

Deuteronomy 9:8-17 (Walter Thomas Prideaux Wolston) 61258

Forty Days of Scripture, Moses' Forty Days: Law and the Curse, or Man's Responsibility and Failure

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(Exodus 32:1-28; Deuteronomy 9:8-17)

We read in the first chapter of the gospel of John that “the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). Now there is the greatest difference possible between law and grace. Today, you know, you and I are in the day of grace. It is what is called in Luke “the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:19). The day of His judgment is coming. We are not in the day of law. Not, mind you, that I am setting aside the law, but it is the day of grace. Moses brought law. The Son of God brought grace. A servant might come and tell man what the claims of God upon man were, but only the Son of God could unfold the heart and nature of God. Moses could not do that. Only Jesus, only that blessed One who is the Son of God, could reveal God.

Truly grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. He has indeed —

“A Name, which must all names displace, With me, a lost one, saved by grace.”

Whether that Name has got a place in your heart, I do not know. If you have not yet learned that you are lost, that you have not kept the law, and that you cannot keep it, and if you have not learned that you are under the curse, I very much doubt if you have turned to Jesus, because it is need that turns the sinner to Christ. Until I learned that I was lost, until I learned that I was absolutely undone, I did not turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. When the question of righteousness is raised, then it is that the soul has to learn its own weakness, and that it cannot answer the claims of God.

What is the value of the law? Scripture replies, “Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound” (Rom. 5:20). It came in to make manifest what man was. God knew what was in his heart, but he did not know, as I shall show you in a minute or two, and the forty days of Moses suffice absolutely to bring out the utter weakness of man, and in plain language, the lost estate of man. Forty days was quite enough. Now there are two “forty days” in Moses’ history, as also there are two “forty days” in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. You have the first “forty days” of the Lord Jesus, when in the wilderness He is tempted by Satan, and then He comes out and men are blessed by His ministry of love. And then came the second “forty days” after the resurrection, of which I shall speak another time, God willing. There are two “forty days” in connection with law-giving, and two in connection with the One who is the Saviour, the personification of grace.

I will not go into the history very much tonight, because it would occupy too much time. But I want to show you what came out when this remarkable man, Moses, was on the mount with God. The Lord had delivered Israel out of Egypt. He had broken the power of the enemy. He had taken them through the Red Sea, had brought them out to the wilderness, and now they were at Horeb. Down came manna to them day by day, and pure water from the rock. “For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4). Over their heads was the Cloud, which, like a huge umbrella, shaded them by day from the heat, and night by night they had light. The Lord was their light, and their all, I may say. Do not forget there were a couple of million people there, and to them Moses could say, “Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years” (Deut. 8:4). Such was God’s care of them.

“Possibly” you say, do you believe it? Well, Scripture says it, and God never tells lies. I am prepared to believe God. You leave God out, and I can see your difficulties. But there is no difficulty when God is in view; hence we find Moses maintained of God for forty days upon the mount. And such was the case with Israel. God had brought them out of Egypt in absolute grace. The grace of God brought them out, and it was grace that led them on right up to the moment the law was given. You will find their whole history recounted in the Psalms. First of all you have their grace-history, nothing but goodness and grace, and it is all about the Lord and what He did (Psa. 105). When you read the 106th Psalm it is what they did. How they grumbled and murmured, and how they disbelieved God, and then what came in? Mercy. But in between their history when God brought them out, and dealt with them in pure grace, and the tale of mercy, when everything was lost through Israel’s sin and idolatry, came the threefold giving of the law, in order that God might let man learn what was in his heart. For long I did not know what was in my heart, nor what was in God’s heart. The greatest surprise that a man gets in this world, and which I got was this, that when I had sinned, and was far away from God, that God not only could save me, but would save me, and He has saved me. That was what was in His heart. It is a wonderful thing when a person learns that.

Now turn to Exodus 19. It gives us the record of the first giving of the law; and we will see how it came out. Now you know that in His nature God is love as well as light. God’s love acts even though man has sinned. That is the way of grace. What is grace? Grace is love in activity after man has sinned. God is love, and God was love, go as far back into eternity as you can. Love is the nature of God. From Israel’s start out of Egypt to Horeb there was nothing but pure sovereign grace on God’s part right along the whole line. Now there comes another thing. Law is introduced. The Apostle Paul distinctly says, “Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man.” Why? Because a righteous man does not need it. He is walking rightly. Who is the law made for? I am going to quote you Scripture in order that you may not misunderstand me. “Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Tim. 1:9-10).

