



BOOKS OF THE BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

by WAYNE PALMER

EXODUS



Copyright © 2019 Concordia Publishing House
3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118-3968
1-800-325-3040 • CPH.org

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of Concordia Publishing House.

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cover art: © Shutterstock.com

INTRODUCTION:

The Book of Exodus describes how God raised up Moses to lead the descendants of Abraham out of slavery in Egypt, redeemed them by the mighty miracles of His hand, and guided them through the wilderness to Mount Sinai.

AUTHORSHIP:

Exodus was written by Moses the prophet; it is the second of his five books.

PURPOSE:

Exodus focuses on God's redeeming work for His people—the heart of which is the Passover, which foreshows Jesus' great sacrifice on the cross.

OUTLINE:

For the purposes of this study, Exodus will be divided into the following sections:

1. Israel Enslaved in Egypt
2. Passover and Exodus
3. Through the Wilderness to Mount Sinai
4. Initial Events at Sinai
5. Prescriptions for the Tabernacle and Accessories
6. Apostasy and Restoration
7. Construction of the Tabernacle

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

ISRAEL ENSLAVED IN EGYPT (EXODUS 1–11)

Genesis finished with Jacob moving his family to Egypt because of a severe famine. Four hundred years later, his descendants are slaves in Egypt.

Israel in Egypt (ch. 1)

Exodus begins around three hundred years after Joseph's death with the fulfillment of God's promise to multiply Abraham's descendants greatly.

Read 1:5–7.

Q 1: What was the state of the people of Israel after centuries in Egypt?

A 1: They were numerous and strong, filling the land of Egypt.

A new pharaoh arises who dreads the number and power of the Hebrews.

Read 1:8–22.

Q 2: What steps did Pharaoh take to try to weaken the people of Israel?

A 2: First he ordered the midwives to kill sons as they were born, but they refused. Then he ordered his people to throw baby boys into the Nile River. (Notice that the names of this pharaoh and his advisors are never mentioned; they are lost to history. But Moses records the names of the god-fearing midwives to remind us that people of faith are remembered by God and precious in His eyes, but those who reject Him are soon forgotten).

Moses the Deliverer (ch. 2)

During the time of Pharaoh's edict to throw newborn boys into the Nile, a deliverer is born to the Hebrews.

Read 2:1–10.

Q 3: How did God completely foil Pharaoh's plot?

A 3: Moses was put into the Nile as Pharaoh commanded, but Pharaoh's own daughter rescued him, Moses' own mother nursed him, and Moses was raised inside Pharaoh's own household, with all the wisdom of Egypt taught to him.

Three times, Moses steps up to help weak people who are being mistreated.

Read 2:11–22.

Q 4: What did Moses learn when he tried to rescue the Israelite from the Egyptian?

A 4: Moses learned he was unable to deliver Israel from Egypt, he lived as a fugitive in the house of a Midianite priest, and he suffered as his people did.

While Moses lives as a fugitive in Midian, the bitter Israelite slavery continues.

Read 2:23–25.

Q 5: What happened to the Israelites during Moses' forty years in Midian?

A 5: Pharaoh died, but even with a new king the situation was no better for the Hebrew slaves.

God's Plan of Deliverance (chs. 3–4)

The Lord appears to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Read chapter 3.

Q 6: How did God overcome Moses' reluctance to return to Egypt?

A 6: The Lord revealed His presence in word and fire, declared His name to Moses as I AM, and promised to go with him and use His great power to force Pharaoh to set Israel free.

Moses resists God's call.

Read 4:1–17.

Q 7: Why was Moses so hesitant to obey God?

A 7: Moses was focused on his own failures and inability—what he had discovered when he tried to deliver the Israelite slave by killing the Egyptian. He knew he didn't have the power or force of will to convince Pharaoh to free the Israelites. He failed to consider the power of God's Word.

Though fearful of Pharaoh and the Israelite slaves, Moses returns to Egypt.

Read 4:18–31.

Q 8: Why did it require great faith and trust in God for Moses to return to Egypt?

A 8: Moses had to confront Pharaoh, who was arguably the strongest king in the world at that time, and Moses was a fugitive, a son of slaves.

Preparation and Confrontation with Pharaoh; the Ten Plagues (chs. 5–11)

Pharaoh hardens his heart and increases Israel's burden.

