

Beauties of the Truth

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Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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Cain and Abel

Genesis 4

The account of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4 raises a number of questions in the mind of the reader, among which are these three.

(1) When Cain murdered his brother, why was the penalty not death? Why “a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth?” And then, though he was not remorseful, why did God grant him a blessing? (2) Why are so many generations of Cain listed, when they did not survive the Flood? (3) If Lamech killed a man, why should he be forgiven more than Cain?

Nevertheless, there are reasonable answers to all these questions, and more.

The Apostle Paul speaks of “the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Hebrews 12:24). This implies that Abel is a type of Jesus Christ. Cain, who slew Abel, would typify Israel and especially its religious leaders, the Sadducees, who urged the Romans to crucify Christ (Matthew 27:25).

Just as Cain's sacrifice was not accepted, fleshly Israel was unable to offer an acceptable sacrifice from the works of the Law. As Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice by a blood sacrifice, Jesus was able to offer an acceptable sacrifice by the sacrifice of himself. Wherefore, Cain was jealous of Abel and slew him; Israel's leaders were jealous of Jesus and had him slain (Matthew 27:24-25).

CAIN'S PENALTY AND BLESSING, GENESIS 4:9-15

Jehovah (Ye'-ho-vah') asked, “Where is Abel thy brother?” Cain shrugged it off, Am I my brother's warden? Jehovah responded, “What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground” (cf. Hebrews 12:24). Unjust slaying calls for retribution. Just as the earth would not yield to Cain its full strength, so the Law would no longer yield to Israel its full blessing. Cain was to become a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth, as Israel was to be in the *Diaspora*, scattered into all nations of the earth (Genesis 4:10-12).

Cain found his punishment greater than he could bear, so “that whosoever findeth me will slay me.” We need to ask, How many people could slay Cain? Does he have

reference to his descendants also? Therefore, God would take vengeance on Cain's enemies sevenfold, the seven emphasizing God's oath, even though Cain has shown no remorse. Even as each nation that has cursed the Jew has paid a severe penalty: e.g., Spain after the Inquisition, Germany under Hitler. Jehovah appointed a mark, or sign, for Cain, just as Israel has remained separate and distinct in the countries into which they have been driven.

CAIN TO LAMECH, GENESIS 4:16-24

Cain went out from the face (favor) of Jehovah to live in the land of Nod (which means Wandering) before (east of) Eden (desirable land). Israel's *Diaspora* comes before Christ's thousand-year Kingdom — the real Desirable land.

Why is Cain's genealogy given when it does not survive the Flood? Very tentatively, it may suggest the history of Israel from Christ's First Advent to his Kingdom.

The genealogy proceeds: Cain (Acquired?), Enoch (Initiated), Irad (Fugitive?), Mehujael (Smitten by God), Methushael (Man of God), and Lamech (a Strong Young Man). The city built for Enoch might suggest Judah between Christ's death and the fall of Judah, a condition away from God's favor, but not yet in full dispersion. The next two might suggest Israel in dispersion. Methushael might suggest Israel returning in unbelief. Lamech might suggest Israel in Christ's earthly Kingdom. Lamech's children prosper, which would fit the Kingdom. Someone might like to study these suggested meanings more carefully.

Whom did Lamech Slay? There are two common translations of Genesis 4:23. “I have slain a man to my

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Chiasms, Memorable Teaching

“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isaiah 28:10).

Effective teaching employs repetition, precept upon precept as noted in Isaiah. Sadly, as the Isaiah context shows, the immediate hearers seem to have included those slow of heart. A special style of effective repetitive teaching called *Chiasms* appears throughout the Bible and follows an established pattern.

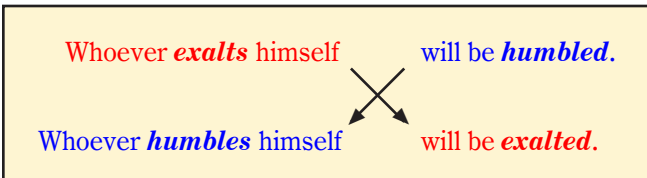
Let us begin with a simple example from our Lord. He preached a general principle in a memorable way. His words seem to have an echo: “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled. Whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Matthew 23:12). Clearly there is repetition here. This repetition follows a predictable pattern and is a characteristic of much we find Biblical teaching:

A **Whoever exalts himself**
 B **will be humbled.**
 B **Whoever humbles himself**
 A **will be exalted.**

We see a focus on the thought of humility. This thought of humility is nested within a contrasting thought of exaltation. The first mentioned self-exaltation is negative, the Bible teaches that self-exaltation is an error. However, the nested second exaltation for the humble one is positive, it is a reward for acting with a spirit pleasing to God.

