

# **Life of Moses**

**Teacher's Manual**

# **The Life of Moses**

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## **Lesson 1**

### **Israel in Egypt**

The story of Moses' life begins in the Book of Exodus and extends through to the Book of Deuteronomy. Moses lived to the ripe old age of 120 and even though he was used by God to deliver the people of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, he was not allowed by God to lead them into the Promised Land.

When the Book of Exodus begins, it does not follow on immediately from where the Book of Genesis ended. The Book of Genesis ends with the death of Joseph while the Book of Exodus begins with the birth of Moses. In the meantime many years pass during which the people of Israel increased in number from about seventy to somewhere in the neighborhood of two to three million people.

At the close of Genesis we left the extended descendants of Isaac (consisting of Jacob's twelve sons with their wives, children and grandchildren) living in Egypt in the land of Goshen in the status of "most-favored-of-people" by virtue of their connection to Joseph. However, when the Book of Exodus opens the small family has grown to become a great multitude and, instead of being favored, they are despised and the objects of cruel bondage.

Before we get into the life of Moses, let us review a few things.

#### **I. How did the people of Israel get into Egypt?**

A. The family of Jacob moved to Egypt during a time of worldwide famine when Joseph was prime minister of Egypt (Gen. 46:1).

1. Joseph invited them to come at the suggestion of Pharaoh for the purpose of blessing them and preserving their lives (Gen. 45:13, 16-20).

*And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. Now you are commanded--do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.'" Genesis 45:16-20*

2. God confirmed to Jacob that it was His will for them to make this move (Gen. 46:1-4).

*So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" And he said, "Here I am." So He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes."*

I am sure that Jacob could have had reservations about going down to Egypt since Abraham and Isaac also were challenged in times of famine over the issue of going to Egypt.

- a. Abraham had fled the land to Egypt in a time of famine without God's direction or blessing (Gen 12:10).

For Abraham his time in Egypt proved to be a mixed blessing. While in Egypt, Abraham prospered in the natural realm and came out with great wealth, but he also came out with a newly acquired maidservant by the name of Hagar (Gen. 13:1-2; 16:1). Soon after coming out of Egypt Abraham's great possessions became a source of contention and strife with Lot and his men leading to their separation (Gen. 13:3-9). Needless to say their maidservant Hagar became a serious problem for them as well.

Both Lot and Ishmael (the child of Abraham by Hagar) became the fathers of nations that were antagonistic toward the people of Israel when it came time for them to possess their inheritance (Gen. 19:36-38; 21:21; 25:12-18).

- b. Isaac was warned by God not to go to Egypt in the time of famine and He obeyed (Gen. 26:1-5).

*There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar. 2 Then the LORD appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. 3 Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. 4 And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; 5 because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."*

Isaac obeyed and God prospered him in the midst of the famine without his going to Egypt for help (Gen. 26:12-14).

*Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him. The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him.*

- B. Joseph eventually died and was laid to rest (Gen. 50:22-26).

*So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. 23 Joseph saw Ephraim's children to the third generation. The children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were also brought up on Joseph's knees. 24 And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to*

*Isaac, and to Jacob.” 25 Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.” 26 So Joseph died, being one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.*

1. He lived to be one hundred and ten years old.
2. He prophesied that God would bring his brethren back to the Promised Land (Gen. 50:24).

*And Joseph said to his brethren, “I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”*

3. He made his brethren promise to take his bones with him when they went to the land (Gen. 50:25; Ex. 13:19; Heb. 11:22).

*Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.” Genesis 50:25*

*By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones. Hebrews 11:22*

*And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you.” Exodus 13:19*

## **II. What was the initial experience of the people of Israel in Egypt?**

- A. Under Joseph the sons and daughters of Jacob had a favored status (Gen. 45:16-20).

*And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. Now you are commanded--do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.’”*

- B. Under Joseph the sons and daughters of Jacob were allowed to live in a very fertile part of Egypt—Goshen (Gen. 45:18).
- C. After Joseph died the people of Israel continued to grow, prosper and become a very strong people (Ex. 1:6-7).

*And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.*

1. Jacob and his family were about 70 in number when they moved into Egypt (Gen. 46:8-27; Ex. 1:1-5).
2. The people of Israel grew to millions while they were in Egypt over a period of a few hundred years (Num. 1-4).

### III. How and why did Israel's situation in Egypt change?

The situation as it existed under Joseph did not last forever. The favor ran out and the attitude of the Egyptians changed in relation to the children of Israel.

A. There were things about the Israelites that the Egyptians never liked.

1. They did not like their livestock—sheep (Gen. 46:31-34).

*Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and say to him, 'My brothers and those of my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. 32 And the men are shepherds, for their occupation has been to feed livestock; and they have brought their flocks, their herds, and all that they have.' 33 So it shall be, when Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?' 34 that you shall say, 'Your servants' occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we and also our fathers,' that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians."*

2. They had different customs and served other gods.

Even though many of the Israelites compromised their faith in Egypt, as a nation they were basically monotheistic. Seeing the national leader Pharaoh as a deity would have been very difficult for them to accept.

B. After enough time went by Joseph and the initial reason for the Israelites being in Egypt were no longer remembered (Ex. 1:8; Acts 7:17-18).

*Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. Exodus 1:8*

This seems a little hard to believe considering the influence that Joseph had in Egypt. There are a couple of explanations for this.

1. The word used here for "know" can mean "acknowledge, approve or have respect toward."
2. The phrase that is used here, "arose a new king" is a phrase that is not used anywhere else and seems to imply that this king did not come to power in the normal progression of leadership that one would expect.

There is reason to believe that a new dynasty (possibly Hyksos or Assyrian) had risen in Egypt and represented outside invaders who did not read hieroglyphics. In this case, the new Pharaoh would not be familiar with the

details of Egyptian history and hence would be unaware of Joseph and the children of Israel (Is. 52:4).

*For thus says the Lord GOD: “My people went down at first into Egypt to dwell there; then the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.”*

The fact that it was most likely a new dynasty that came to power would also imply that the entire leadership personnel and structure in Egypt changed at this time as well. The invading dynasty may have brought in their own police force to maintain order while the nation was being subdued (Ex. 1:9, 22).

Notice the term “his people” in the following verses:

*And he said to **his people**, “Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we...”* Exodus 1:9

*So Pharaoh commanded all **his people**, saying, “Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive.”*  
Exodus 1:22

3. The children of Israel were most likely in Goshen for at least 300 years.

Think back 300 years to 1700 B.C. A lot of things change with time especially in a day when the education systems are not strong and modern technology and mass communication systems do not exist. Given enough time, it is easy to forget even significant things. The famine that covered the whole world some 300 years ago was now non-existent in people’s memory.

4. The actions of any new dynasty often include helping people to forget the heroes of the past as a way to sever old loyalties and encourage the development of new heroes within the new administration.

People like to rewrite history according to the way they want it to read. Joseph’s name was most likely scratched from the pillars and from the ancient scrolls.

- C. Because of the prosperity of the children of Israel they were envied and began to be viewed as a threat (Ex. 1:8-10).

*Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, “Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land.”*

#### **IV. What was the condition of the people of Israel just prior to the birth of Moses?**

The condition of the children of Israel just prior to the birth of Moses is described in the language of Exodus 1:11-14.

*Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage--in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor.*

- A. They were given taskmaster to afflict them with heavy burdens (Ex. 1:11; 2:11a 3:7).

The word “burdens” in this passage means “forced labor, compulsory service or burden bearing.”

*And the LORD said: “I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.” Exodus 3:7*

The word that is translated “sorrows” can also be translated “pain, grief or anguish.”

- B. They helped to build cities for Pharaoh (Ex. 1:11).

Some feel that this building may have included such building as the pyramids.

- C. They were made to serve with rigor (Ex. 1:13, 14).

The word for “rigor” in these verses means “harshness, severity and cruelty.”

*But the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more quickly the Israelites multiplied! The Egyptians soon became alarmed and decided to make their slavery more bitter still. They were ruthless with the Israelites, forcing them to make bricks and mortar and to work long hours in the fields.*

Exodus 1:12-14, NLT

It is worthy of note that the more the Egyptians afflicted them, the more the children of Israel grew strong and multiplied (Ex. 1:12). In the New Testament whenever there was persecution leveled at the church, the result was always the same—the people of God grew strong and multiplied (Acts 4:31; 8:3-4; 11:19-21).

- D. They made their lives bitter with hard bondage (Ex. 1:14).

This hard bondage refers to difficult, intense or fierce manual labor. Josephus suggests that the children of Israel were employed to dig canals (*Antiquities*, II:9:1).

## **V. Why study the life of Moses?**

Moses is an extremely important person to study for a variety of reasons.



A. Moses authored the first five books of the Bible (II Chr. 34:14; John 1:45).

*Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses.*  
II Chronicles 34:14

1. These five books together are sometimes referred to as the Pentateuch.

The word “Pentateuch” literally means “five books” or “five scrolls.”

2. These five books are referred to by Jesus as “the law” or “the law of Moses” (Luke 24:44).

*Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.*

Luke 24:44-45

Jesus summarized the entire Old Testament in three broad categories including the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.

3. These five books compose what is called the Torah or The Law for the Jews.

The word “torah” literally means “instructions.”

B. Moses along with David and Jesus is among the most referenced figures in the Bible. Moses is named just under 1000 times in both Old and New Testaments.

C. Moses was used by God to be the mediator of the Old Covenant (Heb. 3:1-6; 10:28-29; 12:18-24).

D. Moses built a tabernacle that served as a place of worship for many decades (I Chr. 21:29).

E. Moses was the man who received God’s law (Heb. 10:28).

F. Moses was one of the greatest political and religious leaders of all time. As such Moses is another one of those examples from whom we can learn (I Cor. 10:11).

G. Moses is the most honored and respected figure in history by the Jewish people to this day.

H. Moses life is a type of Christ and a study of his life reveals many other types of Christ (e.g. manna, the smitten rock, the serpent on a pole, etc.).

I. Moses was the only man in history to be raised from the dead never to die again (Mt. 17:1-5). As such he becomes a testimony and the first-fruits of those who have died in Christ (I Th. 4:13-18).

## Lesson 2

### The Birth and Early Life of Moses

#### I. What was the response of the Egyptians to the multiplication of the children of Israel?

A. The Egyptians were not very excited about the multiplication of the children of Israel.

1. They were fearful that they might become strong enough to overthrow them (Ex. 1:10, 12).

*And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land." Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel.*

Exodus 1:9-12

2. They were afraid they might lose them as slaves (Ex. 1:10).

Once you get used to slave labor and your economy is based on cheap labor it is difficult to let that go.

B. The Egyptians tried to control the multiplication process.

Their response was to "deal shrewdly with them" (Ex. 1:10).

Gill in his commentary says it this way, "let us deal wisely with them; form some wise schemes, take some crafty methods to weaken and diminish them gradually; not with open force of arms, but in a more private and secret manner, and less observed."

1. The king made their work more physically demanding so that they would be weakened in strength (Ex. 1:9-14).
2. The king tried to make a deal with the Hebrew midwives to kill all of the male children during the birthing process (Ex. 1:15-21).
3. The king finally ordered the military to cast all of the newly born Israelite males into the river to be killed (Ex. 1:21).

*So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive."*

It should be noted here that this attempt by Pharaoh to kill the male children in Israel was part of Satan's attempt to thwart the purpose of God and persecute the

Seed of the Woman. Pharaoh was only an instrument in the hands of Satan. This action by Pharaoh is similar to Herod's attempt to kill Jesus by also killing Israel's male offspring (Mt. 2:16) and must be compared to the attack against a generation of the unborn through the vehicle of abortion in our day.

It is equally important to note that just as God miraculously spared Moses to be a deliverer, and just as God miraculously preserved Jesus to be a savior, He has a plan to preserve a people in the last days to deal a death blow to Satan (Rom. 16:20).

## **II. What was God's response to the plight of the children of Israel?**

### **A. God continued to prosper His people with multiplication.**

1. When the Israelites were loaded up with hard work they grew more and more mighty (Ex. 1:12a).

*But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.*

2. When the midwives refused to carry out the commands of the king, Israel multiplied and grew very mighty (Ex. 1:20).

*Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; 16 and he said, "When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live." 17 But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive. 18 So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?" 19 And the midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are lively and give birth before the midwives come to them." 20 Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty. 21 And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them. Exodus 1:15-21*

### **B. God heard the cry of His people (Ex. 3:7).**

*And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows."*

### **C. God began acting on the behalf of His people and set into motion certain events that would eventually result in their deliverance (Ex. 2:1-2).**

*And a man of the house of Levi went and took as wife a daughter of Levi. So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months.*

The child Moses was born to godly parents and was pleasing to God (Acts 7:20).

*At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months.*

*At that time Moses was born--a beautiful child in God's eyes. His parents cared for him at home for three months. –NLT*

*At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for in his father's house. –NIV*

D. God preserved Moses and placed him in the household of the king (Ex. 2:3-12).

The exercise of faith was going to transform a river that was intended to be a place of death for male Israelite children into a place of life for Moses.

This preservation involved several things:

1. God spoke to Moses' parents about what to do.
2. Moses' mother responded with a deep faith.
3. Moses was placed in an ark in the river when he was 3 months old (Acts 7:20).
4. The river carried Moses safely into the courts of Pharaoh.
5. Pharaoh's daughter was the first one to notice the ark prepared for Moses.
6. The baby Moses cried on cue.
7. Miriam was able to get close to Pharaoh's daughter.
8. Miriam's suggestion was obeyed by Pharaoh's daughter.
9. Moses' mother was paid to nurse her own baby.
10. Pharaoh's daughter made sure that nothing harmed baby Moses'.
11. Moses mother was able to raise Moses for the first few years of his life and so put a sense of destiny in his heart (Heb. 11:24-26).
12. Pharaoh's daughter raised Moses as her own son with all of the advantages available in that day.

*By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. Hebrews 11:23*

It is worthy of note that there are three “arks” mentioned in the Bible and all of them speak the message of “preservation.”

- The Ark of Noah (Gen. 6:17-20; 7:23)

*And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. 18 But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark--you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. 19 And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. 20 Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the*

*earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive.*

Genesis 6:17-20

- The Ark of Moses (Ex. 2:3)

The Ark of Moses became an instrument of preservation for Moses, both from the Egyptians and the waters of destruction outside.

- The Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 16:33-34; Num. 17:10; Heb. 9:4)

The manna which could not be kept or preserved more than a couple of days under normal conditions would be preserved indefinitely when it was placed in the Ark of the Covenant.

E. God began the work of preparing a deliverer.

### **III. What do we know about Moses' family?**

A. Moses' parents were named Amram and Jochebed (Ex. 6:20).

1. They were people of great faith (Heb. 11:23).
2. They were people who were not intimidated by Pharaoh (Heb. 11:23).

B. Moses was most likely the third child in the family.

1. Moses had a sister Miriam who was most likely the eldest child in the family (Ex. 2:4). Miriam was very instrumental in Moses' rescue and would become an important leader in Israel's future.
2. Moses had an older brother Aaron who was about three years older than he (Ex. 7:7). Aaron would also become a key leader in the nation of Israel after the captivity was over.

C. Moses was born into the tribe of Levi which would eventually become the priestly tribe for the nation of Israel (Ex. 2:1).

D. Moses' father was of the family of Kohath (Ex. 6:18).

The Kohathies would eventually be placed over the Ark of the Covenant and the other furniture and vessels connected with the sanctuary in the Tabernacle of Moses (Num. 3:31).

### **IV. What else do we know of Moses early life?**

The Bible does not tell a lot about Moses early life, but it tells us enough.

- A. Moses was instructed by his own mother for the first few years of his life (Ex. 2:7-10).

*Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?" 8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the maiden went and called the child's mother. 9 Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. 10 And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."*

Imagine the mother of Moses being paid by Pharaoh to care for her own son. Finally we have a mother who is getting paid what she is worth. His mother not only nursed the child until he was weaned, she may have kept him even longer.

The normal custom for weaning a child was two or three years (II Sam. 1:21-24). Sometimes it would even be extended beyond that period. Often there would be a feast associated with the transition out of the weaning process (Gen. 21:8).

