

Exod 04-08-08a

We continue our worship this morning. This is August the 8th, 2004. We're in the Book of Exodus and as we prepare for the study of God's Word, let's take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer.

It gives us the opportunity to clear our minds and prepare our hearts, recognize that the ministry of God's Holy Spirit is essential for this time to be beneficial and for resources to be stored in our souls that God can use at the time and place where we need them for our thoughts and intents of the heart to stand up in the light of God's scrutiny. We can't generate thinking or behavior that pleases God except as it is based in the truth of His Word. So let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, thank you for this day. Thank you for giving us another opportunity to assemble, to experience the blessing that comes from fellowship and from the stimulation of thinking and of faith, the motivation to love and good works that comes from the time we spend together. We thank you for the gift of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who saw us even before we were born, knew that we would be trapped in a lost and hopeless condition, who emptied himself and took on the form of a servant who came and lived and dwelt among us, was tested in all points like as we are, who endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now seated at your right hand where he lives to make intercession for us.

We thank you that because of him a way has been opened to us through the veil. We can come before your throne boldly. We can represent ourselves as priests.

We can avail ourselves of your grace. Our life has meaning and purpose. We have a destiny.

We have a calling, and all of that is due to your great love expressed through the Lord Jesus. We thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit, His presence, His guarantee and surety of our salvation by that presence, and His ongoing ministry of conviction, of teaching, of guidance, and of comfort. We thank you for the gift of your word and those who have lived and died to preserve it and give us our own copy.

We can study in freedom. We can meditate on the truth of your word without fear of reprisal or of persecution in this country. We thank you for our government and those who have the rule over us.

We thank you for our president, his cabinet, and all those believers in particular who are seeking to honor you as they fulfill their role in our national destiny, both at home and abroad. We pray for those who are serving to continue the existence of our nation, whether in the military or in law enforcement or in any of the various branches and functions that sustain us in this great period of blessing and freedom. We pray for our country that godly values, that biblical principles will prevail so that we can maximize the potential of the time that remains to us to learn and to grow and to be readied for the kingdom of the Lord Jesus which is near at

hand.

We ask your blessing on us as we study together this morning, impart the truth of your word to our souls. We ask it in Jesus name, amen. Our scripture reading this morning comes from Hebrews chapter 4, Hebrews chapter 4, a New Testament commentary and application of the study that we are now engaged in in Exodus.

We have seen this passage before from the standpoint of the Sabbath and the rest that God has made available symbolically in the seventh-day rest and in the feasts of Israel and in real terms the rest that remains to the people of God but we want to focus this time in Hebrews 4 on how people missed it. There used to be in the early days of southern gospel quartets, they initially just would get up and sing and so on but some of the singers had a lot of personality and so pretty soon the fill-ins between songs as they were changing sheet music or deciding what they were going to do next, the individuals who had a lot of personality or a sense of humor would talk and pretty soon comedy came to be a part of gospel concerts. Then the statesman quartet, one of the early tenors, was Cat Freeman.

He was Vestal Goodman's brother and he was a witty young man at the time and so they would sing this song called the fourth man and his commentary and his interaction with the pianist and leader of the group Hovey Lister became a classic and it has been emulated and repeated ever since the early fifties when it happened sort of by chance but the fourth man is a song about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace and how when the king looks in and he sees the fourth man that has a form like the Son of God. It's a great song but Hovey Lister would introduce this song by saying we're about to do an amazing arrangement. These men in our quartet are going to sing this song and even though it's a difficult song and it goes fast they are so well rehearsed and have got this song down so well that it is going to sound like a single voice singing the song.

