

Adult Bible Class  
Study of Exodus, Lesson 16  
June 15, 2025

God gave specific instructions for the Tabernacle and its furniture to be built a certain way in certain dimensions, using certain materials. The priests were of the tribe of Levi and descendants of Aaron. The High Priest's garments were to be made a certain way with specific instructions.

Why all this detail, and does it have any significance? Today we will study this in detail.

### Exodus Chapter 31

**Exodus 31:1 (NKJV)** Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: **2** "See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. **3** And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *manner of* workmanship, **4** to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, **5** in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all *manner of* workmanship.

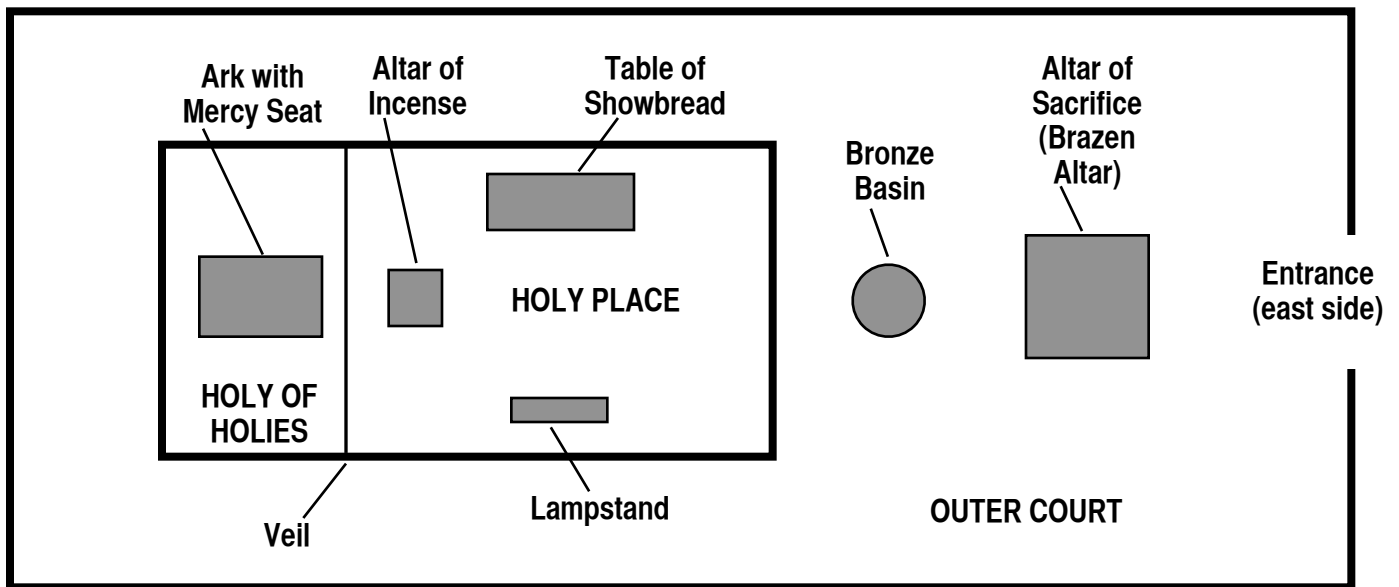
**6** "And I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have put wisdom in the hearts of all the gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you: **7** the tabernacle of meeting, the ark of the Testimony and the mercy seat that is on it, and all the furniture of the tabernacle— **8** the table and its utensils, the pure gold lampstand with all its utensils, the altar of incense, **9** the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base— **10** the garments of ministry, the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests, **11** and the anointing oil and sweet incense for the holy *place*. According to all that I have commanded you they shall do."

Bezalel was to be the chief master builder and artisan of the tabernacle. God wanted *him*, and He called him out by name. His name means, "in the shadow of God." If we think about it, this name is extremely significant. The Tabernacle in the Wilderness is a picture, type or "shadow" of Jesus Christ and His salvation plan of the New Testament. Everything that Bezalel carefully and artistically manufactured was to have great meaning of future spiritual significance.

