשֶׁה וַיַּעֲבִירוּ קוֹל בְּמַחֲנֶה לֵאמֹר אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֶל-יַעֲשׂוּ-עוֹד מְלָאכָה

¹ Bezalel, Oholiab, and all the skilled craftsmen whom Yahweh had given skill and perception to carry out all that was required for the service of the sanctuary, did their work as Yahweh had directed.

² Moses then summoned Bezalel, Oholiab, and all the skilled ones to whom Yahweh had given skill, and all those whose heart was stirred to come to do the work. ³ And from Moses they received all that the Israelites had brought as contributions to do the work of building the sanctuary. They continued each morning to bring ⁴ their offerings, the artisans, busy with the various works on the sanctuary, all left their work ⁵ and said to Moses, "The people are bringing more than is needed for the work, which Yahweh has directed us to do." ⁶ So, Moses commanded that this proclamation be made throughout the camp: "Let no one, man or woman, do anything more towards the collection for the sanctuary." So, the people were prevented from

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¹ This noun here translated as 'service' (following the NJB & NETB) is usually given an interpretive translation; the NRSV & NIV have 'the work of constructing the sanctuary'.

² The verb קָרָא plus the preposition 'to' means 'to summon' that person.

³ In the MT, the infinitive 'to do it' comes after 'sanctuary'; it makes a smoother rendering to place it here in place of reading 'brought for the work' (as NJB).

⁴ The literal translation of 'all left their work' is 'a man, a man from his work'.

⁵ The construction translated as 'bringing more than is needed' uses the verbal hendiadys: מְרִבִּים הָעָם לְהֵבִיא is the Hiphil participle followed (after the subject) by the Hiphil infinitive construct; it would read, 'they multiply ... to bring', meaning, 'they bring more than is needed'.

⁶ The verse ends with the infinitive serving as the object of the preposition: 'from bringing'.

לְתַרוּמַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ וַיִּכְלֹא הָעָם מֵהָבִיא: ^ז וְהַמְלָאכָה
הָיְתָה דַּיִם לְכָל־הַמְלָאכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ וְהוֹתֵר: {ס}

^ח וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כָל־חֲכָם־לֵב בַּעֲשֵׂי הַמְלָאכָה אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן
עֲשׂוֹר יָרִיעֹת שֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזֹר וְתִכְלֹת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי
כְּרֻבִים מַעֲשֶׂה חֹשֶׁב עָשָׂה אֹתָם: ^ט אַרְבֵּי הִירִיעָה
הָאֶחָת שְׁמֹנֶה וְעֶשְׂרִים בָּאֶמָּה וְרֹחַב אַרְבַּע בָּאֶמָּה
הִירִיעָה הָאֶחָת מִדָּה אֶחָת לְכָל־הִירִיעֹת: ^י וַיַּחְבֵּר
אֶת־חֲמֹשׁ הִירִיעֹת אֶחָת אֶל־אֶחָת וְחֲמֹשׁ יָרִיעֹת חֲבֵר
אֶחָת אֶל־אֶחָת: ^{יא} וַיַּעַשׂ לָלֶאֱת תִּכְלֹת עַל שְׁפַת
הִירִיעָה הָאֶחָת מִקְצָה בַּמַּחְבֶּרֶת בֵּן עֶשֶׂה בְּשֹׁפֶת
הִירִיעָה הַקִּיצוֹנָה בַּמַּחְבֶּרֶת הַשֵּׁנִית: ^{יב} חֲמִשִּׁים לָלֶאֱת
עָשָׂה בִּירִיעָה הָאֶחָת וְחֲמִשִּׁים לָלֶאֱת עָשָׂה בַּקְצָה
הִירִיעָה אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּחְבֶּרֶת הַשֵּׁנִית מִקְבִּילַת הַלָּלֶאֱת
אֶחָת אֶל־אֶחָת: ^{יג} וַיַּעַשׂ חֲמִשִּׁים קְרָסִי זָהָב וַיַּחְבֵּר
אֶת־הִירִיעֹת אֶחָת אֶל־אֶחָת בַּקְרָסִים וַיְהִי הַמִּשְׁכָּן
אֶחָד: {פ}

bringing any more; ⁷ for, the material they had already brought was enough – more than enough – for them to complete all the work.

⁸ Thus, every one of the most skilled craftsmen among the workers made the Dwelling. He made it with ten curtains of finely woven linen, of blue, purple and scarlet yarns, finely brocaded with Cherubim. ⁹ The length of a single curtain was twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain was four cubits, all the curtains being of the same size. ¹⁰ He joined five of the curtains to one another and the other five curtains he joined to one another. ¹¹ He attached loops of blue material to the border of the last curtain in one set, and he did the same for the border of the last curtain in the other set. ¹² He put fifty loops on the first curtain and, opposite them one by one, fifty loops on the border of the last curtain in the second set. ¹³ And he made fifty gold clasps and, with them, coupled the curtains together. In this way, the Dwelling was a unified whole.

⁷ The NRSV reads a somewhat terser version of this verse: “for what they had already brought was more than enough to do all the work.”

⁸ The singular pronoun opening the 2nd sentence replaces the plural: the author has reproduced the orders given to Moses himself, with the necessary grammatical changes. Vv. 8–38 correspond to 26:1–37 (see the introductory footnote to Ch. 35).

⁹ Literally translated, this verse ends, “... one measure for every curtain.”

¹⁰ The NJB ends this verse, here following the MT & NRSV, with ‘other five curtains similarly’.

¹¹ In place of ‘blue material’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘violet stuff’.

¹² The NJB has ‘matching’ in place of ‘opposite’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹³ The literal translation of ‘a unified whole’ (here following the NJB) is ‘one’.

^{יד} וַיַּעַשׂ יְרִיעֹת עֲזִים לְאֹהֶל עַל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן עֲשָׂתֵי־עֶשְׂרֵה יְרִיעֹת עָשָׂה אֹתָם: ^{טו} אַרְבֵּי הַיְרִיעָה הָאֶחָת שְׁלֹשִׁים בָּאֲמָה וְאַרְבַּע אַמּוֹת רֹחַב הַיְרִיעָה הָאֶחָת מִדֶּה אֶחָת לַעֲשֹׂתִי עֲשָׂרָה יְרִיעֹת: ^{טז} וַיַּחְבֵּר אֶת־חֲמֵשׁ הַיְרִיעֹת לִבָּד וְאֶת־שֵׁשׁ הַיְרִיעֹת לִבָּד: ^{יז} וַיַּעַשׂ לָלֶאֱת חֲמִשִּׁים עַל שַׁפַּת הַיְרִיעָה הַקִּיצָנָה בַּמַּחְבֶּרֶת וְחֲמִשִּׁים לָלֶאֱת עָשָׂה עַל־שַׁפַּת הַיְרִיעָה הַחֲבֵרֶת הַשְּׁנִיָּת: ^{יח} וַיַּעַשׂ קְרָסִי נְחֹשֶׁת חֲמִשִּׁים לַחֲבֵר אֶת־הָאֹהֶל לִהְיוֹת אֶחָד: ^{יט} וַיַּעַשׂ מִכְסֵּה לְאֹהֶל עֶרְת אֵילָם מְאֻדָּמִים וּמִכְסֵּה עֶרְת תְּחָשִׁים מְלֻמָּעָה: {ס}

^כ וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַקְּרָשִׁים לַמִּשְׁכָּן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים עֲמֻדִים: ^{כא} עֲשׂוֹר אֲמַת אַרְבֵּי הַקְּרֶשׁ וְאֲמָה וְחֻצִי הָאֲמָה רֹחַב הַקְּרֶשׁ הָאֶחָד: ^{כב} שְׁתֵּי יָדָת לַקְּרֶשׁ הָאֶחָד מְשֻׁלָּבֹת אֶחָת אֶל־אֶחָת בֵּין עָשָׂה לְכָל קְרָשֵׁי הַמִּשְׁכָּן: ^{כג} וַיַּעַשׂ

¹⁴ And he made curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the Dwelling; he made eleven curtains. ¹⁵ The length of each curtain was thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain was four cubits; the eleven curtains were all of the same size. ¹⁶ He joined five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves. ¹⁷ He attached fifty loops to the border of the last curtain in one set, and fifty loops to the border of the other connecting curtain; ¹⁸ and he made fifty bronze clasps, to couple the tent together and make it a unified whole. ¹⁹ And, for the Tent, he made a covering of rams' skin dyed red, and a covering of fine leather to spread over it.

²⁰ And, for the Dwelling, he made frames of acacia, these to stand upright. ²¹ Each frame was ten cubits in length and each frame was one and a half cubits in width. ²² Each frame was fitted with twin pegs, joined to one another; this he did for all the frames of the

¹⁴ After 'eleven', the NJB adds 'of these'; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

¹⁵ Literally translated, this verse ends, "one measure for the eleven curtains."

¹⁶ For this verse, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB reads, "He coupled five of these curtains together in one set, and the remaining six curtains into another set."

¹⁷ In place of 'other connecting curtain', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'last curtain in the second set'.

¹⁸ The construction translated as 'make it a unified whole' uses the infinitive construct from the verb 'to be' to express this purpose clause: 'to be one' or, 'so that it might be a unit'.

¹⁹ See #25:5 for the meaning of the phrase translated 'fine leather'.

²⁰ There is debate whether the word הַקְּרָשִׁים means 'frames' or 'boards' or, better, 'beams', given the size of them.

²¹ The NJB lacks the 2nd instance of 'each frame was', here following the MT & NRSV.

²² NETB has 'projections' in place of 'pegs', here following the NJB & NRSV.