You will not be able to tell that it's a quartet. Well then they launch into it and Cat Freeman gets off and he's singing something completely different than the other guys and they try two or three times and finally Hovey Lister confronts him and he says what is the matter with you that you can't keep in? I have introduced this, I've built up this song and I've talked about how well rehearsed you are and you're just off and Cat Freeman kind of hangs his head and he says well you know I don't know what's the matter with these other guys. He says I'm right on, I'm right on this and Hovey Lister says so you mean to tell me that you're right on the money and you've got every word down and these other three men just missed it and you have to hear the whole thing but I have often thought of that when it comes to something that is obvious and proper and everybody can see it in an objective light and yet everybody seems to just miss it and it's comical to think that here is something that is so clear and so plain we looked at it Friday night with the Apostle Paul repeated guidance from God don't go to Jerusalem here's your calling you the Apostle of the Gentiles I didn't locate a bunch of Gentiles in Jerusalem they're off in Gentile lands they're in the other direction and how could the Apostle Paul just miss it that's what we see here in Hebrews chapter 4 this is the commentary of the author of Hebrews looking back at

the experience of Israel he actually begins this back in chapter 3 where he says in verse 7 today if you will hear his voice do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion in the day of trial in the wilderness where your fathers tested me tried me and saw my works 40 years this is a long time to see miraculous provision of God on a daily basis supernatural manifestations of the presence of God in the pillar of fire pillar of cloud which moves about at the will and behest of God stops and starts the entire multitude of Israel 40 years they see this and yet they still test and try God therefore I was angry with that generation and said they always go astray in their heart and they have not known my ways so then in verse 12 he says beware brother unless there be in any of you an evil heart of faithlessness in Greek this is a pistia pistia is the word for faith and when we think of a heart of unbelief we think well that's our word for people who aren't saved who are hellbound they're unbelievers and we forget that the word for faith is pistia and I think a better translation that would have a little more grip on our thinking is faithlessness beware lest there be in you a heart of faithlessness a heart that goes through life navigating through circumstances making decisions without faith not implementing faith faith is in a box on the shelf and we take it out when we hear somebody quote the Word of God or speak the Word of God or say a biblical principle but when it comes to actually making decisions and living life talking with people and doing our jobs and performing tasks our life is essentially faithless faith is not an active factor it's not involved in what we do and how easy is it to get to the end of the day and look back and say you know I basically I didn't really implement any faith I didn't think about a promise a principle or a doctrine and make that the basis of my choices and the basis of my policies and the basis of my priorities I basically I lived a faithless life we don't think of ourselves as believers as faithless but that's what this says beware brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of faithlessness in departing from the living God well he's going to continue this idea in chapter 4 therefore since a promise remains of entering his rest let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it there is a promise but we can fall short of it for indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them but the word which they heard did not profit them not being mixed with faith in those who heard it so we have two separate and distinct issues here we have the word that is preached and is available and then we have whether or not it's mixed with faith if it's not mixed with faith we have an evil heart of faithlessness we who have believed we who have exercised faith we who have trusted do enter that rest as he said now this is commonly misunderstood in my view as referring to salvation that if we have believed in the sense of accepting Christ as Savior we have entered into rest but it's not the case and we look at the great parallel the great picture in the Old Testament the nation of Israel in the Old Testament represents the individual believer in the new well where is the point of salvation what is the picture of salvation for Israel in the Old Testament it is the blood of the Passover lamb it is the passing by of the scourge of death that takes the firstborn it is the exodus from Egypt crossing through the baptismal waters of the Red Sea and being separated from the old slavery the power of the slave master is broken the blood has sanctified them the blood has separated them they have been delivered from bondage and now belong to the Lord that's the picture the faith that caused them to splash the blood on the doorpost is the picture of saving faith but once on the other side of the water once in the wilderness there is this evil heart of faithlessness their day-to-day journeying is not

