

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

OCTOBER 5-11

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | EXODUS 31-32

“Flee From Idolatry”

(Exodus 32:1) Meanwhile, the people saw that Moses was taking a long time coming down from the mountain. So the people gathered around Aaron and said to him: “Get up, make for us a god who will go ahead of us, because we do not know what has happened to this Moses, the man who led us up out of the land of Egypt.”

w09 5/15 11 ¶11

Press On to Maturity—“The Great Day of Jehovah Is Near”

¹¹Applying what we have learned from the Scriptures can be a challenge, particularly when circumstances are difficult. For example, shortly after Jehovah liberated the sons of Israel from Egyptian bondage, they “fell to quarreling with Moses” and kept “putting Jehovah to the test.” Why? Because of a lack of water to drink. (Ex. 17:1-4) Less than two months after entering into a divine covenant and agreeing to do “all the words that Jehovah [had] spoken,” they violated his law on idolatry. (Ex. 24:3, 12-18; 32:1, 2, 7-9) Was this because the prolonged absence of Moses while he was being instructed on Mount Horeb made them fearful? Did they perhaps think that the Amalekites would strike again and that the Israelites would be helpless without Moses, whose upheld hands had brought them victory earlier? (Ex. 17:8-16) That is possible, but whatever the case, the Israelites “refused to become obedient.” (Acts 7:39-41) Paul urged Christians to ‘do their utmost’ to avoid ‘falling into the same pattern of disobedience’ that the Israelites showed when they were afraid to enter the Promised Land.—Heb. 4:3, 11.

(Exodus 32:4-6) Then he took the gold from them, and he formed it with an engraving tool and made it into a statue of a calf. They began to say: “This is your God, O Israel, who led you up out of the land of Egypt.” ⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. Then Aaron called out: “There is a festival to Jehovah tomorrow.” ⁶ So they got up early on the next day and began offering up burnt offerings and presenting communion sacrifices. After that the people sat down to eat and drink. Then they got up to have a good time.

w12 10/15 25 ¶12

Obey God and Benefit From His Sworn Promises

¹²Jehovah immediately began to fulfill his side of the Law covenant by arranging for a tent of worship and a priesthood that made it possible for sinful humans to approach him. Israel, on the other hand, quickly forgot their dedication to God and “pained even the Holy One of Israel.” (Ps. 78:41) For example, while Moses was busy receiving further instructions on Mount Sinai, the Israelites became impatient and began to lose faith in God, thinking that Moses had deserted them. So they made a golden image of a calf and said to the people: “This is your God, O Israel, who led you up out of the land of Egypt.” (Ex. 32:1, 4) Then they held what they called “a festival to Jehovah” and bowed down and sacrificed to their man-made image. Upon seeing that, Jehovah told Moses: “They have turned aside in a hurry from the way I have commanded them to go.” (Ex. 32:5, 6, 8) Sadly, from then on Israel had a history of making vows to God that they later broke.—Num. 30:2.

(Exodus 32:9, 10) Jehovah went on to say to Moses: “I have seen that this is an obstinate people. ¹⁰ So now let me be, and I will exterminate them in my burning anger, and let me make a great nation from you instead.”

w18.07 20 ¶14

“Who Is on Jehovah’s Side?”

¹⁴ The people knew that idolatry was a serious offense against Jehovah. (Ex. 20:3-5) But soon they were worshipping a golden calf! Despite this obvious act of disobedience, the Israelites somehow fooled themselves into thinking that they were still on Jehovah’s side. Why, Aaron even called their calf worship “a festival to Jehovah”! How did Jehovah react? He felt betrayed. Jehovah told Moses that the people had “corrupted themselves” and had “deviated from the way [He] commanded them to go.” In his “burning anger,” Jehovah even considered wiping out the newly formed nation of Israel.—Ex. 32:5-10.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Exodus 31:17) It is an enduring sign between me and the people of Israel, for in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth and on the seventh day he rested and refreshed himself.’”