WHY CHIASM?

Writing out this text from Matthew with arrows pointing to the related nested thoughts, we see:



Because this pattern with the connecting arrows suggests the letter “X,” called *Chi* in Greek, this pattern is called a *Chiasm*.

Chiasms appear throughout Matthew. This specific pattern used in Matthew 23:12 follows the pattern A:B:B:A. This simple pattern appears elsewhere in scripture and is employed frequently in Ezekiel’s prophetic writing.¹ One well-formed example will be presented from Ezekiel 19: 2-3 although throughout the Old Testament many, many examples could be shown:

A **She crouched among young lions,**
 B **She raised her cubs;**
 B **But lifted up one of her cubs**
 A **He became a young lion.**

Chiasm use among Jews is found in Moses' writings. The code of conduct commanded by Jehovah Himself, following the flood, employs Chiasm (Genesis 9:6):

A **Whoso sheddeth**
 B **man's blood**
 B **by man shall his blood**
 A **be shed.**

This method of reinforcing learning was familiar and well established when our Lord employed it in his teaching. Though this structure is not common in our day, Chiasm structure was already centuries-old when Moses employed it. Chiasms appear in the most ancient literature of the Near East that pre-date Moses. Chiasms are used in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, which recounts the exaggerated exploits of this ruler who lived after the flood as the fifth king of Uruk, or biblical Erech, a city just north of Ur, second in importance only to Babel in the confederacy of Nimrod (Genesis 10:10).² Chiasms are used in the God-dishonoring Creation myths (*Enuma elis*) which also pre-dates the Pentateuch and stands in stark contrast to the sensible established science that opens the book of Genesis.³

The Church historian Eusebius writing ~326 AD refers to Matthew as, “the Gospel of Matthew in the Hebrew, which is also preserved until this time” (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 5, Section 10). In Matthew we hear the actual words of our Lord in his own Aramaic language, which Eusebius calls Hebrew. Matthew 24:26 has three nested thoughts forming a Chiastic structure:

A **No man can serve two masters:**
 B **for either he will hate the one,**
 C **and love the other;**
 C **or else he will hold to the one,**
 B **and despise the other.**
 A **Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.**

The *focus* of the nested thoughts is that which is *loved* and *held* to by an individual making a decision as to whom he will serve — either God or Mammon. This is nested within consideration of which one of these two masters he will *hate* and *despise*. Hopefully, the good hearer of this message will hate and despise Mammon. In turn, the next layer of nesting opens and closes repeating a declaration of

the impossibility of serving *both* of these masters. You may either serve God, or you certainly shall serve Mammon.

Matthew 13 demonstrates that Chiasm structure is far from accidental. Chiasms are carefully constructed. The

A Therefore speak I to them in **parables**:
 B because they seeing *see* not; and hearing they *hear* not, neither do they understand.
 C And in them is fulfilled the *prophecy* of Esaias, which saith,
 D By hearing ye shall *hear*, and shall not understand;
 E and seeing ye shall *see*, and not perceive:
 F For this people's *heart* is waxed gross,
 G and their *ears* are dull of hearing,
 H and their *eyes*
 I they have closed; lest at any time they should see
 H with their *eyes*,
 G and hear with their *ears*,
 F and should understand with their *heart*, and should be converted, and I should heal them.
 E But blessed are your eyes, for they *see*:
 D and your ears, for they *hear*.
 C For verily I say unto you, That many *prophets* and righteous men
 B have desired to *see* those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to *hear* those things which ye hear,
 and have not heard them.
 A Hear ye therefore the *parable* of the sower.

focus, or center, of the Chiasm is the sad observation that the unspiritual have no understanding. Their eyes are closed lest they should see with their eyes; hear with their ears; have an understanding heart and be converted; for the eyes of the unspiritual see, but do not perceive. In contrast, the spiritual have eyes that are blessed; the ears of the unspiritual hear, but do not understand, while in contrast the spiritual hear with their ears and understand; this fulfills what prophecy promised and what prophets longed for; hearing these words; now taught in parables.