אֶת־הַקְּרָשִׁים לַמִּשְׁכָּן עֲשִׂים קְרָשִׁים לַפֶּאֶת נֹגֵב
 תִּימְנָה: כִּד וְאַרְבַּעִים אֲדָנִי־כֶסֶף עֲשֵׂה תַּחַת עֲשִׂים
 הַקְּרָשִׁים שְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת־הַקְּרָשׁ הָאֶחָד לְשֵׁתִי
 יִדְתּוּ וּשְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת־הַקְּרָשׁ הָאֶחָד לְשֵׁתִי יִדְתּוּ:
 כֹּה וּלְצֹלַע הַמִּשְׁכָּן הַשְּׁנִית לַפֶּאֶת צִפּוֹן עֲשֵׂה עֲשִׂים
 קְרָשִׁים: כִּו וְאַרְבַּעִים אֲדָנִיהֶם כֶּסֶף שְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת
 הַקְּרָשׁ הָאֶחָד וּשְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת הַקְּרָשׁ הָאֶחָד:
 כִּז וּלְיִרְכַּתִּי הַמִּשְׁכָּן יִמָּה עֲשֵׂה שְׁשֵׁה קְרָשִׁים: כִּח וּשְׁנֵי
 קְרָשִׁים עֲשֵׂה לַמִּקְצַעַת הַמִּשְׁכָּן בִּירְכַּתִּים: כִּט וְהָיוּ
 תּוֹאֲמִם מִלְּמִטָּה וַיַּחֲדּוּ יִהְיוּ תָמִים אֶל־רֹאשׁוֹ אֶל־
 הַטֶּבַעַת הָאֶחָת בֶּן עֲשֵׂה לְשֵׁנִיהֶם לְשֵׁנִי הַמִּקְצַעַת:
 ל וְהָיוּ שְׁמֹנֶה קְרָשִׁים וְאֲדָנִיהֶם כֶּסֶף שְׁשֵׁה עֲשִׂר־
 אֲדָנִים שְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים שְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת הַקְּרָשׁ הָאֶחָד:
 לא וַיַּעַשׂ בְּרִיחֵי עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים חֲמִשָּׁה לְקְרָשֵׁי צֹלַע־
 הַמִּשְׁכָּן הָאֶחָת: לב וְחֲמִשָּׁה בְּרִיחִים לְקְרָשֵׁי צֹלַע־

Dwelling.²³ He made the frames for the Dwelling: twenty frames for the southern side, facing southward.²⁴ And he made forty silver bases for putting under the twenty frames: two bases under the first frame to receive its two pegs, and two bases under another frame to receive its two pegs.²⁵ And for the second side of the Dwelling, on the north side, he made twenty frames²⁶ and their forty silver bases, two bases under the first frame and two bases under the next frame.²⁷ And for the back of the Dwelling, facing westward, he made six frames;²⁸ and he made two frames for the corners of the Dwelling, at the back side.²⁹ They were coupled at their lower end and finished at the top, up to the level of the first ring; this he did with two of them, to form the two corners.³⁰ Thus, there were eight frames with their sixteen silver bases: two bases under each frame.³¹ And he made bars of acacia wood: five to hold the frames together that were to form one side of the Dwelling,³² and five bars for the

²³ The NRSV omits 'facing southward' and NETB has simply 'facing south'; the NJB has 'facing the south country'.

²⁴ Throughout this section, the NJB has 'sockets' in place of 'bases', here following the NRSV & NETB.

²⁵ In place of 'second', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'other'.

²⁶ The NJB has 'one' and 'another' in place of 'the first' and 'the next', respectively, here following the NRSV.

²⁷ In place of 'facing westward', here following NETB, the NJB has 'on the west' and the NRSV has 'westward'.

²⁸ The NJB has 'at the back of the Dwelling' in place of 'of the Dwelling, at the back side', here following (loosely) the NRSV.

²⁹ This difficult verse uses the perfect tense at the beginning and the 2nd clause parallels it with יִהְיוּ, which here is a preterite without the consecutive vav. The predicate 'finished' is תָּמִים, which means 'complete', 'sound', or 'whole'; related words describe sacrifices as unblemished.

³⁰ The distributive sense is supplied by the repetition: 'two bases, two bases under the one frame' means that each frame had two bases.

³¹ The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, "... five for the frames of the one side of the tabernacle."

³² The NJB reads: "five on the other side to hold the frames that were to form the end of the Dwelling on the west;" here, we follow the NRSV & NETB.

הַמִּשְׁכָּן הַשֵּׁנִית וְחֻמֶּשֶׁה בְּרִיחֵם לְקִרְשֵׁי הַמִּשְׁכָּן
לִירְכָתֵים יָמָה: ^{לג} וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַבְּרִיחַ הַתִּיכֹן לְבִרְחֹ
בְּתוֹךְ הַקִּרְשִׁים מִן־הַקֶּצֶה אֶל־הַקֶּצֶה: ^{לד} וְאֶת־
הַקִּרְשִׁים צָפָה זָהָב וְאֶת־טַבַּעְתָּם עָשָׂה זָהָב בָּתִּים
לְבְּרִיחֵם וַיִּצֹף אֶת־הַבְּרִיחִים זָהָב:

^{לה} וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַפָּרֹכֶת תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי
וְשֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב עָשָׂה אֹתָהּ כְּרִבִּים: ^{לו} וַיַּעַשׂ
לָהּ אַרְבַּעַת עֲמֻדֵי שִׁטִּים וַיִּצָּפֵם זָהָב וְוִיהֶם זָהָב וַיִּצֹק
לָהֶם אַרְבַּעַת אֲדָנִי־כֶסֶף: ^{לז} וַיַּעַשׂ מִסָּךְ לִפְתַּח הָאֹהֶל
תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר מַעֲשֵׂה רֶקֶם:
^{לח} וְאֶת־עֲמֻדָּיו חֻמֶּשֶׁה וְאֶת־וִוֵּיהֶם וְצָפָה רָאשֵׁיהֶם
וְחֻשְׁקֵיהֶם זָהָב וְאֲדָנִיהֶם חֻמֶּשֶׁה נְחֹשֶׁת: {פ}

frames of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames of the tabernacle at the rear westward. ³³ He made the middle bar, fixed half way up the frames, to run from one end to the other. ³⁴ He plated the frames with gold, and put gold rings on them to provide places for the bars, which he also plated with gold.

³⁵ He made the veil of blue, purple, and scarlet, and of finely woven linen, skilfully embroidered with Cherubim. ³⁶ For it, he made four posts of acacia and plated them with gold, with golden hooks, and he cast four silver bases for them. ³⁷ For the door to the tent, he made a screen of blue, purple and scarlet, and finely woven linen, the work of an embroiderer, ³⁸ and its five posts with their hooks; their capitals and rods he plated with gold; their five bases were of bronze.

³³ Throughout this paragraph, the NJB has 'crossbar(s)' in place of 'bar(s)', here following the NRSV & NETB.

³⁴ The literal translation of 'places' is 'houses'.

³⁵ The verb translated as 'embroidered' is simply 'he made' but, as in 26:31, it probably means that the Cherubim were worked into the curtain with the yarn, and so embroidered on the curtain.

³⁶ In place of 'for it', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'for hanging this veil'.

³⁷ Before 'embroiderer', the NJB inserts 'skilled'; here, we follow NETB.

³⁸ In place of 'and its', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB opens this verse with 'for the hanging of this, he made'. The word translated 'capitals' is actually 'heads'; the bands were bands of metal surrounding these capitals just beneath them. These are not mentioned in 26:37, and it sounds like the posts are to be covered with gold; but the gradation of metals is what is intended: the posts at the entrance to the Most Holy Place are all of gold; the posts at the entrance to the tent are overlaid with gold at the top; and the posts at the entrance to the courtyard are overlaid with silver at the top.

שמות פרק לו

א וַיַּעַשׂ בְּצִלְאֵל אֶת־הָאָרֶן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים אֲמָתִים וַחֲצִי אַרְכּוֹ וְאֲמָה וַחֲצִי רַחְבּוֹ וְאֲמָה וַחֲצִי קִמְתּוֹ: ב וַיִּצְפֶּהוּ זָהָב טָהוֹר מִבֵּית וּמִחוּץ וַיַּעַשׂ לוֹ זָרָהָב סָבִיב: ג וַיִּצָּק לוֹ אַרְבַּע טַבַּעַת זָהָב עַל אַרְבַּע פַּעֲמָתָיו וּשְׁתֵּי טַבַּעַת עַל־צִלְעוֹ הָאַחַת וּשְׁתֵּי טַבַּעַת עַל־צִלְעוֹ הַשְּׁנִית: ד וַיַּעַשׂ בְּדֵי עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וַיִּצָּף אֹתָם זָהָב: ה וַיָּבֵא אֶת־הַבָּדִים בְּטַבַּעַת עַל צִלְעַת הָאָרֶן לִשְׂאת אֶת־הָאָרֶן: ו וַיַּעַשׂ כַּפֹּרֶת זָהָב טָהוֹר אֲמָתִים וַחֲצִי אַרְכָּהּ וְאֲמָה וַחֲצִי רַחְבָּהּ: ז וַיַּעַשׂ שְׁנֵי כְרָבִים זָהָב מְקֻשָּׁה עָשָׂה אֹתָם מִשְׁנֵי קְצוֹת הַכַּפֹּרֶת: ח כְּרוֹב־אֶחָד מְקַצֵּה מִזָּה וּכְרוֹב־אֶחָד מְקַצֵּה מִזָּה מִן־הַכַּפֹּרֶת עָשָׂה אֶת־הַכְּרָבִים מִשְׁנֵי קְצוֹתָיו: ט וַיְהִיו הַכְּרָבִים פְּרָשָׁי כְּנָפִים לְמַעַלָּה סֹכְכִים בְּכִנְפֵיהֶם עַל־הַכַּפֹּרֶת וּפְנֵיהֶם