w19.12 3 ¶4

“There Is an Appointed Time” for Work and for Rest

⁴ Do the examples set by Jehovah and Jesus in working hard imply that it is not necessary for us to rest? Not at all. Jehovah never gets tired, so he does not need physical rest. The Bible does say that after Jehovah created the heavens and the earth, “he rested and refreshed himself.” (Ex. 31:17) However, that evidently means that Jehovah paused and found satisfaction in what he had made. And although Jesus worked hard while he lived on earth, he still made time to rest and to enjoy meals with his friends.—Matt. 14:13; Luke 7:34.

(Exodus 32:32, 33) But now if you are willing, pardon their sin; if not, please wipe me out from your book that you have written.”

³³ However, Jehovah said to Moses: “Whoever

has sinned against me, I will wipe him out of my book.

w87 9/1 29

Questions From Readers

A person’s being noted with remembrance and approval (having his name “in the book of life”) does not mean that he is guaranteed eternal life, as if this were predestined or unchangeable. Concerning the Israelites, Moses asked Jehovah: “Now if you will pardon their sin,—and if not, wipe me out, please, from your book that you have written.” God replied: “Whoever has sinned against me, I shall wipe him out of my book.” (Exodus 32:32, 33) Yes, even after God listed someone with approval in his “book,” the individual could become disobedient or abandon his faith. If that developed, God would “blot out his name from the book of life.”—Revelation 3:5.

Bible Reading

(Exodus 32:15-35) Moses then turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hand. The tablets were inscribed on both sides; they were written on the front and on the back. ¹⁶ The tablets were the workmanship of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets. ¹⁷ When Joshua began to hear the noise of the people because of their shouting, he said to Moses: “There is the sound of battle in the camp.” ¹⁸ But Moses said: “It is not the sound of singing over a victory, And it is not the sound of wailing over a defeat; I hear the sound of another kind of singing.” ¹⁹ As soon as Moses got near the camp and saw the calf and the dances, his anger began to blaze, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain. ²⁰ He took the calf that they had made and he burned it with fire and crushed it into powder; then he scattered it on the water and made the Isra-

elites drink it. ²¹ And Moses said to Aaron: “What did this people do to you that you have brought a great sin upon them?” ²² Aaron replied: “Do not be enraged, my lord. You well know that the people are inclined to do evil. ²³ So they said to me, ‘Make for us a god who will go ahead of us, for we do not know what has happened to this Moses, the man who led us up out of the land of Egypt.’ ²⁴ So I said to them, ‘Whoever has any gold must take it off and give it to me.’ Then I threw it into the fire and out came this calf.” ²⁵ Moses saw that the people were unrestrained, for Aaron had let them go unrestrained, so that they were a disgrace before their opposers. ²⁶ Then Moses took his position in the gate of the camp and said: “Who is on Jehovah’s side? Come to me!” And all the Levites gathered around him. ²⁷ He now said to them: “This is what Jehovah the God of Israel has said, ‘Each of you must fasten on his sword and pass through all the camp from gate to gate, killing his brother, his neighbor, and his close companion.’” ²⁸ The Levites did what Moses said. So about 3,000 men were killed on that day. ²⁹ Then Moses said: “Set yourselves apart for Jehovah today, for each of you has gone against his own son and his own brother; today he will give you a blessing.” ³⁰ On the very next day, Moses said to the people: “You committed a very great sin, and now I will go up to Jehovah to see if I can make amends for your sin.” ³¹ So Moses returned to Jehovah and said: “What a great sin this people has committed! They made themselves a god of gold! ³² But now if you are willing, pardon their sin; if not, please wipe me out from your book that you have written.” ³³ However, Jehovah said to Moses: “Whoever has sinned against me, I will wipe him out of my book. ³⁴ Go now, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you. Look! My angel

will go ahead of you, and on the day when I make an accounting, I will bring punishment on them for their sin.” ³⁵ Then Jehovah began plaguing the people because they had made the calf, the one that Aaron had made.