In the book of Maccabaeus there is an account of a woman who made reference to her son by saying, "I carried you for nine months in my womb, and nursed you for three years, and have reared you and brought you up to this point in your life, and have taken care of you" (II Mac. 7:27).

It is important to point out that most translations do not mention the weaning process. Most of them seem to indicate that she could have had him even longer. I am sure that she would have kept him just as long as she could.

*And when the child was grown, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses, and said, Because I drew him out of the water. –Darby*

*And when he was old enough, she took him to the king's daughter, who adopted him. –CEV*

*When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. –NIV*

*Later, when he was older, the child's mother brought him back to the princess, who adopted him as her son. –NLT*

- B. Moses was named by the daughter of Pharaoh (Ex. 2:10).

The name "Moses" is of Egyptian origin and is made up of two Egyptian words. The first part of his name literally means "water" and the second part of his name means "to deliver." So when these are combined they could be translated "saved out of the water" (Alfred Jones, *Dictionary of Old Testament Proper Names*).

It is interesting that the entire nation would ultimately be saved or delivered from Egyptian bondage by passing through the water (Red Sea) under the leadership of a man called “saved out of the water” (See: Is. 63:11-12).

*Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying: “Where is He who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit within them, who led them by the right hand of Moses, with His glorious arm, dividing the water before them to make for Himself an everlasting name...”*

- C. Moses was raised in a luxurious environment in the palace of the king (Ex. 2: Heb. 11:24-26).

*By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.*

- D. Moses had the finest education that anyone could get for the day in which he lived (Acts 7:22).

*At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father’s house for three months. But when he was set out, Pharaoh’s daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.*  
Acts 7:20-22

Adam Clarke says this regarding Egyptian learning:

“The learning of the Egyptians was confined chiefly to astrology, to the interpretation of dreams, to medicine, to mathematics, and to their sacred science or traditional doctrines about religion, which were concealed chiefly under their hieroglyphics. Their learning is not infrequently spoken of in the Scriptures (I Kgs 4:30; compare Is. 19:11-12). Their knowledge is equally celebrated in the pagan world. It is known that science was carried from Egypt to Phoenicia, and thence to Greece; and not a few of the Grecian philosophers traveled to Egypt in pursuit of knowledge. Herodotus himself frankly concedes that the Greeks derived very much of their knowledge from Egypt.” (See Rawlinson’s Herodotus, vol. 2, pp. 80, 81; Herodotus, bk. 2, pp. 50, 51.)

- E. Moses was bathed in the culture of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22).

Even though he was offered every luxury that could be had by being a part of Pharaoh’s household, there is some reason to believe that he did not take full advantage of his position (Heb. 11:24-26).

*By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy*

*the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.*

F. Moses became a leader among the Egyptians (Acts 7:22).

1. This leadership is described as being “mighty in words.”

Even though later on at the age of 80 Moses described himself as lacking eloquence and being of slow speech (Ex. 4:10) at a much younger time in his life he is described as being “mighty in words.”

At the age of 40 Moses was much more confident and sure of himself than he was at age 80 after forty years of the deep dealings of God.

2. This leadership is described as “being mighty in deeds.”

If Josephus is correct, Moses was a captain or leader in the Egyptian army who was involved in several successful military campaigns (Josephus, *Antiquities*, II:10:1). He knew what it was to be groomed for leadership in the ways of Egypt. He would have to forget much of that when he was transferred into the school of the Holy Spirit on the backside of the desert.

G. Moses’ life began to change at the age of forty (Acts 7:23-29).

*Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. 24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. 25 For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. 26 And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, “Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?” 27 But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, “Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?” 29 Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons.*



## Lesson 3-4 The Call of Moses

### I. What changed for Moses around the age of forty?

- A. Moses had been aware of his connection to the Israelites (Heb.11:24-26).

How early he became aware of this is a matter of some debate. It is very likely that this understanding was passed on to him while he was in the care of his mother.

- B. Moses had become increasingly aware of the plight of the Israelites.

Moses would have had a nagging curiosity regarding his past history. He knew that his birth mother was not Pharaoh's daughter and he knew that he was Israelite by birth. It is completely possible that Moses could have lived his whole life to that point (apart from the time he spent with his mother) without ever interacting with an Israelite because the Israelites were confined primarily to one area of Egypt. He had no doubt heard about them and no doubt wondered about them.

This curiosity in Moses would be similar to that of many adopted children. When they get older they have a growing curiosity about their roots and their birth parents. Moses was no different. He would have the same thoughts circulating in his mind.

- C. Moses went out to visit his brethren and saw their condition (Ex. 2:11a; Acts 7:23).

*Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. Exodus 2:11a*

Sometimes we can be aware of needs in the world, but it is when we visit those needs and actually see them in person that we are touched by them in a most powerful way. This is why after a natural disaster leaders will go to the sight of the devastation to assess the situation personally. While we believe that a need does not determine a call, it is equally true that a need can fan a call that is from God.

- D. Moses was grieved and began to feel that he was to be used of God to change their situation (Acts 7:25).

It is difficult to know what Moses' concept of God looked like at this point. The Bible had not been written yet (because Moses had not yet written it). Moses would not have had the advantage of the oral tradition passed down to the Israelites by the patriarchs. His knowledge of God may have been instilled in him as a child in his mother's arms.

Moses may have felt a great deal like Esther after Mordecai exhortation to her (Est. 4:14).

*For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*

## **II. What did Moses do initially to act on his concern for the Israelites?**

- A. Moses defended an Israelite against the abuse of an Egyptian taskmaster (Ex. 2:11-12; Acts 7:24).

*Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. Exodus 2:11-12*

- B. Moses attempted to intervene between two Israelites who were fighting (Ex. 2:13; Acts 7:24).

*And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion?" Exodus 2:13*

## **III. What was the result of Moses' attempt to become a deliverer?**

- A. Moses was sure that the Israelites would understand his actions, get excited and conclude that God was going to use him to deliver them (Acts 7:25).

*Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. Acts 7:23-25*

- B. Moses miscalculated the response of the Israelites (as happens in most cases where people proclaim themselves to be the leader) (Ex. 2:13-14a; Acts 7:26-28).

*Then he said, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Exodus 2:13-14a*

*And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, "Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?" But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, "Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?" Acts 7:26-28*

Moses was rejected for several reasons.

1. He undoubtedly looked and dressed like an Egyptian.

As far as the Israelites were concerned he was just another one of the oppressors. If you have ever seen the movie *The Ten Commandments* you will notice the distinctive hair style of Pharaoh and other men. This style is a fairly accurate portrayal of the Egyptian custom where the head was shaved except for a one long lock on the side which was then braided.

Egyptian boys would begin wearing this hairstyle from a rather early age which is evidenced by the discovery of an actual mummy of an eleven year old with that unique hairstyle (Barbara Mertz, *Red Land, Black Land*, pg. 57).

2. The Israelites were undoubtedly skeptical of all Egyptians.

If the ruling regime in Egypt was indeed a foreign power that had invaded Egypt, even the native Egyptians themselves would be skeptical of those in authority over the land. Many believe that the native Egyptians were very sympathetic to the Israelites and their plight. This is perhaps one of the reasons why the Egyptian people were so liberal with them when they finally exited Egypt (Ex. 12:35-36).

3. Moses had no previous relationship with the Israelites that would suggest anything other than the fact that he was thoroughly Egyptian.

At this point, Moses knew nothing of being a shepherd. Being raised an Egyptian he most likely did not even like sheep. But God did not want His people to be led by someone with an Egyptian style of leadership. Egyptian leadership leads from position, power, force and command. God's style of shepherding leadership leads by example coupled with gentle, loving care.

- C. Moses realized that his secret was no longer a secret (Ex. 2:14b).

*So Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!"*

*Then Moses panicked: "Word's gotten out--people know about this." –Msg*

When the fighting Israelites responded to Moses he realized that his act of killing and burying the Egyptian was known and becoming more known. He knew that this would soon come to the ears of Pharaoh. It reminds us of the saying, "Be sure your sins will find you out" (Num. 32:23).

- D. Moses lost his favored status with Pharaoh and became a hunted man (Ex. 2:15a).

*When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses.*

- E. Moses was forced to flee Egypt for his life (Ex. 2:15b; Acts 7:29).

*But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well. Exodus 2:15b*

1. This action was expedient for his self-preservation.
2. This action may also have been mingled with faith (Heb. 11:27).

*By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.*

Some feel that this reference to faith in Moses had more to do with the actual Exodus forty years later because of the apparent contradiction regarding the issue of fear in Moses (Ex. 2:14b). Often fear and faith run together in our lives.

#### **IV. What did this result reveal to Moses?**

- A. It revealed that this was not the right way to become a deliverer.

The deliverance of God's people would not come by the impulsive reactions and the arm of the flesh. When the people were delivered God's way there would be no doubt about who was their deliverer. God would get the glory.

- B. It revealed that this was not the right time to become a deliverer.

There is a time to every purpose under heaven. Moses had a fairly good understanding of his calling, but he was premature in its expression. Knowing the right time is as important as knowing the right call.

- C. It revealed that he (Moses) was not personally ready to become a deliverer.

Moses was going to realize more and more that you cannot lead if no one is following. No one will follow unless your reason for being in leadership and your motives are right. Before Moses would be ready to be the deliverer that God wanted him to be there had to be an emptying of himself. This process takes different amounts of time for different people. Who could have known that it would take another 40 years for Moses to be truly ready? Sometimes it takes a long time to get rid of the "Egypt" in us.

- D. It revealed that the children of Israel were not ready to be delivered.

When God moves to deliver His people he works in multiple ways. In this case God would work in three arenas. He would have to do his work to prepare Moses, the children of Israel and the leadership in Egypt as well.

#### **V. How would God further prepare Moses for his calling?**

God was in the process of changing an Egyptian leader into God's anointed deliverer who would become the meekest man on the face of the earth. That kind of process does not happen overnight.

Notice the contrasts in the life of Moses (from Arthur Pink, *Gleanings in Exodus*, pg. 16).

<b>Contrasts in the Life of Moses</b>	
The child of a slave	The son of a queen
Born in a hut	Lived in a palace
Inherited poverty	Enjoyed unlimited wealth
Leader of armies	Became a leader of flocks
Mightiest of warriors	Meekest of men
Educated in the court	Dwelt in the desert
Had the wisdom of Egypt	Had the faith of a child
Fitted for the city	Wandered in the wilderness
Tempted with pleasures of sin	Endured hardships by virtue
Backward in speech	Talked with God
Had the rod of a shepherd	Had the power of the infinite
Fugitive from Pharaoh	Ambassador from heaven
Giver of the law	Forerunner of grace
Died on a mountain alone	Appeared on a mountain with Christ

God put Moses into the process of His dealings which included six things:

A. Moses' process included going into the land of Midian (Ex. 2:15).

The Midianites were a people who were descendants of Abraham through his second wife Keturah (Gen. 25:1-4). They did not inherit land in Canaan because Abraham gave the full inheritance to Isaac. He sent his other sons east. The sons of Midian settled in the Arabian Peninsula just east of the Gulf of Aquabah. They seem to be the forefathers of many of the modern Arab nations. They also seemed to have had a close relationship to the Ishmaelites (Gen. 37:38, 36).



- B. Moses' process included walking into another scene of injustice (Ex. 2:15-20).

*But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well. 16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father's flock. 17 Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. 18 When they came to Reuel their father, he said, "How is it that you have come so soon today?" 19 And they said, "An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and he also drew enough water for us and watered the flock." 20 So he said to his daughters, "And where is he? Why is it that you have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread."*

There is no question that Moses was being prepared for the ministry of a deliverer. He had seen the injustice of the Egyptians toward the Israelites and now he observes the injustice of some cruel shepherds toward the daughters of Reuel, also known as Jethro (Ex. 2:17).

This passage mentions that Reuel was a priest. It is not known what this priesthood entailed. It must be remembered, however, that the Midianites were true descendents of Abraham and as such may have served the God of Abraham in the best way that they knew how.

- C. Moses' process included serving another man's vision (his father-in-law).

Part of God's plan for bringing anyone into a major area of leadership is to test them in three areas (Luke 16:10-13). If he was to be God's appointed leader he would have to prove himself...

1. By being faithful with that which was small to qualify to for the great.
2. By being faithful in natural riches to qualify to handle spiritual riches.
3. By being faithful with that which belonged to another man to qualify to have that which was his own.

- D. Moses' process included tending sheep that belonged to another man.

This man Moses had to learn what it was like to be a support ministry to another man before he would make a good lead man. He had to learn how to do some things that he may have once despised. He had to learn to use the rod and the staff. The best leaders are those who have learned how to serve. This will temper their leadership because they have sat where the people have sat (Ezek. 3:15).

*Then I came to the captives at Tel Abib, who dwelt by the River Chebar; and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.*

- E. Moses' process included marrying and raising a family (Ex. 2:21-22).

It is amazing how similar leadership in the family is to leadership in the church. It takes the same skills only on a smaller scale. This is why in the New Testament no one was to be an elder in the church who did not have their own family in order.

*Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses. And she bore him a son. He called his name Gershom, for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land."*

The name Gershom literally means "a stranger there" or "exile." This gives us insight into how Moses was feeling. This land of Midian was so different from anything he had known. He lived in tents, worked with sheep, dressed entirely different, observed different customs, dwelt in obscurity and was cut off from everything that was familiar.

This was a perfect position for someone in whom God was going to do a new thing.

F. Moses' process included experiencing the death of a vision.

I am sure that as time rolled on and Moses got closer and closer to the age of eighty that he had virtually given up on being a deliverer to his people. He no doubt had many bouts with depression feeling that he had missed God, missed his opportunity and lost his destiny.

## **VI. How did God make Himself known to Moses?**

When we go through the death of a vision process, God often waits until there is no chance in the natural for life to come forth (e.g. Abraham). When we fully surrender all to God, we release Him to move into our lives once again. Just when Moses thought that all was lost, God met him in a supernatural way.

*Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. 3 Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." 4 So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5 Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." 6 Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. 7 And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. 8 So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the*

*Hivites and the Jebusites. 9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” Exodus 3:1-10*

A. God came to Moses when the time was right (God’s calendar).

God was waiting for the stage to be set (Ex. 2:23-25).

*Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them.*

1. Pharaoh was where God wanted him to be.

In one sense you could say that God waited until Moses had no connections in Egypt. Moses would have no man on the inside to help him in the ministry of deliverance.

2. The Israelites were where God wanted them to be.

The Israelites were ready to receive God’s deliverance from the way that He chose for them. Sometimes it has to get worse before we will receive God’s answer.

3. Moses was where God wanted him to be.

Moses was emptied of himself and could be directed wholly by God (I Cor. 1:29).

a. In Egypt Moses gained some things.

- He gained knowledge.
- He gained experience.
- He gained physical maturity.

b. In the backside of the desert he was to gain something more important.

In the backside of the desert he would have an encounter with the true and living God, learn to hear the voice of God and learn to respond to the commands of God.

B. God came to Moses when he was actively doing what had been given him to do.

Moses was a moving ship in the desert. He was active and busy doing what his hand found to do. Often God appears to people as they are busy doing what they know to do.



C. God came to Moses when it was totally unexpected.

This is so much like those waiting on the Day of Pentecost. It is wait, wait and wait some more and then “suddenly” God moves (Acts 2:1-2).

*When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

D. God came to Moses in a burning bush.

The Hebrew word that is used for “bush” here literally means “thorny bush” and only occurs in one other place in the Bible. In the song of Moses he sings of him “Him who dwelt in the bush” (Deut. 33:16). This is a very special bush indeed.

E. God came to Moses in a supernatural way.

This was a supernatural manifestation of fire in the bush. It was a fire that burned but did not consume. Within the fire there was the manifestation of a mysterious figure called “The Angel of the Lord.”

F. God came to Moses as the “Angel of the Lord.”

This angel was not a created angel, but it was none other than a theophany, that is, a pre-incarnation appearance or manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ—the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9). The word angel means “messenger” and this messenger was the same Angel in whom God’s name was found (Ex. 23:20-22).

*Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him. But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.*

This was the Angel that brought them out of Egypt (Num. 20:16).

*When we cried out to the LORD, He heard our voice and sent the Angel and brought us up out of Egypt; now here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your border.*

Because of the presence of the Angel of the Lord, this place and this ground became “holy ground.” Moses was encouraged to “take off his sandals” which is consistent with the customs of the time for people entering someone’s home or a place of worship (Acts 7:33). Even today when you visit Eastern cultures, it is common to see sandals and shoes everywhere outside of the church auditorium. People remove them as a sign of respect.

Any place where God is present is holy ground (Josh. 5:15).

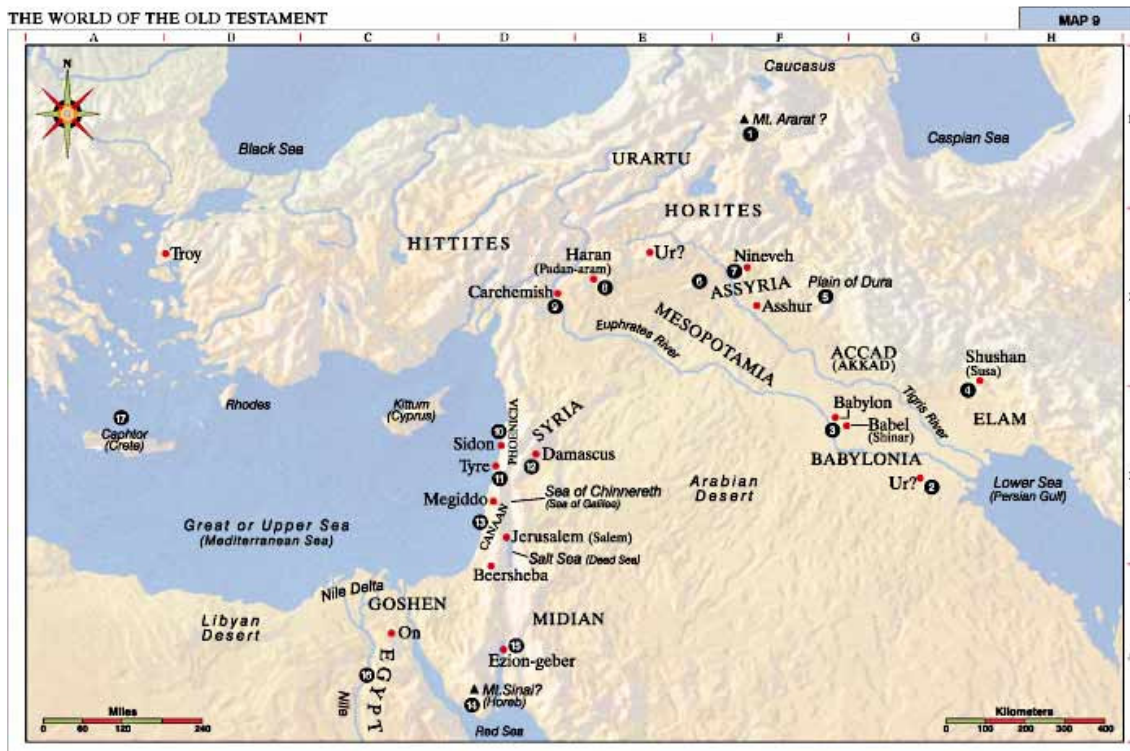
*And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, “Are You for us or for our adversaries?” So He said, “No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, “What does my Lord say to His servant?” Then the Commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, “Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.” And Joshua did so. Joshua 5:13-15*

Other such appearances of the Angel of the Lord include appearances:

1. To Hagar (Gen. 16:7-11)
2. To Abraham (Gen. 22:11)
3. To Balaam and his donkey (Num. 22:22-35)
4. To Joshua as the Captain of the Lord’s Hosts (Josh. 5:13-15)
5. To the nation of Israel (Judg. 2:1-4)
6. To Gideon (Judg. 6:11-22)
7. To Samson’s parents (Judg. 13:3-21)
8. To Elijah (I Kgs. 19:5-7; II Kgs. 1:3, 15)
9. To David (I Chr. 21:16-18)
10. To Zechariah (Zech. 1:11-14; 3:1-6)

G. God came to Moses to reveal His name to him.

### Map of the World of the Old Testament



*From scriptures.lds.org*

## Lesson 5-6 Moses and the Name of God

### I. How did Moses respond initially to the call of God?

After forty years on the backside of the desert Moses was emptied of himself and he did not respond at all impetuously. He had acted that way forty years earlier.

A. Moses responded by questioning whether or not he was the one to actually fulfill the call.

Before it was all over, Moses would offer six excuses as to why he was not the best choice for this call. The transformation of Moses over a forty year period of time was amazing. When Moses was forty he was full of confidence and may have even confessed, “Who else but I could bring deliverance to this people?” But now as age eighty he has every excuse as to why he cannot do what God has called him to do.

It is amazing because in the several thousand years of history, human nature has not changed that much. The excuses of Moses are excuses that are common to many of us who have had God “come knocking on our door.”

Here are the six primary excuses of Moses. I call them “six reasons why I cannot do what God has called me to do.”

1. First Excuse: “Who am I that I should go?” (Ex. 3:10-11).

*“Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”*

After forty years of being in the crucible of God’s dealings, Moses had no sense of value or worth. He felt useless like he had nothing to contribute. He most likely felt like Gideon when he was hiding in a winepress and God came to him and referred to him as a “mighty man of valor” (Judg. 6:12). But God is the one who created us and when He looks at us He often sees things in us that we do not see in ourselves.

2. Second Excuse: “But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice?” (Ex. 4:1).

*Then Moses answered and said, “But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, ‘The LORD has not appeared to you.’”*

Moses had already made up his mind—he is going to fail. God could have just as easily asked him, “Well, just suppose that they do?” Moses had only experienced one failure in his life but Satan had used that failure to beat him down for forty years. Moses was listening in his mind to that last thing that an Israelite had said to him, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us?” Now

he was visualizing going down to Egypt and experiencing much of the same result.

3. Third Excuse: “O my Lord, I am not eloquent” (Ex. 4:10).

*Then Moses said to the LORD, “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”*

In other words, “my natural training and abilities are not sufficient to the task. If I am going to deliver God’s people I will need eloquence.” Moses was acting as if God was going to accomplish everything in the natural realm and through his personal powers of persuasion (Zech. 4:6). Moses had taken inventory, measured his natural abilities against the task at hand and said, “I don’t have what it takes.”

Jeremiah gave a similar excuse when he responded to God’s initial call. He said, “I cannot speak, I am but a youth” (Jer. 1:6). But youthfulness is not a liability in the work of God when it is coupled with the wisdom and the grace of God.

It is hard for us to believe that Moses could have ever felt this way. We know the story from history. We know what Moses ended up being and doing. Unfortunately Moses was in the middle of his life with no history from which to draw.

Moses would prove, as we all must, that in the end it is not our natural ability that is going to work deliverance in others. It is the Holy Spirit within us. Perhaps this is why Paul said “When I am weak, then I am strong” (II Cor. 12:10). Perhaps this is why God does not choose many mighty (I Cor. 1:26-31).

*For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption--31 that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”*

4. Fourth Excuse: “Lord, you made the wrong choice” (Ex. 4:13).

*But he said, “O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send.”*

Moses perceived that there were so many others who were more qualified than he was. This is how Moses felt, but in reality no one was better qualified or prepared to do what Moses was to do.

Just like Moses, we must not look for others to do what God has called us to do. We must believe that God knows what he is doing and that He never sends a message to the wrong address.

It is not always the most qualified that end up doing a mighty work for God. It is those who are humble before God, who trust God and His word and who believe in the power of God to deliver that God uses in supernatural ways.

5. Fifth Excuse: No apparent results, “Why have you sent me?” (Ex. 5:22-23).

*So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why is it You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all.”*

In this passage Moses had finally gone to Egypt and attempted to bring deliverance to the people. Instead of Pharaoh responding and letting the people go, he made the Israelites’ work even more difficult. In other words instead of bringing deliverance, he made the bondage even worse. I am sure that the Israelites were thrilled about Moses being their deliverer. I am also sure that Moses thought it was going to be easier than it was.

He could have easily asked, “Shouldn’t I have more fruit if this is my ministry? If I am a deliverer, shouldn’t someone get delivered?”

In the case of fruitfulness, God’s instruction is to “Be patient, even as the husbandman is patient. There is more to what is going on than just you, Moses. I am working in the heart of Pharaoh, the Israelites and you, Moses. When everything lines up, the deliverance will take place.”

Ultimately we cannot bring forth the fruit that we desire. We are called to sow and water, but it is God who brings forth the increase. God is not asking for fruit as much as He is asking for obedience. When we are obedient to the Lord no matter what we see with our eyes, it demonstrates a complete trust in God and that He knows exactly what He is doing.

6. Sixth Excuse: “Others won’t listen to me or receive my ministry” (Ex. 6:12; 6:30).

*And Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, “The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?” Exodus 6:12*

Moses was saying to God, “For me to fulfill my call other people have got to respond to me in a certain way.” When we stand before our Maker, none of

us will ever be able to excuse ourselves based on someone else's action.

It is funny how all of these excuses (as good as they are) do not seem to get through to God. After all of our excuses God constantly reminds us that whom He calls He also equips.

It is as if God was saying to him, "There is no plan 'B' Moses!"

- B. Moses responded by wanting to know more about the one who was issuing the call (Ex. 3:13-15).

*Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'"*

Notice the three part nature of God's revelation to Moses about His name.

Father	Son	Holy Spirit	References
I AM	WHO	I AM	Ex. 3:14
God of Abraham	God of Isaac	God of Jacob	Ex, 3:6, 15; I Kgs.18:36

We will come back to this later on, but for now we only take note that Jesus filled in the "WHO" in this name when He said, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58).

## II. What was God's answer to Moses' initial excuses?

- A. God's response to his first excuse, "Who am I that I should go?" (Ex. 3:10-11).

God told Moses that He would be with Him and He would give Him a sign to confirm it. The sign he would be given is the Israelites being released (Ex. 3:12).

*So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."*

That is not the kind of sign that we are usually looking for. We want to see some physical sign or manifestation in the now that will tell us that God is in this plan. God is saying that it doesn't work that way. This is going to have to be a faith venture on Moses' part. He was going to have to trust the Word of the Lord and lean on the promises of God.

It was then that God revealed His name to Moses. The essence of what God was saying is that it is not about who you are Moses; it is about who I am and what I can do.

- B. God's response to his second excuse, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice?" (Ex. 4:1).

God answered Moses' question with His own question, "What is that in your hand?" This question does not seem to answer Moses' question at all.

I am sure that when Moses looked down at his hand he saw something that was very common or familiar to him. Since he had been a shepherd for the last forty years he always had a shepherd's crook in his hand. In other words, he saw a "stick."

I am sure that Moses wondered, "Is this 'stick' is the answer to my question? Am I going to go to Egypt and deliver the people of God with a 'stick'?"

What is that in your hand? Nothing much, Lord. Just a stick I picked up a long time ago and certainly nothing when you compare it to all of the weapons and armaments of the Egyptians.

This is man's evaluation—nothing much. We know the story. We could easily exhort Moses and say, "It might be just a stick to you, but you give that stick to God and you see what God can do through just a stick."

1. God can cause miracles to happen through just a stick (Ex. 4:3-4).
2. God can divide waters and bring people out of bondage with just a stick (Ex. 17:5).
3. God can bring water (that which brings and sustains life) out of a rock with just a stick (Ex. 17:5-6).
4. God can defeat Amalek with just a stick when it is held up before Him (Ex. 17:9).

When Moses put his stick into God's hands that stick became the "rod of God" (Ex. 4:20). It was all that Moses needed to bring Egypt to its knees.

*Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand.*

You see, "Little is much when God is in it"..... "What is that in your hand?"

God does end up giving Moses a couple of signs for his own encouragement which we will look at later, but God wanted Moses to know that He was going to use Moses in a manner with which he was comfortable to bring about a victory through his life.

- C. God's response to his third excuse: "O my Lord, I am not eloquent" (Ex. 4:10).

*So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say." Exodus 4:11-12*

When Moses gave God his list of inadequacies, it is as if he is trying to question God's omniscience. Moses seemed to feel that he needed to inform God of some things before he could go forward. He said to God, "Don't you understand who I am? Don't you understand my limitations? Do you really think I should be the one doing this?"

All God could say to Moses was "Yes Moses, I understand! Who do you think made you the way you have been made? If I could have made a better instrument for this purpose I would have done so. You are my choice and there is nothing that I have not taken into account when I made that choice."

God is saying, "Do not rely on your natural talents or abilities, they will never be enough. Rely on God. He is enough."

- D. God's response to his fourth excuse "Lord, you made the wrong choice" (Ex. 4:13). Moses actually said...

*But he said, "O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send." Exodus 4:13*

*"O Lord, please send someone else to do it." –NIV*

By this time God is getting upset with Moses. The excuses just keep coming. Could we actually be seeing something other than humility in these excuses? Could this man who would become the meekest man on the face of the earth be demonstrating a bit of stubbornness and lack of faith?

This fourth excuse leads God to give into Moses. There are times when we persist with God He will give into us for the sake of His purpose. In doing so, however, Moses settled for second best.

*So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and He said: "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God." Exodus 4:14-16*

### **III. What is so important about the revelation of God's name to Moses?**



A. God had revealed Himself to man and was known to man by several names, the most common of which were variations on Elohim (Gen. 1:1). These names all focused on the attributes of God, His greatness and His power.

1. Elohim (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 19:1)

This name is the very first name used of God in the Bible. It is a very common name for God in the Bible and speaks of the strength and power of God.

2. El Elyon (Gen. 14:17-20; Is. 14:13-14)

This name was first revealed to Abraham by Melchizedek. The meaning is the “Most High God” which emphasizes the fact that the true God is above all other man-made gods.

3. El Roi (Gen. 16:13)

This name was revealed to Hagar after she had been cast out. This name literally means the “Strong One Who Sees.” In her situation where she felt that no one saw her or understood her plight there was one who saw and was willing to get involved in her situation.

4. El Shaddai (Gen. 17:1; 28:3; Ps. 91:1)

This name was first revealed to Abraham by God Himself and means the “Almighty and Most Powerful One.” In the context where it was revealed, the emphasis was God being the God of the impossible.

5. El Olam (Gen. 21:33; Ps. 90:2; Is. 40:28-31)

This name emphasizes the eternal nature of God who was from ancient times, and who dwells in both the present and the eternal future. It is best translated, “The Everlasting God.”

B. The name God used in relation to Moses is the root on which God’s redemptive name is founded. God’s redemptive names focus on God’s specific ministry to His people.

1. The name “I AM WHO I AM” comes from the Hebrew verb “to be.”

a. There are various interpretations of what God meant to communicate through this revelation.

In the context of this passage there are many suggestions as to how best to render this unusual phrase.

Notice the following thoughts from key commentators:

“I will be what I will be...” suggesting “that what he had been to his fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he would be to him and the Israelites; and that he would perform the promises he had made to his fathers, by giving their descendants the promised land.” –Adam Clarke

“This signifies the real being of God, his self-existence, and that he is the Being of beings; as also it denotes his eternity and immutability, and his constancy and faithfulness in fulfilling his promises, for it includes all time, past, present, and to come; and the sense is, not only I am what I am at present, but I am what I have been, and I am what I shall be, and shall be what I am.” –John Gill

“It contains each tense of the verb ‘to be’, and might be translated, I was, I am, and I shall always continue to be.” –Dr. Pentecost

- b. Various translations also bring out a variance of meaning.

*And God said to Moses, I AM WHO I AM and WHAT I AM, and I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE; and He said, You shall say this to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you!* –Amp

*God replied, “I AM THE ONE WHO ALWAYS IS. Just tell them, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”* –NLT

*I am he who exists.* –Septuagint

2. The Hebrew verb “to be” forms the basis of God’s redemptive name.

God’s redemptive name in the Bible is most often simply rendered LORD. It is not translated directly because in ancient times this name was considered so holy that man was not to speak it from unclean lips.