The law came in, What to do? To make manifest what man was. He did not know himself. But it did not put him right. Men were in utter ruin by nature and departure from God before the moment that the law came in, but "sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Rom. 5:13). Again the law brings in wrath, for it is written, "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15). God did not give it with the view of justifying. He says distinctly, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. 3:20). The object of the law then was not to justify. It was to make manifest where man was and what he was, that he might learn his own helpless ruin, and then turn to God to learn what He is. I believe the giving of the law was distinctly what I may call a retrograde action on the part of God. In the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I find God coming down and talking with these men in the most simple way possible. But when He raises with man the question of righteousness, He has to retire into thick darkness. Notice, the promise of God, which is pure grace, is one thing, and the law is quite another. The Apostle Paul works that out in Galatians.

Now, what is promise? It is unconditional grace, though it may be measured by the extent of the promise. God had said to Abraham, "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies" (Gen. 22:17). Moses had got hold of and remembered that promise, for when God says, after Israel's sin of the golden calf, "Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation" (Ex. 32:10); he, so to speak, rejoins, "Lord, you will in that case have to recall what you said to Abraham." Note his request — "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants, to whom Thou swarest by Thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever" (Ex. 32:13). Had Moses not been utterly self-forgetful and devoted to God's interests, and Israel's blessing as His people, he would have said, This is a fine chance for me. But look at that man. He declines his own advancement, and puts God in memory of the promise He had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is very fine.

But again I inquire — Why does the law come in? To raise the question of righteousness, and prove that man, on the ground of responsibility, which involves behavior, has lost all and can claim nothing. I will illustrate. I go into a friend's house and I meet a child, little Mary, whom I know well. I say, "Mary, I am coming back next week, and I will bring you some oranges." Well, when I come back, she is at the gate to meet me, and she gets the oranges, because I promised them, and she enjoys them. Supposing, on the other hand, I had said to her, "I am coming back again next week, and I shall bring you a bag of oranges, if I learn from mother that there has been a week of perfectly good behavior." She is on her behavior now. Very well, I come back next week, and I open the garden gate, but I do not see Mary. "Where's Mary?" "Oh," says the mother, "I am sorry to say — ." "Ah I understand." I have the bag of oranges all right, but upon her behavior she has lost them. Upon behavior, everything is lost before God. But you can get all through grace. There is not a thing the heart of God can furnish you with that you cannot get through grace. Peace, pardon, and salvation, may be yours, through grace, but upon behavior, not one thing. There is where the value of the law comes in. It teaches me that I am powerless, guilty, and lost.

Now we will go back to the nineteenth chapter of Exodus. "In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself." That was the expression of His own goodness. That was unconditional grace. "Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine" (Ex. 19:1,3-5). There is a condition — obedience — brought in. And now mark, without even waiting to hear what the demands of the law were, as given in Exodus 20, look at the blindness that leads Israel to say rashly and boldly, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (Ex. 19:8). And what was it? They were to obey His voice. It was quite right that God should make claims, and there is not a man in this hall whose conscience does not tell him that the claims of the law are right. And what does the law tell me? It tells me what I ought to be as a responsible creature of God. It tells me my responsibility to God and my neighbor, and ensures a curse on failure therein. "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Now do you not see their blind folly? They did not even wait to learn the character of the claim that God was going to make, nor the responsibility that they were going to accept. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee forever" (Ex. 19:9). Ah, it was not now face to face work. It was not like the Lord coming down to Abraham and speaking to him as in days gone by. No. I retire, says God. As far as the unfolding of what God is in His nature, save as to holiness and righteousness, the introduction of law was retrogression on God's part. Man could only fail, and then God could only judge.

And now see how the law is unfolded in what Moses elsewhere calls "the day of the assembly" (see Deut. 9:10; 10:4; 18:16). "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death" (Ex. 19:10-12). Look at that "Draw near to Me," says God, "and you die." And that is why the apostle says it was the "ministration of death" (2 Cor. 3:7).