OCTOBER 12-18

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | EXODUS 33-34

“Jehovah’s Endearing Qualities”

(Exodus 34:5) Then Jehovah came down in the cloud and stationed himself with him there and declared the name of Jehovah.

it-2 466-467

Name

The material creation testifies to God’s existence, but it does not reveal God’s name. (Ps 19:1; Ro 1:20) For an individual to know God’s name signifies more than a mere acquaintance with the word. (2Ch 6:33) It means actually knowing the Person—his purposes, activities, and qualities as revealed in his Word. (Compare 1Ki 8:41-43; 9:3, 7; Ne 9:10.) This is illustrated in the case of Moses, a man whom Jehovah ‘knew by name,’ that is, knew intimately. (Ex 33:12) Moses was privileged to see a manifestation of Jehovah’s glory and also to ‘hear the name of Jehovah declared.’ (Ex 34:5) That declaration was not simply the repetition of the name Jehovah but was a statement about God’s attributes and activities. “Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, preserving loving-kindness for thousands, pardoning error and transgression and sin, but by no means will he give exemption from punishment, bringing punishment for the error of fathers upon sons and upon grandsons, upon the third generation and upon the fourth generation.” (Ex 34:6, 7) Similarly, the song of Moses, containing the words “for I shall declare the name of

Jehovah,” recounts God’s dealings with Israel and describes his personality.—De 32:3-44.

(Exodus 34:6) Jehovah was passing before him and declaring: “Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and abundant in loyal love and truth,

w09 5/1 18 ¶3-5

When Jehovah Described Himself

The first thing Jehovah reveals about himself is that he is “a God merciful and gracious.” (Verse 6) According to one scholar, the Hebrew word rendered “merciful” bespeaks God’s “tender compassion, like that of a father to his children.” The word rendered “gracious” is related to a verb that “depicts a heartfelt response by someone who has something to give to one who has a need.” Clearly, Jehovah wants us to know that he looks after his worshippers as parents look after their children—with tender love and deep concern for their needs.—Psalm 103: 8, 13.

Next, Jehovah says that he is “slow to anger.” (Verse 6) He is not prone to become angry with his earthly servants. Rather, he is patient with them, putting up with their shortcomings while giving them time to change their sinful ways.—2 Peter 3:9.

God continues, saying he is “abundant in loving-kindness and truth.” (Verse 6) Loving-kindness, or loyal love, is a precious quality by which Jehovah forges between himself and his people a bond that is steadfast, unfailing. (Deuteronomy 7:9) Jehovah is also a wellspring of truth. He can neither deceive nor be deceived. Since he is “the God of truth,” we can have complete faith in everything he says, including his promises for the future.—Psalm 31:5.

(Exodus 34:7) showing loyal love to thousands, pardoning error and transgression and sin, but he will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, bringing punishment for the

error of fathers upon sons and upon grandsons, upon the third generation and upon the fourth generation.”

w09 5/1 18 ¶6

When Jehovah Described Himself

Another great truth that Jehovah wants us to know about himself is that he pardons “error and transgression and sin.” (Verse 7) He is “ready to forgive” repentant sinners. (Psalm 86:5) At the same time, Jehovah never condones badness. He explains that “by no means will he give exemption from punishment.” (Verse 7) The holy and just God will not leave willful sinners unpunished. Sooner or later the consequences of their sinful behavior will catch up with them.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Exodus 33:11) Jehovah spoke to Moses face-to-face, just as one man would speak to another man. When he returned to the camp, Joshua the son of Nun, his minister and attendant, would not depart from the tent.