Why go to all this trouble to manufacture a Tabernacle that was in fact only seen by the Levite priests of God? Imagine living in Old Testament days where the average person could not go beyond the entrance of the Tabernacle. He had to trust the priests to offer a sacrifice for his sins. Further, why kill innocent animals? Why must the furniture of the Tabernacle be built to certain specifications? What did it all mean?

Let's look at the Tabernacle plan and compare what it was in Old Testament days to what it means to us in New Testament days. The Book of Hebrews in the New Testament gives us much insight into the spiritual significance of the Tabernacle and what it means to New Testament believers.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT TABERNACLE



**Hebrews 9:1 (NLT)** That first covenant between God and Israel had regulations for worship and a place of worship here on earth. **2** There were two rooms in that Tabernacle. In the first room were a lampstand, a table, and sacred loaves of bread on the table. This room was called the Holy Place. **3** Then there was a curtain, and behind the curtain was the second room called the Most Holy Place [Holy of Holies]. **4** In that room were a gold incense altar and a wooden chest called the Ark of the Covenant, which was covered with gold on all sides. Inside the Ark were a gold jar containing manna, Aaron's staff that sprouted leaves, and the stone tablets of the covenant. **5** Above the Ark were the cherubim of divine glory, whose wings stretched out over the Ark's cover, the place of atonement. But we cannot explain these things in detail now.

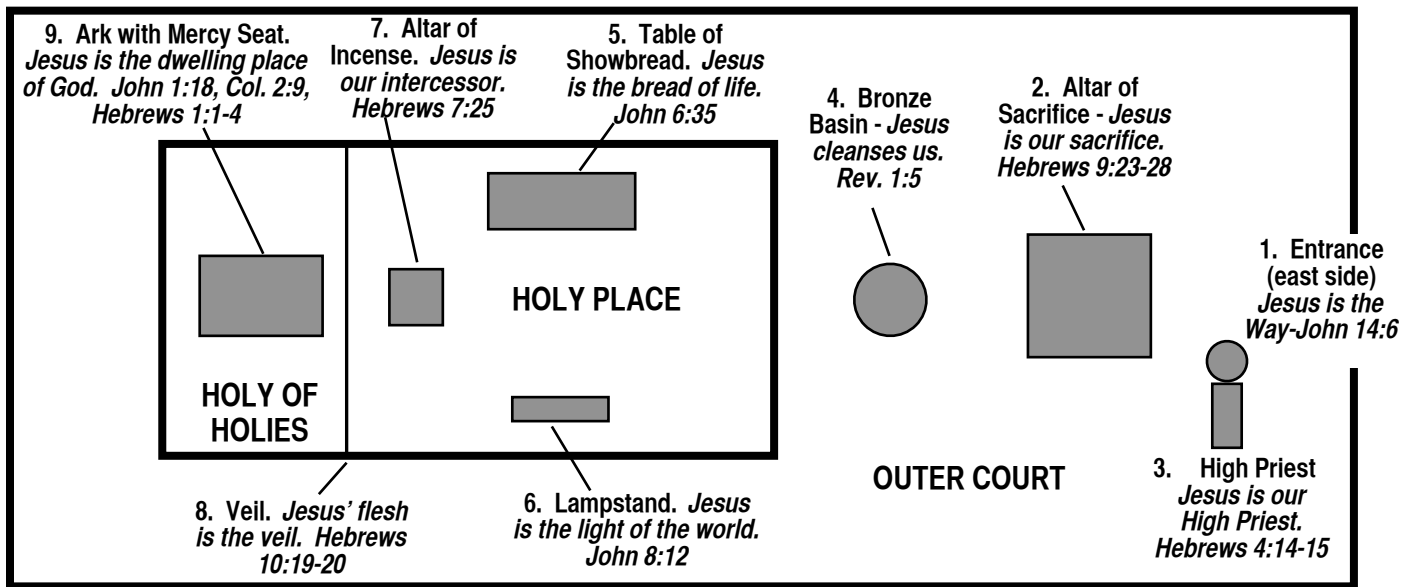
**6** When these things were all in place, the priests regularly entered the first room as they performed their religious duties. **7** But only the high priest ever entered the Most Holy Place, and only once a year. And he always offered blood for his own sins and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. **8** By these regulations the Holy Spirit revealed that the entrance to the Most Holy Place was not freely open as long as the Tabernacle and the system it represented were still in use.