"And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish. And Moses said unto the Lord, The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai: for Thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it" (Ex. 19:16-21 and 23). This awful display of glory caused the people to tremble, and Moses even to fear and quake exceedingly (Heb. 12:24). Thereafter the terms of the law — the ten words — are given in full (Ex. 20:4-17), the effect of which is immediate.

The people turned and said to Moses, "We would rather you spoke to God, than have to do with Him ourselves." They look for a mediator. "And all the people saw the thunders and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it they removed and stood afar off" (Ex. 20:18). Law must drive you from God. It does not draw to God. It is the full revelation of God's

claims upon me as His creature, claims which, if I know myself, I am sure I cannot fulfill. "And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Ex. 20:19). They could not face God. Upon that ground — the fulfillment of the creature's responsibility — no one can face God.

You have the ten words unfolded to you in chapter 20. The first table of the law gives you man's responsibility, and his due God-ward. Then you get the responsibility of man with his neighbor. You remember the lawyer who came to the Lord Jesus in His life and said, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life." The Lord says: "What is written in the law? How readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:25-28). Who has done it? No man here tonight could say, I have done it. You know your own heart. Have you loved God with all your heart? You have not. And your neighbor as yourself? No, my dear friend, if you take that ground you never can know what God's salvation is. You may be interested in your neighbor, but have you loved him as yourself? No. Does anybody think they are going to get to heaven upon that ground? I am certain that I shall get there, but not on that ground, and I will tell you why.

One night, a few years ago, when I was in a hotel seeing a patient, there was a knock at his bedroom door. His wife went to the door, and then came back. Soon some one knocked again, and again she went to the door. Shortly there came a third knock, and again she went, but said nothing to me. I began to wonder whether I was the person wanted, and having finished my visit left. Outside on the landing stood a waiter, who said, "Doctor, your house is on fire." I flew down the stairs and out into the darkness, for my wife was very ill at the time. It looked very like my house at a distance, as I saw flames breaking forth from the roof, but as I got up the hill some one met me and said, "It is not your house, doctor, it's your neighbor's." "Thank God!" came right out of my lips. I was honest, but it showed me that I cannot go to heaven on the ground of loving my neighbor as myself. Nor can you. No man can stand on that ground before God save the Lord Jesus. If you fancy that you can, you will wake up to find out by-and-by that you are in hell, not heaven. If you are going to heaven, it will be by the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ only. But if any have an idea they are going to wend their way into heaven by works, they will eventually discover that it is all a mistake. Oh, no, you cannot get to heaven on that ground.

A rich ruler also came to Jesus and said, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The Lord says to him, "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother." And he said, "All these have I kept from my youth up." And what does the Lord say? "Yet lackest thou one thing." And what was that? "Sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."

If he really loved his neighbor as himself he must do that. If he had 5,000 he would have to give someone else 2,500. And then he would give the half of that to some other person, and so on till all was gone. You say he would very soon have nothing left. Just so, but there is the principle. And the Lord bids him make short work of it, "And come, follow me." What took place? "And when he heard this he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich" (Luke 18:18,20-23). He loved his money more than eternal life or his neighbor. Everybody gets tested in that way.

Law is very useful, but it cannot save man. The law is undoubtedly the perfect rule of what the creature ought to be, both in relation to God and his neighbor. But while it may tell me what I ought to be, it does not fit me to be it. The law neither gave life, power, nor an object. Further, "If righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21). But the law, I repeat, does not give me life, nor power, nor an object. What does the gospel do? It gives me all three. I get life as the gift of God in Christ; then the Holy Spirit seals the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ; and an object for the heart is found in the person of the Blessed Lord. The difference between the law and the gospel is absolutely immeasurable. One detects and judges me, the other reveals God and saves me. Are you going to turn back to the law to get to heaven? Moses' forty days should correct you.

Let us now pass on in Exodus till we come to chapter 24, where the Lord bids Moses come up to Him in the mount. There we read: "And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and on the seventh

day

the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him

up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights" (Ex. 24:17-18).

What occurred in those forty days? The next seven chapters of Exodus are occupied with unfolding this. Nothing could be more interesting and blessed than what is unfolded to Moses during these forty days. He went up, I quite admit, to receive from the hand of God the law; and the people thought he was only gone up to get that law; but what was God thinking about? He was thinking about Christ all that time, and He was telling Moses about Christ, in figure, type, and shadow. The next seven chapters, from chapter 25 right on to the end of chapter 31, are all about Christ. "How about Christ?" you say. "He was not born." I know that. But it was a marvelous unfolding of Christ's Person and His work in figure, type, and shadow.