OLD TESTAMENT CHIASMS, OR ATBESH

Numerous examples of Chiasms may be found in the Old Testament. The Jewish commentators are familiar with this structure and make reference to it calling it both *Chiasm* and *Atbesh*. Frequently, the Hebrew may use clearly related words not always as clearly linked when translated from the Hebrew.⁴

Chiastic, or *Atbesh* structure appears frequently in the Psalms. The structure may be found in Psalm 18 where it is spread out over 47 verses:

The focus for this Chiasm in Psalm 18 is that the LORD would reward the Psalmist's righteousness and clean-

ness of hands. That is, while David had responded with force, David had not been provoked to brutality. He had been rescued from his powerful enemies. The LORD is his rock!

CHIASMS OVER MANY CHAPTERS

While the structure for these Chiasms has been examined only for related verses of the Bible, as Fohrman shows, this structure may also cover many chapters of the Bible.⁴ This large-scale structure will be examined separately. The Bible teachings are memorable. What assists and makes them memorable to us is a deliberate structure that may not be obvious without examination.

— Br. Richard Doctor

(1) Boadt, Lawrence, "The A:B:B:A Chiasm of Identical Roots in Ezekiel," *Vetus Testamentum*, 25 (4), October 1975, pages 693-699.

(2) Doctor, Richard, "The Deluge and the Epic of Gilgamesh," *Beauties of the Truth*, 9 (2), May 1998.

(3) Seri, Andrea, "Borrowings to Create Anew: Intertextuality in the Babylonian Poem of 'Creation' (Enuma elis)," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 134 (1), January-March 2014, pages 89-106.

(4) Fohrman, David, *Genesis: A Parsha Companion*, Aleph Beta Press and Maggid Books, New Milford, Connecticut, 2019. This acronym *Atbesh* used in Jewish commentaries is based on the Hebrew alphabet. The first Hebrew letter is Aleph (A). It is paired with the final letter Tau (T). Then the second letter Beth (B) is paired with the second to last letter Shin (Sh). Hence, *A-T-Be-Sh*, or *Atbesh*.

A (2) **LORD, my rock**, my fortress, my deliverer, **My God, my rock** of refuge,
 B (18) He rescued me from **my mighty enemy**, from foes too powerful for me.
 C (21) The LORD acknowledged **my righteousness, rewarded my clean hands**
 C (25) The LORD rewarded **my righteousness, the cleanness of my hands**.
 B (38) I pursued **my enemies** and overtook them.
 A (47) The **LORD** lives! Blessed be **my rock!**

The Golden Calf— Exodus 32 and Chiasms

What has happened to Moses? We do not see him,

The mob was blind with frustration. The people assembled unto Aaron; it was near forty days since Moses had ascended the fearful mountain and since then there was no word, no signal, no sighting of Moses. Whispers grew into a mob's roar that demanded to know, "What has happened to Moses? We do not see him" (Exodus 32:1). The grievous sin of the Golden Calf that follows this disastrous assembly is one of the turning points in Israel's history. It is also the focus of a Chiasm that covers a full 16 chapters of Exodus. (Chiasm is discussed earlier in this issue. A discussion of the Chiastic structure will follow later in the article.)

THE GOLDEN CALF AND HIS ORDINANCES

It became clear that the assembled mob would settle for nothing less than a visible god to whom they could render homage (Exodus 32:2-6). Aaron capitulated. He asked the people for their golden earrings so that they could be melted down and formed into beaten sheets of gold to cover the idol. The earrings were the high fashion of Egypt, certainly not appropriate for slaves, but now the people wore them in abundance. The gold earrings were reparations for their years of servitude, a departure offering to the Israelites from the bereaved, exhausted, humiliated, and demoralized Egyptians.