EXODUS 37

¹ And Bezalel made the Ark of acacia, two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. ² He plated it, inside and out, with pure gold, and made a gold moulding around it. ³ He cast four gold rings for it, for its four feet: two rings on one side of it and two rings on its other side. ⁴ He also made poles of acacia and plated them with gold; ⁵ he put the poles into the rings on the sides of the Ark, to carry the Ark; ⁶ he also made of pure gold a mercy seat, two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. ⁷ For the two ends of this mercy seat, he made two golden Cherubim; he made them of beaten gold, ⁸ one Cherub at one end and one Cherub at the other end; of one piece with the mercy seat, he made the Cherubim at its two ends. ⁹ The Cherubim had their wings spread upwards so that they overshadowed the mercy seat. They faced one

EXODUS 37

- ¹ Vv. 1–9 correspond to 25:10–22. A cubit is the length from the tip of the middle finger to the elbow on a man's arm, or about 46 centimetres.
- ² An alternative translation for 'moulding' (as NJB & NRSV) is 'border' (as NETB).
- ³ In place of 'for it', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'for the Ark'.
- ⁴ The NJB has 'shafts' in place of 'poles', here following the NRSV.
- ⁵ In place of 'put', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'passed'.
- ⁶ NETB has 'propitiatory lid' in place of 'mercy seat' (throughout the books of the Pentateuch), here following the NJB & NRSV.
- ⁷ The NRSV & NETB have 'hammered' in place of 'beaten', here following the NJB.
- ⁸ The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with, "... and fastened them to the two ends of the mercy seat so that they made one piece with it." The Kethib/Qere difference here warrants an explanation.
- ⁹ The literal translation of 'they faced one another' is 'and their faces a man to his brother'.

אִישׁ אֶל-אָחִיו אֶל-הַכַּפֹּרֶת הָיוּ פְּנֵי הַכְּרֻבִּים: {פ}

וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת-הַשְּׁלֶחָן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים אֲמֹתַיִם אַרְבּוֹ וְאַמָּה רַחְבּוֹ וְאַמָּה וַחֲצִי קִמְתּוֹ: י^א וַיִּצָּף אוֹתוֹ זָהָב טָהוֹר וַיַּעַשׂ לוֹ זֶר זָהָב סָבִיב: יב וַיַּעַשׂ לוֹ מִסְגָּרַת טַפַּח סָבִיב וַיַּעַשׂ זֶר-זָהָב לְמִסְגָּרָתוֹ סָבִיב: יג וַיִּצֶק לוֹ אַרְבַּע טַבַּעֲתֵי זָהָב וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-הַטַּבַּעֲתֵי עַל אַרְבַּע הַפָּאֵת אֲשֶׁר לְאַרְבַּע רַגְלָיו: יד לְעִמַּת הַמִּסְגָּרָת הָיוּ הַטַּבַּעֲתֵי בְּתֵימִים לַבָּדִים לְשֹׂאת אֶת-הַשְּׁלֶחָן: טו וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת-הַבָּדִים עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וַיִּצָּף אֹתָם זָהָב לְשֹׂאת אֶת-הַשְּׁלֶחָן: טז וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת-הַכֵּלִים אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַשְּׁלֶחָן אֶת-קַעְרָתָיו וְאֶת-כַּפֹּתָיו וְאֶת מִנְקִיתָיו וְאֶת-הַקְּשׁוֹת אֲשֶׁר יִסֹּךְ בָּהֶן זָהָב טָהוֹר: {פ}

וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת-הַמִּנְרָה זָהָב טָהוֹר מְקֻשָּׁה עָשָׂה אֶת-הַמִּנְרָה יִרְכָה וְקִנָּה גְּבִיעֶיהָ כַּפֹּתֶיהָ וּפְרָחֶיהָ מִמִּנָּה הָיוּ: יח וְשֵׁשׁ קָנִים יִצְאִים מִצְּדֵיהָ שְׁלֹשָׁה קָנֵי מִנְרָה

another, the faces of the Cherubim towards the mercy seat.

¹⁰ And he made the table of acacia, which was two cubits long, one cubit wide, and a cubit and a half high. ¹¹ He plated it with pure gold and made a gold moulding all around it. ¹² He fitted it with a frame, a hand's breadth wide, and made a gold moulding around the frame. ¹³ He cast four gold rings for it and fixed the rings at the four corners where the four legs were. ¹⁴ The rings lay close to the frame to hold the poles for carrying the table. ¹⁵ He made the poles of acacia and plated them with gold; these were for carrying the table. ¹⁶ And he made the vessels of pure gold that were to be on the table, its plates and dishes for incense, and its bowls and flagons with which to pour drink offerings.

¹⁷ He made the lampstand of pure gold and made the lampstand, base and stem, of beaten gold. Its cups, bud and petals were of one piece with it. ¹⁸ Six branches extended from its sides, three from one

¹⁰ Vv. 10–16 correspond to 25:23–30 (see the introductory footnote to Ch. 35).

¹¹ The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with, "... and decorated it all round with a gold moulding."

¹² In place of 'a frame', here following NETB (the NRSV has 'a rim'), the NJB has 'struts'.

¹³ The NJB has 'these' in place of 'the rings', here following the MT & NRSV.

¹⁴ In place of 'poles', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'shafts'.

¹⁵ The NRSV & NETB have simply 'to carry the table' in place of 'these were for carrying the table', here following the NJB.

¹⁶ For this verse, the NJB reads, "He made the furnishings of pure gold, which were for the table, and its dishes, its cups, its jars and its libation bowls."

¹⁷ Vv. 17–24 correspond to 25:31–40.

¹⁸ The MT includes the word for 'lampstand' three times in this verse; here, following the NJB, we replace the 1st occurrences with 'its' and omit the other two: after 'side (of the lampstand)' and 'other (side of the lampstand)'.

מִצְדָּהּ הָאֶחָד וּשְׁלֹשָׁה קָנִי מִנֶּה מִצְדָּה הַשֵּׁנִי:
 יט שְׁלֹשָׁה גִבְעִים מְשְׁקָדִים בִּקְנֵה הָאֶחָד כִּפְתָּר וּפָרֶחַ
 וּשְׁלֹשָׁה גִבְעִים מְשְׁקָדִים בִּקְנֵה אֶחָד כִּפְתָּר וּפָרֶחַ בֵּן
 לְשֵׁשֶׁת הַקָּנִים הַיֵּצְאִים מִן־הַמִּנְרָה: כ ובִּמְנֵה
 אַרְבָּעָה גִבְעִים מְשְׁקָדִים כִּפְתָּרִיהָ וּפָרֶחֶיהָ:
 כא וְכִפְתָּר תַּחַת שְׁנֵי הַקָּנִים מִמֶּנָּה וְכִפְתָּר תַּחַת שְׁנֵי
 הַקָּנִים מִמֶּנָּה וְכִפְתָּר תַּחַת שְׁנֵי הַקָּנִים מִמֶּנָּה לְשֵׁשֶׁת
 הַקָּנִים הַיֵּצְאִים מִמֶּנָּה: כב כִּפְתָּרֵיהֶם וּקְנֵתָם מִמֶּנָּה
 הָיוּ כֹּלָה מְקֻשָּׁה אַחַת זֶהָב טָהוֹר: כג וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־נִרְתִּיהָ
 שְׁבָעָה וּמִלְקָחֶיהָ וּמַחְתֵּתֶיהָ זֶהָב טָהוֹר: כד כָּכָר זֶהָב
 טָהוֹר עָשָׂה אֹתָהּ וְאֵת כָּל־כֵּלֶיהָ:

{פ}

כה וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַ הַקְטֹרֶת עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים אֲמָה אַרְבֹּ
 וְאֲמָה רָחֳבָו רְבֹועַ וְאֲמָתַיִם קִמְתּוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ הָיוּ קִרְנֵתָיו:

side and three from the other. ¹⁹ Three cups shaped like almond flowers, each with its bud and petals were on one branch; three cups shaped like almond flowers, each with its bud and petals, on the next, and so for all six branches of the lampstand. ²⁰ The lampstand carried four cups shaped like almond flowers, each with bud and petals. ²¹ There was a bud of one piece with it under the first pair of branches, a bud of one piece with it under the next pair of branches, and a bud of one piece with it under the last pair of branches. ²² The buds and the branches were of one piece with the lampstand, the whole of it one beaten piece of pure gold. ²³ Then he made its seven lamps, its snuffers and trays of pure gold. ²⁴ He used a talent of pure gold for making it and its accessories.

²⁵ And he made the altar of incense out of acacia. It was a cubit long and a cubit wide – square – and two cubits high. Its horns were of

¹⁹ The NJB has, respectively, 'first' and 'second' in place of 'one' and 'next', here following the NRSV; the literal translation of 'next' is 'the one branch', but the repetition of 'one ... one' means here one after another, or the 'first' and then the 'next'.

²⁰ After 'lampstand', the NJB & NRSV add 'itself'; here, we follow NETB.

²¹ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "thus: one calyx under the first two branches extending from the lampstand, one under the next pair, one under the last pair: corresponding to the six branches extending from the lampstand." The translation of 'first', 'next' and 'last' is interpretive, because the text simply says 'under two branches' in each of three places.

²² In place of 'one beaten piece of pure gold', the NJB has 'a single piece of pure gold beaten out'.

²³ The NJB has 'lamps, seven of them' in place of 'seven lamps', here following the NRSV.

²⁴ The NJB has 'lampstand' in place of 'it', here following the MT & NRSV. A 'talent' is about 30 Kg or 965 Troy ounces.