Read chapter 5.

Q 9: Why shouldn't Moses have been so despondent at Pharaoh's reaction?

A 9: It seems Moses expected God to immediately deliver Israel—though God had warned him that Pharaoh would not let Israel go until a strong hand compelled him to do so (3:19).

God Comforts and Encourages Moses and Aaron.

Read 6:1–13.

Q 10: How did the Lord overcome Moses' discouragement with Pharaoh's reaction and Israel's refusal to listen?

A 10: God repeated His promises and restated what He would do. As Moses pondered that word of promise, the Holy Spirit strengthened his faith and confidence.

Moses and Aaron's Genealogy

Read 6:14–30.

Q 11: Why was it important to note that Moses and Aaron were from the tribe of Jacob's third son, Levi?

A 11: The Lord would choose that tribe to be His special ministers to the other tribes of Israel. Aaron's sons would be the priests, and his cousins from the other Levite clans would dedicate their lives to serve the Lord in various ways—especially in teaching and worship responsibilities.

Moses and Aaron confront Pharaoh.

Read 7:1–13.

Q 12: Why did the Lord want Moses and Aaron to clearly understand that Pharaoh would not listen to them?

A 12: God wanted to teach them that He knew the events of the future and He wanted keep them from becoming discouraged when Pharaoh would say no, over and over. When the plagues kick in one after the other, Moses' confidence in God's ultimate victory seems to grow.

The First Plague: Water Turned to Blood

Read 7:14–25.

Q 13: What effect did this first plague have on the Egyptians?

A 13: The Egyptians revered the Nile as a life-giving god. The God of Israel showed His dominion over their river god. This gentle rebuke got the attention of Pharaoh and all Egypt. It demonstrated God's power without causing great harm to the people or their economy.

The Second Plague: Frogs

Read 8:1–15.

Q 14: How did the plague of frogs affect Egypt?

A 14: The frogs were more of a nuisance than damaging or destructive. God was showing that He is slow to anger.

The Third Plague: Gnats

Read 8:16–19.

Q 15: How did the gnats show that God was gradually intensifying His plagues?

A 15: The gnats were a more intense nuisance than the blood or the frogs, but still would not cause any damage to Egypt's economy.

The Fourth Plague: Flies

Read 8:20–32.

Q 16: Why did God make a distinction between the Egyptians and Israelites in this plague?

A 16: The flies afflicted only the Egyptians, proving that this was not a natural occurrence but was supernatural and completely under God's control.

The Fifth Plague: Egyptian Livestock Die

Read 9:1–7.

Q 17: How did the fifth plague increase the pressure on Pharaoh?

A 17: Up until now, the plagues were mostly nuisances. But since Pharaoh kept stubbornly refusing to obey God, the plagues begin to damage Egypt's economy.

The Sixth Plague: Boils

Read 9:8–12.

Q 18: What does it mean that the Lord “hardened” Pharaoh's heart?

A 18: Initially, the Holy Spirit worked through Moses' words to help Pharaoh recognize his sin and ask for God's forgiveness. But after Pharaoh kept lying and refusing to obey, God stopped working to turn him to obedience and let him remain in unbelief and rebellion.

The Seventh Plague: Hail

Read 9:13–35.

Q 19: What did God reveal about Himself when He gave the Egyptians a way to save their servants and livestock from the hail?

A 19: God is merciful and kind. He threatens punishment for those who disobey Him, but for those who trust in Christ Jesus, He offers a way to be saved from His fierce judgment.

The Eighth Plague: Locusts

Read 10:1–20.

Q 20: How destructive was the plague of locusts?

A 20: This plague destroyed all the agriculture in Egypt. The escalating severity of these plagues gave warning that the end was drawing nearer every day.

The Ninth Plague: Darkness

Read 10:21–29.

Q 21: How was this miraculous plague a judgment against the gods of Egypt?

A 21: The chief god worshiped by the Egyptians was the sun. The deep darkness during these three days demonstrated God's power over the sun and greatly limited mobility within Egypt.

The Tenth and Final Plague

Read chapter 11.

Q 22: Why did Moses instruct the Israelites to ask their neighbors for silver and gold jewelry?