A carved wooden frame was formed and now it was covered with gold sheets and fashioned into a calf idol — a god that the people could see. Possibly seeking some additional delay, Aaron declared that there would be a feast unto Jehovah, now visibly embodied in the Golden Calf. The sin of idolatry in building the Golden Calf was compounded by the building of an altar, the sacrificing, the eating, the drinking, and the "laughter" which clearly is a euphemism for drunken lascivious carousing.

LET ME CONSUME THE PEOPLE

These actions brought the Lord to the point of condemning the entire people, declaring that he would destroy them (Exodus 32:7-14). Moreover, he promised then to build a new nation through Moses. This, if only Moses would "stand aside."

What does this mean? The Lord had accepted Moses as a mediator for Israel, and the Lord honored that commitment. For judgment to move forward, Moses needed to resign his mediator commission, to "stand aside." Moses had no defense for the people. Clearly, the people had sinned grievously.

Nevertheless, Moses did not "stand aside" even as the LORD's anger waxed hot. This is the first entreaty

by Moses to counter the sin of the Golden Calf. Moses silently assented that there was no question of the people's guilt and yet there were broader considerations that would reflect on the reputation and character of the Almighty. He reminds the LORD that the people, are "thy people" (Exodus 32:11), asking the nearly outrageous question, "Why should the LORD be so angry?"

Moses sets forth that if this course is followed, if the people are destroyed, then the strong hand of God that humbled Egypt will appear ineffective. The whole lesson will be lost. Moses brings to memory the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He leaves unasked, "How will these promises be fulfilled?" and he implies that these promises will appear to have failed.

"And the LORD renounced the punishment he had planned to bring upon his people" (Exodus 32:14, *The Jewish Study Bible* (JPS), 2nd Edition, Jewish Publication Society and Oxford, 2014). "He [Moses] thus showed himself a worthy type of the great Mediator" (R3046:5).

THE CLOUD MOSES COULD ENTER

To review the opening events that brought the people to Mount Sinai and their encounter with Jehovah, we need to go back and start reading from Exodus 19. After arriving at the mountain and having a conference of the tribal elders, the people accepted the conditions set forth by Jehovah and entered into a holy covenant. "All these things we will do" (Exodus 19:8).

Next there were solemn warnings that Jehovah was intending to manifest His awesome power; they needed to bathe, wash their clothing, and keep themselves holy. On the third day, there was a thick cloud and fire on the mountain, accompanied by lightning, thunder, and the continued sounding of a trumpet. Passing the sacred boundary marks and walking forward in the sight of the people, Moses ascended through the thick cloud enshrouding the mountain and into this terrifying spectacle to receive the Ten Commandments along with diverse laws (Exodus 20 and forward). Alas for poor humanity's self-confidence, that which they thought would gain life instead condemned all to death (Galatians 3:13).



Water from the rock in the wilderness

There is an account of the elders of Israel having a sacrificial meal where seventy of the elders “saw the God of Israel” (Exodus 24:10), that is, the Lord’s special messenger, the angel of the Lord. Thus Jehovah made his presence known in Exodus 24.

At this juncture the Exodus account initiates a special and deliberate structure of teaching called a *Chiasm* (this structure is illustrated). The Chiasm begins when Moses is called to ascend the mountain. He entered the thick cloud and what is “like a devouring fire upon the top of the mount,” and yet, like the burning bush, this fire did not consume (Exodus 24:18). Then, for a critical period of forty days and forty nights, indicating a full period of testing, he remained with no word getting back to the camp. Sadly, this is testing which the people fail utterly, bringing upon themselves additional condemnation.

TABERNACLE COMMISSIONED

The commission for constructing the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) begins in Exodus 25. “According to all that I show thee, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of the furniture thereof ... shall ye make it” (Exodus 25:9 RVIC).

In great detail the Lord related the design and the dimensions of the tabernacle, the materials of construction, the furniture, the priestly clothing, the gemstones (including two special ones, the Urim and the Thummin for cases of special judgment), the sacrifice of consecration, even the formulation of the sacred incense. Closing the commissioning account, two artisans, Bezalel of Judah and Aholiab of Dan, are specifically named and charged to carry through all the construction (Exodus 31).