**9** This is an illustration pointing to the present time. For the gifts and sacrifices that the priests offer are not able to cleanse the consciences of the people who bring them. **10** For that old system deals only with food and drink and various cleansing ceremonies—physical regulations that were in effect only until a better system could be established.

The Tabernacle of the Old Testament was given by God to be a picture of greater things to come (in New Testament days). Verse 8 tells us that the Tabernacle Plan pictured that the Holy of Holies was not freely open to everyone in those days. However, Jesus Christ was going to come on the scene and change all that. Through Jesus Christ, the way would be opened to the presence of God.

In the Tabernacle Plan we can see Jesus Christ pictured plainly.

## JESUS IN THE TABERNACLE PLAN



### 1. Jesus is the only way to salvation and the presence of God:

**John 14:6 (NLT)** Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. **7** If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!"

**8** Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."

**9** Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you?"

### 2. Jesus is our one and only sacrifice for sins, once and for all time:

**Hebrews 9:23 (NLT)** That is why the Tabernacle and everything in it, which were copies of things in heaven, had to be purified by the blood of animals. But the real things in heaven had to be purified with far better sacrifices than the blood of animals.

**24** For Christ did not enter into a holy place made with human hands, which was only a copy of the true one in heaven. He entered into heaven itself to appear now before God on our behalf. **25** And he did not enter heaven to offer himself again and again, like the high priest here on earth who enters the Most Holy Place year after year with the blood of an animal. **26** If that had been necessary, Christ would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. But now, once for all time, he has appeared at the end of the age to remove sin by his own death as a sacrifice.

**27** And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment, **28** so also Christ died once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him.

### 3. Jesus is our High Priest who lives and serves forever:

**Hebrews 4:14** So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. **15** This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin.

**Hebrews 7:23** There were many priests under the old system, for death prevented them from remaining in office. **24** But because Jesus lives forever, his priesthood lasts forever . . . **26** He is the kind of high priest we need because he is holy and blameless, unstained by sin. He has been set apart from sinners and has been given the highest place of honor in heaven. **27** Unlike those other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices every day. They did this for their own sins first and then for the sins of the people. But Jesus did this once for all when he offered himself as the sacrifice for the people's sins.

#### 4. Jesus cleanses us from our sins:

**Revelation 1:5 (NKJV)** and from Jesus Christ . . . To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

#### 5. Jesus is the bread of life. He is our spiritual sustenance:

**John 6:35** And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst . . . **48** I am the bread of life. **49** Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. **50** This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. **51** I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

6. The lampstand gave light to the priests as they were ministering in the Tabernacle. Jesus is the light of the world:

**John 8:12** Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

#### 7. The Altar of Incense was a place of prayer. Jesus is our intercessor:

**Hebrews 7:23** Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. **24** But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. **25** Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

8. A thick veil separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies where the presence of the Lord dwelt. Jesus' flesh was the veil. When Jesus died on the cross and His flesh was torn for us and His blood was spilled, He opened the way to the Holy of Holies. Beyond the flesh of Jesus was God's presence.

**Hebrews 10:19** Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh

9. Jesus is the way, the sacrifice, our High Priest, the one who cleanses us, the bread of life, the light of the world, our intercessor, and the veil. But most importantly, He is the God that we serve. Jesus Christ was God in flesh. It was important that he had human flesh so He could take our place and become the perfect sacrifice. But He is also the God with whom we desire to have fellowship. He is the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat (the dwelling place of the presence of God, veiled in flesh):