characterized by faith and patience because they lack faith because they lack patience that generation does not inherit the promises what we have in the New Testament you have need of endurance Peter says that after you have suffered a while you receive the promise by faith and patience we inherit there is a distinction clear distinction in Scripture between salvation not going to the lake of fire and inheritance partaking of all of the spoils of the victory that the Lord Jesus won at the cross let us fear the author says lest any of you seem to have come short of it gospel was preached to us as well as to them we who have believed verse three do enter that rest as he has said I swore in my wrath they shall not enter my rest although the works were finished from the foundation of the world God had a promise and God had a purpose and God had a plan from the very beginning he has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way God rested on the seventh day from all his works and again in this place they shall not enter my rest since therefore it remains that some do enter it and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience and you'll notice that we were talking about this yesterday there is a parallel here there is a link between the faithlessness and disobedience obedience is not a part of salvation obedience is a part of life after salvation did not enter because of disobedience so again he designates a certain day saying in David in the psalms today after such a long time as it has been said today if you will hear his voice do not harden your hearts and that of course is a quote from Psalm 95 if Joshua had given them rest he would not afterward in David's day has spoken of another day there remains therefore a rest for the people of God for he who has entered his rest has himself also ceased from his own works just as God did from his and this is where righteousness is found the basis of our inheritance the basis of our hope in the future partaking of the eternal life in the sense of its quality is based on obedience it is based on righteousness by faith and not works of righteousness which we have done which the Bible labels as filthy rags wood hay and stubble we have to cease from our definition and our power and go to God's verse 11 let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience for the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even to the division of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart and there's no creature hidden from his sight but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must give account seeing that we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens Jesus the Son of God let us hold fast our confession for we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses but was in all points tempted as we are yet without sin let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need there's a clear distinction made here between looking to God for his strength obtaining for ourselves the righteousness of God as he points out in this same book as Paul points out in Romans Abraham believed God and it was credited to him for righteousness well turn back now to our study in Exodus chapter 32 that word that is the object of our faith the plan and purpose of God the marching orders from God are being delivered on the mountain to Moses but the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain how long was he up there we go back to chapter 24 and it tells us in verse 18 the last verse in the chapter Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain and he was on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights so we think about this this is August the 8th so

40 days ago would have been back around the beginning of July before the 4th of July how many days have passed since then that's quite a long time well somebody left and you're expecting their return and you're expecting some information from them but they left before the 4th of July as far as from our standpoint and they're still not back and you're waiting and you're waiting and you're waiting what happens well we call it impatience we call it running out of patience something needs to be done we've been sitting here too long we're just spinning our wheels we're going nowhere so toward the end of this time the people say this man Moses that brought us up out of the land of Egypt we do not know what has become of him in Hebrew the word Hayah which means to be is here we don't know what it is with him or what it is to him it's it has the preposition love which means to and you have the word for being the word is in a literal wouldn't literal English translation the people are saying we do not know what it is to him we don't know what has happened to him 40 days now or something close to that we don't know what what's up with him we would say in the colloquial we don't know what's up with Moses he brought us up out of land of Egypt now we don't know what what it is we don't know what it is with reference to him so come they say to Aaron make us Elohim that shall go before us let us make Elohim that shall go before us as for this ish Moses we don't know what's up with him so Aaron by the way we just saw the fact that we have a great high priest the people are already aware from what has transpired that this is the leadership turn back to Exodus 24 for just a moment and review this because we know what's coming up we've seen we saw last week the golden calf is underway Aaron is going to take their earrings are going to break them out of their ears he's going to melt them down he's going to hammer the gold he's going to put it over a wooden frame and he's going to make this golden calf well how accountable is Israel at this point back in chapter 24 come up to the Lord you Aaron Nadab and Abihu and 70 of the elders of Israel and worship from afar Moses will come near Moses told the people the words of the Lord the people in verse 3 answered with one voice and said all the words which the Lord has said we will do Moses wrote all the words of the Lord this is pre tablets of the law we have had all of the Ten Commandments given back here in the preceding four or five chapters remember the Ten Commandments were back in chapter 20 treatment of servants all of the things that we saw in those first four chapters at Sinai this has all been delivered and Moses has written it down Moses is a literate man he's trained in the universities of Egypt and evidently there are two or three other people who know how to read because he wrote it all down and left it there for them so now in chapter 24 Moses wrote it down the words of the Lord he rose early in the morning built an altar at the foot of the mountain 12 pillars to represent the twelve tribes of Israel sent people through the children of Israel offered burnt offerings sprinkled them with blood for 70 took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of all the people and the people said all that the Lord has said we will do and we will be obedient the issue here is obedience these are regulations he doesn't say please believe that I'm really God given them four chapters of injunctions Moses took the blood sprinkled on the people and said this is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words Moses went up here in Nadab Abihu 70 the elders of Israel saw the God of Israel under his feet paved work of sapphire stone like the very heavens in its clarity but on the nobles the elders of the children of Israel he did not lay his hand so they saw God and they ate and drank they ate