A 22: This can be seen as the Egyptians paying for all the years of the Israelite's labors, or the victor's spoils in war. The Israelites would generously contribute from these spoils for the building of the tabernacle.

PASSOVER AND EXODUS

(EXODUS 12:1–15:21)

God's delivering of Israel from Egyptian slavery is the pivotal moment of the Old Testament. It powerfully foreshadows the suffering and death of Jesus Christ that delivers all of us from slavery to sin, death, Satan, and hell.

Preparations for and Celebration of Passover (12:1–28)

The Passover lamb is presented as the way to save the Israelite firstborn.

Read 12:1–28.

Q 23: How did the Passover lamb foreshadow Jesus' suffering and death?

A 23: The lamb had to be physically perfect—without blemish or defect. It was slain in place of the firstborn of Israel, its blood brushed onto the doorposts and lintel of each house. Jesus is the perfect, sinless Lamb of God who was slain in place of all sinners. The blood from the nails in His hands (like the doorposts on left and right) and feet (like the doorway below), and the crown of thorns on His head (like the lintel above) is placed on us in Baptism so the angel of death passes over us.

Death of Egyptian Firstborn and Expulsion of Israelites (12:29–42)

The angel of death passes through Egypt killing all the firstborn whose homes are not marked by the blood of the Passover lamb.

Read 12:29–32.

Q 24: Why was it significant that Pharaoh told Moses, "And bless me also!"?

A 24: Pharaoh did not simply free Israel; He also compelled them to leave. By begging Moses to bless him also, he was pleading with Israel's God to stop His destructive plagues on Egypt. This was ironic, because none of the firstborn of Pharaoh and his people would have been killed if Pharaoh had obeyed God after any of the previous plagues.

The Israelites are driven out of Egypt.

Read 12:33–42.

Q 25: What does it mean that "the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians" (v. 36)?

A 25: It does not necessarily mean that the Egyptians liked the Israelites or felt sorry for the slavery they had afflicted upon them, but more likely it means that the Egyptians were willing to do anything to get rid of the Israelites because they feared and dreaded Israel's powerful God.

Passover Regulations (12:43–51)

The Lord establishes rules for foreigners who want to partake of future Passover festivals.

Read 12:43–51.

Q 26: Why would foreigners join Israel?

A 26: One reason God hardened Pharaoh's heart was that the report of His mighty plagues would spread far and wide, and many people would come to fear the God of Israel and seek to be among His people. Indeed, even though forty years will have passed before Israel enters the Promised Land, the Canaanites living there will remember the plagues on Egypt and they will be in deep fear and dread of the God of Israel.

Consecration of the Firstborn (13:1–16)

God claims the firstborn of Israel as His own.

Read 13:1–2.

Q 27: What was so important about the firstborn?

A 27: God sets aside the firstborn to represent and serve Him as leaders in their families and the nation. At Mount Sinai, He took the entire tribe of Levi in place of the firstborn Israelites as His full-time servants and ministers among the Israelites (Numbers 3:12). The firstborn point ahead to the birth of God's only-begotten—His firstborn—Son, Jesus.

God establishes observances that will help future generations recall His great deliverance through the Passover.

Read 13:3–16.

Q 28: What observances has the New Testament Church established so future generations will remember the events of Jesus' great salvation?

A 28: We celebrate the season of Lent for forty days, and during its last week (Holy Week), we recall the events of our salvation: Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday), His Last Supper (Maundy Thursday), His suffering and death (Good Friday), and His glorious resurrection (Easter Sunday). Within each of these services are elements that remind us of our Savior's great work that sets us free from death and hell.

Crossing the Red Sea (13:17–14:31)

God guides Israel by a pillar of cloud and fire.

Read 13:17–22.

Q 29: What was the importance of the pillar?

A 29: The pillar represented God visibly present among His people to guide, protect, and provide for them on their way to the Promised Land. During the days, it spread over the nation to shade the Israelites from the desert sun, and in the cold desert nights, it gave light and heat.

God leads Israel out of Egypt through the Red Sea. Pharaoh again changes his mind and sends his army to enslave the Israelites once again.

Read chapter 14.

Q 30: Why was the crossing of the Red Sea so pivotal for Israel?

A 30: The destruction of the Egyptian army made it absolutely clear that God had set them free.