Now I will ask you to glance over those chapters. You will read with interest how those forty days were spent by Moses in the presence of the Lord, as God unfolds to him in figure, type, and shadow, the life and death of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Therein we see the way in which God can come out to man, and how man can go in to God through the work, the death, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Ah, those were wonderful forty days! To apprehend their teaching is of the last importance.

First, notice what we find in chapter 25. "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Ex. 25:8). That is God's main idea. "According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it" (Ex. 25:9). Observe the first thing commanded to be made. "And they shall make an ark of shittim wood" (Ex. 25:10). What is that ark? Christ. Of course it was Christ. Eleven articles are named, and all pointed to Christ. First of all, you have the ark. What is the next thing? The mercy seat. "And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the

breadth thereof" (Ex. 25:17).

Do you know what happened afterward, when Moses brought down the tables of stone the second time? He put them into the ark. Why? Because there was never any man but Christ who kept the law. If it be a question of the first man's responsibility, failure is immediately manifest; all is gone. Hence Moses breaks the first tables of stone at the base of the mount. But in that ark the second tables of stone were placed, and there they remain till this day. When you get to Solomon's reign, which is a picture of the future millennial reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, there was nothing in the ark but the two tables of stone. The golden pot with manna and Aaron's rod that budded have then disappeared. They speak of Christ, seen here once in lowly grace and then exalted, and of His priestly grace, which meets the saints of God in wilderness days. The tables of stone tell a different tale. By-and-by when "a king shall reign in righteousness," there shall be the establishment of that law which the tables of stone reveal. It shall be written in Israel's heart, and everything shall be according to it.

The mercy seat was Christ. Where did God meet man in that day? When the priest came to the ark, where did he put the blood? On the mercy seat once, and before the mercy seat seven times. In Romans we read, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (a mercy seat) through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:25). How can I draw near to God now? On the ground of the blood which is sprinkled on that mercy seat.

The third thing telling us of Christ is the pure table of shittim wood whereon the shewbread was placed (Ex. 25:23). And now we come to the fourth thing. "And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made" (Ex. 25:31). Again, this is Christ, and all the light that Christ bears and sheds within the holy place.

Passing on to the next chapter, you get the tabernacle with its "ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubim of cunning work" (Ex. 26:1). This is the fifth thing. It is a lovely picture of Christ. How has God revealed Himself? The Apostle Paul replies: "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building" (Heb. 9:11). Christ is the precious antitype of all this striking imagery. I view that tabernacle, and I look at the inside curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and cherubim (Ex. 26:1). What do they tell us of? Nothing but Christ. We must, however, not now forget that everything is taken out of type, and is seen in a living man at God's right hand. The day of ritual is over, and the ritualist is quite out of date now. To revive ritual is to ignore Christ really. The veil, spoken of in chapter 26:31, is an exquisite type of Christ. The blue gives His heavenly character; the purple His imperial rights as King of kings and Lord of lords; the scarlet indicating that He is King of the Jews; also, the fine twined linen tells us of His spotless humanity; the cherubim — always in Scripture the executors of God in judgment — telling that all judgment is placed in His hands. How wondrous, later, to find that veil rent, and ourselves brought to the knowledge of God through the Lord Jesus Christ, having title to go inside the rent veil through His blood. He who will be the judge has Himself borne the judgment of God that we might be delivered.

In chapter 27 we come to the sixth thing. "And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood... and thou shalt overlay it with brass" (Ex. 27:1-2). There we find an unmistakable figure and type of the cross of Christ, where all the claims of God were met by Christ. If anybody went towards the tabernacle in that day, what was the first thing that met his eye? The brazen altar and the sin offering on it. I draw near to God through that brazen altar: on the cross Christ has met all the claims of God, and any claim that God could bring against me as a sinner has been answered and met by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now go a little further. In chapters 28 and 29 you have the priests, their anointing, and all about their garments. It is the way in which God brings us back into His own presence. He brings you inside the veil, and there you find the high priest. He represents the people before God. "Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial." Again: "And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually" (Ex. 28:12-29). What is that? It is Christ risen from the dead: Christ the great High Priest bearing each one up before God. It is love bearing me on His shoulders of everlasting power, and on His breast of undying affection. What a picture this was that Moses got on the mount. It would be a very profitable thing for you and me to consider these "forty days" very thoroughly.