²⁵ Vv. 25–28 correspond to 30:1–10 (see the introductory footnote to Ch. 35). The literal translation of the last sentence is 'from it were its horns', meaning that they were made from the same piece.

כו וַיִּצַף אֹתוֹ זָהָב טָהוֹר אֶת־גִּגּוֹ וְאֶת־קִירָתָיו סָבִיב
 וְאֶת־קֶרְנָתָיו וַיַּעַשׂ לָו זָר זָהָב סָבִיב: כז וּשְׁתֵּי טַבְּעֹת
 זָהָב עָשָׂה־לָּו מִתַּחַת לְזָרוֹ עַל שְׁתֵּי צִלְעֹתָיו עַל שְׁנֵי
 צַדָּיו לְבָתִּים לְבָדִים לִשְׂאת אֹתוֹ בָּהֶם: כח וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־
 הַבָּדִים עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וַיִּצַף אֹתָם זָהָב: כט וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־שֶׁמֶן
 הַמִּשְׁחָה קָדֹשׁ וְאֶת־קְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים טָהוֹר מַעֲשֵׂה
 רֶקֶח: {ס}

one piece with it. ²⁶ The top of it, its surrounding sides and its horns,
 he plated with pure gold and he made for it a gold moulding all
 around. ²⁷ He fixed two gold rings to it below the moulding on its
 two opposite sides, to take the poles used for carrying it. ²⁸ These
 poles he made of acacia and plated them with gold. ²⁹ He also made
 the holy anointing oil and the pure, fragrant incense, blending it as
 perfumers do.

²⁶ The NJB ends this verse, here following the MT & NRSV, with, 'decorated it all round with a gold moulding'.

²⁷ Since it is a small altar, it needed only two rings, one on either side, in order to carry the object.

²⁸ The NJB has 'shafts' in place of 'poles' (as also in v. 27); here, we follow the NRSV & NETB.

²⁹ For the last clause, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads 'blended as by the perfumer' and NETB has 'the work of a perfumer'.

שמות פרק לח

א וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים חָמֵשׁ אַמּוֹת
אָרְצוֹ וְחָמֵשׁ־אַמּוֹת רָחְבוֹ רְבֹוע וּשְׁלֹשׁ אַמּוֹת קָמְתּוֹ:
ב וַיַּעַשׂ קַרְנֹתָיו עַל אַרְבַּע פְּנֵתָיו מִמָּנוּ הָיוּ קַרְנֹתָיו
וַיִּצֹף אֹתוֹ נְחֹשֶׁת: ג וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־כָּל־כְּלֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֶת־
הַסִּירֹת וְאֶת־הַיָּעִים וְאֶת־הַמְזֻרְקֹת אֶת־הַמְזֻלָּגֹת
וְאֶת־הַמַּחְתֹּת כָּל־כְּלָיו עָשָׂה נְחֹשֶׁת: ד וַיַּעַשׂ לַמִּזְבֵּחַ
מִכְבָּר מַעֲשֵׂה רֶשֶׁת נְחֹשֶׁת תַּחַת כַּרְכָּבוֹ מִלְמַטָּה עַד־
חֲצָיו: ה וַיִּצֹק אַרְבַּע טַבַּעֲתַי בְּאַרְבַּע הַקְּצוֹת לַמִּכְבָּר
הַנְּחֹשֶׁת בָּתִּים לַבָּדִים: ו וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַבָּדִים עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים
וַיִּצֹף אֹתָם נְחֹשֶׁת: ז וַיָּבֵא אֶת־הַבָּדִים בְּטַבַּעֲתַי עַל
צִלְעֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לָשֵׂאת אֹתוֹ בָּהֶם נָבוֹב לַחַת עָשָׂה
אֹתוֹ: {ס}

ח וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת הַכִּיּוֹר נְחֹשֶׁת וְאֵת כִּנּוֹ נְחֹשֶׁת בְּמִרְאֵת
הַצַּבָּאֹת אֲשֶׁר צָבְאוּ פָתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: {ס}

EXODUS 38

¹ And he made the altar of burnt offering out of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide, a square three cubits high. ² At its four corners, he put horns, its horns being of one piece with it, and plated it with bronze. ³ And he made all the altar vessels: pots, shovels, sprinkling basins, hooks and fire-pans; he made all the vessels for the altar out of bronze. ⁴ And he made a grating for it, a bronze network, under its ledge, below, so that it reached half way up the altar. ⁵ And he cast four rings and fixed them on the four corners of the bronze grating to take the poles. ⁶ And he made the poles of acacia wood and plated them with bronze. ⁷ And he placed the poles through the rings fixed to the sides of the altar for carrying it, and he made it hollow, of planks.

⁸ He made the bronze basin and its bronze support from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

EXODUS 38

- ¹ Vv. 1-7 correspond to 27:1-8. A cubit is the length from the tip of the middle finger to the elbow on a man's arm, or about 46 centimetres.
- ² The literal translation of 'its horns being of one piece with it' is 'its horns were from it'.
- ³ In place of 'pots', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'pans for the ashes'.
- ⁴ The NRSV has 'halfway down' in place of 'below, so that it reached halfway up the altar', here following the NJB.
- ⁵ The NJB has 'shafts' in place of 'poles', here following the NRSV & NETB.
- ⁶ Throughout this section, the NRSV & NETB have 'overlaid' in place of 'plated', here following the NJB.
- ⁷ The NJB has 'these' in place of 'poles' and 'the altar' in place of 'it'; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.
- ⁸ V. 8 corresponds to 30:17-21. The mirrors of antiquity were made of polished bronze. The word for 'serve' is not the ordinary word to be used; it means 'to serve in a host', especially in a war: it appears that women were organized into bands and served at the tent of meeting.

ט וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַחֲצֵר לַפָּאֵת | נֶגֶב תִּימָנָה קִלְעֵי הַחֲצֵר
שֶׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר מֵאָה בָּאֲמָה: י עֲמוּדֵיהֶם עֲשָׂרִים וְאַדְנִיָּהֶם
עֲשָׂרִים נְחֹשֶׁת וְיֵי הָעֲמוּדִים וַחֲשֻׁקֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף:
יא וְלַפָּאֵת צִפּוֹן מֵאָה בָּאֲמָה עֲמוּדֵיהֶם עֲשָׂרִים
וְאַדְנִיָּהֶם עֲשָׂרִים נְחֹשֶׁת וְיֵי הָעֲמוּדִים וַחֲשֻׁקֵיהֶם
כֶּסֶף: יב וְלַפָּאֵת־יָם קִלְעִים חֲמִשִּׁים בָּאֲמָה עֲמוּדֵיהֶם
עֲשָׂרָה וְאַדְנִיָּהֶם עֲשָׂרָה וְיֵי הָעֲמוּדִים וַחֲשֻׁקֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף:
יג וְלַפָּאֵת קִדְמָה מִזְרָחָה חֲמִשִּׁים אֲמָה: יד קִלְעִים
חֲמִשֶּׁעֲשָׂרָה אֲמָה אֶל־הַכֶּתֶף עֲמוּדֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה
וְאַדְנִיָּהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה: טו וְלַכֶּתֶף הַשְּׂנִית מִזָּה וּמִזָּה לְשַׁעַר
הַחֲצֵר קִלְעִים חֲמֵשׁ עֲשָׂרָה אֲמָה עֲמוּדֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה
וְאַדְנִיָּהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה: טז כָּל־קִלְעֵי הַחֲצֵר סָבִיב שֶׁשׁ
מִשְׁזָר: יז וְהָאֲדָנִים לְעֲמֻדִים נְחֹשֶׁת וְיֵי הָעֲמוּדִים

9 And he made the court. For the south side of the court, facing southward, the hangings were of fine twisted linen, a hundred cubits, ¹⁰ with their twenty posts and twenty bronze bases, and their silver hooks and rods. ¹¹ For the north side, a hundred cubits, with twenty posts and twenty bronze bases, and their silver hooks and rods. ¹² For the west side, fifty cubits of hangings, on ten posts set in ten bases, with their silver hooks and rods; ¹³ and for the east side, facing east, fifty cubits. ¹⁴ On one side, there were fifteen cubits of hangings, carried on three posts set in three bases. ¹⁵ On the other side of the gate to the court, on either side, were fifteen cubits of hangings with three posts and three bases. ¹⁶ All the hangings around the court were of finely woven linen. ¹⁷ The bases for the posts were bronze and their hooks silver, like the plating on their capitals. The

⁹ Vv. 9–20 correspond to 27:9–19. The NRSV omits ‘facing southward’ (literally, ‘facing downward’), here following the MT.

¹⁰ While this verse could be translated as an independent sentence, it is probably to be subordinated as a circumstantial clause in line with 27:10–12, as well as v. 12 of this passage.

¹¹ Here, this verse follows the MT; the NJB expands it for clarity: “For the northern side there were one hundred cubits of hangings; their twenty posts with their twenty sockets were of bronze, their hooks and rods of silver.”

¹² As in the previous verse, the NJB adds ‘there were’ before ‘fifty’; here, again, we follow the MT.

¹³ For this verse, here following the MT & NJB, the NRSV reads simply, “And for the front to the east, fifty cubits.”

¹⁴ After ‘one side’, the NJB adds ‘of the gateway’ and the NRSV has ‘of the gate’; here, we follow the MT.

¹⁵ The literal translation of ‘on either side’ is ‘on this hand and on that hand’; many commentators consider this a scribal gloss, for it makes no sense at all in the verse.

¹⁶ The NJB has ‘enclosing’ in place of ‘around’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁷ The literal translation of ‘all had silver bands’ is ‘were all banded with silver’.

וַחֲשׂוּקֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף וְצָפוּי רֹאשֵׁיהֶם כֶּסֶף וְהֵם מְחֻשָּׁקִים
כֶּסֶף כָּל עַמְדֵי הַחֹצֵר: י"ח וּמִסְדֵּי שַׁעַר הַחֹצֵר מַעֲשֵׂה
רָקִים תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מְשֻׁזָּר וְעִשְׂרִים
אֲמָה אֶרֶךְ וְקוֹמָה בְּרוּחַב חֲמֵשׁ אַמּוֹת לַעֲמֹת קִלְעִי
הַחֹצֵר: י"ט וְעַמְדֵיהֶם אַרְבַּעָה וְאַדְנִיָּהֶם אַרְבַּעָה נְחֹשֶׁת
וְוֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף וְצָפוּי רֹאשֵׁיהֶם וְחֻשְׁקֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף: כ' וְכָל-
הַיְתָדֹת לַמִּשְׁכָּן וְלַחֹצֵר סָבִיב נְחֹשֶׁת: {ס}

כ"א אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדֻת אֲשֶׁר פָּקַד עַל-
פִּי מֹשֶׁה עֲבַדְתָּ הַלְוִיִּם בְּיַד אִיתָמָר בֶּן-אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן:
כ"ב וּבְצִלְאֵל בֶּן-אֹוֹרִי בֶן-חֹר לְמִטָּה יְהוּדָה עָשָׂה אֶת
כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה: כ"ג וְאֵתוֹ אֶהֱלִיאָב בֶּן-
אֲחִיסָמָד לְמִטָּה-דָּן חֹרֶשׁ וְחֹשֶׁב וְרָקִים בַּתְּכֵלֶת
וּבְאַרְגָּמָן וּבְתוֹלַעַת הַשָּׁנִי וּבְשֵׁשׁ: {ס}

כ"ד כָּל-הַזָּהָב הָעָשׂוּי לַמִּלְאכָה בְּכָל מְלָאכַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ
וַיְהִי זָהָב הַתְּנוּפָה תָּשַׁע וְעִשְׂרִים כֶּכָר וּשְׁבַע מֵאוֹת
וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שֶׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ: כ"ה וְכֶסֶף פְּקוּדֵי הָעֵדָה

posts for the court all had silver bands.¹⁸ The screen for the gate of the court, the work of an embroiderer, was made of blue, purple, and scarlet, and finely woven linen. It was twenty cubits long and, along its width, five cubits high, like the hangings of the court.¹⁹ Its four posts with their four bases were bronze. The hooks for the posts were silver, like the plating on their capitals and like their rods.²⁰ The pegs for the Dwelling and for the court enclosure were all bronze.

²¹ Here is the account of the Dwelling, the Dwelling of the Covenant, as drawn up by order of Moses, the work of the Levites by the hand of Ithamar son of Aaron, the priest.²² Now Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that Yahweh commanded Moses.²³ With him was Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, engraver, designer, embroiderer in blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine linen.

²⁴ All the gold used in the work, all the work for the sanctuary, the gold of the offering, was twenty-nine talents and seven hundred and thirty shekels (reckoning by the sanctuary shekel).²⁵ The silver

¹⁸ The word used for 'screen' is different from the word for 'hangings'; it has more of the idea of shielding or securing the area.

¹⁹ The NRSV has 'pillars' in place of 'posts', here following the NJB.

²⁰ In place of 'pegs', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'tent pins'.

²¹ Vv. 21-31 seem to assume that the institution of the Levites (Nb 3) and the national census (Nb 1) have already taken place.

²² The NJB & NRSV omit the opening conjunction (literally, 'and'); here, we follow NETB.

²³ In place of 'designer', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'damask weaver'.

²⁴ There were 3,000 shekels in a talent, so the total weight here would be 87,730 shekels of gold – a little over a tonne!

²⁵ The total was 301,775 shekels, being a half shekel exacted per person from 605,550 male Israelites 20 years old or more: ~3¼ tonnes!

מֵאֵת כֶּכֶר וְאַלְף וְשִׁבְעַת מֵאוֹת וְחֲמִשָּׁה וְשִׁבְעִים שֶׁקֶל
בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ: ^{כו} בָּקָע לְגִלְגָּלֹת מַחְצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל
הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְכֹל הָעֹבֵר עַל־הַפְּקָדִים מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה
וּמֵעֵלָה לְשֵׁשׁ־מֵאוֹת אֶלְף וְשִׁלְשֹׁת אֲלָפִים וְחֲמִשׁ
מֵאוֹת וְחֲמִשִּׁים: ^{כז} וַיְהִי מֵאֵת כֶּכֶר הַפֶּסֶף לְצִקְתָּ אֶת
אֲדָנֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶת אֲדָנֵי הַפֶּרֶכֶת מֵאֵת אֲדָנִים לְמֵאֵת
הַכֶּכֶר כֶּכֶר לְאֶדָן: ^{כח} וְאֶת־הָאֶלְף וְשִׁבְעַת הַמֵּאוֹת
וְחֲמִשָּׁה וְשִׁבְעִים עָשָׂה וַיִּזְכֹּר לְעִמּוּדִים וְצִפָּה רָאשֵׁיהֶם
וְחֲשִׁק אֹתָם: ^{כט} וַנְּחַשֵׁת הַתְּנוּפָה שִׁבְעִים כֶּכֶר
וְאַלְפִים וְאַרְבַּע־מֵאוֹת שֶׁקֶל: ^ל וַיַּעַשׂ בָּהּ אֶת־אֲדָנֵי
פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת מִזְבַּח הַנְּחֹשֶׁת וְאֶת־מִכְבַּר
הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וְאֶת כָּל־כְּלֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: ^{לא} וְאֶת־אֲדָנֵי
הַחֹצֵר סָבִיב וְאֶת־אֲדָנֵי שַׁעַר הַחֹצֵר וְאֶת כָּל־יִתְדֹת
הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת־כָּל־יִתְדֹת הַחֹצֵר סָבִיב:

collected at the time of the census was one hundred talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels (reckoning by the sanctuary shekel), ²⁶ a beqa per head, or half a shekel (reckoning by the sanctuary shekel), for everyone counted of twenty years and over: six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. ²⁷ The hundred talents of silver were to cast the bases for the sanctuary and for the veil: a hundred bases from a hundred talents: a talent per base. ²⁸ With the one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels, he made the hooks for the posts, the plating for their capitals, and their bands. ²⁹ The bronze of the offering was seventy talents and two thousand four hundred shekels. ³⁰ With this, he made the bases for the door to the Tent of Meeting, the bronze altar with its bronze grating and all the utensils for it, ³¹ the bases all around the court, those for the gate of the court, all the pegs for the Dwelling, and all the pegs for the court enclosure.

²⁶ One 'beqa' weighed about 14g.

²⁷ The NJB has 'socket(s)' in place of 'base(s)', here following the NRSV.

²⁸ The NRSV opens this verse with 'of' and NETB with 'from'; here, we follow the NJB.

²⁹ The total would have been 212,400 shekels, which would be about 2½–3 tonnes.

³⁰ The NJB has 'furnishings' in place of 'utensils', here following the NRSV.

³¹ The bronze altar is, of course, the altar of the burnt offering.

שמות פרק לט

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א וּמִן־הַתְּכֵלֶת וְהָאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת הַשָּׁנִי עָשׂוּ בְּגָדִי־
שָׂרָד לְשָׂרֵת בִּקְדָּשׁ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־בְּגָדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר
לְאַהֲרֹן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: {פ}

ב וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הָאֶפֶד זָהָב תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי
וְשֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר: ג וַיִּרְקְעוּ אֶת־פָּתֵי הַזָּהָב וְקִצָּץ פְּתִילִם
לַעֲשׂוֹת בִּתְּוֹךְ הַתְּכֵלֶת וּבִתְּוֹךְ הָאַרְגָּמָן וּבִתְּוֹךְ תוֹלַעַת
הַשָּׁנִי וּבִתְּוֹךְ הַשֵּׁשׁ מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב: ד כְּתִפֹּת עָשׂוּ־לּוֹ
חֲבֵרֹת עַל־שְׁנֵי קִצּוֹתָיו קִצּוֹתָיו חֶבֶר: ה וַחֲשֹׁב אֶפְדָּתוֹ
אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו מִמֶּנּוּ הוּא כַּמַּעֲשֵׂהוּ זָהָב תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן
וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־
מֹשֶׁה: {ס}

ו וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־אַבְנֵי הַשֹּׁהַם מִסַּבֵּת מִשְׁבַּצַּת זָהָב
מִפְתָּחַת פְּתוּחֵי חוֹתָם עַל־שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ז וַיִּשֶּׁשׁ

¹ From the blue, purple, and scarlet, and the fine linen he made plaited garments for service in the sanctuary. They made the sacred garments for Aaron, as Yahweh had directed Moses.

² They made the ephod of gold, and blue, purple, and scarlet, and finely woven linen. ³ They beat gold into thin plates and cut these into fine strips to weave into the blue, purple, and scarlet, and the fine linen, as does an artistic designer. ⁴ For the ephod, they made two shoulder straps, joined to it at its two ends. ⁵ The woven band on it was of one piece with it and was of similar workmanship: of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, and finely woven linen, as Yahweh had directed Moses.

⁶ They fashioned the onyx stones, mounted in gold mesh and engraved, like the engravings of a seal, with the names of the sons of

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¹ Vv. 1–31 correspond to 28:1–43.

² Here, and in vv. 3, 7, 8 and 22, some of the pronouns and verbs appearing in the singular in the MT have been changed to plural, following the Samaritan Pentateuch & Peshitta.

³ The verb translated 'to weave' literally means 'to do', or 'to work'; it could be given a literal rendering but weaving or embroidering is probably what is intended.