In more modern translations of the Bible you find this name translated “Jehovah” or in some cases “Yahweh” which is perhaps the more literal pronunciation.

If one were to define this word it would literally mean “The Existing One.”

- C. God’s redemptive names form the basis of how He relates to us based on His covenants with man.

His names demonstrate His commitment to meet every need of those in covenant relationship with Him. God would be whatever we need Him to be including:

1. Jehovah Jireh or “The Lord My Provider” (Gen. 22:13-14).

*Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the*

*name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, “In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”*

God presents Himself as the One Who will provide the atonement for us that we cannot provide for ourselves (Ps. 65:3; 79:9; Ezek. 16:63).

2. Jehovah Rapha or “The Lord My Healer” (Ex. 15:26).

*...and said, “If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you.”*

God presents Himself as our Doctor who can heal us inside and out (Ps. 103:3; 147:3).

3. Jehovah Nissi or “The Lord My Banner” (Ex. 17:14-15).

*Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.” And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner...*

God presents Himself as the One Who leads us forth into battle and gives us the victory. When you fight under the Lord’s banner the victory is certain (See: Is. 11:10).

*In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. –NIV*

4. Jehovah M’Kaddesh or “The Lord My Sanctifier” (Ex. 31:13; Lev. 20:8; 22:32).

*Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: “Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.” Exodus 31:13*

God presents Himself as the One Who provides for our sanctification or holiness which is not something that we can do of ourselves.

5. Jehovah Shalom or “The Lord My Peace” (Judg. 6:24).

*Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, “Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face.” Then the LORD said to him, “Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die.” So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The-LORD-Is-Peace. Judges 6:22-24*

God presents Himself as the One Who makes it possible for us to have peace with God and as a result we do not need to be fearful in His presence (Ps. 29:11; Is. 26:12).

6. Jehovah Rohi or “The Lord My Shepherd” (Ps. 23:1).

*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

God presents Himself as the One Who cares for us the same way that a shepherd cares for his flock (Ps. 28:9; 80:1).

7. Jehovah Sabboath or “The Lord of Armies” (II Sam. 6:2).

*Again David gathered all the choice men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, the LORD of Hosts, who dwells between the cherubim. II Samuel 6:1-2*

God presents Himself as the One Who has a mighty army and He will fight for us as we put our trust in Him (I Sam. 14:6; 17:45-47; II Kgs. 6:16-17; 19:31).

*Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands.” I Samuel 17:45-47*

8. Jehovah Tsidkenu or “The Lord My Righteousness” (Jer. 23:6).

*In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

God presents Himself as the One Who stands in our stead and becomes what we cannot become in ourselves—righteous (Ps. 23:3; Is. 46:13; 54:17).

9. Jehovah Shammah or “The Lord Who is Present” (Ezek. 48:35).

*All the way around shall be eighteen thousand cubits; and the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE.*

God presents Himself as the One Who is in the midst of us, is always present and will never forsake us, but He will be an ever present help in time of trouble (Is. 12:6; Ps. 46:1, 4-5).

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1*

*There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn. Psalm 46:4-5*

This is the God Who was going to go with Moses. Moses would learn that when God is with you there is no need to fear whatever challenge may come.

- D. God's redemptive names are further demonstrated in the person of Jesus Christ (For further insight in this area see *The Life of Christ*, Lesson 16).

The Gospel of John particularly tells us that Jesus is the "I AM."

Jesus declared Himself to be the "I AM" in seven ways:

- I AM the Bread of Life
- I AM the Light of the World
- I AM the Door
- I AM the Good Shepherd
- I AM the Resurrection and the Life
- I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life
- I AM the True Vine

1. I AM the Bread of Life (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."*

Just as the Children of Israel lived off of the bread from heaven provided to them by the Father, we as believers live off of the bread that descended down from above—Jesus (John 6:31-33).

*"Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."*

2. I AM the Light of the World (John 8:12; 9:5).

*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." John 8:12*

*As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. John 9:5*

*I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. John 12:46*

Outside of Christ the whole world is dwelling in darkness (Mt. 4:16; John 3:18-21; Eph. 5:8; Col. 1:13; I Pet. 2:9). Jesus is the light Who enlightens the life of every man who receives Him (Luke 1:79; John 1:4-9; 12:35-36).

3. I AM the Door (John 10:7-10).

*Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”*

Jesus is the door of protection, keeping out the wolves and other enemies of the sheep. Jesus is the door providing access to pasture and rest.

4. I AM the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-14).

*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.*

5. I AM the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25).

*Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.”*

This statement was made by Jesus in the context of perhaps His greatest miracle—the raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-44). Jesus presented Himself as the personification of resurrection and life (John 11:25-26).

6. I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6).

*Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*

This verse could be translated, “I am the true and living way.”

a. Jesus is the only way to God. He is the narrow way that leads to life (Mt. 7:13-14; I Tim. 2:5).

b. Jesus is the Truth. Jesus did not merely bring truth, He is the Truth (John 1:17).

*For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

c. Jesus is the Life (John 1:4; 11:25; Col. 3:4).

*When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3:4*

Many people are looking for the key to life. Jesus is the only path to life (I John 5:12).

7. I AM the True Vine (John 15:1-2).

*I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.*

It is not difficult to see why the soldiers who came to arrest Jesus fell backward when Jesus revealed Himself as “I AM” (John 18:4-8).

*Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?” “Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “I am he,” Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, “Who is it you want?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” “I told you that I am he,” Jesus answered. “If you are looking for me, then let these men go.” –NIV*

This Jesus is the same one that said to His followers, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” With Jesus with us we need never fear any challenge that may come our way.

#### **IV. What is the significance of the signs that God gave to Moses?**

In God’s dealings with Moses He gave him three supernatural signs to give him some assurance and some credibility. It is interesting that Moses demanded a sign. Perhaps this was an evidence that he was a true Jew (I Cor. 1:22).

A. The sign of the rod turning into a serpent and back again (Ex. 4:2-5).

*So the LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A rod.” 3 And He said, “Cast it on the ground.” So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Reach out your hand and take it by the tail” (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), 5 “that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”*

There are many who have discussed the meaning of this sign. While many of them have merit I think that the context of this sign determines the primary meaning of the sign. This sign that was meant to be repeated before the children of Israel had a special meaning for Moses and a special meaning for the Israelites.

1. For Moses this was a sign of his ultimate conquest over Pharaoh (the serpent).

The serpent is often seen as a symbol of Satan (Gen. 3:1; Rev. 20:2). The cobra was the symbol of royal and divine power on the diadem of every Pharaoh (Barnes). For Moses and the children of Israel, the Pharaohs were used by Satan to undermine God's purposes. Moses encountered the serpent Pharaoh in his early life. At the age of forty he had fled from Pharaoh in fear, but now was the time to grab that serpent by the tail.

2. For the Israelites this was a sign that God was going to fulfill all of the promises made to the fathers.

The Israelites had been in God's hand in the land in the past. They had moved to Egypt which had eventually led to bondage under the serpent Pharaoh. This sign demonstrated that God was going to restore them to the land just as He had promised.

B. The sign of the leprous hand (Ex. 4:6-8).

*Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow. 7 And He said, "Put your hand in your bosom again." So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh. 8 "Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign."*

Like the first sign, this second sign was to be performed in front of the children of Israel. It too was to help them to believe the words of Moses to them.

Leprosy was the "cancer" of the day. It was seen as a death sentence to those who contracted it. As far as they were concerned it was incurable and required quarantine. Throughout the Bible it appears that leprosy was a type of sin and the sin nature. We will look at this later when we discuss the laws concerning leprosy.

1. For Moses and the Israelites this sign would indicate that what is impossible for man is possible with God.
2. For Pharaoh this sign would mean that he was up against more than a mere man, he was up against an all powerful God.

C. The sign of water to blood (Ex. 4:9).

*And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land.*

There is no evidence that Moses and Aaron had to use this sign in relation to the children of Israel since they received the first two signs (Ex. 4:31). However, this sign was done before Pharaoh as the first plague upon the land. We will discuss this later when we look at the plagues.



## Lesson 7-8 Moses before Pharaoh

### I. What events led up to Moses' first attempt to answer his call to Egypt?

A. God had instructed Moses to go Egypt as His representative (Ex. 3:16-22).

*Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, "The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, 'I have surely visited you and seen what is done to you in Egypt; 17 and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" 18 Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, "The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God."*

1. God indicated that Moses was to go to the elders of Israel first (Ex. 3:16).

This is God's order to deliver His message—elders first. If the Israelites were going to come on board, their leaders would be a key to their acceptance of Moses.

2. God told Moses to go with the elders and ask Pharaoh for a three days journey to sacrifice to their God (Ex. 3:18).

This event would involve a three days' journey coupled with a sacrifice. This is not the first three days' journey coupled with a sacrifice. Abraham and Isaac had a three days journey coupled with a sacrifice (Gen. 22:4). Jesus' journey of sacrifice on Calvary also involved three days (Mt. 12:40; 26:61).

3. God indicated that the Israelites would believe Moses (Ex. 3:18; See: Ex. 4:31).

4. God warned Moses that Pharaoh would not respond well (Ex. 3:19).

*But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand.*

a. God knew that Pharaoh would not respond easily and He wanted Moses to have realistic expectations.

b. God knew that Pharaoh would harden his heart against Moses and against God.

c. God knew that Pharaoh was a person who would only respond to a power that was greater than he.

5. God made it clear that He was prepared to demonstrate His power to Pharaoh and the Egyptians through signs and wonders (Ex. 3:20).

*So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go.*

The word “wonders” in this passage literally means “supernatural, distinguished, extraordinary and surpassing displays.”

6. God let Moses know that His intention was for them to plunder the Egyptians (Ex. 3:21-22; 12:36; Gen. 15:13-14).

*And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed. But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians.*

God had prophesied this to Abraham centuries before this (Gen. 15:13-14).

*Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions.”*

B. Moses responded by moving his family to Egypt (Ex. 4:18-23).

1. Moses asked permission from his father-in-law and employer to go (Ex. 4:18).
2. God encouraged Moses by letting him know that all who sought his death had died (Ex. 4:19).
3. Moses began his journey back to Egypt with his family and the rod of God in his hand (Ex. 4:20).

*Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand.*

4. God reminded Moses that the deliverance would be a process that involved a display of His wonders (Ex. 4:21-23).

C. God sought to kill Moses (Ex. 4:24-26).

After dealing with all of Moses’ excuses, after finally persuading Moses to go to Egypt, God tries to kill Moses.

*And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met him and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses’ feet, and said, “Surely you are a husband of blood to*

*me!” So He let him go. Then she said, “You are a husband of blood!”--because of the circumcision. Exodus 4:24-26*

Why did God seek to kill Moses?

1. God sought to kill Moses because his home was not in order spiritually.

This is a basic qualification for leadership in God’s mind (I Tim. 3:4; Tit. 1:6).

*An elder must be well thought of for his good life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who are not wild or rebellious.*

Titus 1:6, NLT

2. God sought to kill Moses because he was negligent to have his son circumcised or brought into covenant relationship.

The ritual of circumcision had been given to Abraham as a sign and seal of the covenant that God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:10-14). Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac all received this sign (Gen. 17:24-26; 21:4).

God had told Abraham that this ritual was to be kept if his progeny were to remain in covenant relationship with God (Gen. 17:14).

*And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.*

Albert Barnes gives the following commentary for this event.

“Moses was attacked by a sudden and dangerous illness, which he knew was inflicted by God. The word “sought to kill” implies that the sickness, whatever might be its nature, was one which threatened death had it not been averted by a timely act. Zipporah believed that the illness of Moses was due to his having neglected the duty of an Israelite, and to his not having circumcised his own son; the delay was probably owing to her own not unnatural repugnance to a rite, which though practiced by the Egyptians, was not adopted generally in the East, even by the descendants of Abraham and Keturah. Moses appears to have been utterly prostrate and unable to perform the rite himself.”

Zipporah should have been familiar with this custom because all of the descendents of Abraham’s line had practiced this earlier in history. However, after hundreds of years had passed this ritual was evidently no longer practiced among the Midianites.

- D. God gave Aaron to Moses as a spokesman (Ex. 4:27-28; 7:1-2).

God eventually gave into Moses’ excuses and gave him Aaron to speak for him. But Aaron was only a spokesman and not the one who was in communication with God. Aaron would speak for to Moses as his mouth the same way that a prophet is a mouthpiece for God (Ex. 4:15-16).

*Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God. Exodus 4:15-16*

Notice how this relationship of Moses to Aaron and Aaron to Moses provide the definition of “a prophet.”

Moses speaks to Aaron and Aaron speaks Moses’ words to the people.

**Moses ⇔ Aaron ⇔ People**

God speaks to the prophet and the prophet speaks God’s words to the people.

**God ⇔ Prophet ⇔ People**

E. Moses and Aaron went to Egypt and met with the Israelites (Ex. 4:29-31).

1. They met with the elders (Ex. 4:29).
2. They told them what God had said (Ex. 4:30).
3. They did the signs in front of the people (Ex. 4:30).
4. The people believed and worshipped the Lord (Ex. 4:31; Compare John 20:24-29).

*So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.*

They saw and they believed. One of the characteristics of the Israelites will be their need for signs. Their motto was “Seeing is believing.” This is actually the weakest kind of faith. It is the faith that Thomas demonstrated after he heard about the resurrection of Jesus. Strong faith is willing to believe without seeing (John 20:24-29).

*The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”....29 Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*

John 20:25, 29

We will follow this thought as we progress through the life of Moses.

## II. What is the significance of God referring to Israel as His firstborn?

*And the LORD said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.’”*  
Exodus 4:21-23

A. The concept of “the firstborn” was understood long before God applied it to the nation of Israel.

1. The firstborn male child was to be dedicated or set apart to the Lord (Ex. 13:1-2, 13; 22:29; Num. 3:13; 8:17; Neh. 10:36).

*You shall not delay to offer the first of your ripe produce and your juices. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me. Likewise you shall do with your oxen and your sheep. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me. Exodus 22:29-30*

The same principle is found in the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament where it was the firstborn animals that were to be offered to the Lord (Ex. 13:11-13, 15).

2. The first born had a special blessing conferred on them (Gen. 27:1-4, 35-38).
3. The firstborn involved pre-eminence and authority in relation to the other siblings (Gen. 27:29; 37:22; 49:3-4).
4. The firstborn received a double portion of the inheritance (Deut. 21:17).
5. The firstborn could claim the right of royal succession (II Chr. 21:3).

B. The title of “firstborn” is applied to Israel, the “called out ones” of the Old Covenant (Ex. 4:22; Jer. 31:9).

Naturally, God chose Israel from among the nations to be a nation of kings and priest to mediate His purposes to the world (Ex. 19:5-6).

*“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”*

C. The title of “firstborn” was applied to Jesus—the only begotten Son of God (Luke 2:7; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15, 18; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 1:5).

*And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. Colossians 1:17-18*

- D. The title of “firstborn” is applied to the Church, the “called out ones” of the New Covenant (Heb. 12:23).

*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect... Hebrews 12:22-23*

Spiritually, God has chosen the church as His kingly priesthood to demonstrate God’s purposes to the rest of the world (I Pet. 2:9-10).

*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

### **III. What happened when Moses finally arrived in Egypt?**

- A. Moses’ first appearance before Pharaoh yielded a negative result (Ex. 5:1-19).
1. Moses addressed Pharaoh in the name of “the Lord God of Israel (Ex. 5:1).
  2. Moses asked for the Israelites to be given release to go into the wilderness and sacrifice to their God (Ex. 5:1, 3).
  3. Pharaoh questioned his need to respond to a god that he did not know (Ex. 5:2).
  4. Pharaoh chided Moses and Aaron for taking the Israelites away from their work (Ex. 5:4-5).
  5. Pharaoh increased the demands on the Israelites by no longer providing straw for bricks (Ex. 5:6-19).

*So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying, “You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God.’ Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words.” Exodus 5:6-9*

Straw and stubble were used for two reasons in the making of bricks. The first reason was to provide a binding agent to the clay. But even more important, as the straw in the brick decayed, it released an acid which gave greater plasticity to the bricks.

