

The Old Testament's 5 steps to maturity:

Tonight's question: *If Genesis is a book about the need of man, what would the message of Exodus be?*

The next book in the Bible is Exodus, which is the story of *God's response to man's need*. It is the complete lesson of redemption.

The whole book of Exodus centres around three major incidents:

- The Passover
- The crossing of the Red Sea
- The giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.

The first two of these, the *Passover* and the *crossing of the Red Sea*, picture for us, as Christians, the *forgiveness* and the *freedom* which God gives - to teach us that freedom and forgiveness come through God alone. Man can have no part in either of them.

The first part of the book of Exodus is the story of *how God began to move to set his people free*. God arranged the encounters of Moses with Pharaoh and also the astounding miracles ending in the *passing over* of the angel of death through the land while protecting His chosen people from judgement, as celebrated in the Passover feast. All this is a picture of God at work, setting his people free. The Israelites did nothing. They could do nothing. There was nothing for them to do. They could not add to it. They could only receive it.

This is a picture of our own salvation! We could and can do nothing - we can only receive it!

The next part of Exodus deals with the crossing of the Red Sea, and is the story of *setting the people free from bondage*. They were brought into a new relationship as they left Egypt.

They came out of the land of the shadow of death, passed through the waters safely, and emerged on the other side no longer merely a mob of people but now, for the first time, a nation under God.

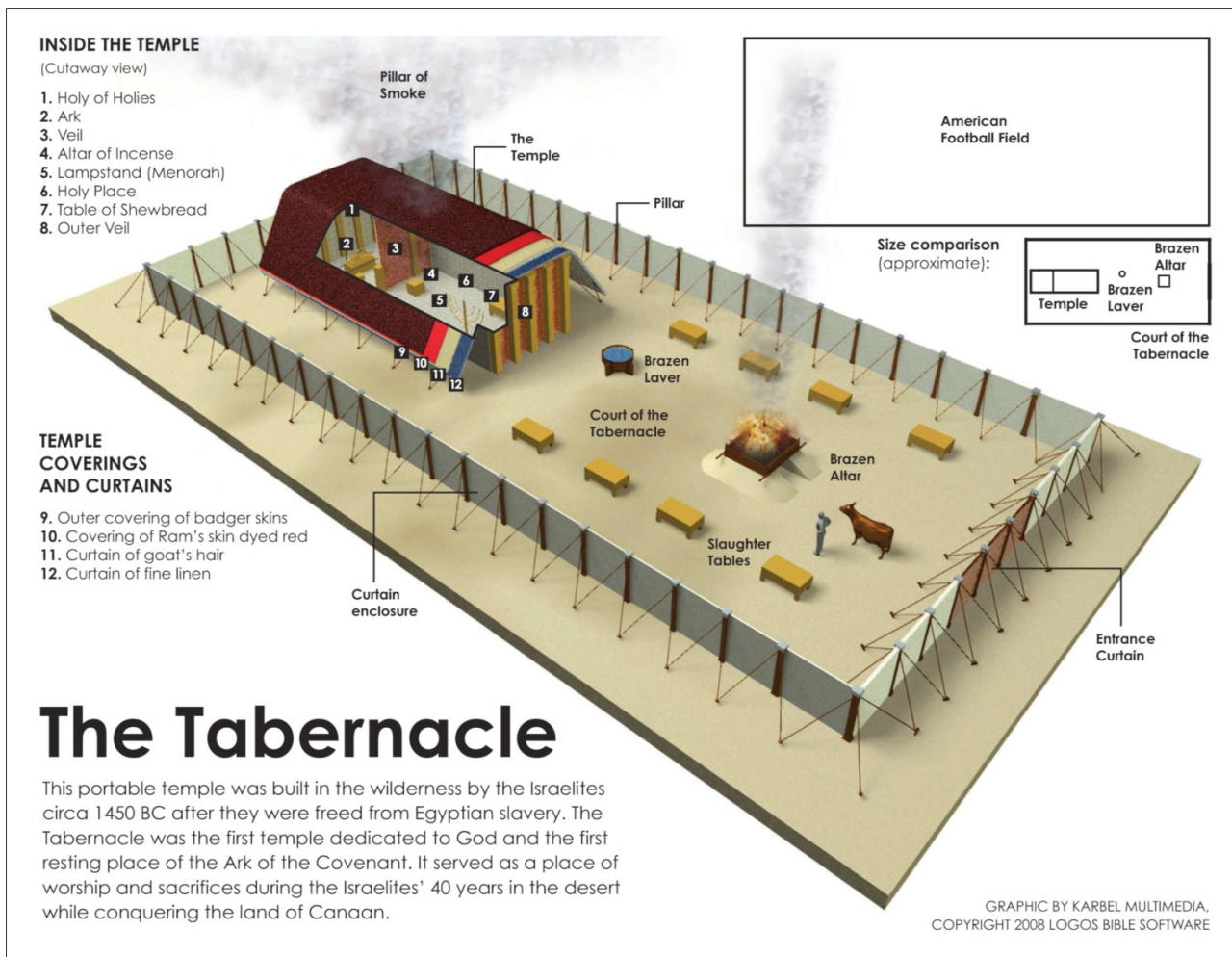
[Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20] *What did the Israelites encounter on the other side of the Red Sea?*