(Exodus 33:20) But he added: “You cannot see my face, for no man can see me and live.”

w04 3/15 27 ¶5

Highlights From the Book of Exodus

33:11, 20—How did God speak to Moses “face to face”? This expression denotes intimate two-way conversation. Moses talked with God’s representative and orally received instruction from Jehovah through him. But Moses did not see Jehovah, since ‘no man can see God and yet live.’ In fact, Jehovah did not personally speak to Moses. The Law “was transmitted through angels by the hand of a mediator,” states Galatians 3:19.

(Exodus 34:23, 24) “Three times a year, all your men are to appear before the true Lord, Jehovah, the God of Israel. ²⁴ For I will drive the nations away from before you, and

I will enlarge your territory, and nobody will desire your land while you are going up to see the face of Jehovah your God three times a year.

w98 9/1 20 ¶5

Be Sure to Put First Things First!

Three times a year every male Israelite and proselyte in the land was commanded to appear before Jehovah. Realizing that the entire family would benefit spiritually from such occasions, many family heads arranged for their wife and children to accompany them. But who would protect their homes and their fields from enemy attack while the family was away? Jehovah promised: “Nobody will desire your land while you are going up to see the face of Jehovah your God three times in the year.” (Exodus 34: 24) It took faith for the Israelites to believe that if they put spiritual interests first, they would not lose out materially. Did Jehovah prove true to his word? He certainly did!

Bible Reading

(Exodus 33:1-16) Jehovah said further to Moses: “Go on your way from here with the people whom you led up out of the land of Egypt. Journey to the land about which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your offspring I will give it.’” ² I will send an angel ahead of you and drive out the Ca’naan-ites, the Am’or-ites, the Hit’tites, the Per’iz-zites, the Hi’vites, and the Jeb’u-sites. ³ Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go in the midst of you, for you are an obstinate people, and I might exterminate you on the way.” ⁴ When the people heard this harsh word, they began to mourn, and not one of them put on his ornaments. ⁵ Jehovah said to Moses: “Say to the Israelites, ‘You are an obstinate people. In one moment I could go through the midst of you and exterminate you. So now

keep your ornaments off while I consider what to do to you.’” ⁶ So from Mount Hor’eb onward, the Israelites refrained from wearing their ornaments. ⁷ Now Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, at some distance from the camp, and he called it a tent of meeting. Everyone inquiring of Jehovah would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. ⁸ As soon as Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise and stand at the entrance of their own tents, and they would gaze after Moses until he entered into the tent. ⁹ As soon as Moses would go into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stand at the entrance of the tent while God spoke with Moses. ¹⁰ When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, each of them rose and bowed down at the entrance of his own tent. ¹¹ Jehovah spoke to Moses face-to-face, just as one man would speak to another man. When he returned to the camp, Joshua the son of Nun, his minister and attendant, would not depart from the tent. ¹² Now Moses said to Jehovah: “See, you are saying to me, ‘Lead this people up,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Moreover, you have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my eyes.’” ¹³ Please, if I have found favor in your eyes, make me know your ways, so that I may know you and continue to find favor in your eyes. Consider, too, that this nation is your people.” ¹⁴ So he said: “I myself will go with you, and I will give you rest.” ¹⁵ Then Moses said to him: “If you yourself are not going along, do not lead us up from here. ¹⁶ How will it be known that I have found favor in your eyes, I and your people? Is it not by your going along with us, so that I and your people will be distinguished from every other people on the face of the earth?”

OCTOBER 19-25

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | EXODUS 35-36

“Equipped to Do Jehovah’s Work”

(Exodus 35:25, 26) All the skilled women spun with their hands, and they brought what they had spun: blue thread, purple wool, scarlet material, and fine linen. ²⁶ And all the skilled women whose hearts impelled them spun the goat hair.

w14 12/15 4 ¶4

Jehovah Richly Blesses a Willing Spirit

What brought Jehovah the most pleasure was, not the material offerings, but the willing spirit of those who thus supported pure worship. They were also moved to contribute their time and labor. “All the skilled women spun with their hands,” says the account. Indeed, “all the skilled women whose hearts impelled them spun the goat hair.” Moreover, Jehovah gave Bezalel “wisdom, understanding, and knowledge of every sort of craftsmanship.” In fact, God filled Bezalel and Oholiab with the skill needed to do all the work that was commissioned.—Ex. 35:25, 26, 30-35.