Now pass to the thirtieth chapter. "And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it... and thou shalt overlay it with pure gold... and Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations" (Ex. 30:1,3,7-8). Now, what is the teaching of this golden altar of incense? I think it is this. There is going up before God all the fragrance, the sweetness, and the perfection of what Christ was as a man. The precious incense, which went up as a sweet savor to God, speaks of the infinite graces of Christ's person and ways as man, and, as being all for God, was burnt on the golden altar.

But there is something more to observe regarding the statement: "And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations" (Ex. 30:8). When God lights a light it never goes out. If the light of God has got into your soul, it is there. The lights were lit in the tabernacle, and they were never to go out. There are two things you do not find in the furniture of the tabernacle, neither an extinguisher, nor a seat. The light is never to be put out. Satan cannot manufacture an extinguisher for the light that God has lit in any soul, and God has not manufactured one. If the light is there it will remain. It may get low. I tell you what He often does. God trims the wick. And I daresay most of us Christians are the better of a trimming. I like to meet a man who trims me. I get brightened up when I get near an earnest, warm-hearted Christian. Do not you? No! Then I do not think you are a Christian at all. But it is very striking there is no extinguisher, as I have said, and further there was no seat. The work of the priest in that day was never done. Now look at this: "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12). His work is done. The Lord Jesus exceeds and rises above all types and shadows of which He is the divine antitype. His work is done, and He has sat down. In that glorious fact I rest. Do not you?

But further, Moses is told, "Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein" (Ex. 30:18). This was most needful for the ministering priests. As Christians we need to have our hands and feet washed (John 13). I must have the feet washed. In going through this wilderness I need to have the water of the Word of God applied to my conscience and heart as a believer. It will give the sense of cleansing. I need what Ephesians 5 speaks of. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water

by the word" (Eph. 5:25-26).

Now, do you know what the laver is for? Cleansing. It is the washing of water by the Word. Can you tell me the size of that laver? I cannot tell you. No record of its size is given. Solomon's laver, or molten sea, "received and held three thousand baths" (2 Chron. 4:5). In the established kingdom of the Son of Man all will be according to law-measured. But it is a remarkable thing that the size of the laver for the tabernacle in the wilderness is unrecorded. It is not measured. It suggests the thought that you cannot measure the applicability of the Word of God. It is wonderful how God's Word meets the soul in its varied conditions, and therefore there is no measure. What meets one person would not meet another. The Word of God can only be applied by the Holy Spirit, and there is no limitation to the way in which that Word is applied. The unmeasured laver gives the idea of the immeasurable breadth, length, and universal value of the Word of God to meet the multitudinous necessities of souls as we pass through this scene.

Following the instructions as to the laver, we read that the Lord bade Moses take certain principal spices and make an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary; it shall be an holy anointing oil" (Ex. 30:22-33). Without doubt we here read of the Holy Spirit of God. It was not to be put upon man's flesh. The blood of atonement must always precede it. The oil was put on the blood, teaching us that the Holy Spirit falls only upon a man who has been born of God, and led to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, dead for his sins, and risen. This is most strikingly borne out in the New Testament, where we read, "In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13).

Only one point more do I notice. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight" (Ex. 30:34). They made therewith that beautiful incense, which was to be burnt upon the golden altar. All the fragrance, the sweetness, and the perfections of Christ, in His life and ways as a lowly man, walking in grace on earth, are here indicated. Burnt on the altar morning and evening, their sweet savor went up before God. If you and I do not appreciate Christ, God does. If you do not appreciate the love that led Him down to death, even the death of the cross, God does.