The Tabernacle which God showed to Moses was, as Paul assures us, a *shadow* of good things to come (Hebrews 8:5, 10:1, Colossians 2:17). The whole nation of Israel, as well as these laws and religious services and ceremonies, was typical. Thus, our understanding of the plan and work of salvation now in progress, as well as their future development, cannot fail to be greatly enlightened by a careful study of those *shadows* which Israel repeated year by year continually until the Gospel age introduced their antitypes — the realities (1 Peter 1:11, Hebrews 10:1-3, *Tabernacle Shadows*, page 12).

THE SABBATH AS A SIGN

“Truly ye shall keep my Sabbaths: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations” (Exodus 31:13 RVIC). Later in the writings of Moses we learn that the Jews were to keep six kinds of Sabbaths. The Sabbath of the 7th day (Exodus 31:15), the 7th week (Deuteronomy 16:9), the 7 x 7 and 50th day (Leviticus 23:15), the beginning of the 7th month (Leviticus 23:24), the 7th year (Leviticus 25:4), and 7 x 7 and 50th year (Leviticus 25:10).

The penalty for ignoring the Sabbath of rest and re-

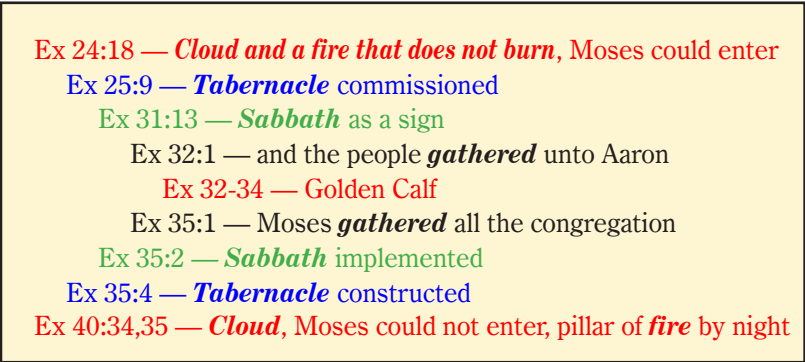
freshing was death. “Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people” (Exodus 31:14).

THE PEOPLE GATHERED AND THE GOLDEN CALF COMMISSIONED

“When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Get up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him” (Exodus 32:1 RVIC).

The word “gathered” (H6950), *viyakahel*, has special significance.¹ This is the first appearance of this word. It is not used in Genesis, nor does it appear earlier in Exodus. This word for “assemble,” or “gather,” does appear again three chapters later: “And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These are the words which the LORD hath commanded, that ye should do them” (Exodus 35:1).

The three chapters between when the people *gathered* unto Aaron, and the setting forth the law by Moses who *gathered* the entire congregation marks the beginning and the end of this pivotal Golden Calf episode. The Chiasm, or nested set of themes, appears in the diagram below.



MOSES’ DESCENT AND ANGER — TABLETS OF THE LAW BROKEN

After Moses’ successful entreaty of the Lord, he descended the mountain with the two tables of the law written by the finger of Jehovah Himself (Exodus 32:15-35). At the base of the mountain Moses met his aid Joshua who was waiting faithfully for him. After hearing the noise of revelry from the camp, Moses in anger cast down the two tablets of divine workmanship, shattering them. This signified breaking the precious covenant relationship that had occupied the forty days on the mount.

With no recorded opposition, Moses regained control of the camp. He dealt with the Golden Calf, burning it, grinding up the ashes, strawing the ashes upon the water, and forcing the people to drink.² Aaron could offer no reasonable excuse when he was confronted. “The gold

was cast into the fire and out came the calf.” Yossa, one of the Rabbinic commentators, observes with a note of warning, “there is a little bit of the Golden Calf in all of us.”

The Levites, their swords in readiness, stood with Moses when he called for action against the ringleaders of the Golden Calf debacle. Aaron was spared, but that day 3000 were slain (Exodus 32:28). The following day, for a second entreaty, Moses once more ascended the mount. Moses was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice. He offered himself on the people’s behalf. The Lord declined Moses’ offer, nor was the Lord finished punishing. The unpunished participants who escaped the sword were smitten with a plague. There is no record of those that died³ (Exodus 32:33-35).