⁴ In place of 'joined to it at its two ends', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'so it could be joined together'. The Kethib/Qere difference here warrants an explanation.

⁵ After 'on it', the NJB adds 'to hold it'.

⁶ The translation 'sons of Israel' may be literal here rather than paraphrasing it to mean the Israelites, because there were twelve names engraved; the idea was not the remembrance of the twelve sons, but the twelve tribes that bore their names.

אתם על כתפת האפד אבני זכרון לבני ישראל
באשר צוה יהוה את משה: {פ}

ח ויעש את החשן מעשה חשב כמעשה אפד זהב
תכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני ושש משזר: ט רבוע היה
כפול עשו את החשן זרת ארכו וזרת רחבו כפול:
י וימלאו בו ארבעה טורי אבן טור אדם פטדה
ויברקת הטור האחד: יא והטור השני נפך ספיר
ויהלם: יב והטור השלישי לשם שבו ואחלמה:
יג והטור הרביעי תרשיש שהם וישפה מוסבית
משבצת זהב במלאתם: יד והאבנים על שמות בני
ישראל הנה שתים עשרה על שמותם פתוחי חתם
איש על שמו לשנים עשר שבט: טו ויעשו על החשן
שרשרת גבלת מעשה עבת זהב טהור: טז ויעשו
שתי משבצת זהב ושתי טבעת זהב ויתנו את השתי

Israel. ⁷ They set them in the shoulder straps of the ephod, stones commemorating the sons of Israel, as Yahweh directed Moses.

⁸ He made the breastplate, in skilled work, of the same work as the ephod: of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, and finely woven linen. ⁹ It was square and they doubled it over, a span long and a span wide.

¹⁰ In this, they set four rows of stones: carnelian, topaz, and emerald for the first row; ¹¹ for the second row, garnet, sapphire, and diamond; ¹² and the third row: hyacinth, ruby and amethyst; ¹³ and the fourth row: beryl, carnelian and jasper: mounted in settings of gold mesh. ¹⁴ The stones bore the names of the sons of Israel and, like their names, were twelve. They were like seals, each engraved with the name of one of the twelve tribes. ¹⁵ For the breastplate, they made chains of pure gold braided like cords. ¹⁶ They made two gold settings and two gold rings, and put the two rings on the end of the

⁷ The NJB has 'the stones' in place of 'them', here following the MT & NRSV.

⁸ In place of 'in skilled work', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'finely brocaded'.

⁹ At the end of this verse, the MT repeats 'when doubled'; here, we follow the NJB.

¹⁰ The identity of several of these stones is uncertain; in place of 'topaz', the NRSV has 'chrysolite'; and in place of 'carnelian' (following the NRSV), the NJB has 'sard'.

¹¹ The NRSV reads: "... a turquoise, a sapphire (or lapis lazuli) and a moonstone."

¹² The NRSV reads: "... a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst."

¹³ The NRSV reads: "... a beryl, an onyx and a jasper."

¹⁴ At the end of this verse, the NJB adds 'in number'; here, we follow the MT (& NRSV).

¹⁵ NETB ends this verse, here following the NJB/NRSV, with, "braided chains like cords of pure gold."

¹⁶ In place of 'settings', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'rosettes'.

הַטִּבַּעַת עַל־שְׁנֵי קְצוֹת הַחֹשֶׁן: י' וַיִּתְּנוּ שְׁתֵּי הָעֵבֶתֶת
 הַזֶּהֶב עַל־שְׁתֵּי הַטִּבַּעַת עַל־קְצוֹת הַחֹשֶׁן: י" וְאֵת שְׁתֵּי
 קְצוֹת שְׁתֵּי הָעֵבֶתֶת נָתְנוּ עַל־שְׁתֵּי הַמְּשַׁבָּצֹת וַיִּתְּנֵם
 עַל־כִּתְפֹת הָאֶפֶד אֶל־מֹול פָּנָיו: י"ט וַיַּעֲשׂוּ שְׁתֵּי טִבַּעֹת
 זָהָב וַיִּשְׁימוּ עַל־שְׁנֵי קְצוֹת הַחֹשֶׁן עַל־שְׁפָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר
 אֶל־עֶבֶר הָאֶפֶד בֵּיתָה: כ' וַיַּעֲשׂוּ שְׁתֵּי טִבַּעֹת זָהָב
 וַיִּתְּנֵם עַל־שְׁתֵּי כִתְפֹת הָאֶפֶד מִלְמָטָה מִמֹּול פָּנָיו
 לַעֲמֹת מִחֲבֶרְתּוֹ מִמַּעַל לַחֹשֶׁב הָאֶפֶד: כ"א וַיִּרְכְּסוּ אֶת־
 הַחֹשֶׁן מִטִּבַּעְתּוֹ אֶל־טִבַּעֹת הָאֶפֶד בַּפֶּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת
 לֵהִיט עַל־חֹשֶׁב הָאֶפֶד וְלֹא־יִזַּח הַחֹשֶׁן מֵעַל הָאֶפֶד
 כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: {פ}

כ"ב וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־מַעֲלֵי הָאֶפֶד מֵעֵשָׂה אָרָג כָּלִיל תְּכֵלֶת:
 כ"ג וּפִי־הַמַּעֲלֵל בְּתוֹכּוֹ כְּפִי תַחֲרָא שֹׁפָה לְפָיו סָבִיב לֹא
 יִקְרַע: כ"ד וַיַּעֲשׂוּ עַל־שׁוּלֵי הַמַּעֲלֵל רִמּוֹנֵי תְּכֵלֶת
 וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי מְשֻׁזָּר: כ"ה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ פַעֲמָנֵי זָהָב
 טָהוֹר וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת־הַפַּעֲמָנִים בְּתוֹךְ הָרִמּוֹנִים עַל־שׁוּלֵי

breastplate,¹⁷ and they put the two gold cords in the two rings on the corners of the breastplate.¹⁸ The two ends of the cords they fastened to the two rosettes; thus, they attached them to the shoulder straps of the ephod, on the front of it.¹⁹ And they made two gold rings and fixed them to the two ends of the breastplate, on the inner hem of the ephod;²⁰ and they made two more gold rings and fixed them low down on the front of the two shoulder straps of the ephod, close to the join, above the waistband of the ephod.²¹ And they secured the pectoral by passing a blue cord through its rings and those of the ephod, so that the pectoral would sit above the waistband and not come apart from the ephod, as Yahweh directed Moses.

²² Then they made the robe of the ephod woven entirely of blue yarn.

²³ The opening in its centre was like the neck of a coat of mail; round the opening was a border to keep it from tearing.²⁴ The hem of the robe they decorated with pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet yarns and twined linen.²⁵ They also made bells of pure gold and

¹⁷ The NJB has 'fastened ... to' in place of 'put ... in', here following the NRSV.

¹⁸ Before 'two ends', the NJB and NETB add 'other'; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

¹⁹ The literal translation of 'inner hem' (here following the NJB) is 'homeward side'.

²⁰ In place of 'waistband', here following NETB, the NJB has 'woven band' and the NRSV has 'decorated band'.

²¹ The NJB has 'ribbon of violet-purple' in place of 'blue cord', here following the NRSV.

²² In place of 'blue yarn', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'violet-purple'.

²³ The meaning of the Hebrew word translated 'coat of mail' (as NJB & NRSV) is uncertain; NETB has 'collar'.

²⁴ The literal translation of 'twined linen' is simply 'twisted'; it may refer to the twisted linen that so frequently is found in these lists.

²⁵ The NJB has 'them' in place of the 2nd occurrence of 'the bells', here following the MT & NRSV.

הַמַּעִיל סָבִיב בְּתוֹךְ הָרִמָּנִים: ^{כו} פַּעֲמָן וְרִמָּן פַּעֲמָן
וְרִמָּן עַל-שׁוּלֵי הַמַּעִיל סָבִיב לְשַׁרְת פֶּאֶשֶׁר צֹוֶה יְהוָה
אֶת-מֹשֶׁה: {ס}

^{כז} וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת-הַכֹּתֶנֶת שֶׁשׁ מַעֲשֵׂה אָרָג לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו:
^{כח} וְאֵת הַמִּצְנֶפֶת שֶׁשׁ וְאֶת-פְּאַרֵי הַמְּגַבֶּעֶת שֶׁשׁ וְאֶת-
מִכְנָסֵי הַבֶּד שֶׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר: ^{כט} וְאֶת-הָאֲבִטָּה שֶׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר
וְתִכְלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי מַעֲשֵׂה רֶקֶם פֶּאֶשֶׁר צֹוֶה
יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה: {ס}

^ל וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת-צִיצִי נֹזֶר־הַקֹּדֶשׁ זָהָב טָהוֹר וַיִּכְתְּבוּ עָלָיו
מִכְתָּב פְּתוּחֵי חוֹתָם קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה: ^{לא} וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלָיו פִּתְּלִי
תְּכֵלֶת לְתֵת עַל-הַמִּצְנֶפֶת מִלְמַעְלָה פֶּאֶשֶׁר צֹוֶה יְהוָה
אֶת-מֹשֶׁה: {ס}

^{לב} וַיִּתְּכֵל כָּל-עֲבֹדַת מִשְׁכַּן אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צֹוֶה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה בֶּן עֶשְׂרִי: {פ}

^{לג} וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן אֶל-מֹשֶׁה אֶת-הָאֹהֶל וְאֶת-כָּל-
כֵּלָיו קְרָסָיו קְרָשָׁיו בְּרִיחוֹ וְעַמֻּדָיו וְאַדְנָיו: ^{לד} וְאֶת-

placed the bells round the hem of the robe between the pomegranates, ²⁶ bells and pomegranates alternately round the hem of the robe of office, as Yahweh directed Moses.