6. The officers of the children of Israel were beaten when they could not fulfill the quota of bricks (Ex. 5:14).
7. The officers confronted Moses and Aaron and expressed their resentment toward them for what they had precipitated (Ex. 5:20-21).

*Then, as they came out from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron who stood there to meet them. And they said to them, "Let the LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us."*

The word rendered "abhorrent" in this passage means "to have a bad smell or to stink."

There are a lot of things that can make people who call themselves Christians to stink in the nostrils of the heathen.

Here the Egyptians accused them of being "lazy" (Ex. 5:8, 17).

*But Pharaoh said, "Lazy! That's what you are! Lazy! That's why you whine, 'Let us go so we can worship GOD.'" Exodus 5:17, Msg*

8. Moses came to God questioning his call (Ex. 5:22-23).

*So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why is it You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all."*

I wonder how many pastors and leaders question their call at the first sign of negative responses?

9. God assured Moses that everything was under His control and nothing was out of control (Ex. 6:1-8).
10. God made a pledge to Moses and the children of Israel (Ex. 6:6-8).

*"Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7 I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.'"*

God gave this pledge in the form of seven "I wills."

- I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians,
- I will rescue you from their bondage,

- I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments,
- I will take you as My people,
- I will be your God,
- I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to your Fathers, and
- I will give it to you as a heritage.

- a. The first three pledges speak of God’s redemption of Israel.
- b. The second two pledges speak of God’s adoption of Israel.
- c. The final two pledges speak of God’s inheritance to Israel.

11. God indicated that He would redeem Israel with a strong arm and great judgments (Ex. 6:1, 6).

*Then the LORD said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.”*

God said that He would deliver them with an “outstretched arm.” The arm is often symbolic of strength and power. This could also be translated by “mighty power” (Deut. 4:34; 9:29; 26:8; II Kgs. 17:36; Ps. 136:10-12; Jer. 27:5; 32:17, 21).

*“For ask now concerning the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether any great thing like this has happened, or anything like it has been heard. 33 Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live? 34 Or did God ever try to go and take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35 To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself is God; there is none other besides Him.” Deuteronomy 4:32-35*

*Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.*

Jeremiah 32:17

12. The Israelites did not listen to Moses because of discouragement and the strenuousness of their labor (Ex. 6:9).

*So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.*

The phrase “anguish of spirit” can literally be translated “shortness of breath.”

“It was the inward pressure caused by deep anguish that prevented their proper breathing—like children sobbing and gasping for their breath.”



B. Moses' second appearance before Pharaoh was to no avail (Ex. 7:1-7).

1. God appointed Moses as a god over Pharaoh (Ex. 7:1-2).

*So the LORD said to Moses: "See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land."*

Since Pharaoh was not willing to acknowledge a god that he had not seen, God would provide a tangible ambassador for this God who Pharaoh would have to acknowledge, namely Moses.

2. God warned Moses that Pharaoh would not listen (Ex. 7:3-5).

*And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them.*

The question is, "Did God harden Pharaoh's heart or did Pharaoh harden his heart?" We will discuss this shortly in our next major section.

C. Moses' third appearance before Pharaoh was with a supernatural sign (Ex. 7:8-13).

There is some debate over whether this appearance was the same as the previous one. Verse 6, however, seems to indicate that the second appearance was completed before the instructions were given to Moses about the signs.

1. God predicted that Pharaoh would ask Moses for a miraculous sign of his divine origin (Ex. 7:9).

The Jewish scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees had all asked Jesus for a sign to authenticate His divine origin (Mt. 12:38-39; 16:1, 4).

2. God gave Moses a sign to perform before Pharaoh (Ex. 7:9).

*When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, "Show a miracle for yourselves," then you shall say to Aaron, "Take your rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and let it become a serpent."*

This is the same sign that Moses had used in the presence of the children of Israel earlier (Ex. 4:3, 29-31).

3. Moses performed the sign in the presence of Pharaoh (Ex. 7:10).

4. Pharaoh had his magicians and sorcerers duplicate the sign (Ex. 7:11-12).

This is our first introduction to the magicians of Egypt. Evidently they were headed up by two prominent leaders named Jannes and Jambres (II Tim. 3:8-9).

*Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.*

The New Testament tells us that the folly of these magicians was going to be manifest to all. Other translations say...

*...for their rash folly will become obvious to everybody... --Amp*

*But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those two men, their stupidity will be plain to everyone. --ISV*

*But they won't get away with this for long. Someday everyone will recognize what fools they are, just as happened with Jannes and Jambres. --NLT*

Studying the life of these magicians in Egypt is quite humorous. Magicians were very powerful figures in Egypt sometimes functioning with trickery and sometimes using black magic coming from the power of Satan.

“Magicians were regarded as wise men, eminent in learning and science. They were priests who had charge of the sacred rites...Often magicians were frauds.” --J.L. Kelso, *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*

In this moment in time we see the conflict of the powers of darkness and the powers of light. We should be encouraged when we read this narrative.

Notice the progressive unraveling of the magicians and their power.

- a. In the first sign of the rod changing into a serpent, Moses' rod swallowed their rod (Ex. 7:11-12).

*But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.*

Meditate on this for a minute. When Moses came into the palace, he had a rod and all of the magicians had rods. When Moses left the palace, only Moses had a rod in his hand. I wonder if Moses' rod had put on any weight from swallowing the magicians rods.

- b. In the first plague involving turning water into blood the magicians were able to duplicate the miracle to such a degree that people could not even find water to drink (Ex. 22-24).

Question: Wouldn't it have been a greater miracle if they had removed the curse by turning the blood back into water? They could not reverse or undo the situation created by God. They could only worsen it.

- c. In the second plague of the frogs, the magicians could seemingly produce more frogs, but Pharaoh had to plead with Moses' to take the frogs away (Ex. 8:7-8).
- d. In the third plague of lice, the magicians could not duplicate the miracle of Moses and they had to admit that they had been outdone by "the finger of God [*Elohim*]" (Ex. 8:18-19).

*Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had said.*

These are the last recorded words of the Egyptian magicians. Note that Jesus also indicated that His miracles were to be attributed to the "finger of God" (Luke 11:20).

God has more power in His little finger than all of the powers of darkness combined.

The law of God was etched in stone by the "finger of God" (Ex. 31:18; Deut. 9:10). Jesus identified the "finger of God" as the Holy Spirit (Compare: Mt. 12:28 with Luke 11:20).

- e. In the sixth plague of boils, the magicians were in so much pain that they could not even stand before Moses (Ex. 9:11).

*And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians.*

This is the last that we hear of the magicians of Egypt in the entire rest of the Bible. They most likely went out and found a different line of work.

- 5. Moses' sign prevailed in the end (Ex. 7:12).
- 6. Pharaoh's heart only grew harder (Ex. 7:13).

Miraculous signs never work the way we think they are going to on people whose hearts are set against the Lord (Luke 16:27-31).

In the story of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man wanted a sign to be given to his unsaved brothers.

*Then he said, "I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment." Abraham said to him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." And he said, "No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent." But he said to him, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."*

- D. Moses' fourth appearance before Pharaoh resulted in the first official plague on the Egyptians (Ex. 7:14-25).

We will come back to this in our next lesson when we discuss the plagues. But for now simply notice that Moses first sign was only done before Pharaoh and his court. Because Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to respond, God moved to the next level. Now Pharaoh's disobedience would be felt by all of those under his rule. All of Egypt would begin to suffer.

God was counting on the fact that the day would come when the people of Egypt themselves would cry out to Pharaoh for the release of the children of Israel.

#### **IV. What is the significance of what took place in the heart of Pharaoh relative to the release of the Israelites?**

- A. Pharaoh's heart was hard toward the God of Israel.

1. God knew in advance that this would be the case from the beginning (Ex.3:19-20).

*But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go.*

2. God told Moses that this would be the case (Ex. 3:19; See: Rom. 8:29).

*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:29*

God's eternal plan is always based on His foreknowledge (Is. 46:9-11).

3. God gave Pharaoh a chance to prove Him wrong (Ex. 5:3).

*So they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."*

God did this by putting a very small, reasonable request in front of Pharaoh. Had Pharaoh responded there would have been no need for the plagues. Pharaoh had a choice to be a vessel of honor or a vessel fit for the master's use or a vessel of dishonor fitted for destruction.

B. Pharaoh’s heart was further hardened by God (Ex.9:34; See: Ps. 18:26).

*With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.* Psalm 18:26, KJV

We determine by our own heart attitude what God’s response will be to us. The hardening of men’s hearts who have continually resisted God is one of the ways that he judges them (Rom. 1:20-32).

Notice these references to Pharaoh’s heart:

<b>Bible Reference</b>	<b>Hebrew Word</b>	<b>Hardened By</b>
Exodus 4:21	<i>Chazaq</i>	God
Exodus 7:3	<i>Qashah</i>	God
Exodus 7:13	<i>Chazaq</i>	Pharaoh
Exodus 7:14	<i>Kabed</i>	Pharaoh
Exodus 8:15	<i>Kabed</i>	Pharaoh
Exodus 8:19	<i>Chazaq</i>	Pharaoh
Exodus 8:32	<i>Kabed</i>	Pharaoh
Exodus 9:7	<i>Kabed</i>	Pharaoh
Exodus 9:12	<i>Chazaq</i>	God
Exodus 9:34	<i>Kabed</i>	Pharaoh
Exodus 9:35	<i>Chazaq</i>	Pharaoh
Exodus 10:1	<i>Kabed</i>	God
Exodus 10:20	<i>Chazaq</i>	God
Exodus 10:27	<i>Chazaq</i>	God
Exodus 11:10	<i>Chazaq</i>	God
Exodus 14:4	<i>Chazaq</i>	God
Exodus 14:8	<i>Chazaq</i>	God
Exodus 14:17	<i>Chazaq</i>	God

C. Pharaoh’s moved progressively through stages of hardness.

Three different words are used to describe the heart of Pharaoh (See above).

1. *Kabed* is a word that means “to be heavy, insensitive, oppressive or dull.”
2. *Qashah* is a word that means “to be hard, difficult, severe, fierce, or harsh.”
3. *Chazaq* is a word that means “to grow strong or to strengthen, prevail, harden, be strong, become strong, be courageous, be firm, grow firm, be resolute, be sore.”

This third word is the strongest of the three words. It is no wonder that Pharaoh sunk as a stone (Ex. 15:5).

*The depths have covered them [the Egyptians]; they sank to the bottom like a stone.*

- D. Pharaoh became an unwilling instrument to fulfill God's purpose (Rom. 9:21; II Tim. 2:20-21).

*But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. II Timothy 2:20-21*

*For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. Romans 9:17-18*

We learn four things from God's interaction with Pharaoh.

1. God is going to accomplish His purpose.
2. God is going to get glory out of our lives.
3. God will be glorified through our obedience and we will be a positive part of His purpose.
4. Or God will be glorified in spite of our disobedience, in which case, we will have our part with those who are destroyed.

## Lesson 9

### Moses and the Plagues of Egypt

#### I. What was the purpose of the plagues that God brought upon the Egyptians?

God used the plagues upon the Egyptians to accomplish a number of things. The purpose of the plagues is similar to God's purpose for any supernatural manifestation of His power.

A. God uses miracles in the following ways:

1. To separate Himself from all other gods (Ex. 9:14; 15:11; 18:11).

*Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: 'Let My people go, that they may serve Me, for at this time I will send all My plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, that you may know that there is none like Me in all the earth.'"* Exodus 9:13-14

*And Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them."* Exodus 18:10-11

2. To prove that He has supreme command over nature and, therefore, over the body and soul of man (Ex. 8:18-19; Mt. 8:27).

*Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"* Matthew 8:26-27

3. To show forth His glory and power to the world (Ex. 9:16; John 2:11).

*Now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth. But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.* Exodus 9:15-16

4. To attest to the divine origin of His servants (Ex. 3:12; 4:4-6; Mt. 11:3-5; Mark 2:10-11; John 3:2).

*This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."* John 3:2

5. To inspire faith in the unbeliever (Ex. 4:30-31; John 2:23; 11:47-48; 20:30-31).

*And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.*

Exodus 4:30-31

*Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.* John 2:23

*And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.* John 20:30-31

6. To build the faith of future generations (Ex. 10:1-2; Ps. 71:17-18; 78:4).

*Now the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I am the LORD."* Exodus 10:1-2

*O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare Your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, your power to everyone who is to come.* Psalm 71:17-18

7. To take out a people for His name (Deut. 4:33-35; 26:8).

*Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live? Or did God ever try to go and take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself is God; there is none other besides Him.* Deuteronomy 4:33-35

B. God used the plagues for additional reasons.

1. To judge the Egyptians for their mistreatment of His people (Gen. 15:14).

*Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions."*

2. To execute judgment on the gods of the Egyptians (Num. 33:4).



The Egyptians are considered to have been the most polytheistic people in the ancient world. Research has shown that they actually venerated about eighty different gods.

*For the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn, whom the LORD had killed among them. Also on their gods the LORD had executed judgments.*

3. To warn other nations not to tamper with God's people (Ex. 15:14-15; Gen. 12:3).

*The people will hear and be afraid; sorrow will take hold of the inhabitants of Philistia. Then the chiefs of Edom will be dismayed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling will take hold of them; all the inhabitants of Canaan will melt away. Fear and dread will fall on them; by the greatness of Your arm they will be as still as a stone, till Your people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over whom You have purchased. Exodus 15:14-16*

The news of these plagues did spread to other nations (I Sam. 4:8; Josh. 2:10; 9:9).

*So the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God has come into the camp!" And they said, "Woe to us! For such a thing has never happened before. Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness."*

I Samuel 4:7-8

4. To test the faith of the people of Israel (Deut. 4:33-34, See #7 above).

The word that is used for trials in this passage is testing or proving. Through these signs Israel was going to be tested in their relationship to God.

5. To demonstrate His love for His covenant people (Deut. 4:37-39; 7:7-8).

*And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power, driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land as an inheritance, as it is this day. Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.*

Deuteronomy 4:37-39

*The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Deuteronomy 7:7-8*

## II. What Egyptian gods were being judged in each of the plagues?

Each plague can be viewed as an attack on one of the Egyptian Gods.

Plague	Exodus Text	Warning	Pharaoh's Heart	Egyptian God Judged	Comments
Water to Blood	7:14-24	Yes	Heart was hardened	Hapi - The Nile god	The Nile itself was considered sacred and a gift from the gods. The Nile god could not protect the fish from dying in this plague.
Frogs	8:1-15	Yes	Hardened his heart	Ptha –the frog headed god Heda – the frog goddess	The frog was a sacred symbol of human life in embryo. It was illegal to kill frogs. In this plague they could not avoid killing them.
Lice Gnats Fleas	8:16-19	No	Heart was hardened	Leb – the earth god	Lice had particular negative effect on the priest who would have been defiled by this infestation and would not be able to fulfil their duties.
Swarming Flies	8:20-32	Yes	Hardened his heart	Khepara, the god of beetles and flies	These flies are swarming insects from which there is no escape. They often bite the edge of the eyelid and cause extreme discomfort.
Murrain or Cattle Disease	9:1-7	Yes	Heart was hardened	Apis or Seraphis, sacred cattle god	The Egyptians had many gods in the form of cattle. This is where the idea for the golden calf came from that Israel would turn back to.
Boils	9:8-12	No	Lord hardened heart	Imhotep – god of healing Thoth – god of magic and healing	Boils are painful, eruptive, oozing sores. The gods of magic and healing were supposed to be able to deal with epidemics like this.
Hail	9:13-35	Yes	Hardened his heart	Iris –the water god Osiris, the fire god	The Egyptians believed that the gods controlled agriculture and the forces of nature. This act of nature destroyed the produce in the fields.
Locust	10:1-20	Yes	Lord hardened heart	Shu, god of air Sebek, insect god	Destroying insects swarming on the people carried upon the air would leave the Egyptians wondering about their mighty gods.
Darkness	10:21-22	No	Lord hardened heart	Ra or Aten, the sun god Neit –the goddess queen of heaven	Ra was their supreme deity and national god who was worshipped as their ultimate provider who blessed them with light and warmth.
Death of Firstborn	12:29-30	No	Eventually the Lord hardened his heart	Pharaoh who was considered a god	Pharaoh was thought to be the embodiment of all the gods and served as their representative on earth.