(Exodus 35:30-35) Then Moses said to the Israelites: “See, Jehovah has chosen Bez’al-el the son of U’ri the son of Hur of the tribe of Judah. ³¹ He has filled him with the spirit of God, giving him wisdom, understanding, and knowledge of every sort of craftsmanship ³² for making artistic designs, for working with gold, silver, and copper, ³³ for cutting and setting stones, and for making all kinds of artistic wood products. ³⁴ And he has put it into his heart to teach, he and O-ho’li-ab the son of A-his’a-mach of the tribe of Dan. ³⁵ He has filled them with skill to do all the work of a craftsman, an embroiderer, and a weaver using blue thread, purple wool, scarlet material,

and fine linen, and of a loom worker. These men will do every sort of work and prepare every sort of design.

w11 12/15 18 ¶6

Faithful Ones of Old—Guided by God’s Spirit

⁶ The experience of Moses’ contemporary Bezalel reveals much about the way God’s spirit can operate. **(Read Exodus 35:30-35.)** Bezalel was appointed to take the lead in making the necessary furnishings for the tabernacle. Did he have knowledge of crafts prior to this vast project? Possibly, but in all likelihood his most recent job was that of making bricks for the Egyptians. (Ex. 1:13, 14) So how would Bezalel fulfill his complicated task? Jehovah “proceeded to fill him with the spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in every sort of craftsmanship and for designing devices . . . to make ingenious products of every sort.” Whatever natural aptitude Bezalel may have had was enhanced by holy spirit. The same is true of Oholiab. Bezalel and Oholiab must have learned well, for they not only performed their duties but also taught others what to do. Yes, God put it into their hearts to teach.

(Exodus 36:1, 2) “Bez’al-el will work along with O-ho’li-ab and every skilled man to whom Jehovah has given wisdom and understanding so as to know how to do all the work of the holy service just as Jehovah has commanded.” ² Moses then called Bez’al-el and O-ho’li-ab and every skilled man into whose heart Jehovah had put wisdom, everyone whose heart impelled him to volunteer to do the work.

w11 12/15 19 ¶7

Faithful Ones of Old—Guided by God’s Spirit

⁷ Another testimony that Bezalel and Oholiab were guided by God’s spirit is the amazing durability of their work. Their productions were still in use some 500 years later. (2 Chron. 1:2-6) Unlike modern-day manufacturers, Bezalel and

Oholiab had no interest in leaving their signature or trademark on their work. All credit went to Jehovah for their accomplishments.—Ex. 36: 1, 2.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Exodus 35:1-3) Moses later gathered the entire assembly of the Israelites together and said to them: “These are the things that Jehovah has commanded to be done: ² Work may be done for six days, but the seventh day will become something holy to you, a sabbath of complete rest to Jehovah. Anybody doing work on it will be put to death. ³ You must not light a fire in any of your dwelling places on the Sabbath day.”

w05 5/15 23 ¶14

Coming to Know Jehovah's Ways

¹⁴ *Give priority to spiritual matters.* The nation of Israel was not to allow caring for physical needs to crowd out attention given to spiritual activities. The Israelites' lives were not to be devoted solely to mundane pursuits. Jehovah set aside time each week that he designated as sacred, time used exclusively for activity related to worship of the true God. (Exodus 35:1-3; Numbers 15:32-36) Each year, additional time was to be set aside for specified holy conventions. (Leviticus 23:4-44) These would provide opportunities to recount Jehovah's mighty acts, to be reminded of his ways, and to express gratitude to him for all of his goodness. As the people expressed their devotion to Jehovah, they would grow in godly fear and love and would be helped to walk in his ways. (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13) The wholesome principles embodied in those instructions benefit Jehovah's servants today. —Hebrews 10:24, 25.