Song of the Sea (15:1–21)

Moses teaches Israel a song so future generations will remember how God delivered them from Egypt's power forever.

Q 31: Why was it important for Israel to remember God's deliverance at the Red Sea?

A 31: They would soon face trouble and dangers both as they crossed the wilderness and as they battled against great nations in the Promised Land.

THROUGH THE WILDERNESS TO MOUNT SINAI (EXODUS 15:22–18:27)

God leads Israel across the wilderness from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai.

First Complaints and Waters of Marah (15:22–27)

After three days of traveling without water, Israel comes upon water too bitter to drink.

Read 15:22–27.

Q 32: What property in the log (or tree) turned the water from bitter to sweet?

A 32: There was nothing in the wood itself; it was God who miraculously changed the water for Israel. It was to be a memorable experience so they would trust His power to provide for them as they traveled to the Promised Land through that inhospitable land.

More Complaints and Manna and Quail (ch. 16)

Israel grumbles for food—and God provides.

Read chapter 16.

Q 33: What did Israel's grumbling reveal about them?

A 33: Whenever Israel faced a challenge, difficulty, or need, they responded with grumbling and complaining instead of crying out to God and bringing their needs to Him in prayer. We would do well to learn that same lesson, especially since we clearly see God's love in giving His Son to die on the cross for us.

More Complaints and Water from a Rock (17:1–7)

Again the people grumble about lack of water as they pass through a dry land.

Read 17:1–7.

Q 34: What was special about God choosing to bring water from a large rock?

A 34: The last place one would expect to find water was from a rock. Also, God appeared visibly in some form on top of that rock. Again, Israel had a very memorable demonstration of God's love and faithfulness despite their stubborn unbelief and doubt.

War with Amalekites, and Moses and Joshua Supported by Aaron and Hur (17:8–16)

Israel is attacked by a nomadic tribe descended from Esau.

Read 17:8–16.

Q 35: What important part did Moses play in Israel's victory?

A 35: Israel was victorious only while Moses held out his hands in prayer. His stance looked like Jesus' arms spread out on the cross. God was teaching Israel that victory depended on His help alone.

Aid and Advice from Jethro (ch. 18)

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, has practical advice for Moses.

Read chapter 18.

Q 36: How does Moses' role in Israel help us better understand the role Jesus fills for us at the Father's right hand?

A 36: Moses was Israel's intercessor before God. He represented Israel to God by sharing Israel's needs. He represented God to Israel in his teaching and through the judges he appointed.

INITIAL EVENTS AT SINAI (EXODUS 19–24)

Having arrived at Mount Sinai, Moses prepares Israel for the Lord's appearance on the mountain.

Moses and Aaron Ascend the Mountain (ch. 19)

God sets strict boundaries and rules for Israel for when He comes near.

Read chapter 19.

Q 37: Why were God's rules for Israel so restrictive?

A 37: Sinful creatures cannot approach our holy Creator and Lord. God set these bounds and rules to protect the Israelites from His holiness. That was also why He wrapped Himself in a thick cloud.

The Ten Commandments (20:1–17)

God speaks the Ten Commandments to His people Israel.

Read 20:1–17.

Q 38: Why did God spend so much more time reciting and explaining the First Commandment than all the others?

A 38: In His relationship with Israel, God wanted them to love and revere Him so much that they wouldn't want to set up a rival god.

The Book of the Covenant (20:18–23:33)

The Israelites are filled with terror at God's voice.

Read 20:18–21.

Q 39: What did God intend to accomplish by coming down and speaking directly to the Israelites?

A 39: God did not intend to terrorize Israel but to show them how pure and holy He is, that they might repent of their sins and treasure the sacrifices and other gifts that point ahead to the promised Savior who will purify them so they may live in His presence forever.

God lays out laws concerning the building of altars.

Read 20:22–26.

Q 40: Why did God direct each step of Israel's worship life so carefully?

A 40: God wanted worship to fill them with hope, peace, and confidence in the promised Messiah. The focus in worship must be on God and what He wants, not on ourselves and what we think is best.

God sets out rules governing Israelite society.

Read 21:1–32.

Q 41: Are we bound by these same rules?