--Above chart mostly taken from The Pentateuch, by L. Thomas Holdcroft, page 61

## III. What were the 10 plagues and what was the result of each one?

A great reference is made to the plagues in David's recounting of Israel's history in Psalm 105 (vs. 26-36). Some of the best estimates suggest that the season for all of the plagues on Egypt extended for nine months to one year.

A. The First Plague – Water to Blood (Ex. 7:14-24)

The river of the Nile and inland rivers, lakes and ponds turned to blood, all of the fish died which made the water stink and become undrinkable. Even the water that was already drawn in their pots was turned to blood.

1. The result of this plague was that Pharaoh hardened his heart after the magicians did the same thing.
2. The Children of Israel and Goshen are not mentioned in this account. Presumably they experienced these plagues until God announced that He would separate them in the fourth plague.

B. The Second Plague – Frogs (Ex. 8:1-15)

Frogs in massive numbers came up out of the water ways and filled the land to the point that people could not keep them out of their beds, their ovens and their kneading bowls.

1. The result of this plague was that Pharaoh agreed to let the people go to sacrifice (Ex. 8:8). However, as soon as there was relief from the frogs he changed his mind (Ex. 8:15).
2. The Children of Israel and Goshen are not mentioned in this account.

C. The Third Plague – Lice, Gnats or Fleas (Ex. 8:16-19)

The dust was turned into lice for the Egyptians and covered both man and beast alike. The word used here in the Hebrew for “lice” can be rendered “gnats or fleas” as it is in other translations. The magicians were not able to duplicate this miracle. It is after this plague that the magicians confessed that “This is the finger of God” (Ex. 8:19).

1. The result of this plague was that Pharaoh’s heart remained hard (Ex. 8:19).
2. The Children of Israel and Goshen are not mentioned in this account.

D. The Fourth Plague – Flies (Ex. 8:20-32)

Swarms of flies and other insects came up on the land so that the houses of the Egyptians were filled with them.

1. The result of this plague was that Pharaoh agreed to let the Israelites sacrifice, but he hardened his heart when the flies were gone (Ex. 8:32)
2. The Children of Israel in Goshen were not affected by this plague (Ex. 8:22-23).

*“And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I*

*am the LORD in the midst of the land. I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be.”*

E. The Fifth Plague – Murrain (Ex. 9:1-7)

A severe pestilence would come upon all of the livestock of Egypt including the cattle, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the sheep and the oxen causing them to die.

1. The result of this plague was that Pharaoh hardened his heart when he saw that the cattle among the Israelites were not affected (Ex. 9:7).
2. The Children of Israel were not affected by this plague (Ex. 9:4-6).

F. The Sixth Plague – Boils (Ex. 9:8-12)

These boils were so severe that the magicians could not even stand before Moses and Aaron.

1. The result of this plague was that Pharaoh’s heart remained hard.
2. The Children of Israel and Goshen are not mentioned in this account. Presumably they were protected from this plague.

G. The Seventh Plague – Hail (Ex. 9:13-35)

A severe hail with fire mingled in with it came on the land which destroyed their crops, all the vegetation and any living man or beast that was in the field.

1. The result of this plague was that Pharaoh confessed that he had sinned and repented, but as soon as the hail was gone he hardened his heart (Ex. 9:35).
2. The Children of Israel were not affected by this plague (Ex. 9:26).

H. The Eighth Plague – Locust (Ex. 10:1-20)

Swarming locust came on the land in such abundance that you could not even see the ground for the locust. They ate up everything that the hail left including the foliage off of the trees.

1. On the threat of this plague Pharaoh’s own servants began to plead with him to let the Israelites go (Ex. 10:7).

*The court officials now came to Pharaoh and appealed to him. “How long will you let these disasters go on? Please let the Israelites go to serve the LORD their God! Don’t you realize that Egypt lies in ruins?” –NLT*

2. Before the plague Pharaoh said that they could go, but only the men (Ex. 10:11).

3. After the plague began Pharaoh confessed that he had sinned and asked for forgiveness (Ex. 10:16-17).
  4. The result was that after the locust went away Pharaoh's heart was hardened (Ex. 10:20).
  5. The Children of Israel and Goshen are not mentioned in this account. Presumably they were protected from this plague.
- I. The Ninth Plague – Darkness (Ex. 10:21-22)

This plague involved a darkness that could be “felt” (Ex. 10:21).

1. The result of this plague was that Pharaoh agreed to let them go without their cattle and other livestock until Moses insisted there be no condition placed on their departure. At this point Pharaoh's heart was hardened (Ex. 10:27).
2. Pharaoh threatened to kill Moses if he ever saw him again (Ex. 10:28-29).

*Pharaoh said to Moses, “Get out of my sight! Make sure you do not appear before me again! The day you see my face you will die.” “Just as you say,” Moses replied, “I will never appear before you again.” –NIV*

3. The Children of Israel were not affected by this plague (Ex. 10:23).

We will look at the last plague in our next lesson.

#### **IV. What was the reaction of Pharaoh to the first nine plagues?**

- A. Pharaoh gave into to Moses' demands only to revert back to a position of stubbornness.

1. Pharaoh confessed that he was a sinner twice (Ex. 9:27; 10:16).
2. Pharaoh asked Moses to forgive him once (Ex. 10:17).
3. Pharaoh gave in to Moses four times in this process.

The problem was not with Pharaoh's head, but with his heart. Ultimately he always rescinded his repentance.

- B. Pharaoh tried to compromise with Moses.

Pharaoh tried to placate Moses in ways that would not have resulted in full deliverance.

1. He told Moses that they could go offer sacrifices to their God but they had to do it in Egypt (Ex. 8:25).

After the fourth plague (flies) Pharaoh said...

*“All right! Go ahead and offer sacrifices to your God,” he said. “But do it here in this land. Don’t go out into the wilderness.” –NLT*

In this interaction with Moses, Pharaoh serves as a type of Satan in his attempt to get us to compromise our deliverance. Satan will let us serve the Lord but stay in Egypt (the world system).

2. He told Moses that they could go into the wilderness to offer sacrifices but they were not to go too far (Ex. 8:28).

*“We must take a three-day trip into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, just as he has commanded us.” “All right, go ahead,” Pharaoh replied. “I will let you go to offer sacrifices to the LORD your God in the wilderness. But don’t go too far away. Now hurry, and pray for me.”*

–NLT

Satan will concede for us to serve the Lord but not to get too extreme or wander too far from Egypt (the world system).

3. He told Moses that they could go into the wilderness but only the men could go (Ex. 10:8-11).

*So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. “All right, go and serve the LORD your God,” he said. “But tell me, just whom do you want to take along?” 9 “Young and old, all of us will go,” Moses replied. “We will take our sons and daughters and our flocks and herds. We must all join together in a festival to the LORD.” 10 Pharaoh retorted, “The LORD will certainly need to be with you if you try to take your little ones along! I can see through your wicked intentions. 11 Never! Only the men may go and serve the LORD, for that is what you requested.” And Pharaoh threw them out of the palace.*

–NLT

Satan will concede for us to serve the Lord, but let me keep the rest of your family.

4. He told Moses that they could all go but they had to leave their flocks behind (Ex. 10:24).

After the plague of darkness, Pharaoh said....

*Then Pharaoh called for Moses. “Go and worship the LORD,” he said. “But let your flocks and herds stay here. You can even take your children with you.” –NLT*

Satan will finally suggest that we can serve the Lord but we must leave our possessions (investments) in Egypt.

- C. Moses refused to compromise (Ex. 10:25-26).

*But Moses said, "You must also give us sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. Our livestock also shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind. For we must take some of them to serve the LORD our God, and even we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there."*

We must never compromise with Satan. We must stand with Moses and declare, "Not a hoof shall be left behind!"

## **V. What is the prophetic significance of the plagues on Egypt?**

The plagues on Egypt can be seen as a prophetic forecast of judgments that will come upon the earth in the last days prior to the return of Christ. Notice the similarities from the Book of Revelation.

A. In the Book of Revelation we have a description of end-time judgments.

1. There are miracles performed by two witnesses (Rev. 11:3-6).
2. False ministries will also perform miracles (Rev. 13:13-15).
3. God will protect His own people from these judgments (Rev. 7:4; 9:4; 12:6, 14-16; 16:2).
4. There will be a witness of blood (Rev. 8:8; 16:3-6).
5. There will be the presence of satanic frogs (Rev. 16:13).
6. There will be swarming locusts that sting like scorpions (Rev. 9:2-11).
7. There will be boils or malignant sores (Rev. 16:2).
8. There will be hailstones (Rev. 8:7).
9. There will be darkness (Is. 60:2; Rev. 16:10).
10. The heathen refused to repent (Rev. 9:20-21; 16:11).
11. Death will come to multitudes (Rev. 9:15).
12. God's people will sing the song of Moses (Ex. 15:1-19; Rev. 15:3-4).

B. In the Book of Revelation the end-time judgments are worse than the plagues in Egypt.

1. The witness of blood touches both the water on earth and the moon above (Rev. 6:12; 8:8; 16:3-6).

2. The satanic frogs were demons spirits sent to war against God (Rev. 16:13).
3. The swarming locusts would sting like scorpions (Rev. 9:2-11).
4. The boils would be sore but also malignant (Rev. 16:2).
5. The hail and fire would be mingled with blood (Rev. 8:7).
6. The darkness would produce physical agony and pain (Is. 60:2; Rev. 16:10).



## Lesson 10

### Moses and the Passover Deliverance

#### I. What was so significant about God's choice for the tenth plague?

Pharaoh had put his hand on God's firstborn (Israel) and God would take Pharaoh's firstborn in judgment (Ex. 4:22-23; Hos. 1:11; Mt. 2:14).

*When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.* Hosea 11:1

For Pharaoh his firstborn would have been the heir to his throne. To the Egyptian this would represent the future leader of the clan.

#### II. What did God predict concerning this last plague?

A. God predicted that Pharaoh would not let the people go simply by telling him about the coming plague (Ex. 11:9).

B. God predicted that Pharaoh would let the people go after the plague was finished (Ex. 11:1).

*And the LORD said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether."*

Now Moses knew for the first time that the season of the plagues was over. The tenth plague would accomplish what they set out to do from the beginning.

C. God predicted that Pharaoh would actually drive the Israelites from Egypt with everything including their wives, their children and all of their animals (Ex. 11:1, 9; 12:31-33).

*Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the LORD as you have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also." And the Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead."*

Exodus 12:31-33

This proves that there was no need for compromise with the devil.

#### III. What was the nature of the tenth and final plague?

A. At midnight on the prescribed day God would demand the life of every firstborn in Egypt (Ex. 11:4-5).

*Then Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: "About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the*

*firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals.*

1. This would include the firstborn of every person in Egypt from the captive who was in the dungeon to the greatest ruler (Ex. 12:29).
2. This would include the firstborn of all their livestock.

By including the livestock in this plague it ensured that every Egyptian family would feel the effects of this plague whether they had children or not.

- B. As a result there would be great wailing from the people of the land (Ex. 11:6; 12:30).

*Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again. Exodus 11:6*

- C. The children of Israel would be spared from this plague but only under certain conditions (Ex. 11:7).

*But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast, that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.*

This plague is different in the sense that the Children of Israel had the opportunity to be spared, but God gave them certain conditions that they had to fulfill if they were to be insured against it. We will discuss these conditions more later on in our study.

#### **IV What preparations did Israel have to make before the final plague?**

- A. God instructed the Israelites to ask for possessions from the Egyptians (Ex. 11:2-3).

*“Speak now in the hearing of the people, and let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor, articles of silver and articles of gold.” And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants and in the sight of the people.*

Some translations of this passage use the word “borrow.” This is an unfortunate translation and only complicates it for people who believe that you should return what you borrow. The actual word used here could mean “borrow” in certain context, but most often it means “to ask, beg or enquire.”

1. God had indicated that the Israelites would plunder the Egyptians (Gen. 15:14; Ex. 3:22).

2. This plunder was a small reward when compared to the years of free wages that the Egyptians had enjoyed though Israel's slavery.
3. God gave the Israelites and Moses great favor among the people (Ex. 11:3; 13:35-36).

*Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.*

Exodus 12:35-36

4. The Egyptians gave largely to the Israelites (Ex. 12:35; 32:2-3; 35:22-24).
- B. God instructed the children of Israel to prepare a symbolic and prophetic meal that they would eat together on the evening of the tenth plague.
1. This meal would eventually be called "The Passover" (Ex. 12:11).
 

The word used here for the term "Passover" is not the same as the words used in the rest of this account describing how God would "pass over" the door of the houses where the blood was sprinkled.

This word comes from a root word which means "a sparing or immunity from penalty" (Gesenius).
  2. This meal would consist of a male lamb without blemish (Ex. 12:5).
  3. This lamb was to be taken on the 10<sup>th</sup> day and killed on the 14<sup>th</sup> day (Ex. 12:3, 6).
  4. This lamb was to be killed at twilight (Ex. 12:6).
  5. The blood from this lamb was to be applied to the doorposts of their houses (Ex. 12:7; 12:22).
  6. This lamb was to be roasted in the fire and served with bitter herbs and unleavened bread (Ex. 12:8).
  7. This lamb was to be eaten in its entirety (Ex. 12:9-10).
  8. This lamb was to be eaten in an atmosphere of readiness (Ex. 12:11).
- C. God instructed the children of Israel concerning the terms of their deliverance from the effects of the tenth plague.

If an Israelite's family was to be spared from this plague it had to meet the following conditions:

1. They would have to sprinkle blood on the doorposts of their dwelling (Ex. 12:13).
2. The members of the family would have to stay within their house where the blood was applied (Ex. 12:22).

*And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning.*

You were protected not merely because you were an Israelite but because you were dwelling where God had instructed you to dwell. Note the similarities here with the salvation of Rahab's household (Josh. 2:16-19).

D. God instructed the children of Israel that this was to be a perpetual feast for them throughout their generations (Ex. 12:14, 17, 24).

1. The celebration of this feast would be a commemoration of their freedom from Pharaoh's bondage (Ex. 12:14, 42).

*It is a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations. Exodus 12:42*

2. The celebration of this feast would become the first month for them (Ex. 12:2).

In other words, this became the beginning of a new calendar for them.

3. The celebration of this feast would be an opportunity to testify to their children of the wondrous works of God (Ex. 12:25-27).

*And it shall be, when your children say to you, "What do you mean by this service?" that you shall say, "It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households." So the people bowed their heads and worshiped.*

Reflect on how this parallels the celebration of communion in under the New Covenant (I Cor. 11:23ff).

## V. What actually occurred in the out working of the final plague?

- A. At the appointed time God sent protecting angels to cover the entry to houses on which the blood had been sprinkled (Ex. 12:13, 23).

*Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. Exodus 12:13*

The idea of God passing over is that he passed over the door opening or covered the opening so that the destroyer could not enter those homes.

*For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you.*

Exodus 12:23

- B. At the God same time sent destroying angels to execute judgment upon the Egyptians (Ex. 12:23; Ps. 78:49-51).

*He unleashed against them his hot anger, his wrath, indignation and hostility—a band of destroying angels. He prepared a path for his anger; he did not spare them from death but gave them over to the plague. He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt...* Psalm 78:49-51, NIV

- C. Pharaoh conceded or surrendered to God and allowed the children of Israel to go out (Ex. 12:51).

*And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the LORD brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt according to their armies.*

## **VI. What is the spiritual significance of Passover for the New Covenant believer?**

- A. The Passover lamb is symbolic and prophetic of Christ our Passover Lamb (I Cor. 5:7; Rev. 5:12; 13:8).

*Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

I Corinthians 5:7-8

*All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

Revelation 13:8

1. Jesus was the Lamb chosen by God (John 1:29, 36; Luke 23:35-36; I Pet. 2:4).

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* John 1:29

2. Jesus was examined and proven to be without blemish (Ex. 12:5; Luke 23:14, 47; I Pet. 1:18-20).

*So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!"* Luke 23:47

3. Jesus was set aside on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month (Ex. 12:3).

In the New Testament this would have been right after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mt. 21:15; John 12:9-19). This is when the religious leaders made serious plots to kill Jesus.