and drank in the presence of Elohim in the presence of the God of Israel seated in the midst of the glassy sea they ate and drank in his presence 74 men then the Lord said to Moses come up to me on the mountain to be there I will give you tablets of stone the law and the commandments which I have written that you may teach them so Moses arose with Joshua went up to the mountain of God he says to the elders wait here for us until we come back to you this is the operative command wait wait here until we come back how many times have we seen problems when people did not wait how did Saul lose his kingdom and his dynasty Samuel said wait here until I come back Saul didn't wait what happened with the election of the bogus thirteenth apostle in Acts Jesus said wait here until you receive power from on high but before the power from on high comes Peter says you know we're a man short here and he quotes scripture goes back to the Psalms let his house be given to another let his office be given to another let's have an election let's look around and they elect Matthias who we never hear from again couldn't wait impatience some of us have more troubles with with patience than others but impatience is the bane you see over and over again in scripture where failing to wait on the Lord and be of good cheer let your heart get strengthened this is the problem wait here for us until we come back to you indeed Aaron and her are with you if any man has difficulty let him go to them Moses went up in the mountain a cloud covered the mountain the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai and the cloud covered it six days on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud so you get the idea that Moses and Joshua go like halfway up the mountain and the cloud of glory is settled on it and they don't go any further and after a week passes God calls to Moses and he leaves Joshua at the base camp and goes on up to the summit so the total time is 40 days and 40 nights it tells us in verse 18 but there are 33 days of instruction on the mountain and there is a week of waiting Moses and Joshua wait seven days before he goes on up and gets the rest of what we get in chapter 25 through 30 and 31 I find it interesting that more than one place in the Bible you have a division of 40 years or 40 into 33 and 7 one of my more recent light bulb moments was that at the time that the Millennial Kingdom starts on the earthly clock the clock of Israel the Lord Jesus will be 40 years of old when he 40 years old when he begins to rain because he was 33 years on this earth then he left and the Israel clock stopped when he comes for us and takes us out of the earth and the Israel clock starts back up again the 70th week of Daniel another seven years runs and so if you're looking at the Israel calendar if you're looking at the Lord Jesus as the Messiah and Israel is blind to the church calendar their King when he comes to sit on the throne of his father David will be 40 years old 33 plus 7 you have that same division in the days on the mountain 33 days and seven days of course is reversed you have this seven up front Moses went in the midst of the cloud went up into the mountain was on the mountain 40 days and 49th that is inclusive of the week he spends with Joshua halfway up well how knowledgeable are the Israelites now about what God expects do they have the Ten Commandments you say well now wait a minute that Moses hasn't brought the tablets down yet and they're never going to see them because Moses is going to break them so maybe they didn't really know about that shall have no other gods before me that shall not make under the any graven image go back to chapter 20 Moses brought those down and wrote them down on parchment and then read them in the assembly of the people and they said all the Lord has said we will do do they have the Ten