ANGELIC LEADERSHIP A CAUSE FOR MOURNING

As God closed this entreaty by Moses, He announced that what was a more direct manner of divine leadership would now be delegated to an angel (Exodus 33:1-11). “I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I consume you in the way” (Exodus 33:3 RVIC). Upon being told that Jehovah would no longer directly lead, the people mourned. As a sign of their deep contrition they cast away the remaining Egyptian gold ornaments with which they were adorning themselves.

“I WILL DO THIS THING THAT THOU HAST SPOKEN”

Moses once again ascended the mount and entreated Jehovah a third time (Exodus 33:12-17). “If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up thence” (Exodus 33:15 RVIC). This is a direct confrontation by Moses challenging the proposed action of the angel’s leading. Moses’ entreaty is heard. “I will do this thing that thou hast spoken.” Moses found grace in the Lord’s sight, adding, “I know thee by name” (Exodus 33:17).

Let us recall that the Hebrew title of this book is not *Exodus*, a Greek word signifying the “Way forth.” Rather,

it is *Shemot*, the book of “names.” At this critical juncture Moses was assured that his **name** was written in God’s memory for blessing. Of course God knows the name of Moses. This statement, “I know thee by name,” is a special promise. Consider if the President of the United States said, “I know you by name.” The clear meaning would be that the President would answer the phone if we were to call. The covenant relationship between Jehovah and his people now was restored.⁴

We have illustrated how the Golden Calf debacle is the focus of 16 chapters of Exodus (Exodus 24-40) in a structure called a *Chiasm*. Within the Golden Calf account, there appears yet another Chiasm. This Chiasm is composed of seven nested themes.

Standing at the very center of 16 chapters, we find the Lord saying that He would do “this thing thou hast spoken.” Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “I know thee by name.” These verses, Exodus 33:12-17, are the very heart of a major portion of Exodus! Moving forward, affairs will now go in a direction where whatever the people may do that is displeasing to the Lord, the relations between the people and the Lord will never again be threatened. There is a turnaround. Things will go in a **positive** direction from this point forward (see diagram below).

I WILL MAKE MY PRESENCE PASS BEFORE THEE

With the restoration of favor, Moses beseeched the Lord for one additional favor. Would Jehovah show Himself?

Moses is told “No,” it is not possible to even glimpse the face of Jehovah’s goodness, “for man shall not see me and live” (Exodus 33:20). What follows is an encounter with the numinous divine that stands as one of the most dramatic in scripture (Exodus 33:18-23). In limited compliance with this request from Moses, he is hidden in the cleft of a rock and covered by the Lord’s hand. Moses then is able to observe the glory that remains after Jehovah passes by and removes his hand.

Ex 32:1 — People **Gather**

Ex 32:1 — **What has happened to Moses?** We cannot see Moses

Ex 32:2-6 — **Ordinances** of the Golden Calf, his altar, sacrifice, feasting, and lascivious assembly

Ex 32:7-14 — Let me consume the people that I may **make of thee a great nation** — Moses entreats

Ex 32:15-35 — **Tablets of the Law broken** and Moses takes vengeance upon the people

Ex 33:1-11 — **An angel will now lead;** the tent of meeting is removed far from the camp

Ex 33:12-16 — Moses: If I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way —

The Lord: My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest

Ex 33:17-23 — **The Lord once again will lead;** Moses sees a glimpse of his glory

Ex 34:1-10 — **Tablets of the Law restored** and the Lord shows grace to the people

Ex 34:10-17 — Let me consume the nations of the land and **make this people a great nation**

Ex 34:18-28 — **Ordinances** of the Law, holy assemblies

Ex 34:29-35 — **What has happened to Moses?** We now are afraid to see Moses

Ex 35:1 — **Moses Gathers**

This closes the nesting Chiasm that began when the Lord said his angel would lead, but not the Lord himself. It follows in the correct sequence.

TABLES OF THE LAW RESTORED

The law on tables of stone were to be hewn from rock like the first set that was shattered. Moses would fashion these and deliver them to the people (Exodus 34:1-9). The ordinances of the law were to be written out with a scribe's pen and these also would be delivered to the people. It seems likely that this writing work would take place back at the camp. "Behold, I make a covenant and will do marvels such as not have been wrought in all the earth" (Exodus 34:10). This closes the nesting Chiasm that began when the hewn Tables of the Law were broken. It follows in the correct sequence.

