

April 20-26, 2026

Exodus 18-20, 24; 31-34

“ALL THAT THE LORD HATH SPOKEN WE WILL DO”

Summary: *Exodus 18. Jethro comes to Moses bringing Moses’ wife and sons and offers sacrifices to the Lord—Moses sits in the judgment seat and hears all cases—Jethro counsels Moses to teach the law, to appoint lesser judges, and to delegate power to them.*

Exodus 19. The Lord covenants to make Israel a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation—The people sanctify themselves—The Lord appears on Sinai amid fire, smoke, and earthquakes.

Exodus 20. The Lord reveals the Ten Commandments—Israel is to bear witness that the Lord has spoken from heaven—The children of Israel are forbidden to make gods of silver or gold—They are to make altars of unburnt stones and sacrifice to the Lord thereon.

Exodus 24. Israel accepts the word of the Lord by covenant—Moses sprinkles the blood of the covenant—He, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel see God—The Lord calls Moses on to the mount to receive the tables of stone and commandments.

Exodus 31. Artisans are inspired in building and furnishing the tabernacle—Israel is commanded to keep the Lord’s Sabbaths—The death penalty is decreed for Sabbath desecration—Moses receives the stone tablets.

Exodus 32. Aaron makes a golden calf, which Israel worships—Moses serves as a mediator between God and rebellious Israel—Moses breaks the tablets of stone—The Levites slay about 3,000 rebels—Moses pleads and intercedes for the people.

Exodus 33. The Lord promises to be with Israel and drive out the people of the land—The tabernacle of the congregation is moved away from the camp—The Lord speaks to Moses face to face in the tabernacle—Later, Moses sees the glory of God but not His face.

Exodus 34. Moses hews new tables of stone—He goes up into Mount Sinai for forty days—The Lord proclaims His name and attributes and reveals His law—He makes another covenant with Israel—The skin of Moses’ face shines, and he wears a veil.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

Who is Jethro and of what people is he, and who are his descendants?

Through modern day revelation we learn that Moses received the Melchizedek Priesthood from Jethro. He taught and ordained Moses. “And the sons of Moses, according to the Holy Priesthood which he received under the hand of his father-in-law, Jethro;” (**Doctrine & Covenants 84:6-7**) In that light, we can presume what “a Priest of Midian” might have meant. He is mentioned three times

the enemy. He acquiesced after she agreed to accompany him (There may be fewer wars if presidents and prime ministers would accompany their young soldiers to battle). The key to the battle was a likely descendant of Jethro. There were other peoples who were aware of and agreeable to Israel’s God-given inheritance in the land. The Kenites seemed to have been one of those peoples. Modern archaeology has discovered Kenite temples that are identical to Israelite temples. Heber, whose wife was Jael, was of the Kenite

in the *Torah* (first five Bible books), once in the *Neviim* (the Prophets) then by the Jews in numerous rabbinic writings. After serving in Jethro's house and marrying one of his daughters (Zipporah) Moses was taught by Jethro to implement a judicial system so that he wouldn't have to address all the nation's needs on his own.

(Exodus 18:13-27) Jethro is spoken of again in the book of Judges, when his descendants lived in the land of Israel.

(Judges 1:16) Later, we'll review a famous story of a judge in Israel, Deborah, conquering the Canaanites. Her military leader, Barak ('lightning' in Hebrew), the military leader of Israel, was hesitant to follow her prophetic instruction to engage

the father-in-law of Moses; his wife's slaying of Sisera apparently signified a switch of loyalties back to Israel on the part of his clan, which had previously been allied to Israel's enemy Jabin."

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How can I sanctify myself?