4. Jesus was taken from among men (the flock) (Phil. 2:7-8; Heb. 4:15).

*...but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Philippians 2:7-8*

5. Jesus was sacrificed on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month (Ex. 12:6; Mt. 26:2). He was crucified in conjunction with the Hebrew Passover celebration.

*Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples, "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified." Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him.*

Mathew 26:1-4

6. Jesus was slain at twilight (Ex. 12:6; Lev. 23:15; Mark 15:33).

7. Jesus was roasted in the fire of suffering and tasted the bitter herbs on the cross (Ex. 12:8-9; Ps. 69:21; Mark 10:38-39; I Pet. 3:18).

8. Jesus' death provided the shedding of His blood that delivered us from sin and the power of Satan (Rom. 5:6-10; Eph. 2:13; Heb. 9:14; I Pet. 1:18-19; I John 1:7).

*...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. I Peter 3:18-19*

9. Jesus marked a new beginning and a new calendar for humanity (Ex. 12:2).

**B. The Passover experience is symbolic of the new birth experience and the believer's relationship to Christ.**

1. We find our new beginning when we take the Lamb, Jesus, into our lives (John 3:5; II Cor. 5:17).
2. We must eat the whole lamb (Ex. 12:10; John 6:55).
3. We must have the blood sprinkled on the door posts of our hearts (Heb. 10:22).

4. We must stay in the place of God's provision if we expect protection (Ex. 12:22; Ps. 91).
5. We must purge out the leaven in our lives as we eat the lamb (Ex. 12:15; I Cor. 5:7-8).
6. When we commemorate our Passover in Communion as a celebration of our being spared from and immune to the penalty for sin (Rom. 6:23; I Cor. 11:23-26).

## Lesson 11

### Moses and the Red Sea Crossing

#### I. What events transpired when the Children of Israel finally were permitted to go out from Egypt?

A. Pharaoh urged Moses and Aaron to take the people and go (Ex. 12:31-32).

*Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the LORD as you have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also."*

1. He told them to take their wives, children and livestock.
2. He asked them to bless him as they left.

B. The Egyptians urged the people to go and go quickly (Ex. 12:33).

*And the Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead."*

C. The Egyptians loaded them up with gold, silver and clothing (Ex. 12:34-36).

D. This night of deliverance was established as a festival to be celebrated annually (Ex. 12:43-49).

The Passover would be something that they would celebrate throughout their history. It appears that as they ate the Passover meal it was not just a time of deliverance for them from their enemies, the symbolic meal also healed them in their physical bodies (Ps. 105:37).

*He also destroyed all the firstborn in their land, the first of all their strength. He also brought them out with silver and gold, and there was none feeble among His tribes. Egypt was glad when they departed, for the fear of them had fallen upon them. Psalm 105:36-38*

People who had been under cruel slavery for most of their life would not naturally be healthy and strong. The word for "feeble" here means "lame, faltering or faint."

E. The Israelites exited Egypt journeying from Rameses to Succoth (Ex. 12:37-39).

1. They exited with about 600,000 men (not counting women and children)(See also: Num. 1:45-46).

*So all who were numbered of the children of Israel, by their fathers' houses, from twenty years old and above, all who were able to go to war in Israel--all who were numbered were six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty.*



Most historians estimate the entire population of Israel at this time to be in the vicinity of between two and three million people.

2. They exited some 430 years from being strangers in the land (Ex. 12:40-41).

*Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years--on that very same day--it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.*

This number of years has confused a lot of commentators when trying to figure out the chronology of this period of history. However, it is clear that the 430 years does not refer to their actual time in slavery but the time that they were strangers or sojourners in the land.

If you mark the time from when Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldeans to the Exodus from Egypt it totals 430 years.

- Abraham's call to his departure from Haran (Gen. 12:31-32) = 5 years
- Abraham's journey from Haran to the birth of Isaac (Gen. 12:4) = 25 years
- Isaac to Jacob (Gen. 25:26) = 60 years
- Jacob to Egypt (Gen. 47:9) = 130 years
- Israel in Egypt is the remaining 210 years

**Total: 430 years**

3. They exited with a "mixed multitude" (Ex. 12:38).

*A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds--a great deal of livestock.*

The Message Version offers this humorous description of this mixed company:

*There was also a crowd of riffraff tagging along, not to mention the large flocks and herds of livestock.*

Who were these people exactly?

The Bible is not clear about who they were. Different suggestions have been made including:

- a. They were Egyptians who were persuaded to the God of the Jews during the plagues.
- b. They were people who had intermarried with the Israelites (Lev. 24:10).
- c. They were other oppressed peoples who were abused in Egypt.
- d. They were opportunists who were out for an adventure.

e. They were criminals who saw this as an opportunity to run for it.

Whoever they were they became a bit of a problem later on (Num. 11:4).

4. They exited with the bones of Joseph (Ex. 13:19; See also: Josh. 24:33; Heb. 11:22).
5. They exited with boldness (Ex. 14:8b).

*...and the children of Israel went out with boldness.*

*...for [they] left proudly and defiantly. –Amp*

This phrase literally means, “with a high hand.”

6. They exited by an indirect route (Ex. 13:17-18; See Appendix Map).

*Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, “Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.” So God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.*

- a. The way of the Philistines is a coastal route and the most direct route to the Promised Land.

This journey would have most likely taken 7-10 days for them to travel and it would not have involved a Red Sea crossing.

“The land of the Philistines was the Pentapolis, or five cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath, which lay between Egypt and Canaan; and their way through it to Canaan, out of Egypt, was the nearest they could go; and was, as Aben Ezra says, about ten days’ journey.”

–Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible

- b. The way of the Philistines would have required immediate readiness for warfare for which the Israelites were ill prepared.

“Had the Israelites been obliged to commence their journey to the promised land by a military campaign, there is little room to doubt that they would have been discouraged, have rebelled against Moses and Aaron, and have returned back to Egypt. Their long slavery had so degraded their minds that they were incapable of any great or noble exertions.” –Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible

Numbers 14:1-4 gives us reason to believe that this would have been a problem for the Israelites when they saw the potential of war as they did after the spies returned from the land.

Some would suggest that the wilderness was not God's will for the Israelites. This verse clearly teaches otherwise. God led them this way intentionally because of what He wanted to do in them to prepare them for entry into the land of promise.

- In the wilderness He would unify them as a nation.
- In the wilderness He would purge them of idolatry.
- In the wilderness He would teach them to trust in God for the impossible.
- In the wilderness He would give them His law.
- In the wilderness He would teach the obedience required for any army.

## II. How did God set the stage for the miracle at the Red Sea?

A. Israel journeyed from Succoth to Etham (Ex. 13:20-22).

*So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.*

Etham is most likely not a city but a region and may be a word that is used to describe the Wilderness of Shur (Ex. 15:22; Num. 33:6). See Appendix

God led them in a supernatural way.

1. He led them with a pillar of cloud by day.

Here we are first introduced to the supernatural cloud that represents the presence of God.

- a. This cloud was large enough to provide shade to this massive congregation of people (Ps. 105:39). At the base it would have had to have been several miles across.
- b. This cloud would show up mysteriously throughout biblical history.

Note the following:

- A mysterious cloud covered Moses when he was on the mountain receiving the law of God (Ex. 24:15-16; 34:5).
- A mysterious cloud came down and stood outside of Moses' "tent of the meeting" when God communed with him (Ex. 33:9).
- A mysterious cloud descended upon the Tabernacle of Moses on inauguration day (Ex. 40:34; Num. 19:15).

- A mysterious cloud rested on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant (Lev. 16:2).
- A mysterious cloud became a vehicle through which the Lord came down to dispense the Holy Spirit to Moses' 70 elders (Num. 11:25).
- A mysterious cloud appeared at the dedication of the Temple of Solomon (I Kgs. 8:10-11; II Chr. 5:13-14).
- A mysterious cloud filled Ezekiel's Temple (Ezek. 10:4).
- A mysterious cloud appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:34-35).
- A mysterious cloud received Jesus into heaven at His ascension (Acts 1:9).
- Jesus will come again in a mysterious cloud (Luke 21:27; Rev. 14:14).

2. He led them with a pillar of fire by night (Heb. 4:29).

It appears that they may have journeyed some at night and some at day with seasons of rest in between. Obviously, they would want to put as much distance between them and Pharaoh as possible.

3. He led them by the hand of the Angel of the Lord (Ex. 14:19).

*And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them.*

Some feel that the Angel of the Lord and the cloud were one in the same, but this passage seems to separate them.

B. In the meantime God led His people into a death trap (Ex. 14:1-3).

*Then the LORD gave these instructions to Moses: "Tell the people to march toward Pi-hahiroth between Migdol and the sea. Camp there along the shore, opposite Baal-zephon. Then Pharaoh will think, 'Those Israelites are confused. They are trapped between the wilderness and the sea!'" –NLT*

Instead of taking the easy and most direct way, God led the Children of Israel South to an extremely vulnerable position camped between the mountain (Migdol) and the Red Sea. He led them into a boxed canyon, as it were between an impassible mountain and an impassible sea with only one way in and one way out.

C. In the meantime Pharaoh changed his mind (Ex. 14:5-9).

*Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, “Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” 6 So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him. 7 Also, he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them. 8 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; and the children of Israel went out with boldness. 9 So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon.*

1. He realized exactly what he had lost—free labor.
2. He amassed his army to pursue them and bring them back.

### **III. What was Israel’s frame of mind when they realized Pharaoh was coming?**

- A. They were afraid (Ex. 14:10).

*And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.*

- B. They made accusations against Moses (Ex. 14:11-12).

*Then they said to Moses, “Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.”*

It could not have been any clearer that God was indeed leading them. However, with their back up against the Red Sea in their time of discouragement they would blame their human leaders for their journey troubles.

It appears that they already forgot what it was like in Egypt. How soon they forgot the miracle of the ten plagues that God worked for their deliverance (Ps. 106:7).

*Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders; they did not remember the multitude of Your mercies, but rebelled by the sea--the Red Sea.*

- C. Moses demonstrated faith in God and God’s deliverance (Ex. 14:13-14).

*And Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.”*

Whenever this phrase is spoken by God, “The Lord will fight for you,” it usually means that the people will not have to actually engage in the combat (II Chr. 20:17).

#### **IV. What did God do to open a pathway for the Children of Israel to go through the Red Sea?**

- A. God instructed Moses to lift up his rod against the sea to divide it (Ex. 14:15).

The word for “divide” here literally means “sever or cleave.” It comes from a root word meaning “hack or chop.” It could be that Moses hacked at the water like a hatchet as the wind blew (Compare: Ex. 17:5). He could have done this all night.

*And the LORD said to Moses, “Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go.”*

- B. God moved the cloud and The Angel to be their rear guard to form a barrier between the pursuing Egyptians and the Israelites (Ex. 14:19-20).
- C. Moses obeyed the Lord, stretched out his rod and the sea opened (Ex. 14:21).
- D. The Israelites crossed over on dry ground (Ex. 14:22, 29).
- E. Once they were over the Egyptians attempted to follow (Ex. 14:23).
- F. God troubled the Egyptians soldiers and disabled their chariots of (Ex. 14:24-25).

*Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians. And He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, “Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians.”*

- G. God closed the Red Sea through Moses’ rod and drowned the army of Egypt (Ex. 14:26-28).

*So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. Exodus 14:27b*

Some commentators who like to debunk the miraculous activities found in the Bible would like to suggest that the Israelites crossed the northern most part of the Red Sea through a shallow portion called the “Reed Sea.” At some point you have to ask yourself which is the bigger miracle, God splitting the waters of the Red Sea or God drowning the Egyptians in two feet of water?!

#### **V. What happened on the other side of the sea after the miracle crossing?**

A. Israel confessed their faith (Ex. 14:30-31).

*So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.*

Note that they “saw” and then they believed (Seeing is believing!). This is the same reaction that they had to the miracle signs that Moses had done before them earlier.

B. Moses and the people sang a song of deliverance (Ex. 15:1-18).

1. They sang of the greatness of God (Ex. 15:1-3).
2. They sang of God’s strength and mighty deliverance (Ex. 15:4-13; Ps. 74:13).
3. They sang of the effects of this miracle on other nations (Ex. 15:14-16; Is. 63:12).
  - a. The people of Philistia will be afraid.
  - b. The chiefs of Edom will be dismayed (Deut. 2:4).
  - c. The mighty men of Moab will tremble (Num. 22:3-4).
  - d. The inhabitants of Canaan will melt away (Josh. 2:24).
  - e. Fear and dread will be on the nations until they reach their destination.

Compare: Joshua 2:9-11, 24; 5:1

C. Miriam led the women in dancing and rejoicing (Ex. 15:20-21).

**VI. What is the symbolic significance of the Red Sea crossing?**

*Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.*

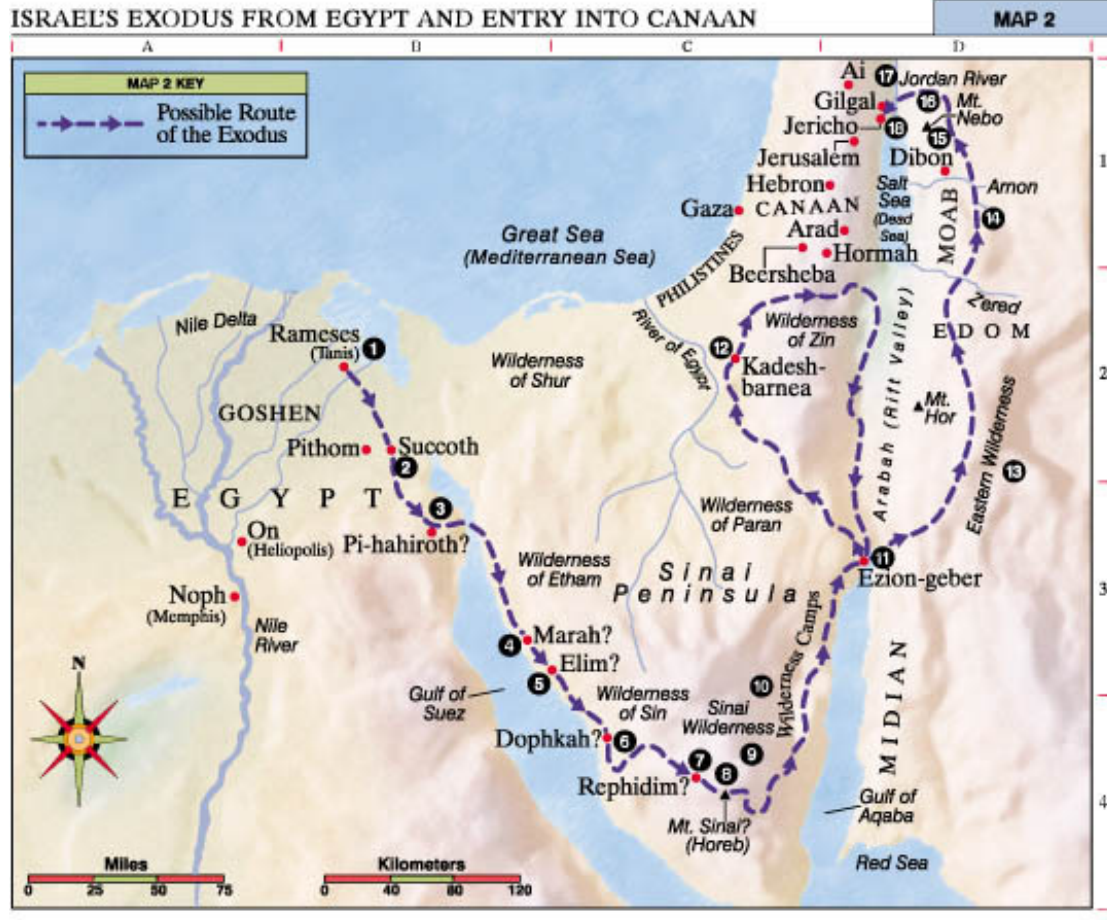
I Corinthians 10:1-4

A. In the natural realm, it speaks of the birthing of a nation and its separation unto God (Deut. 4:34-35).

*Or did God ever try to go and take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself is God; there is none other besides Him.*