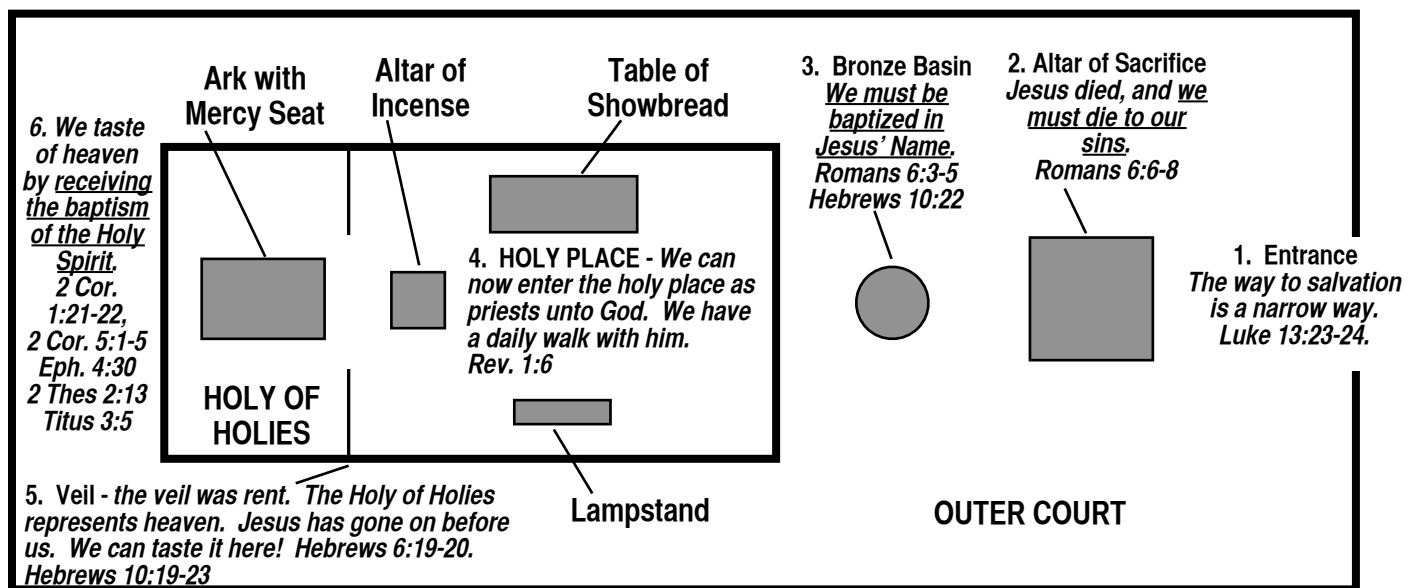
**John 1:18** No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

**Colossians 2:9** For in Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

**Hebrews 1:1** God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, **2** has in these last days spoken to us by *His Son*, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; **3** who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, **4** having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Not only is Jesus pictured in the Tabernacle plan but the New Testament Plan of Salvation is also pictured:

### THE PLAN OF SALVATION PICTURED IN THE TABERNACLE



1. Salvation is not a broad path where any opinion may do.

**Luke 13:23** Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?"

And He said to them, **24** "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

2. Jesus died on Calvary as our sacrifice. We must also die to our sins:

**Romans 6:6** knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. **7** For he who has died has been freed from sin. **8** Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

3. After he died, Jesus was buried in a tomb. After we die out to our sins (repent) we must be buried (in the waters of baptism):

**Romans 6:3** Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

**5** For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death [through water baptism] certainly we also shall be *in the likeness of His* resurrection

**Hebrews 10:22** let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

4. After we have repented and been baptized, our sins washed away, we are then ready to be filled with the Holy Spirit and have sweet fellowship with God. We, as priests, can enter into the Holy Place each day. Jesus is our light and our bread. We offer up sweet prayers to Him each day.

**Revelation 1:5b** To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, **6** and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

5. Because Jesus' death took away the veil that separates us from the presence of God, we can now receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We can look into that heavenly place where only Jesus has been as our High Priest. Heaven comes to us and glory fills our souls as we receive His Spirit.

**Hebrews 6:19** This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, **20** where the forerunner has entered for us, *even* Jesus, having become High Priest forever. . .