The famous Lubavitcher Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994) taught that is the duty of the Children of Israel to sanctify and transform their way of life, making it into a realm for the presence of the Lord. The first step in this process was the biblical command which reveals to us the power to sanctify "time." That includes Sabbaths, Holy convocations (Holy Days). This was the prelude to the Exodus, which would lead to the conquest of the Holy Land, expressing the sanctification of "place." That would include our homes, meeting places, temples, holy cities (Jerusalem). This expresses the full role of the Jewish people: to bring holiness and light to the world in all its aspects, including both space and time. (See Lubavitcher Rebbe's *Likkutei Sichot* vol. 26 p.59) The early Apostles taught, "Furthermore then we

people, apparently a descendant of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. "Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, slew the Canaanite general Sisera in the war of Deborah and Barak against the Canaanite king Jabin of Hazor (Judges 4-5). Sisera had fled to Jael's tent after the rout of his army by the Israelites; she offered him comfort and hospitality but killed him while he slept, using a hammer and a tent pin rather than a sword, in accordance with the biblical command prohibiting the use of weapons by women (Deuteronomy 22:5). The murder thus fulfilled Deborah's prophecy to Barak that God would "sell Sisera into the hand of a woman" (Judges 4:9). Heber was descended from Jethro,

compromise and present a set of "do's and don'ts," the "letter of the law" in response to the Children of Israel saying in effect, "Just tell us what to do." Some poetry came to mind as the boys and I "rewrote the Ten Commandments:"

THE SERMONS ON THE MOUNTS (Daniel Rona)

The law was given, the standard set.
But best was not accepted yet.
We compromised with Heaven's voice,
Just ten commandments was our choice.
Tooth for tooth and eye for eye,
Retribution was the cry.

The Lesser Law

1. No other God -
2. Or image graven -
3. Not in vain, the name of Heaven -
4. Remember Sabbath,
5. Father, Mother -
6. Thou shalt not kill -
7. Nor defile another -
8. Do not steal -
9. Or false word belabor -
10. Do not covet the wealth of neighbor -

But then was promised a covenant new,
Inwardly, God would speak to you.
With sins forgiven and God revealed,
A higher law on us was sealed.

beseech you, brethren, and exhort *you* by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification . . .” (1 **Thessalonians 4:1-3**) Samuel the prophet had Jesse’s family sanctify themselves before a sacrificial offering and in preparation to ordain a new King of Israel. (1 **Samuel 16:5**)

How did the ten commandments turn out to be a compromise?

One of my boys as a youngster suggested that “Moses might have been the most wicked man in the Bible, after all, he broke all the commandments at once!” What he broke was the “Higher Law” determined by the spirit, instead he had to

Gentiles. The Apostle Paul explains the proper perception of the same law for everyone as he spoke to King Agrippa at Caesarea. “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.” (Acts 26:22-23) This statement helps us understand Moses’ teaching us that the Messiah must first be a “suffering servant,” that there really is life after death, a literal resurrection, and that the “law” is for everyone – same commandments for everyone.

The Higher Law

10. Bless your neighbor -
9. Share a kindly word -
8. Give to others –
7. And clean thoughts preferred –
6. No need for anger to hide your smile -
5. Parents, children walk the second mile -
4. Use the Sabbath, blessings to bestow -
3. The name of God in your good deeds show -
2. Your life will God's true image mirror,
1. As you and He become much nearer.

The secret of God's law is known
When action by intent is shown
In Heaven's highest throne to stay,
Use thought and reason to guide the way.
The highest law is now defined -
In thought, in spirit and in the mind.

Where does it state that there are different laws for different people?

A previous lesson discussion compares the modern Jewish concept that the Law of Moses is for the Jews and the Law of Noah (Noachide Laws) are for the

Must it be gold – to glitter?

Some thoughts on gold and the golden calf may also be interesting. “According to the *midrash* (Jewish scriptural commentary), God created gold specifically for use in the Temple . . . On account of the idolatrous worship of the Golden Calf, gold became a symbol of sin and was not to be used to sheath the *shofar* mouthpiece. On the Day of Atonement there was no gold on the vestments of the high priest; he officiated in robes of pure white linen. International treaties were inscribed on bronze tablets. Corinthian bronze, famous for its luster and quality, was used for the Nicanor Gates of the Herodian Temple in Jerusalem.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What leadership councils did the Lord require?