Commandments yes have they heard and have they been sprinkled with blood covenant commitment thou shalt have no other gods before me thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image not an image of any beast to represent God yes and it should click in their mind oh yes that's what happened in Egypt the gods of Egypt were all represented by animals you've got bird-headed men you've got Sphinx type of things you've got the Apis cult which was thriving in the time of the captivity in Egypt all of this they have seen so I think at some point in my earlier life I was under the misapprehension that well maybe they weren't real clear on the commandments because the tablets haven't come down yet it didn't didn't synthesize itself in my brain that four chapters ago they got the Ten Commandments but they have them so now when we come to 32 make us Elohim that shall go before us Aaron said break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives your sons and your daughters and bring them to me all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron he received from their hand he fashioned it with an engraving tool and made a molded calf this is kind of a two-step process because you make the shape you melt the gold you have to get it all into one place and you can cast some of the elements if you're making an image you can make the body for example of a golden calf and get the rough structure but for the fine detail of the face you might cast a face in a mold and then affix that to the structure this wooden structure and so some of it is cast some of it is hammered and overlaid the large portions of the body and so on were probably just hammered gold but he puts all the gold in one place he's going to cast some of it he's going to hammer some of it he's going to affix it with his engraving tool and he's going to manufacture this golden calf what I find interesting about this and in thinking about it of course we have heard this story all of our lives but we have seen all of the instructions for the for the tabernacle if I told you right now I'm going to give you this bucket of gold and I want you to make me a golden calf just go out here my backyard I'll give you anything you need make me a golden calf none of us to my knowledge have the skill to this is a skilled work right you not just anybody can sit down and say well okay fine it's kind of like making a cake you just read the instructions on the back there's an art to this how hot do you heat it how do you heat it how do you pour it how do you cast it how do you make the under structure and affix that to a platform and how do you get the hammered gold I can see myself making a complete hash of this if I just tried it because I have no experience I have no skill with it at all many men in Israel had this skill because during the time of their captivity they were engaged in construction and not only did they make mud bricks but you have your interior you have your finished carpenters you have your your image makers and your your gold leaf artisans and Israel is full of workmen who are going to employ their talents and their skills learned in Egypt in slavery in the service of the Lord to construct the tabernacle but in all of the Bezalel and the Holy Abba and such as have been filled with the spirit to manufacture and weave the curtains and all of the stuff for the tabernacle there's one conspicuously absent artisan God never says that Aaron is to make a thing and yet he is obviously a guy who knows how to do this because they come to him and they say make us and they fully expected he why why do they expect that he can do this they don't come up and say Aaron do you know how to make a calf they say make us one and Aaron says bring me the gold and within an extremely short period of time he makes it in the biblical description just happens

in fact Aaron's description when he talks to Moses later on it gives you a sense of how quickly this took place we'll see it here shortly but Aaron is evidently a skilled worker in this area and yet when God gave instructions for the tabernacle Aaron is not to be making anything so why is Aaron now making something he's this is something he knows how to do and the people ask him to do it as well I can do that let me show you what I can do and he does it so he received it from their hand he says this is your God Oh Israel that brought you out of the land of Egypt and look at verse 5 so when it says when Aaron saw it but you see the it is in italics there because it's not when he looked at the calf he makes this calf they said this is your God Oh Israel that brought you out of the land of Egypt he's kind of putting the finishing touches on it and the people say this is him this is the God that brought us out when Aaron sees their reaction to the calf that's what he sees it's not the calf that he sees it's the reaction of the people he is appreciated he is applauded it his great masterpiece here is greatly famous and favored and popular it's a big hit so when he sees he builds an altar in front of it he says well this this is going over this is working so he built an altar before it and in Hebrew this says in front of its face so if you could actually see this on film I like to think there's going to be a theater in the Millennial Kingdom where we'll get a multimedia version of the Bible and we'll be able to see the parting of the Red Sea and it'll just put the mill to shame we'll be able to see the top come off of Mount Carmel will be able to see the flood will be able to see the days of creation will be able to see God making Eve see him forming Adam out of I think it's you know we're gonna have all eternity God will be able to give us this is just a shadow of the true Word of God and the history is going to be there well the vision that you have here once this calf is constructed Aaron builds an altar in front of it so that it can see is facing them they're looking at its face they are before it's in Hebrew it says before its face they build the altar before its face what is the whole issue here I want a God that I can see I want to see I want to look him in the eye I want him to see me and I want to see him I put the altar what I'm doing my sacrifice I don't know that he can see what I'm doing I don't know if he appreciates where I am and what I'm up to I want him to be there well you have a similar cry in the book of Job don't you if I had a way I don't dare I would I could not represent myself before God and the whole one of the major themes of the book of Job is his recognition as an advanced believer in his day that he needs a mediator so that he could represent himself this is what the author of Hebrews goes on to say Christ has made a way through the veil Hebrews chapter 10 we can come boldly to the throne of grace this is a desire of our heart it's a legitimate desire but how do you accomplish that God through Christ reached down and brought us up to himself the golden calf the people take God and bring him down to them and they say make us a God that we can see make us a God that we can put the altar in front of him and he can see us and we can see him and now we've got our objective it's not an illegitimate desire to be face-to-face with the Lord the Apostle Paul absent from the body face-to-face with the Lord what a grand hope but it's how you do it are you going to drag God down are you going to allow God to lift you up and this is a dragging of God down when Aaron sees that they accept this as the God that brought them out of the land of Egypt this is a good working model of God that is visible and popular he's he builds an altar in front of it then he makes a proclamation that this is based on the Hebrew verb to cry out he cries out and says tomorrow is a feast to Yahweh the covenant God of Israel brought them out