**Hebrews 10:19** Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, **21** and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, **22** let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. **23** Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful.

6. The Holy of Holies is a picture of Heaven. Only the High Priest could enter there, and then only once a year, picturing heaven which is beyond our reach. Jesus, however, as our High Priest, entered the real Holy of Holies in heaven and He sent back His Spirit to us as a taste of what heaven will be! The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the down payment, the guarantee, the earnest of our inheritance of heaven!

**2 Corinthians 1:21** Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us *is* God, **22** who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

**2 Corinthians 5:1 (NLT)** For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. **2** We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. **3** For we will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies. **4** While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. **5** God himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy Spirit.

**Ephesians 4:30 (NKJV)** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

**Titus 3:4** But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, **5** not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, **6** whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

## Exodus Chapter 31 Continued

**Exodus 31:12 (NLT)** The Lord then gave these instructions to Moses: **13** "Tell the people of Israel: 'Be careful to keep my Sabbath day, for the Sabbath is a sign of the covenant between me and you from generation to generation. It is given so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy. **14** You must keep the Sabbath day, for it is a holy day for you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; anyone who works on that day will be cut off from the community. **15** You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day must be a Sabbath day of complete rest, a holy day dedicated to the Lord. Anyone who works on the Sabbath must be put to death. **16** The people of Israel must keep the Sabbath day by observing it from generation to generation. This is a covenant obligation for all time. **17** It is a permanent sign of my covenant with the people of Israel. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day he stopped working and was refreshed.'"

For the children of Israel in the Old Testament, keeping the Sabbath was an absolute. Words from God like, "*Anyone who works on the Sabbath must be put to death,*" show how seriously God took His commandment given to His people, Israel, to honor the Sabbath day and keep it holy. The Fourth Commandment states:

**Exodus 20:8** "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. **9** Six days you shall labor and do all your work, **10** but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. **11** For *in* six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

What was the Sabbath day in Old Testament times? It was a day of no work. The Sabbath day was a day to stop working and to refresh oneself.

The regulations for observing the Sabbath were relatively simple. The Sabbath was to be observed every seventh day. It was to be observed by all - servants, beasts of burden, members of the Hebrew household, and even guests staying with them - all were to observe the day of rest. Scripture gives reason for observing the Sabbath:

**Deut. 5:12** 'Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you . . . **15** And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

God reminded Israel that He delivered them from their labors as slaves in Egypt. The day of rest on the Sabbath reminds them that they had been delivered from the toil of slavery.

God was serious about the Sabbath. The gathering of manna on the Sabbath was forbidden (Exodus 16:27-29). A man who was found gathering sticks on the Sabbath day was stoned to death (Numbers 15:32-36). The penalty for doing work on the Sabbath was death (verse 14 above). However, not every activity stopped

on the Sabbath. The daily ministrations of the priests in the Tabernacle were to continue. The daily sacrifice was to be offered along with a special, Sabbath day sacrifice (Numbers 28:9-10). If a boy child needed circumcision on the eighth day of life and this fell on the Sabbath, he was to be circumcised. We can see by this that worship also became a part of the Sabbath day, and Jews in the Old Testament, New Testament era, and modern times included worship as a part of the Sabbath.

After the first Temple (Solomon's Temple) was destroyed by the Babylonians, the keeping of the Sabbath became even more important to the Jews since it was something that could be done without the Temple structure. Jews had been scattered all over the Mediterranean world after they had been conquered and taken away captive. This gave rise to the Jewish synagogue. The synagogue became the center of the religious life of the Jewish communities everywhere in the world where Jews lived. Even after the Second Temple was built, the synagogue - and the keeping of the Sabbath - continued to be an important part of Jewish life.

However, along with the synagogue came newly created Sabbath rules by Jewish leaders. They wrote an elaborate code of regulations and restrictions concerning keeping the Sabbath (with over 1500 rules!). These *man-made restrictions* were specific, such as:

"You could not rescue a drowning person on the Sabbath. Untying knots that needed only one hand was permissible, but if two hands were required, it was forbidden . . . If a man was bitten by a flea on the Sabbath, he had to allow the flea to keep on biting. If he tried to stop the flea from biting or killed it, he was guilty of hunting on the Sabbath."