I WILL MAKE OF ISRAEL A GREAT NATION

A few days prior, the opening segment of this nested thought within the Chiasm spoke to the Lord's wrath waxing hot against the people, asking Moses to "stand aside." Again, this follows in the correct sequence. Now God reaffirms His commitment and protection of the people. "Let me consume the nations of the land [Canaan] and make this people a great nation" (Exodus 34:10-17).

There is a prophetic warning against the seductive daughters of the people of the land. On more than one occasion these nubile young women would prove effective in seducing the young men of Israel to join their idol worship. Initially, the bread offerings to "the queen of heaven" might seem harmless, but these led to abandoning Jehovah's worship and violating the commandments. This downward path would end in embracing the most depraved forms of worship, child sacrifice.

God would punish idolatry among the Israelites by removing the people from the land of promise as captives. The ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, with its capital Samaria, was taken captive by Assyria in the days of king Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah. Over a century later, in the days of the prophet Jeremiah, Judah and Benjamin with their capital of Jerusalem would be taken captive to Babylon. Possibly the reason that the specific warning of child sacrifice was not added is stated in Jeremiah. "They have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart" (Jeremiah 7:31).

ORDINANCES OF THE LAW, HOLY ASSEMBLIES

Highlights of the most significant ordinances for acceptable sacrifice were given. The men of Israel were to



Moses casting down tablets

have holy assemblies **three** times a year. Is there a connection here with the **three** entreaties for the people by Moses?

When these holy assemblies were held, there was a promise of blessing. "Write thou these words for after the tenor of these words, I have made a covenant with thee and Israel" (Exodus 34:27, 18-28 RVIC).

This closes the nesting Chiasm that began when the Ordinances for the worship of the Golden Calf were announced, and now the true Ordinances are announced. Again this follows in the correct Chiastic sequence.

MOSES THE RADIANT MEDIATOR

Possibly, in the aftermath of encountering Jehovah's presence, Moses' face now shined forth with radiance, literally "horns." This supernatural radiance was renewed as he conferred with Jehovah. The people were frightened. Henceforth, it would serve as a constant testimony to Moses' mediatorship. In a very different way, the people's sentiments now were, "What has happened to this Moses? We are frightened to see him" (Exodus 34:29-35). This closes the nesting Chiasm that began when the whispers, "What has happened to Moses?" grew into mob action. Again this follows in the correct Chiastic sequence.

MOSES GATHERS THE PEOPLE

Moses gathered the people. The word for gathered (Exodus 35:1, H6950, *vayakhel*) is written out with the identical letters used when the Golden Calf episode began. Then the people gathered (Exodus 32:1m H6950, *viyakahel*) against Aaron. Since these two usages of the same word are different parts of speech, the vowel points and pronunciation diverge.

The Torah scroll Reader (*Baal Korei*) at the synagogue sees identical letters. This *gathering* closes the entire Golden Calf episode laid out for us as a Chiasm. Now the focus shifts back to the larger Chiasm that began in Exodus 24 with Moses ascending the mount in a thick cloud.

SABBATH INSTITUTED

Before construction was initiated for the Tabernacle, the people needed to observe some workplace rules for both everyday living and the special assignments for the Tabernacle. The Sabbath ("Shabbat") was to be observed strictly as a day of rest. "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day" (Exodus 35:2, 3).

Today, among Orthodox Jews, Sabbath begins just 18 minutes before sunset. The women of the house begin the

Sabbath by lighting candles and saying prayers. Sometime later the joyful Sabbath meal commences. Sabbath then ends Saturday evening one hour after sunset when the first stars should be visible. An observant Jewish website notes that “Shabbat is the centerpiece of Jewish life.”

We read in Genesis that the Lord created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. The Jewish sages set forth that on that day, God created *rest*. Without rest *sustained creativity* becomes an impossible burden.

Throughout the forty years of wandering in the wilderness, nourishing manna would descend from heaven, except on the Sabbath. But no one went hungry — extra rations would fall on Friday, so that everyone would have more than enough for the holy day.