The organization
structure bears

repeating: a council of three, with Moses, Aaron & Hur, a Council of Twelve Elders and a Council of Seventy. It is comparable to the leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The latter-day Israelites led now by the tribe of Ephraim (Joseph) are also organized with a “First Presidency of three, a Quorum of Twelve and a Council of Seventy. Two thousand years ago, an apostate group called the Essenes, established a community by the Dead Sea and had a text they called, *The Manual of Discipline*, a sort of doctrines and covenants of these religious people. It describes their organization that included a teacher of righteousness and two assistants. There was also a council of twelve overseers. Their priestly system

numbered . . . and the princes of Israel, being twelve men: each one was for the house of his fathers.” (**Numbers 1:44**) This order was continued after Moses as well.” Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. (**Joshua 3:12**) Moses had a council of seventy; “And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off.” (**Exodus 24:1**)

What is the importance of the Sabbath?

The prime factor of religious observance for the Jews is keeping the Sabbath day holy. They feel that Sabbath observance identifies them over all other peoples. “The Hebrew name for the Sabbath is *Shabbat*, which derives from a root meaning to cease or desist. It gets this

included two castes: One of a higher authority that connected with an order of the *Melech Zedek* (righteous king), and another of lesser authority that connected with the Levitical, or order of *Aaron*. They were bound by a strict order of unity. An Essene’s membership in a kibbutz-like united order came into effect only after a two-year trial period. They kept copies of the scriptures, interpretations of the scriptures, and their own scrolls of doctrines and covenants. Some people suggest that this governing system was copied by Jesus, and that he may have studied with this sect. It seems highly unlikely that this is the case. However, Jesus did use the same system of government that was given to Moses, a system that partially continued to exist in other Jewish traditions up to and at the time of Jesus. Moses had a governing body of twelve elders, one from each tribe. “These are those that were

come.” “Other biblical laws repeatedly show concern for the well-being of animals. Man must rest on the Sabbath and may not work his animals either. “Thou shalt not do any manner of work, neither thy son . . . nor thy servant . . . nor thy cattle, (**Exodus 20:10**).” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

What demeanor is appropriate for Sabbath and how did its meaning evolve?

“The Sabbath and the festivals are particularly times of joy, and indeed it is a positive commandment, often difficult to observe, to be happy on them. The joy required is not frivolity but, contradictory though it may sound, a serious happiness. The highest level of joy according to the rabbis is the *simhah shel mitzvah*, the joy felt at performing a commandment or doing a good deed.”

the seventh day of Creation, God “*shavat mi-kol melakhto*” --- He “ceased” or “desisted” from all His work (i.e., of Creation). It is from this that the supreme importance of the Sabbath derives; observance of the Sabbath is an act of testimony to the fact that God created the world.” “In the course of time observance of the Sabbath became the identifying mark of the Jew. It set him apart from all other religions. According to the **First Book of Maccabees 2:31--41**, at the beginning of the Hasmonean revolt against Syria, the Jews would not fight on the Sabbath but let themselves be killed. Later they realized that was a mistake and that if danger to life is involved, the Sabbath is suspended.” “The rabbis of the *Talmud* thought that the Sabbath is the most important of all the laws of the Torah and that by itself it is equal to all the rest. One statement is that “if Israel keeps one Sabbath as it should be kept, the Messiah will come.” They saw *Shabbat* as a special privilege; a gift that God gave His people Israel and as a foretaste of the world-to-

the Temple, which was displayed each Sabbath.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) On the Sabbath, a special bread called hallah is used. The Hallah is baked sweeter than regular bread because the Sabbath is a “sweeter” day. “In some communities it is customary for the father to bless his children on the Sabbath eve when he returns from the synagogue.” “Funerals may not take place on the Sabbath or on the Day of Atonement . . .” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Concisely stated, Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, at first was a memory of the creation and its rest-day, then Sabbath included a memory of being delivered from Egypt plus an expectation of a greater deliverance in the future. Since the Savior’s atonement and resurrection in the meridian of times it became a memory of that greater deliverance, completed on the “first day of the week, hence “Sunday.”