(Exodus 35:21) Then everyone whose heart impelled him and everyone whose spirit incited him came and brought their contribution for Jehovah to be used for the tent of meet-

ing, for all its service, and for the holy garments.

w00 11/1 29 ¶1

Riches of Generosity Bring Joy

Imagine, then, how the Israelites felt. Generations had suffered through bitter slavery and deprivation. Now they were free and had rich material possessions. How would they feel about parting with some of those possessions? They might have felt that they had earned them and had a right to keep them. However, when called upon to contribute financially to support pure worship, they did so—and not reluctantly or stingily! They did not forget that Jehovah had made it possible for them to have those material things. Thus, they gave abundantly of their silver and gold and livestock. They were “willing-hearted.” Their ‘hearts impelled them.’ ‘Their spirit incited them.’ It truly was “a voluntary offering to Jehovah.”—Exodus 25:1-9; 35:4-9, 20-29; 36:3-7.

Bible Reading

(Exodus 35:1-24) Moses later gathered the entire assembly of the Israelites together and said to them: “These are the things that Jehovah has commanded to be done: ² Work may be done for six days, but the seventh day will become something holy to you, a sabbath of complete rest to Jehovah. Anybody doing work on it will be put to death. ³ You must not light a fire in any of your dwelling places on the Sabbath day.” ⁴ Moses then said to the entire assembly of the Israelites: “This is what Jehovah has commanded, ⁵ ‘Take up a contribution for Jehovah from among yourselves. Let everyone with a willing heart bring a contribution for Jehovah: gold, silver, copper, ⁶ blue thread, purple wool, scarlet material, fine linen, goat hair, ⁷ ram skins dyed red, sealskins, acacia wood, ⁸ oil for the lamps, balsam for the anointing oil

and for the perfumed incense, ⁹ onyx stones, and other stones for setting in the eph'od and the breastpiece. ¹⁰ “Let all who are skilled among you come and make everything that Jehovah has commanded, ¹¹ namely, the tabernacle with its tent and its covering, its clasps and its panel frames, its bars, its pillars, and its socket pedestals; ¹² the Ark and its poles, the cover, and the curtain for the screen; ¹³ the table and its poles and all its utensils and the showbread; ¹⁴ the lampstand for light and its utensils and its lamps and the oil for lighting; ¹⁵ the altar of incense and its poles; the anointing oil and the perfumed incense; the screen for the tabernacle's entrance; ¹⁶ the altar of burnt offering and its copper grating, its poles and all its utensils; the basin and its stand; ¹⁷ the hanging curtains of the courtyard, its pillars and its socket pedestals; the screen of the entrance to the courtyard; ¹⁸ the tent pins of the tabernacle and the tent pins of the courtyard and their cords; ¹⁹ the finely woven garments for ministering in the sanctuary, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons for serving as priests.” ²⁰ So all the assembly of the Israelites went out from before Moses. ²¹ Then everyone whose heart impelled him and everyone whose spirit incited him came and brought their contribution for Jehovah to be used for the tent of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments. ²² They kept coming, the men along with the women, each with a willing heart, bringing brooches, earrings, rings, and other jewelry, as well as all sorts of articles of gold. They all presented their offerings of gold to Jehovah. ²³ And all who had blue thread, purple wool, scarlet material, fine linen, goat hair, ram skins dyed red, and sealskins brought them. ²⁴ All those contributing silver and copper brought Jehovah's contribution, and all

who had acacia wood for any part of the work brought it.