Sinai and the giving of the Law. This shows us that when man is redeemed - in other words, set free, when he is brought out of the *slavery of the bondage of sin, passing by the death of Another (the Passover Lamb) into liberty from Egypt - he comes under the control of Another*. The giving of the Law is the expression of the Lordship of God. The message of Exodus is that a new relationship is begun, a new ownership entered into.

The next book of the Bible is **Leviticus** - and this is where the wheels fall off for most us with Bible Study! Very simply put, *Leviticus is a book of instruction designed to make all that God is, available to man, so that all that man is, may be available to God*.

So its theme is - *access to God* - and it begins with the story of the Tabernacle, that

wonderful building where God dwelt. *All this is a picture of God's dwelling in the midst of his people, showing how they could have fellowship with Him.*



The Tabernacle

This portable temple was built in the wilderness by the Israelites circa 1450 BC after they were freed from Egyptian slavery. The Tabernacle was the first temple dedicated to God and the first resting place of the Ark of the Covenant. It served as a place of worship and sacrifices during the Israelites' 40 years in the desert while conquering the land of Canaan.

The book of Leviticus is designed to teach us three major principles:

1. The first is **representation**. That is, we never would have been permitted into the Holy of Holies, had we been part of Israel. Only the *high priest* could go in, but when he did, he *represented* the whole nation. By that representation, the nation began to learn the wonderful principle of *appropriating the value of another's work*. (*appropriation is "bewilling" in Afrikaans*) [Read Romans 6:3-10] That is what we are asked to believe - that Christ died for us, and that we died with Him - and all of our victory rests upon our ability to appropriate the work of another (*Jesus*) who is our *representative*. God began to teach this to the world, in Leviticus.
2. The second great principle that God teaches in Leviticus was His **adequacy**. The first 7 chapters of Leviticus open with the introduction of five offerings, (*which we will deal with later on in detail*) and each one speaks of Jesus Christ in his death for us. Each offering shows how a basic need of human life is fully met in what Christ has already done. All together they show us that there is nothing we will ever run into which hasn't already been taken care of. Therefore it is *unbelief* to come to God and start asking Him to do something for us which He hasn't already done.
3. The third great principle God teaches in Leviticus is that all of the representation

and all of the adequacy, by the simple act of obedience - of faith in action - becomes the **expression** in our life. The expression of this faith in action is - **worship!**

Leviticus is the book of access to God, of instruction in how to worship. *Worship is nothing more than laying hold of God.* We don't worship when we simply bow our heads and let some kind of religious thoughts wander through our minds, or sing and clap our hands in some religious chorus! We worship when we lay hold of what God is! Though it may seem dry reading, when we begin to understand it, Leviticus gives us tremendous lessons in the life of worship.

Leviticus is that book of instruction. If you read it in conjunction with the book of Hebrews, it is one of the most illuminating studies in all of the Bible.

Next time we will deal with the last two books of the Pentateuch - Numbers and Deuteronomy - See if you can find out what the word "Deuteronomy" means...)