Well, that was what Moses was being instructed about during those forty days. You should look at these instructions regarding the sanctuary more in detail at your leisure. They are summed up in chapter 31. You will find the eleven things I have just indicated named in verses 7-11. God puts them all together there. It is just a little picture of what the Lord Jesus is in His person, His offices, and His work. If you have never yet studied these types of the Old Testament, let me urge you to sit down and do it. They are replete with blessing for the soul. The Old Testament is the picture book of Christ, and by these figures, types, and shadows, we learn wondrously what Christ is, and what Christ has done. What could be more wonderful than this that Moses learns, that there is a mercy seat based on righteousness. All the claims of God have been met in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then there is the blood of atonement that gives me title to draw near, and the cherubim fixedly gaze on that sprinkled blood. I find the table, and on it there is the bread. I am to eat. I find the light, and am in it, to enjoy all that Christ is. I am in all the light of the purposes of God. Then I am brought to the brazen altar — the cross that gives me a title to glory. God, so to speak, takes me by the hand, and says, "You can come in." The claims of the brazen altar have all been met, and the sprinkled blood witnesses that by His atoning death Christ has settled the sin question. And then you find a Priest that maintains you in the presence of God. He bears you in His heart and on His shoulders. You find in His company light that you can enjoy, and food which you can eat. Then the oil — the Holy Spirit — put on us, gives us power for access to God in all the fragrance of the incense of Christ's perfection. The thought of God is not to keep us at a distance, but to bring us near in the enjoyment of all that Christ is.

That was what Moses was favored to see during these forty days. And what were the people doing all the time? Let us come down to earth and see. The first word of the law which they had so readily accepted, was this — "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" (Ex. 20:3). Alas! when Moses comes down he sees a golden calf, and Israel dancing round about it. They could not walk by faith. They had said, "As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him" (Ex. 32:1). He comes down to find that the people have committed the most awful idolatry. And they are positively saying, regarding the golden calf, "This is the Lord." Aaron, alas, was with them in it. God then says that He will judge them, and make of Moses a great nation. But Moses, as we have seen, sets himself aside, turns to God in intercession for the people, and says, "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom Thou swarest by Thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever. And the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people" (Ex. 32:13-14).

When Moses comes down he has the two tables of stone in his hand, and do you know what took place? He felt he could not take them down, so he smashed them at the base of the mountain. It says, "And Moses' anger waxed hot" (Ex. 32:19). A very striking word that. I think I see his face flash with righteous anger, as he regards the people's sin and idolatry, and takes in the consequences of the broken law. Do you know how he came down the next time? With his face shining in the most wonderful way. Do you know why? He had learned then what "mercy" was. Here he knows that it is all over with Israel on the ground of responsibility and law. And what is the next thing? He says, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me" (Ex. 32:26). Out steps Levi, and three thousand men died that day. When the law was broken, three thousand men died (Ex. 32:28). Did you ever notice what took place on the day of Pentecost, the day of grace? The day the Holy Spirit came down three thousand men were saved (Acts 2:41). Striking contrast! The day the Holy Spirit came down to tell of an ascended Christ in glory, who had made atonement before He went up, three thousand men were saved. And since then, what has been happening? Why, salvation like a shining river has been rolling through this world, and countless millions have drunk of it. Have you? If not, drink tonight.

Do you think that the law can help you or save you? Let the Apostle Paul give you one little word as to this: "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:15-16). How then can God justify a guilty sinner? On the ground of the finished work of His own blessed Son on the cross, and of the simple faith on the sinner's part in His Son and the work of His Son, which the charming figures we have been noticing portray so beautifully. Understand this, "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3:10). Failure on one point brings me in guilty of all, as says the apostle, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10).

I tell you, my friends, there is only one man fit for God, and that is the Man in the glory, the Lord Jesus Christ. He kept the law perfectly. And did He not keep it for me? I do not think that is the way in which Scripture presents it. The point is this, He proved what He was in all His blessed obedience, and when He had manifested what was in Himself, He went to the cross and died for the man that had broken the law. And what did He do? He wound up and ended the history of that man, when He died on the cross for the guilty sinner who had broken it, and then He rose from the dead, the head of a new race. Notice what the Apostle Paul says: "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:11-13).

If you are going to have blessing it must be on the ground of faith, not works. Christ has hung on a tree, and He has taken the curse for us. I see that Christ has endured the curse of a broken law, and that I am clear through His death, so, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. 3:14). How do you get the Spirit? By faith. How do you get pardon? By faith. "The just shall live by faith." Well, if any man here thinks he can stand before God on the ground of works or law, how vain is the thought. But how blessed to see that God during these forty days on the mount, was, in striking type, unfolding to Moses His thoughts, purposes, and counsels, regarding Christ and His work, to the end that Christ might be the object of faith and love on the part of all who hear of Him. God help you from this night out to simply rest on the Lord Jesus Christ.

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