²⁷ Then they made the tunics of finely woven linen for Aaron and his sons, ²⁸ the turban of fine linen, the headdresses of fine linen, the undergarments of finely woven linen, ²⁹ and the sash of finely woven linen, of blue, purple and scarlet yarns, finely embroidered, as Yahweh directed Moses.

³⁰ They also made the plate, the holy diadem, of pure gold, and engraved on it, "Holy to Yahweh," as a man engraves a seal. ³¹ They attached to this a blue cord to secure it to the top of the turban, as Yahweh directed Moses.

³² Thus, all the work of the Dwelling, the Tent of Meeting, was completed. The Israelites did all that Yahweh directed Moses.

³³ And they brought to Moses the Dwelling, the Tent and all its furnishings: its hooks, its frames, its bars, its posts, and its bases;

²⁶ The literal translation of 'bells and pomegranates alternately' (here following the NJB) is 'a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate'.

²⁷ NETB has simply 'fine linen' in place of 'finely woven linen' and adds, at the end of the verse, 'the work of a weaver'.

²⁸ In place of 'undergarments', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'breeches'.

²⁹ The NJB has 'girdle' in place of 'sash', here following the NRSV & NETB.

³⁰ In place of 'holy', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'consecrated'.

³¹ In place of 'blue cord', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'ribbon of violet-purple'.

³² Vv. 32-43 correspond to 26:7-14.

³³ Not only is this the completion of the tabernacle, it is the fulfilment of God's plan revealed in Ch. 1, i.e., 'to reside with his people'.

מִכֶּסֶה עֹרֹת הָאֵילָם הַמֵּאֲדָמִים וְאֶת־מִכְסֵּה עֹרֹת
הַתַּחֲשִׁים וְאֶת פָּרֹכֶת הַמָּסָךְ: ^ל אֶת־אֲרוֹן הָעֵדֻת
וְאֶת־בִּדְיוֹ וְאֶת הַכַּפֹּרֶת: ^{לו} אֶת־הַשְּׁלָחַן אֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו
וְאֶת לֶחֶם הַפָּנִים: ^{לי} אֶת־הַמִּנְרָה הַטְּהֻרָה אֶת־נִרְתֶּיהָ
נֹרֹת הַמַּעֲרָכָה וְאֶת־כָּל־כְּלֶיהָ וְאֶת שֶׁמֶן הַמָּאֹר:
^{לח} וְאֶת מִזְבַּח הַזָּהָב וְאֶת שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְאֶת קְטֹרֶת
הַסַּמִּים וְאֶת מִסְךְ פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל: ^{לט} אֶת מִזְבַּח
הַנְּחֹשֶׁת וְאֶת־מִכְבַּר הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר־לֹו אֶת־בִּדְיוֹ וְאֶת־
כָּל־כֵּלָיו אֶת־הַכִּיֹּר וְאֶת־כַּנּוֹ: ^מ אֶת קַלְעֵי הַחֲצֵר אֶת־
עַמֻּדֶיהָ וְאֶת־אֲדָנֶיהָ וְאֶת־הַמָּסָךְ לְשַׁעַר הַחֲצֵר אֶת־
מִיתָרֶיהָ וְיִתְדֹתֶיהָ וְאֶת כָּל־כְּלֵי עֲבֹדַת הַמִּשְׁכָּן לְאֹהֶל
מוֹעֵד: ^{מא} אֶת־בְּגָדֵי הַשָּׂרָד לְשָׂרֵת בִּקְדָּשׁ אֶת־בְּגָדֵי
הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְאַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן וְאֶת־בְּגָדֵי בָנָיו לְכַהֵן: ^{מב} כָּל
אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה בֶּן עֲשׂוֹ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵת
כָּל־הָעֲבֹדָה: ^{מג} וַיֹּרֶא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־הַמְּלָאכָה וְהִנֵּה

³⁴ and the covering of rams' skins dyed red, the covering of fine leather and the screening veil; ³⁵ the Ark of the Covenant with its poles and the mercy seat; ³⁶ the table with all its utensils and the bread of the Presence; ³⁷ the pure lampstand with its lamps – the lamps set in order – and all its utensils, and the oil for the light; ³⁸ and the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the entrance to the Tent; ³⁹ the bronze altar with its grating of bronze, its poles and all its utensils; the basin and its stand; ⁴⁰ the hangings of the court, its posts and its bases, and the screen for the gate of the court, its cords and its pegs, and all the utensils for the service in the Dwelling, the Tent of Meeting; ⁴¹ the sumptuous vestments for ministering in the sanctuary – the sacred vestments for Aaron the priest and the vestments for his sons – to minister as priests. ⁴² The Israelites had done all the work exactly as Yahweh had commanded Moses. ⁴³ And Moses examined the whole work, and he

³⁴ In place of 'screening veil', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'curtain for the screen'.

³⁵ The NJB has 'shafts' in place of 'poles', here following the NRSV & NETB.

³⁶ In place of 'bread of the Presence', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'loaves of offering'.

³⁷ The NJB has 'lampstand of pure gold' in place of 'pure lampstand', here following the MT & NRSV.

³⁸ In place of 'screen', here following then NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'curtain'.

³⁹ The NJB has 'shafts' and 'furnishings' in place of 'poles' and 'utensils', respectively, here following the NRSV.

⁴⁰ In place of 'gate of the court', here following the NRSV, the NJB & NETB have 'gateway to the court'.

⁴¹ The NRSV has 'finely worked' in place of 'sumptuous', here following the NJB.

⁴² A more literal translation of this verse, following NETB, is, "According to all that Yahweh had commanded Moses, so the Israelites did all the work."

⁴³ The situation and wording in this verse are reminiscent of Gn 1:28 & 31, with the motifs of blessing people and inspecting what has been made.

עָשׂוּ אֹתָהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה בֶּן עֲשׂוֹ וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם
מֹשֶׁה: {פ} could see that they had done it exactly as Yahweh had directed him;
and Moses blessed them.

שמות פרק מ

EXODUS 40

א וידבר יהוה אל-משה לאמר: ב ביום-החדש הראשון באחד לחדש תקים את-משכן אהל מועד: ג ושמית שם את ארון העדות וסכת על-הארץ את-הפרכת: ד והבאת את-השלחן וערכת את-ערכו והבאת את-המנורה והעלית את-נרתיה: ה ונתתה את-מזבח הזהב לקטרת לפני ארון העדת ושמית את-מסד הפתח למשכן: ו ונתתה את מזבח העלה לפני פתח משכן אהל-מועד: ז ונתת את-הכיר בין אהל מועד ובין המזבח ונתת שם מים: ח ושמית את-החצר סביב ונתת את-מסד שער החצר: ט ולקחת את-שמן המשחה ומשחת את-המשכן ואת-כל-

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses: ² "On the first day of the first month you are to erect the Dwelling, the Tent of Meeting, ³ and you shall place the Ark of the Covenant in it, screening the Ark with the veil. ⁴ You are to bring in the table, arranging its setting; and bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. ⁵ You shall put the golden altar of incense before the Ark of the Covenant and set up the screen at the door to the Dwelling. ⁶ And you shall put the altar of high-offering before the door to the Dwelling, the Tent of Meeting, ⁷ and put the basin between the Tent of Meeting and the altar and put water in it. ⁸ You shall set up the court all around and hang the screen at the gate of the court. ⁹ Then, take the anointing oil and anoint the Dwelling

EXODUS 40

- ¹ All of 39:32–40:38 could be taken as a unit: the first section (39:32–43) shows that the Israelites had carefully and accurately completed the preparation and brought everything they had made to Moses – the work of Yahweh builds on the faithful obedience of the people. In the second section are the instruction and the implementation (40:1–33) – the work of Yahweh progresses through the unifying of the work. The last part (40:34–38) may take the most attention – when the work was completed, the glory filled the tabernacle: by his glorious presence, Yahweh blesses and directs his people in their worship.
- ² The literal translation of 'you are to erect' is 'you will raise', an imperfect of instruction.
- ³ The NJB has simply 'it' in place of the 2nd occurrence of 'the Ark', here following the MT & NRSV.
- ⁴ In place of 'its setting', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'what is to be set in order on it'.
- ⁵ The literal translation of 'put' is 'give' (as also throughout vv. 6–8).
- ⁶ The term, 'high-offering' translates עלה, connecting it to a name for God (עֶלְיוֹן – 'Most High God') – the offering was for God alone.
- ⁷ Literally translated, this verse ends, 'put water there'.
- ⁸ In place of 'the court all around', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'the enclosure of the court'.
- ⁹ The NJB has 'a holy place' rather than 'holy', here following the MT, NRSV & NETB.

אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ וְקִדְשָׁתָּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו וְהָיָה קֹדֶשׁ׃
 וּמִשְׁחָתָּ אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו וְקִדְשָׁתָּ
 אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְהָיָה הַמִּזְבֵּחַ קֹדֶשׁ קֳדָשִׁים׃¹⁰ וּמִשְׁחָתָּ
 אֶת־הַכִּיֹּר וְאֶת־כַּנּוֹ וְקִדְשָׁתָּ אֹתוֹ׃¹¹ וְהִקְרַבְתָּ אֶת־
 אֶהֱרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּרְחַצְתָּ אֹתָם
 בַּמַּיִם׃¹² וְהִלַּבְשָׁתָּ אֶת־אֶהֱרֹן אֶת בְּגָדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ
 וּמִשְׁחָתָּ אֹתוֹ וְקִדְשָׁתָּ אֹתוֹ וְכָהֵן לִי׃¹³ וְאֶת־בָּנָיו
 תִּקְרִיב וְהִלַּבְשָׁתָּ אֹתָם כְּתֹנֶת׃¹⁴ וּמִשְׁחָתָּ אֹתָם
 כַּאֲשֶׁר מִשְׁחָתָּ אֶת־אַבְיָהֶם וְכָהֲנֹו לִי וְהִיְתָה לְהִי
 לָהֶם מִשְׁחָתָם לְכַהֲנַת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתָם׃¹⁵ וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה
 כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ בֶּן עֶשְׂרֵה׃ {ס}

יָּ וְהָיָה בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁנִיָּה בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ
 הַיּוֹקֵם הַמִּשְׁכָּן׃¹⁶ וַיִּקֶּם מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־
 אֲדָנָיו וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־קֶרְשָׁיו וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־בְּרִיחָיו וַיִּקֶּם אֶת־
 עַמּוּדָיו׃¹⁷ וַיִּפְרֹשׂ אֶת־הָאֹהֶל עַל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־

and everything in it, sanctifying it with its furniture, to make it holy.