A 41: No, these were laws to structure the nation of Israel and guide its judges until the promised Messiah came. Yet these rules show God's mercy and grace, protecting the weak and disadvantaged from the strong and powerful.

God sets out rules that benefit all the members in Israel's society.

Read 21:33–22:15.

Q 42: How do these laws battle the greed and selfishness caused by the sinful nature of all the Israelites (and us)?

A 42: Each of these laws is a form of Jesus' golden rule: "Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them" (Matthew 7:12). They recognize human sinfulness and greed, but together form a societal structure that would be marvelous to live under in such a sinful world as ours.

God gives laws to regulate the relationships within Israelite society.

Read 22:16–23:9.

Q 43: How do these laws show God's concern for the helpless and powerless?

A 43: These laws remind those who would take advantage of their power over helpless people that the Lord will not tolerate it or leave it unpunished.

God gives laws to ensure rest and worship for all Israelites.

Read 23:10–19.

Q 44: Why did the Israelites need to be commanded to take and give rest to their workers?

A 44: God knows that our sinful greed drives us to overwork for the sake of accumulating things. Worship and rest make us turn our attention to God, to learn to trust Him to provide all our needs. At the same time, we find our greatest worth in God's love for us, not in the works we accomplish or the possessions we accumulate.

God promises to help Israel conquer the Promised Land if they remain faithful to His covenant.

Read 23:20–33.

Q 45: After all they had seen God do in Egypt and at the Red Sea, why did the Israelites need to hear God repeating His promise to give them the Promised Land?

A 45: Israel would face powerful nations with strong walls in the Promised Land. Their sinful focus on themselves would convince them they could not succeed. But if they would look outside themselves and think hard and long about God's glorious appearance on Mount Sinai, His great works in Egypt, and His many promises to be with them and give them victory, they would have complete confidence that He would empower them to conquer the Promised Land. Unfortunately, as we will see, in less than a year they would refuse to enter the Promised Land because they had forgotten these things and felt completely inadequate in the face of their powerful enemies.

Ratification of the Covenant with a Unique Blood Ceremony (ch. 24)

While Israel makes an oath to obey God's words, Moses, Aaron, Aaron's sons, and seventy elders climb the mountain to eat a fellowship meal in God's presence.

Read chapter 24.

Q 46: How does this meal prefigure Holy Communion?

A 46: We gather in God's presence to eat the body and blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world.

PRESCRIPTIONS FOR THE TABERNACLE AND ACCESSORIES (EXODUS 25–31)

God gives Moses the design for the tabernacle and its furnishings, and for the special garments for the priests and high priest.

Gathering of Materials and Revelation of Heavenly Pattern (25:1–9)

God will locate His saving presence in the tabernacle

Read 25:1–9.

Q 47: What did God mean when He said about the tabernacle, “I may dwell in their midst”?

A 47: God was not saying that He would be confined within the tent of meeting or tabernacle but that there would be only one place where His grace and mercy would be found: the tabernacle. There Israel would be reassured that God was with them in grace, mercy, and love. The tabernacle foreshadowed the body in which Jesus would dwell or “tabernacle” among us. And the command to approach God only at the tabernacle is like Jesus’ exclusive statement, “No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

Ark and Its Lid with Cherubim Atop (25:10–22)

God gives the design for the ark of the covenant.

Read 25:10–22.

Q 48: What was the purpose of the ark?

A 48: The ark represented God’s presence among His people, the place from which Moses heard God’s voice, and the place to which Israel prayed. It was fulfilled in Jesus’ physical body as He lived among His people.

Table for the Bread of the Presence (25:23–30)

God provides the design for the table that will hold the bread of the Presence.

Read 25:23–30.

Q 49: What was the bread of the Presence all about?

A 49: The bread was a reminder of God’s provision of our physical needs. Twelve new loaves were set on the table each Sabbath day (one for each tribe) and the old loaves were eaten by the priests and their families. The table also held flagons and bowls of wine. That bread and wine remind us of Holy Communion, where we receive the body and blood of our Savior at the altar of our Lord.

Lampstand (25:31–40)

God gives Moses the design for the lampstand (Menorah).

Read 25:31–40.

Q 50: What was the purpose of the lampstand?

A 50: The inside of the tabernacle was dark because of the curtains. The lampstand was its only source of light. It represented Jesus as the light of the world.