OCTOBER 26–NOVEMBER 1

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | EXODUS 37-38

“Tabernacle Altars and Their Role in True Worship”

(Exodus 37:25) He now made the altar of incense out of acacia wood. It was square, a cubit long, a cubit wide, and two cubits high. Its horns were one piece with it.

it-1 82 ¶13

Altar

Altar of incense. The altar of incense (also called “the altar of gold” [Ex 39:38]) was likewise made of acacia wood, the top and sides being overlaid with gold. A border of gold ran around the top. The altar measured 44.5 cm (17.5 in.) square and 89 cm (2.9 ft) high, and also had “horns” extending out from the four top corners. Two gold rings were made for the insertion of the carrying poles made of acacia overlaid with gold, and these rings were placed underneath the gold border on opposite sides of the altar. (Ex 30:1-5; 37:25-28) A special incense was burned on this altar twice daily, in the morning and in the evening. (Ex 30:7-9, 34-38) The use of a censer, or a fire holder, is elsewhere mentioned for burning incense, and evidently such was employed also in connection with the altar of incense. (Le 16:12, 13; Heb 9:4; Re 8:5; compare 2Ch 26:16, 19.) The position of the altar of incense was within the tabernacle just before the curtain of the Most Holy so that it is spoken of as being “before the ark of the testimony.”—Ex 30:1, 6; 40:5, 26, 27.

(Exodus 37:29) He also made the holy anointing oil and the pure, perfumed incense, skillfully blended.

it-1 1195

Incense

The sacred incense prescribed for use in the wilderness tabernacle was made of costly materials that the congregation contributed. (Ex 25:1, 2, 6; 35:4, 5, 8, 27-29) In giving the divine formula for this fourfold mixture, Jehovah said to Moses: “Take to yourself perfumes: stacte drops and onycha and perfumed galbanum and pure frankincense. There should be the same portion of each. And you must make it into an incense, a spice mixture, the work of an ointment maker, salted, pure, something holy. And you must pound some of it into fine powder and put some of it before the Testimony in the tent of meeting, where I shall present myself to you. It should be most holy to you people.” Then, to impress upon them the exclusiveness and holiness of the incense, Jehovah added: “Whoever makes any like it to enjoy its smell must be cut off from his people.”—Ex 30:34-38; 37:29.

(Exodus 38:1) He made the altar of burnt offering out of acacia wood. It was square, five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high.

it-1 82 ¶1

Altar

Tabernacle Altars. With the setting up of the tabernacle, two altars were constructed according to divine pattern. The altar of burnt offering (also called “the altar of copper” [Ex 39:39]) was made of acacia wood in the form of a hollow chest, apparently without top or bottom. It was 2.2 m (7.3 ft) square and 1.3 m (4.4 ft) high with “horns” projecting from the upper four corners. All its surfaces were overlaid with copper. A grating, or network, of copper was placed below the altar’s rim “down within,” “toward the center.” Four rings were placed at the four extremities near the grating, and these appear to be the same rings through which the two copper-sheathed acacia-

wood poles were passed for carrying the altar. This might mean that a slot was cut through two sides of the altar allowing for a flat grating to be inserted, with the rings extending out on both sides. There is considerable difference of opinion among scholars on the subject, and many consider it likely that two sets of rings were involved, the second set, for insertion of the carrying poles, being attached directly to the outside of the altar. Copper equipment was made in the form of cans and shovels for the ashes, bowls for catching the blood of the animals, forks for handling the flesh, and fire holders.—Ex 27:1-8; 38:1-7, 30; Nu 4:14.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Exodus 37:1) Bez'al-el then made the Ark of acacia wood. It was two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide and a cubit and a half high.

(Exodus 37:10) He then made the table of acacia wood. It was two cubits long, a cubit wide, and a cubit and a half high.