¹⁰ And you shall anoint the altar of high-offering with all its vessels and sanctify the altar, so the altar will be most holy. ¹¹ And you shall anoint the basin with its base and sanctify it. ¹² And you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the Tent of Meeting and wash them with water, ¹³ and clothe Aaron with the sacred garments, and anoint him and sanctify him, to serve me as priest. ¹⁴ Next, you shall bring his sons and put tunics on them, ¹⁵ and anoint them as you have anointed their father, to serve me as priests. And their anointing will make them a priesthood that will last for all their generations."

¹⁶ Moses did this; he did exactly as Yahweh directed him.

¹⁷ And so, the Dwelling was set up in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month. ¹⁸ Moses erected the Dwelling; and he fixed the bases for it, and put up its frames, and put its bars in position, and set up its posts. ¹⁹ And he spread the Tent over the

¹⁰ The term, 'high-offering' translates עֹלָה, connecting it to a name for God (עֶלְיוֹן – 'Most High God') – the offering was for God alone.

¹¹ The items inside the tent did not need to be enumerated since they were already holy; but items in the courtyard needed special attention.

¹² The NJB ends this verse, here following the MT, NRSV & NETB, with, "... shall see that they bathe."

¹³ In place of 'as priest', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'in the priesthood'.

¹⁴ The verb here translated as 'bring' could be more literally translated as 'present' (as also in v. 12).

¹⁵ For the last sentence, the NJB has, "This anointing of them is to confer the priesthood on them in perpetuity from generation to generation."

¹⁶ More literally translated (as NETB), this verse reads, "This is what Moses did, according to all Yahweh had commanded him – so he did."

¹⁷ According to Priestly chronology, the workers erected the tabernacle nine months after the arrival at Sinai (19:1).

¹⁸ In place of 'bars', here following NETB, the NJB has 'crossbars' and the NRSV has 'poles'.

¹⁹ The NJB has 'on top of it' in place of 'over it', here following the NRSV & NETB.

מִכְסֵּה הָאֹהֶל עָלָיו מִלְמַעְלָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־
מֹשֶׁה: {ס}

כ וַיִּקַּח וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־הָעֵדֻת אֶל־הָאָרֶן וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־הַבְּדִים
עַל־הָאָרֶן וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־הַכַּפֹּרֶת עַל־הָאָרֶן מִלְמַעְלָה:
כא וַיָּבֵא אֶת־הָאָרֶן אֶל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת פָּרֹכֶת
הַמִּסָּד וַיִּסָּד עַל אֲרֹן הָעֵדוּת כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־
מֹשֶׁה: {ס}

כב וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־הַשְּׁלֶחָן בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד עַל יָרֵךְ הַמִּשְׁכָּן
צָפֹנָה מִחוּץ לַפָּרֹכֶת: כג וַיַּעֲרֹךְ עָלָיו עֶרֶךְ לֶחֶם לִפְנֵי
יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: {ס}

כד וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־הַמְּנֹרָה בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד נֹכַח הַשְּׁלֶחָן עַל
יָרֵךְ הַמִּשְׁכָּן נֹגֶבָה: כה וַיַּעַל הַנֵּזֶר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר
צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: {ס}

כו וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַ הַזָּהָב בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לִפְנֵי הַפָּרֹכֶת:
כז וַיִּקְטֹר עָלָיו קֹטֶרֶת סַמִּים כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־
מֹשֶׁה: {ס}

Dwelling and he put the covering for the Tent over it, as Yahweh directed Moses.

²⁰ And he took the Covenant and placed it inside the Ark; and he set the poles to the Ark and placed the mercy seat above on the Ark; ²¹ then he brought the Ark into the Dwelling and put the screening veil in place; thus, he screened the Ark of Yahweh, as Yahweh directed Moses.

²² He put the table in the Tent of Meeting, on the north side of the Dwelling, outside the veil, ²³ and on it arranged the bread before Yahweh, as Yahweh directed Moses.

²⁴ He put the lampstand in the Tent of Meeting, opposite the table, on the south side of the Dwelling; ²⁵ then he set up the lamps before Yahweh, just as Yahweh directed Moses.

²⁶ And he put the golden altar in the Tent of Meeting in front of the veil, ²⁷ and, on it, he burnt fragrant incense, as Yahweh directed Moses.

²⁰ The NJB substitutes the 3rd occurrence of 'the Ark' with the pronoun, 'it'; here, we follow the MT, NRSV & NETB.

²¹ The literal translation of 'screening veil' is 'veil of the covering'.

²² The NRSV has 'tabernacle' and 'curtain' in place of 'Dwelling' and 'veil', respectively (throughout this book); here, we follow the NJB.

²³ The literal translation of 'arranged the bread' is 'arranged the arrangement of bread' (a cognate accusative construction).

²⁴ Throughout the books of the Pentateuch, the NRSV & NETB do not capitalise the phrase, 'Tent of Meeting'; here, we follow the NJB.

²⁵ The NJB translates the opening conjunction literally ('and') and the NRSV omits it; here, we follow NETB.

²⁶ The NRSV has 'curtain' in place of 'veil', here following the NJB & NETB.

²⁷ In place of 'burnt', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'offered'.

כח וישם את־מסך הפתח למשכן: כט ואת מזבח העלה שם פתח משכן אהל־מועד ויעל עליו את־העלה ואת־המנחה כאשר צוה יהוה את־משה: {ס}

ל וישם את־הכִּיֹּר בין־אהל מועד ובין המזבח ויתן שמה מים לרחצה: לא ורחצו ממנו משה ואהרן ובניו את־ידיהם ואת־רגליהם: לב בבאם אל־אהל מועד ובקרבתם אל־המזבח ירחצו כאשר צוה יהוה את־משה: {ס}

לג ויקם את־החצר סביב למשכן ולמזבח ויתן את־מסך שער החצר ויכל משה את־המלאכה: {פ} לד ויכס הענן את־אהל מועד וכבוד יהוה מלא את־המשכן: לה ולא־יכל משה לבוא אל־אהל מועד כי־שכן עליו הענן וכבוד יהוה מלא את־המשכן: לו ובהעלות הענן מעל המשכן יסעו בני ישראל בכל

28 And he put the screen at the entrance to the Dwelling. 29 He put the altar of high-offering at the entrance to the Dwelling, the Tent of Meeting, and on it offered the high-offering and the oblation, as Yahweh directed Moses.

30 And he put the basin between the Tent of Meeting and the altar and put water in it for washing, 31 and Moses and Aaron and his sons would wash their hands and feet in it: 32 whenever they entered the Tent of Meeting or approached the altar they washed, as Yahweh directed Moses.

33 And he set up the court round the Dwelling and the altar and put the screen at the gate to the court; so, Moses completed the work.

34 The cloud covered the Tent of Meeting and the glory of Yahweh filled the Dwelling. 35 Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud settled on it and the glory of Yahweh filled the Dwelling. 36 Whenever the cloud rose from the Dwelling, the Israel-

28 After 'put', the NRSV adds 'in place'; here, we follow the NJB & NETB.

29 The term, 'high-offering' translates עֹלָה, connecting it to a name for God (עֶלְיוֹן – 'Most High God') – the offering was for God alone.

30 The literal translation of 'in it' is 'there'.

31 In place of 'and ... would wash', here following NETB, the NJB has 'this was for ... to wash'.

32 The construction translated here 'whenever they entered' is the infinitive with the temporal preposition and the suffixed subjective genitive; this temporal clause indicates that the verb in the preceding verse was frequentative.

33 The NJB opens this verse, here following the MT, NRSV & NETB, with 'Moses then set up'.

34 Vv. 34–38 reflect 25:8 (and see 29:43–46).

35 In place of 'settled', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'rested'.

36 The pillars of cloud and fire (13:21–22) are now linked with the portable sanctuary accompanying Israel on its journey (Nb 9:15–23).

מִסְעֵיהֶם: לֹא וְאִם-לֹא יַעֲלֶה הָעָנָן וְלֹא יִסְעוּ עַד-יוֹם
הָעֹלָתוֹ: לֵחַ כִּי עָנָן יִהְיֶה עַל-הַמִּשְׁכָּן יוֹמָם וְאֵשׁ תִּהְיֶה
לַיְלָה בּוֹ לְעֵינֵי כָל-בֵּית-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל-מִסְעֵיהֶם:
{ש}

ites would resume marching.³⁷ If the cloud did not rise, they did not set out until the day it did rise.³⁸ For, the cloud of Yahweh rested on the Dwelling by day, and a fire shone within the cloud by night, for all the House of Israel to see; at each stage of their journey.

³⁷ In place of 'did (not) rise', here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have 'was (not) taken up'.

³⁸ The verb 'shone' is an example of the imperfect tense used with its 'customary' nuance.