## The Sabbath and the New Testament

When Jesus came on the scene, it was His custom to attend the synagogue on the Sabbath:

**Luke 4:16 (NLT)** When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath . . .

In the days of Jesus, the true meaning of the Sabbath had been hidden by all the man-made rules and restrictions that had been added regarding its observance. In his teaching, Jesus sought to return the original purpose of the Sabbath to the people - and to bring even greater fulfillment:

**Mark 2:23 (NKJV)** Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. **24** And the Pharisees said to Him, "Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

**25** But He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: **26** how he went into the house of God *in the days* of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?"

**27** And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. **28** Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."



In the above Scripture, Jesus was saying that human need takes first priority over the legal requirements of the Sabbath. Matthew's description of the above encounter with the Pharisees concerning the Sabbath has this addition:

**Matthew 12:5** And haven't you read in the law of Moses that the priests on duty in the Temple may work on the Sabbath? **6** I tell you, there is one here who is even greater than the Temple! **7** But you would not have condemned my innocent disciples if you knew the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.' **8** For the Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath!"

The Sabbath day, according to Jesus, provided for man's welfare and was not supposed to be a burdensome legal requirement. He also stated that He, Jesus, was Lord over the Sabbath. Jesus, as our High Priest, could work on the Sabbath. He was "on duty" doing the work of God.

This desire of Jesus to see human need met, even on the Sabbath day is seen in this Scripture:

**Mark 3:1 (NLT)** Jesus went into the synagogue again and noticed a man with a deformed hand. **2** Since it was the Sabbath, Jesus' enemies watched him closely. If he healed the man's hand, they planned to accuse him of working on the Sabbath.

**3** Jesus said to the man with the deformed hand, "Come and stand in front of everyone." **4** Then he turned to his critics and asked, "Does the law permit good deeds on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing evil? Is this a day to save life or to destroy it?" But they wouldn't answer him.

**5** He looked around at them angrily and was deeply saddened by their hard hearts. Then he said to the man, "Hold out your hand." So the man held out his hand, and it was restored! **6** At once the Pharisees went away and met with the supporters of Herod to plot how to kill Jesus.

In another instance, Jesus shows mercy on a crippled woman:

**Luke 13:10** One Sabbath day as Jesus was teaching in a synagogue, **11** he saw a woman who had been crippled by an evil spirit. She had been bent double for eighteen years and was unable to stand up straight. **12** When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Dear woman, you are healed of your sickness!" **13** Then he touched her, and instantly she could stand straight. How she praised God!

**14** But the leader in charge of the synagogue was indignant that Jesus had healed her on the Sabbath day. "There are six days of the week for working," he said to the crowd. "Come on those days to be healed, not on the Sabbath."

**15** But the Lord replied, "You hypocrites! Each of you works on the Sabbath day! Don't you untie your ox or your donkey from its stall on the Sabbath and lead it out for water? **16** This dear woman, a daughter of Abraham, has been held in bondage by Satan for eighteen years. Isn't it right that she be released, even on the Sabbath?"

The above Scripture reminds us of the passage in Deuteronomy where God gives the reason for observing the Sabbath - to remind His people that they had been set free from the slavery of Egypt. This woman was held in bondage by Satan, and Jesus set her free!

In John 5:1-8, Jesus healed the sick man at the pool of Bethesda, and in John 9:1-41, Jesus healed a man born blind - both incidents on the Sabbath! Jesus again put human need above the man-made rules of the Sabbath.

Now, let's finish chapter 31

**Exodus 31:18 (NLT)** When the Lord finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two stone tablets inscribed with the terms of the covenant, written by the finger of God.

Moses was given stone tablets with the Ten Commandments (the covenant) written with the finger of God. The words were “etched in stone.” Moses had spent 40 days on the mountain in the presence of the Lord (see Exodus 24:12, 18). He was now ready to take the stone tablets with the covenant to the people below.