(Exodus 37:25) He now made the altar of incense out of acacia wood. It was square, a cubit long, a cubit wide, and two cubits high. Its horns were one piece with it.

it-1 36

Acacia

The acacia has many long thorns extending out from the widely spreading branches. These branches usually interlace with those of the neighboring acacias to form tangled thickets; this fact doubtless explains why the plural form *shit-tim'* is almost always used in the Bible record. The acacia may grow to heights of 6 to 8 m (20 to 26 ft), but often is bush-like in appearance. It has soft, feathery leaves and is covered with pleasingly fragrant yellow blossoms, producing curved tapering pods as its fruit. The rough, black bark covers a very hard, fine-grained, heavy wood that is immune

to insect attack. These characteristics and its availability in the desert made the acacia especially well suited as a building material for the tabernacle and its furnishings. It was employed to construct the ark of the covenant (Ex 25:10; 37:1), the table of showbread (Ex 25:23; 37:10), altars (Ex 27:1; 37:25; 38:1), poles for carrying these items (Ex 25:13, 28; 27:6; 30:5; 37:4, 15, 28; 38:6), pillars for the curtain and screen (Ex 26:32, 37; 36:36), and the panel frames (Ex 26:15; 36:20) and their connecting bars (Ex 26:26; 36:31).

(Exodus 38:8) Then he made the basin of copper and its copper stand; he used the mirrors of the women who were organized to serve at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

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Did You Know?

Unlike the glass mirrors of today, mirrors in Bible times were generally made of metal that was highly polished—usually bronze, but possibly also copper, silver, gold, or electrum. The first mention of mirrors in the Bible is in connection with the construction of the tabernacle, Israel's first center of worship. Women contributed mirrors for the fabrication of a sacred copper basin and its stand. (Exodus 38:8) Presumably, the mirrors would have to be melted down to be used for that purpose.

Bible Reading

(Exodus 37:1-24) Bez'al-el then made the Ark of acacia wood. It was two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide and a cubit and a half high. ² He overlaid it with pure gold inside and outside and made a border of gold around it. ³ After that he cast four rings of gold for it, for above its four feet, with two rings on its one side and two rings on its other side. ⁴ He next made poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold. ⁵ Then he put the poles through the rings on

the sides of the Ark for carrying the Ark. ⁶ He made the cover of pure gold. It was two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. ⁷ He then made two cherubs of hammered gold on both ends of the cover. ⁸ One cherub was on one end, and the other cherub on the other end. He made the cherubs on both ends of the cover. ⁹ The two cherubs spread out their wings upward, overshadowing the cover with their wings. They were facing each other, and their faces were turned toward the cover. ¹⁰ He then made the table of acacia wood. It was two cubits long, a cubit wide, and a cubit and a half high. ¹¹ And he overlaid it with pure gold and made a border of gold around it. ¹² Next he made a rim the width of a handbreadth to go around it and a border of gold to go around the rim. ¹³ Further, he cast four rings of gold for it and placed the rings on the four corners where the four legs were attached. ¹⁴ The rings were near the rim, as holders for the poles used for carrying the table. ¹⁵ Then he made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold for carrying the table. ¹⁶ After that he made out of pure gold the utensils that went on the table—its dishes, its cups, and its bowls and pitchers from which drink offerings would be poured. ¹⁷ Then he made the lampstand of pure gold. He made the lampstand of hammered work. Its base, its stem, its cups, its knobs, and its blossoms were one piece. ¹⁸ Six branches were extending out from its stem, three branches of the lampstand from its one side and three branches from its other side. ¹⁹ Three cups shaped like almond flowers were on the one set of branches, with knobs and blossoms alternating, and three cups shaped like almond flowers were on the other set of branches, with knobs and blossoms alternating. This was done for the six branches extending out from the stem of the lamp-

stand. ²⁰ And on the stem of the lampstand were four cups shaped like almond flowers, with knobs and blossoms alternating. ²¹ There was a knob under the first two branches that extended out of the stem and a knob under the next two branches and a knob under the next two branches, for the six branches extending out from the stem of the lampstand. ²² The knobs and the branches and the whole lampstand were made to be one piece of pure, hammered gold. ²³ Then he made its seven lamps and its snuffers and its fire holders out of pure gold. ²⁴ He made it, along with all its utensils, from a talent of pure gold.