of the land so this is syncretism this is accommodation of the true God in a more acceptable form the God that's up in the cloud is too far away the God that is up in the cloud is not visible he's not the God that I want I need a God that I can look at I need a God that I know can see me so let's make one like what we want and instead of us being restored to the image of God that we lost at the fall we take God and cast him in an image that we like it's popular with us so in the same way that God brought the elders up on the mountain back in chapter 24 and they saw him seated in the mid this supernatural vision representation of God what did they do they ate and they drank in his presence well here is an occasion where God has been brought into our midst at the foot of the mountain let's eat and drink in his presence and so the people brought these offerings peace offerings of course you know the burnt offerings and so on God gets the offering in the smoke and the priests get their portion but peace offerings the offer eats the food so if you have a choice of offerings to make well let's do the peace offering because then we can have a feast so we waited before the Lord we present it then we eat it and have a big feast so they sat down to eat and drink God called the elders up to eat and drink in his presence I asked myself where the food come from was this prepared by angelic chefs as we see other places in the Bible where there is food that is brought because there is no record of them packing animals to go up there prepare a big feast that the women did the cooking these elders you don't think they know how to cook and yet they ate and drank in the presence of God this was a supernatural banquet here is a banquet they have made in front of a God that they have made at a time and place of their choosing so the Lord said to Moses verse 7 go get down for your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves well this is a good place for us to stop and take our break but we're going to pick up with verse 7 and see some fascinating things when we look at the the words that God uses here and the dialogue the interchange that takes place between God and Moses before he ever goes back down it's a fascinating study but in what we have seen through our scripture reading and our review of the first portion of this chapter there is a great danger and you see it happening all around us today of redefining God it's hard to brand it and to identify and to call it out as heresy because it incorporates truth well you're supposed to eat and drink in the presence of God we're supposed to he's our covenant God this is the God that brought us out of the land of Egypt he's Yahweh we're celebrating a feast we brought sacrifices it's legitimate it's just a little different what have they left out all that the Lord has said we will do thou shalt have no other gods thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image no likeness of any beast in the air above on the earth or in the sea do not do it and by blinding themselves and conveniently forgetting what is written in the book and redefining God they come within an eyelash of being annihilated it is faithless they are doing a worship of God they are quote honoring God sacrificing to God identifying him as the God of their salvation but it is faithless the word was given to them it is not mixed with faith in them that heard it and the word gets twisted the word gets changed and yet there's enough of it there that we're deceived we the heart is deceitful desperately wicked who can figure it out as we saw Friday night with the Apostle Paul we have to operate from what we know if it says no graven image it has to be no graven image whatever you do you can't violate the clear command of Scripture and that's exactly what they do and justify it on the basis of other scripture and other ideas about God it just won't wash and

it is the sowing the seeds of their own destruction let's pause and take a break when we come back we'll look at verse 7 and following