Frames and Curtains of Tabernacle (ch. 26)

God gives the design for the frames and curtains that will make up the walls and ceiling of the tabernacle.

Read chapter 26.

Q 51: How does the tabernacle remind us of God's creation?

A 51: The design of the tabernacle carefully organized the space in which the Creator and Redeemer of Israel would be worshiped. In a like way, He carefully organized the heavens and the earth in the six days of creation. The design also reminds us that worship cannot be haphazard but is carefully ordered to receive God's gifts through the Word and Sacraments.

Q 52: What reminder did the veil between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place give?

A 52: Because of our sin, we do not have direct access to God. We must come to Him through a mediator of His own choosing. For the Old Testament believers, this was first Moses, and then the high priests. For us, it is our High Priest, Jesus Christ.

Altar of Burnt Offering (27:1–8)

God gives Moses the design for the bronze altar of burnt offering, which stands in the courtyard in front of the tabernacle.

Read 27:1–8.

Q 53: What was important about the location of this bronze altar?

A 53: It was the only article visible to the congregation, since the ark, table for the bread of the Presence, altar of incense, and lampstand were inside the tabernacle and could only be seen by priests and Levites. It was a powerful reminder to Israel that they could have access to God only when their sins were atoned for by the substitutionary death of the sacrificial animals—which foreshadowed the coming sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah.

Courtyard (27:9–19)

God gives Moses the design for the courtyard outside the tabernacle.

Read 27:9–19.

Q 54: What was significant about the courtyard?

A 54: It marked the border of God's holiness, allowing God's people to stand in His presence outside the tabernacle. Faithful Jews desired to stand in the courts of the Lord's house in the presence of God. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we will stand in the courts of heaven.

Oil for the Lampstand (27:20–21)

God tells Moses to use pure olive oil in the lampstand, and commands the priests to tend the light so they can perform the service God has commanded them.

Read 27:20–21.

Q 55: Why was the oil important?

A 55: The oil enabled the lampstand to give light so the priests could serve God as He has commanded them. Through the Word and Sacraments, the Holy Spirit enables us to serve God.

Vestments for Aaron the High Priest and Other Priests (ch. 28)

God gives Moses the design for the vestments of the priests and high priest.

Read chapter 28.

Q 56: Why were the robes so elaborate and beautiful, including golden bells along the hems?

A 56: The garments represented God's beauty and the precious privilege of gathering in His presence, hearing His Word, and praising Him. The bells remind us to worship God in our movements—if only to rise to our feet to honor His Word.

Ordination of the Priests (ch. 29)

God sets apart Aaron and his descendants from all Israel to serve as priests and high priest.

Read chapter 29.

Q 57: How did the high priest foreshadow Jesus' work and salvation?

A 57: The high priest came into God's presence (in the Most Holy Place) to sprinkle the blood sacrificed on the altar to atone for the sins of God's people. Jesus shed His blood on the altar of the cross and came into God's presence to plead for us sinners.

Altar of Incense (30:1–10)

God gives Moses the design for the altar of incense.

Read 30:1–10.

Q 58: When was the incense burned?

A 58: The incense was burned when lambs were slain at the bronze altar each morning and afternoon. At that time, the congregation prayed silently. The sweet aroma of the incense reminded the Israelites that God was pleased with their prayers because of the sacrifice that pointed ahead to Jesus' great sacrifice on the cross.

Census Tax for the Tabernacle (30:11–16)

Before Israel leaves Mount Sinai, God will direct Moses to take a census (Numbers 1). God establishes a one-time tax for that event to support the tabernacle upkeep.

Read 30:11–16.

Q 59: Why was a payment necessary to avoid a plague?

A 59: God had promised Abraham that his offspring would be more numerous than the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the beach. Counting the Israelites implied distrust in God—except in this case where God commanded it.

Basin for Priestly Washing (30:17–21)

A basin will be built so the priests can wash their hands and feet before they serve the Lord in the tabernacle.

Read 30:17–21.

Q 60: What does this washing symbolize?

A 60: The priests were sinners who needed to be washed of their sins before they could serve God. Though Jesus was sinless, He was washed in Baptism before beginning His ministry, and we are washed in Baptism to be forgiven and to serve God.

