

136-150

136- You can't even get out of the 10 Commandments chapter before God provides a method of escape for the times when you fail in your obedience to that law. (He gave rules for building an altar.) Talk about grace!

137- At times God tailored the sacrifices based upon the resources of the one giving it. There were times when a King was required to bring a bull, a priest should bring a ram, a merchant a lamb and a poor couple from Nazareth might only have to bring a couple of birds that they caught for free. How gracious is that? God took into account the "ability to pay" for some of the sacrifices.

138- You didn't have to be a talented artisan or craftsman to create an altar for God. In fact, if you tried to impress God with the size or the design or decoration you immediately negated Him accepting your altar. Exodus 20 tells us that everyone was to just pile up ugly old rocks the way God gave them. He wasn't accepting anyone's arrogance. Those of us who are not as skilled really, really appreciate that!

139- The Egyptians thought the heart was "the seat of the soul." They threw the brain away when they prepared a body for embalming. The Greeks thought it was the liver. How curious it is that the Bible people were taught about "the renewing of the mind" and that God only His people on the forehead, right on the frontal lobe of the brain.

140- In order to fulfill the Deuteronomy 6 command that "you are to mark your doorposts" the Jews created the Mezuzah. It's a repository of permanent material, marked with the letter "Shin" (which looks like an English "W" and holds a small piece of parchment or paper (called a "Klaff.") There are prescribed verses printed on that "Klaff." Thus, the door is "marked."

141- As crazy as he was, Herod the Great was one of history's greatest visionaries and builders. His greatest monument was the expansion of the magnificent Jerusalem temple. But, don't fall for the concept that he did that because of any great affinity for God. Herod's temple project was for his own arrogance AND a bit of a bribe to the Jewish people so they might resent him less as an outsider king who really had no business ruling over them.

142- The busiest place in the Jerusalem temple was The Court of Jewish Women. Gentiles were not allowed there but women and children were. So, many of the activities of the temple took place in that enclosure.

143- "Sabbath" in the best definition doesn't really mean "Rest" or cessation. It's better understood to be "renewal" or "regeneration" or "re-creation." That's why the book of Judges often refers to the pauses in warfare where the people could build up their defenses as "the land had rest." That may be a new viewing of "Sabbath" to you.

144- Observant Judaism has a way of letting the Sabbath linger. When the Sabbath comes to close on Saturday evening one of the elements used is spices. The goal is to have the essence of the Sabbath linger after the candles are extinguished. Not a bad lesson.

145- Those who really understand do not "keep" the Sabbath. Instead, the "make" it. Keeping anything denotes confinement or narrowness or minimizing. You keep things in a bag or a dog on a leash or money in a bank. When you "make" something you are engaged it expanding it, enriching it. So, "making" Sabbath is much more proactive and creative. It's a much healthier sense of what Sabbath is to be.

146- One of the most horrific words in the Bible is "Hoshek." It's the Hebrew word for "darkness" but not your common darkness. *Hoshek* is a choking darkness, a black hole that negates light. You don't defeat *Hoshek* by lighting a torch in Egypt's ninth plague. *Hoshek* is a horrifying absence of light. That's the stuff that Jesus would call "outer darkness."

147- There is, within the Text, a direct challenge to the concept that God took eons to create the world. One is “*erev v’ boker*”, the “evening and morning” claim for each day. The other is that the listing shows vegetation created prior to the “Sun, Moon and stars.” How do you keep plant-life alive over long periods of time without photosynthesis? Just asking. (And the rabbis have noted the order... light wins!)

148- Contrary to what many Christians seem to believe Jesus was a very, very loyal law-keeper. He may not have kept all the man-expected minutiae of the law in the manner demanded by the ultra-conservatives but He did, for the most part, do what a good Jew was supposed to do in His day. As a result, He probably did make sacrifice because not every sacrifice was tied to the remission of sin. Some were just statements of gratitude.

149- Judaism teaches that if you can pronounce God to be blessed at least 100 times a day you are “starting to get there.” That’s a great concept!

150- There are three Hebrew words that somewhat define the concept or expectations of “Kingdom” in the Bible viewing. I don’t know which is the most important- *Malqut* (God’s sovereign territory), *Shalom* (comprehensive wholeness) and *Bracha*- “Blessing/prayer.”