TABERNACLE CONSTRUCTED

“And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD commanded, saying, Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD” (Exodus 35:4, 5). It is heart warming to observe that all the materials and the monetary means to trade for exotic goods such as the Dugong skins that would serve as the Tabernacle’s outer covering, were voluntary donations.⁵ The next five chapters chronicle the construction of the Tabernacle, its furniture, the garments of the priests, the gemstones for the breastplate of the High Priest, etc.

Finally, the Tabernacle (*Miskan*) was ready to assemble. Moses supervised every detail of the assembly, on the first day of the month of Nisan, the first month of the religious New Year⁶ (Exodus 40:1). So much had happened in what was two weeks short of nearly a year since the people observed the first Passover and departed Egypt.

A CLOUD MOSES CANNOT ENTER

“When Moses had finished the work, the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the Presence of God filled the Tabernacle. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting, because the cloud had settled upon it and the Presence of the God filled the Tabernacle ... over the Tabernacle the cloud of God rested by day, and fire would appear in it by night, in the view of all the house of Israel throughout their journeys” (Exodus 40:33-38, JPS 2014, *op. cit.*).

Observe the contrast with Exodus 24:15. At that time there was a cloud that Moses could enter and confer with God. At the consecration of the Tabernacle, the divine presence and holiness occupied a thick cloud and Moses could not enter. God was not inaccessible, but a new approach to God was open. The Tabernacle had a priesthood and daily sacrifices. The cloud was a visible sign of God’s presence. It rose above the Tabernacle so that service could take place. The daytime cloud transformed into a pillar of fire by night serving as testimony to God’s faithfulness in keeping his promises. — *Br. Richard Doctor*

(1) Forhman, David, *Exodus: A Parsha Companion*, Aleph Beta Press and Maggid Books, New Milford, Conn., 2020.

(2) The alkali ash from the wood would make the water bitter, the gold itself is chemically inert and would have no taste.

(3) It may be that the plague of the Lord’s judgment was slow and chronic. Recognizing the debauchery of the people, this plague may have been a slowly acting sexually transmitted disease.

(4) Keil, C.F. and E. Delitzch, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, Volume 1 (translated), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan (reprinted 1981), page 235.

(5) “Tabernacle Coverings of Sea Cows,” *Beauties of the Truth*, 21 (1), February 2010.

(6) Cohen, A., *The Soncino Chemash -- The Five Books of Moses with Haftorahs*, 2nd Edition, Soncino Press, 1985, page 597.

(Cain and Abel, continued from page 1)

wounding, and a young man to my hurt” (KJV, ASV margin). “I have slain a man for wounding me, And a young man for bruising me” (ASV, KJV margin).

Genesis 4:23 may be equally well translated either way. The choice may be made according to which better fits the context or circumstances. The “and” may be understood as either “also” or “even.”

Is there any record of Lamech personally slaying anyone? Apparently not. However, Hebrews 7:10 might give us a clue: Levi “was yet in the loins of his father [Abraham],” when he paid tithes to Melchizedek. Was not Lamech in the loins of Cain when Cain slew Abel? This could explain why unremorseful Cain was to be avenged sevenfold, but remorseful Lamech would be avenged seventy and sevenfold. (*Cf.*, on forgiveness, “I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but until seventy times and seven,” Matthew 18:21-22 RV margin, RVIC margin).

Thusly understood, Lamech typifies Israel in the Kingdom. If Israel in the Diaspora, that is, their dispersion among the nations, unrepentant, was granted divine blessing of not being forever lost, in the Kingdom they will be fully forgiven (seventy times and seven).

Lamech’s children prospered, just as Israel will prosper in Christ’s thousand-year Kingdom. (Whether Lamech’s children by Adah typify the heavenly Bride of Christ and the Great Multitude is left as an exercise for the reader.)

SETH AND ENOSH, GENESIS 4:25-26

Jesus Christ was slain by crucifixion, but He did not stay dead; he was resurrected as a divine being. Therefore, Adam (typifying Jehovah God Himself) had another son, Seth, to typify our resurrected Lord Jesus, to take the place of Abel. To Seth was born a son, Enosh, to typify the children of the resurrection. And in their days will men begin “to call upon the name of Jehovah.”

— *Br. Jim Parkinson*