Anointing Oil and Sanctuary Incense (30:22–38)

God provides formulas for the oil used to anoint the high priest, the priests, and the tabernacle and its furnishings.

Read 30:22–38.

Q 61: What was the symbolism of this anointing?

A 61: The anointing oil was a visible sign that God extended His holiness to the priests and the furnishings of the temple, thus making them holy. This anointing oil pointed ahead to the Holy Spirit, who was poured out on Jesus in His Baptism and on each of us in our Baptism.

Appointing of Craftsmen under Bezalel and Oholiab (31:1–11)

God sets aside Hebrew craftsmen to construct the tabernacle, its furnishings, and the priestly garments for Aaron and his sons.

Read 31:1–11.

Q 62: Where did the artisans likely learn their skills?

A 62: Most likely, in their slavery in Egypt, they were taught these skills to be put in service to Pharaoh, his officials, and his people. Now they would have the privilege of using these skills to serve the Lord and His people.

Reminder to Keep the Sabbaths (31:12–18)

Even as God lined up workers to construct the tabernacle, He reminded Israel of the need for spiritual rest on each Sabbath.

Read 31:12–18.

Q 63: Why is weekly rest in God's presence essential for us as well?

A 63: Our souls get weary in this sin-stained world and need to find rest and refreshment in God's gifts of Word and Sacraments.

APOSTASY AND RESTORATION (EXODUS 32–34)

While Moses is on the mountain with God, the Israelites go astray.

The Golden Calf (32:1–29)

With Moses missing on the mountain for nearly forty days, Israel looks for another god to deliver them.

Read 32:1–29.

Q 64: How did Aaron fail in his responsibility to Israel and to God?

A 64: As high priest, he was to remind Israel of God's promises and deliverance. Instead, he formed the golden calf.

Moses' Intercession (32:30–33:23)

Moses intercedes to turn God's fierce anger away from Israel.

Read 32:30–33:23.

Q 65: How was Moses' role as savior of Israel similar to what Jesus accomplished on the cross?

A 65: Moses pleaded with God to spare Israel despite their horrible sin. Jesus pleads with God the Father to forgive our sins for the sake of His own suffering and death for us.

Renewal of the Covenant (ch. 34)

Moses returns up Mount Sinai for another forty days to renew the covenant between God and Israel.

Read chapter 34.

Q 66: What does the fading glory of Moses' face teach us about God's holiness?

A 66: The natural state of Moses' face (not glowing) reminds us we are sinners. But when God brings us into His presence through His Word and Sacraments, He washes away our sins, makes us His own children, and extends His glory to us.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE (EXODUS 35–40)

Moses oversees the construction of the tabernacle, its furnishings, and the priestly garments.

Materials Contributed by the People (35:1–36:7)

Before contributions or construction begin, God calls His people to a holy rest.

Read 35:1–3.

Q 67: Why did God require this rest before construction began?

A 67: Before we can do the works that please God, we need Him to work within our heart to wash away our sins, purify our motives, center our devotion, and give us strength and guidance for our tasks.

God's people bring materials and skills for the construction of the tabernacle.

Read 35:4–29.

Q 68: Why was it important to note that the contributions of the people and the work of the workers came from hearts that were stirred and spirits that were moved (35:21)?

A 68: God looks for our offerings and works to come willingly and lovingly as a response to the grace, mercy, and salvation He has given us.

Contributions pour into the work site under the leadership of two Israelites called by God.

Read 35:39–36:7.

Q 69: What was remarkable about Moses' command for the Israelites to stop bringing contributions?

A 69: This same people who had grumbled and complained, who had built and worshiped the golden calf, now gave exceedingly generously for God's tabernacle.

Description of Construction (36:8–38:31)

Moses reveals God's spoken plans to Bezalel and Oholiab, who train Israel's skilled workmen.

Read 36:8–38:31.

Q 70: How is the hierarchy of these leaders similar to that of the New Testament Church?

A 70: Jesus revealed God's salvation to His apostles, who recorded the New Testament to train pastors, called workers, and all Christians to serve God as they do works of love for others.

Bezalel himself builds the central and most holy piece of furniture.

Read 37:1–9.

Q 71: Why was the ark and its mercy seat the most holy piece of furniture?