“For the Sabbath, there are special candlesticks and oil lamps, *Kiddush* cups, *hallah* covers and tablecloths; and for *Havdalah*, special candleholders and spice containers in many shapes and sizes, some of them masterpieces of artistic workmanship.” “Women usher in the Sabbath each week by lighting candles and blessing God “who sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath light.” On Saturday night, traditional Jewish families light a *havdalah* candle made of several wicks braided together, raise a cup of wine and sniff fragrant spices, thus bidding farewell to the Sabbath peace and beginning a new week.” “From Talmudic times, it was the special duty of the housewife to bake the bread for the Sabbath. This bread, usually prepared from white flour, is also called “*hallah*.” Two such loaves are placed on the festive Sabbath table as a symbol for the double portion of manna which the Israelites in the wilderness received every Friday, and because of the Showbread in

large wooden board whose underside was set with basalt stones was dragged over the grain by a pair of oxen. The grains could then be shaken horizontally in a round sieve with a fiber net attached. This winnowing caused the lighter elements to be carried away by the wind while the heavier kernels fell down in a heap. The kernels were then milled or crushed (by stone).”

(**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) The Law that Moses conveyed to the Children of Israel was written on stone. Stones have always been symbolic for them. “On the breastplate were embedded 12 precious stones, one for each of the tribes of Israel, and the Talmud speculates that the oracular message was miraculously spelled out by the protruding of letters out of the tribal names inscribed on the stones.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

How can I relate to the symbolic meaning of the Altar?

The altar had to be of uncut stone, natural and not shaped by mankind. “According to the Bible the altar was made of stones joined together with earth, the wider stones being placed below and the narrower above. The stones of the altar of the Temple were smooth and were plastered over twice a year, and according to Judah ha-Nasi were smoothed down with a cloth every Sabbath eve. Four stones were placed at the four corners of the altar; these were known as the “horns” of the altar.”

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) Because of the covenants we make at the altar, it is a symbol of the Lord. The Lord has many names such as “Rock of Salvation.” Another name is the “Bread of Life.” There is a distinct connection of rock and bread considering the ancient methods of preparing flour to make bread. “When threshing, in order to separate the kernels from the husks, a

Christ. Their light drove back the spiritual darkness that covered the earth and pointed the way forward for Joseph Smith—and for all of us. Because of the light revealed that day, we can receive the fulness of blessings available through the Atonement of our Savior, Jesus Christ.”

(Bonnie H. Cordon Young Women General President, April 2020 General Conference)

Must it be gold – to glitter?

The Golden Calf was made because the Children of Israel grew tired of waiting. How long do we stay strong in times of waiting? Some repeated thoughts on gold and the golden calf may also be helpful. “According to the *midrash* (Jewish scriptural commentary), God created gold specifically for use in the Temple . . . On account of the idolatrous worship of the Golden Calf, gold became a symbol of sin and was not to be used to sheath the

What prompted Michelangelo to create Moses with horns?

The Moses sculpture and painting done by Michelangelo (1475-1564) shows horns on his head. The Hebrew word for “Horn” is pronounced *KAREN*, the same pronunciation, *KAREN* also means “Rays of Light,” Moses “beamed” because he was in the presence of the Lord. This is typical of being in the companionship of God. Similar repetition is in the New Testament. “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.” **(Matthew 17:1-2)** Light is the form of endorsement, in this case a reflection – not originating in the mortal person – however, reflecting God’s words and power rather than man’s own thoughts and feelings. “Two hundred years ago, a pillar of light rested on a young man in a grove of trees. In that light, Joseph Smith saw God the Father and His Son, Jesus

shofar mouthpiece. On the Day of Atonement there was no gold on the vestments of the high priest; he officiated in robes of pure white linen. International treaties were inscribed on bronze tablets. Corinthian bronze, famous for its luster and quality, was used for the Nicanor Gates of the Herodian Temple in Jerusalem.” **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)**

What does the phrase “wait upon the Lord” mean? **(Psalm 37:9; 123:2; Isaiah 8:17; 40:31; 2 Nephi 18:17)**. “In the scriptures, the word wait means to hope, to anticipate, and to trust. To hope and trust in the Lord requires faith, patience, humility, meekness, long-suffering, keeping the commandments, and enduring to the end. **(Robert D. Hales, Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, General Conference October 2011)**