A 71: The ark represented the place where God dwelt with His people and received the blood of the sacrifices; this pointed ahead to Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

The table that held the bread of the Presence and the wine for drink offerings is built.

Read 37:10–16.

Q 72: What was the purpose of the bread and wine on this table?

A 72: God provided this food and drink to nourish the priests who served before Him. Now at the altar, we receive Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine to nourish our souls, since we serve as royal priests to God.

The lampstand is assembled.

Read 37:17–24.

Q 73: What was the purpose of the lampstand in the tabernacle?

A 73: The lampstand not only illuminated the tabernacle but also represented God's mercy and care for His people.

The altar of incense is built and the anointing oil blended.

Read 37:25–29.

Q 74: What lesson did the altar provide through the sense of smell?

A 74: The blood of the sacrifices was not a pleasing smell. But just as the lampstand gave light for the priests' vision and work, the fragrance of the incense and anointing oil reminded the priest that God's holiness cleansed the stench of our sins.

The altar of burnt offering is assembled.

Read 38:1–7.

Q 75: The furniture inside the tabernacle was covered in gold. Why was this altar covered with bronze?

A 75: The tabernacle design reminded the Israelites of the barriers their sin set between them and God. The value of the precious metals increased closer to the ark of the covenant, which symbolized God's presence, reminding the Israelites that they had access to God only through the high priest—even as we have access to our heavenly Father only through Jesus Christ, our great High Priest.

The bronze basin is constructed.

Read 38:8.

Q 76: What was significant about the ministering women contributing their mirrors to build this basin?

A 76: The ministering women assisted the priests as they washed their hands and feet before going into the tabernacle to minister or serve the Lord. These women contributed their mirrors, focusing their attention on God rather than themselves.

The court is built as a boundary for the people.

Read 38:9–20.

Q 77: Why was the altar of burnt offering placed inside the door of this court?

A 77: The placement of the altar reminded God's people that they could come into His presence only through the sacrifices that took away their guilt and sin.

The curtains and stands for the tabernacle are constructed.

Read 38:21–31.

Q 78: What did this tabernacle and later, Solomon's temple, represent?

A 78: They were the covering that concealed the glory of God in the midst of Israel. They pointed ahead to Jesus' physical body, which concealed His glory as the Son of God living in the midst of God's people on earth.

Manufacture of Priestly Vestments (39:1–31)

The holy garments are made for the high priest and priests.

Read 39:1–31.

Q 79: What was the symbolism of these special garments?

A 79: Aaron and his sons were chosen and set apart by God from the other Israelites. But being sinners, they had to be covered by God's righteousness. The same is true of each of us. We are royal priests covered by the righteousness of Jesus Christ and set apart to serve God as we serve our neighbors.

Tabernacle and Vestments Inspected and Blessed (39:32–43)

Bezalel and Oholiab bring all the furnishings to Moses for inspection.

Read 39:32–43.

Q 80: Why was it important for Moses to inspect the furnishings before setting up the tabernacle and consecrating it?

A 80: He had to be sure God's directions had been followed completely and accurately. Seeing that they were, he blessed the workers.

Erection of the Tabernacle (40:1–33)

Moses erects the tabernacle and sets all the furniture in place.

Read 40:1–33.

Q 81: How is the material of the tabernacle and the furnishings similar to the furniture in our churches and the water, bread, and wine of the Sacraments?

A 81: These are all ordinary elements that have been set aside for the Lord's service. Once God joins Himself to them through His Word, they become sacred and precious to God's people.

Consecration of the Tabernacle by the Cloud and Glory of the Lord (40:34–38)

The glory of the Lord fills the tabernacle.

Read 40:34–38.

Q 82: What was significant about the statement “Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it”?

A 82: Even though Moses had stood in God's presence on Mount Sinai and had seen God's “back”, he was unable to enter God's presence in the tabernacle. Only Aaron, the high priest, and all the high priests who would follow him would be able to enter the Most Holy Place. They could do so only once a year when they brought the blood of sacrifice. Then, they entered briefly, poured the blood on the mercy seat and ark, and left. Their actions symbolized Jesus completing His earthly work, bringing His own blood into God's presence in heaven. But then, unlike the Israelite high priest, Jesus would remain in the Most Holy Place, taking His place at the right hand of God the Father.