B. In the spiritual realm, it speaks of the new birth experience of the believer.

## Appendix, Lesson 11, From Egypt to Canaan



--From scriptures.lds.org/biblemaps

1. **Rameses** Israel was thrust out of Egypt (Ex. 12; Num. 33:5).
2. **Succoth** After the Hebrews left this first campsite, the Lord attended them in a cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:20-22).
3. **Pi-hahiroth** Israel passed through the Red Sea (Ex. 14; Num. 33:8).
4. **Marah** The Lord healed the waters of Marah (Ex. 15:23-26).
5. **Elim** Israel camped by 12 springs (Ex. 15:27).
6. **Wilderness of Sin** The Lord sent manna and quail to feed Israel (Ex. 16).
7. **Rephidim** Israel fought with Amalek (Ex. 17:8-16).
8. **Mount Sinai (Mount Horeb or Jebel Musa)** The Lord revealed the Ten Commandments (Ex. 19-20).
9. **Sinai Wilderness** Israel constructed the tabernacle (Ex. 25-30).
10. **Wilderness Camps** Seventy elders were called to help Moses govern the people (Num. 11:16-17).
11. **Ezion-geber** Israel passed through the lands of Esau and Ammon in peace (Deut. 2).
12. **Kadesh-barnea** Moses sent spies into the promised land; Israel rebelled and failed to enter the land; Kadesh served as the main camp of Israel for many years (Num. 13:1-3, 17-33; 14; 32:8; Deut. 2:14).
13. **Eastern Wilderness** Israel avoided conflict with Edom and Moab (Num. 20:14-21; 22-24).
14. **Arnon River** Israel destroyed the Canaanites who fought against them (Deut. 2:24-37).
15. **Mount Nebo** Moses viewed the promised land (Deut. 34:1-4). Moses delivered his last three sermons (Deut. 1-32).
16. **Plains of Moab** The Lord told Israel to divide the land and dispossess the inhabitants (Num. 33:50-56).
17. **Jordan River** Israel crossed the Jordan River on dry ground. Near Gilgal, stones from the bottom of the Jordan River were placed as a monument of Jordan's waters being divided (Josh. 3-5).
18. **Jericho** The children of Israel possessed and destroyed



## Lesson 12-13

### Moses and God's Miracle Provision

#### I. What are some of the ways that Israel would be tested in the wilderness?

God was about to lead the Children of Israel deeper into the wilderness. He did not take them the shortest way to Canaan because the Israelites were not ready to possess the land for a variety of reasons. For one thing they were not ready to face war. Had they gone the way of the Philistines which would have been the shortest route, they would have had to go right into battle. They were not physically ready and they were not spiritually ready.

The Israelites at this time were a real mixture. Slavery had robbed them of a corporate identity and they were no longer unified as a nation. In addition, their relationship with God was not what it should be. Many of the Israelites had embraced some of the Egyptian deities and some of them had intermarried with other people groups that were not wholly separated unto the Lord.

Before God could take them into the land, He planned a one to two year detour to get the people ready. Part of this involved testing them to find out what they were made of (Deut. 8:1-20, NLT).

*Be careful to obey all the commands I am giving you today. Then you will live and multiply, and you will enter and occupy the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors. 2 Remember how the LORD your God led you through the wilderness for forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would really obey his commands. 3 Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people need more than bread for their life; real life comes by feeding on every word of the LORD. 4 For all these forty years your clothes didn't wear out, and your feet didn't blister or swell. 5 So you should realize that just as a parent disciplines a child, the LORD your God disciplines you to help you.*

*6 So obey the commands of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and fearing him. 7 For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land of flowing streams and pools of water, with springs that gush forth in the valleys and hills. 8 It is a land of wheat and barley, of grapevines, fig trees, pomegranates, olives, and honey. 9 It is a land where food is plentiful and nothing is lacking. It is a land where iron is as common as stone, and copper is abundant in the hills. 10 When you have eaten your fill, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.*

*11 But that is the time to be careful! Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the LORD your God and disobey his commands, regulations, and laws. 12 For when you have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live in, 13 and when your flocks and herds have become very large and your silver and gold have multiplied along with everything else, 14 that is the time to be careful. Do not become proud at that time and forget the LORD your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt. 15 Do not forget that he led you through the great and terrifying wilderness with poisonous snakes and scorpions, where it was so hot and dry. He*

*gave you water from the rock! 16 He fed you with manna in the wilderness, a food unknown to your ancestors. He did this to humble you and test you for your own good. 17 He did it so you would never think that it was your own strength and energy that made you wealthy. 18 Always remember that it is the LORD your God who gives you power to become rich, and he does it to fulfill the covenant he made with your ancestors.*

*19 But I assure you of this: If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods, worshiping and bowing down to them, you will certainly be destroyed. 20 Just as the LORD has destroyed other nations in your path, you also will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.*

A. Israel would be tested for a specific reason (Deut. 8:2)

*Remember every road that GOD led you on for those forty years in the wilderness, pushing you to your limits, testing you so that he would know what you were made of, whether you would keep his commandments or not. –Msg*

1. To humble them.

God must deal with our pride before He can shape us into a vessel of honor suited to His purpose.

2. To prove their character.

God wants our character to match His character if we are going to stand in the earth as His representative.

3. To test their obedience.

God must be assured of our willingness to obey His voice as we go forth to conquer our promised land. He is the one who knows how to fight, He is the one who trains our hands for war and He is the one who must be our captain in battle (Ps. 144:1).

*Blessed be the LORD my Rock, Who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle...*

This wilderness experience was much like “Boot Camp” in the military. Boot camp is designed to strip people down, to teach them obedience and to build them back up into a unified fighting machine.

4. To do them good in the end (Deut. 8:16).

*He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you.*  
Deuteronomy 8:16, NIV

What God does in relation to His children is always for their good. Now that God had claimed Israel as His firstborn, He would deal with them as His child (Pro. 3:11-12; Heb. 12:5-11).

*And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Hebrews 12:5-11*

B. Israel would be tested ten times in the wilderness (Num. 14:22).

1. The number ten (among other things) is the number of trial and testing.
  - a. The Egyptians experienced ten plagues as God tested them (Ex. 7-12).
  - b. The 10 commandments were given to the Israelites to test their obedience (Deut. 8:1-2).
  - c. The giving of the tithe or ten percent back to God is meant to test the heart of man regarding money (Mal. 3:10).
  - d. Job was reproached ten times by his friends (Job 19:3).
  - e. Daniel went through ten days of testing concerning his diet in Babylon (Dan. 1:12-16).
  - f. The apostles in the upper room were tested ten days while waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1-2).
  - g. Paul was tested in ten different ways (II Cor. 6:4-5).
  - h. The Church at Smyrna was tested ten days (Rev. 2:10).
  - i. The believer may face ten challenges in accepting God's unconditional love (Rom. 8:38-39).

*For I am persuaded that neither (1) death nor (2) life, nor (3) angels nor (4) principalities nor (5) powers, nor (6) things present nor (7) things to come, nor (8) height nor (9) depth, nor (10) any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

2. The ten tests in the wilderness included the following:
  - a. The test of the Red Sea barrier (Ex. 14:11).
  - b. The test of bitter water at Marah (Ex. 14:23).
  - c. The test of no bread (Ex. 16:3).
  - d. The test of no water (Ex. 17:1-3).
  - e. The test of delay—idolatry (Ex. 32:1).
  - f. The test of discontentment—ingratitude (Num. 11:1)
  - g. The test of no meat and despising the manna (Num. 11:4-6).
  - h. The test of battle against Amorites (Deut. 1:27).
  - i. The test of submission to God appointed authority (Num. 1-2).
  - j. The test of faith in the face of an evil report (Num. 14:2-4).

Unfortunately Israel did not do well with these tests and, therefore, prolonged their stay in the wilderness.

We will come back to these tests and deal with them separately as we continue through the life of Moses.

## **II. What happened immediately after the Israelites departed from the Red Sea?**

Now that the Israelites had come through the Red Sea they were officially free from the bondage of the Egyptians. Just like the experience of water baptism marks a leaving of the old and the beginning of the new, so Israel began their new walk separated from their old master (Pharaoh) and unto their new master the Lord God.

God is taking them on a journey to Sinai where He will give them His law and establish His covenant with them, but there were four significant stops along the way.

### **A. The first stop—Marah (Ex. 15:22-23; Num. 33:8).**

After the praises died down, the Israelites traveled into the wilderness three days and came to a place called Marah, which literally means “bitter.” The place was named “Marah” because of the bitter waters that were characteristic of it.

Here they are positioned for test number two—bitter waters. After three days journey any water that they might have reserved from the Red Sea would have mostly likely been used up and they would have become very thirsty in the hot, dry climate.

Their immediate response was to murmur or complain (Ex. 15:24). Only three short days earlier they were singing God’s praises.

*Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?"* Exodus 15:23-24

Complaining or murmuring for the Children of Israel would become a lifestyle. Thirteen times in their wilderness wanderings their murmuring is mentioned, five times in Exodus and eight times in Numbers.

For them murmuring was a sign of unbelief, rebellion, ingratitude, lack of respect for God ordained authority, lack of responsiveness to God and hardening of their hearts against the dealings of God.

We will come back to this theme later, but for now let us look at what happened at Marah (Ex. 15:25-26).

*So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you."*

1. God opened Moses' eyes to see the solution.

When Moses cried out to the Lord in his trouble, the Lord heard him and provided an answer (Ps. 34:6).

*This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.*

- a. God did the same thing for Abraham when He provided a ram (Gen. 22:13).
- b. God did the same thing for Hagar when He opened her eyes to see a well (Gen. 21:19).
- c. God open the eyes of Elisha's servant to see the armies of God surrounding them (II Kgs. 6:17).

2. God made the bitter waters sweet when the tree was cast into them.

In the case of the bitter waters the solution would be a tree. This is an interesting choice. The tree in this case healed the waters. God has another tree that brings healing to the bitter lot of mankind. That tree is the cross of Jesus Christ (Is. 53:5; Gal. 3:13; I Pet. 2:24).

*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree")...*

Galatians 3:13

*...who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.*

I Peter 2:24

3. God established a covenant of healing with Israel (Ex. 15:26; Compare Rev. 22:1-2).

*And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Revelation 22:1-2*

- a. Note that this covenant that God made with them was conditional.

It was a covenant of healing based to a great extent on their obedience to the Lord. To presume upon God's protection over a life lived in disobedience is presumption.

The opposite would also be true. God told them later that if they continually walked in disobedience he would expose them to the diseases of the Egyptians (Deut. 28:15b, 27).

*...if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God...The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed.*

- b. Note that it is conjunction with this covenant of healing that God reveals his covenant name—Jehovah Rapha. I am the Lord your Doctor.

- B. The second stop—Elim (Ex. 15:27; Num. 33:9-10).

*Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.*

At Elim there were 12 wells of water (one for each tribe) and 70 palm trees. After the bitter waters of Marah, this was a real oasis. It is not unlike God to give us these times of refreshing on the heels suffering. However, this wonderful place is not a destination. There is more testing ahead as they move toward the destination of Sinai.

At Elim we are confronted with the numbers 12 and 70 used in proximity. There is something about these numbers along with a couple of others that may be reflective of God's order in the heavenlies.

1. Notice that the history of humanity from Noah consisted of...

- 1 – Noah
- 3 – Sons of Noah (Shem, Ham, Japheth)
- 70 – Nations (Gen. 10:32)

- Multitudes

2. Notice that Israel patriarchal history consisted of...

- 1 – God
- 3 – Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob)
- 12 – Sons of Jacob
- 70 – Souls travel to Egypt (Gen. 46:27; Ex. 1:5)
- Multitudes

3. Notice that the leadership in Israel will consisted of...

- 1 – God
- 3 – Key Leaders (Moses, Aaron and Mirium)
- 12 – Tribes
- 70 – Elders (Ex. 24:1; Num. 11:16)
- Multitudes

4. Notice that Jesus relationship to His followers consisted of...

- 1 – Jesus
- 3 – Key Disciples (Peter, James and John).
- 12 – Apostles
- 70 – Sent Ones (Luke 10:1, 17)
- Multitudes

C. The third stop—the Wilderness of Sin (Ex. 16:1; Num. 33:11).

Elim was not the goal. God disturbed their rest after about three weeks at the oasis and Israel was on the move again. Once again they are thrust into the harshness of the desert. And true to form, once again they end up murmuring or complaining. This time their complaint is concerning that lack of food supply in the wilderness (Ex. 16:2-3).

*Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, “Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”*

1. The Israelites perspective is already warped by their present circumstances.

It seems that the further that they get away from Egypt, the more skewed their memory is of it.

- In this passage they remembered only that their bellies were full.
- Later on they remembered the tasty foods of Egypt (Num. 11:5).

*We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic...*

- c. An eventually they refer to Egypt as a land flowing with milk and honey (Num. 16:13).

*Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you should keep acting like a prince over us?*

2. The Israelites blame their problems on God.
3. The Israelites questioned the motivation of Moses and Aaron.

*For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.*

4. In response to their need God would provide for them daily and miraculously for the rest of their journey.

We will take a closer look this miraculous provision in our next section.

#### D. The fourth stop—Rephidim (Ex. 17:1).

Eventually the Israelites come to a place called Rephidim which is a plural name meaning “resting places.” Here they also find no water. They are meeting difficulty every step of the way. However, each new difficulty is an opportunity to experience the grace of God in a fresh way.

Rather than taking a faith posture at these juncture by declaring, “God is our provider, I wonder what fresh miracle He will bring into our lives to help us”, once again the Israelites murmur (Ex. 17:2-3).

*And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, “Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” Exodus 17:3*

At Rephidim...

1. The Israelites murmured against God and Moses for a lack of water.
2. Moses cried out to the Lord for help (Ex. 17:4).

*So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!”*

3. God provided miracle water from a rock (Ex. 17:5-7).



Moses was instructed by God to stand before the rock in Horeb with his rod in his hand. He was to strike the rock with his rod and water would come forth of sufficient quantity to water the nation of Israel.

Just how much water is this? We will discuss that subject later.

4. Israel was attacked by Amalek (Ex. 17:8-13).

Amalek is the people group that was a direct descendent of the grandson of Esau (Gen. 36:12).

This is right after God supplied water to His people. It is possible that Amalek was contending over the water because the place that this occurred is named both Massah and Meribah.

It is called Massah meaning “tempted” in reference to Israel tempting God. It may have been called Meribah meaning “contention” because of the jealousy it provoked among the Amalekites. Water was often the source of contention in this time (Gen. 21:25; 26:19-20; Ex. 2:17; Num. 20:19; Judg. 5:11).

It is important to notice that Amalek like Satan attacked Israel right after a high and miraculous moment in God and at their most vulnerable point (Deut. 25:17-18).

*Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God.*

These were the weak, the tired and those who were following from a distance. These were the ones who were the furthest from their leaders.

a. Here Joshua’s leadership came to the forefront (Ex. 17:9).

Joshua is about 40 years old at this time. From this point on we will see Joshua fulfilling the role of Moses’ personal aide (Ex. 24:13; 32:17; 33:11; Josh. 1:1).

b. Here God gave a supernatural battle plan.

As the commander-in-chief God always has a plan for the defeat of every enemy that we will face. Throughout Israel’s history He would lead them to do rather strange things in battle. The key to every victory was to tune into the instructions coming from the Lord and walk in obedience.

Here are a few other strange battle strategies:

- Shouting and blowing trumpets against the walls of Jericho (Josh. 6:6-20)

- Torches, trumpets and earthen pitchers under Gideon (Judg. 7:15-20)
  - Singing God’s praises under Jehoshaphat (II Chr. 20:21)
- c. Here God worked a miraculous deliverance for His people.

*And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses’ hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.*

Exodus 17:11-13

The lifting up of Moses’ arms during the conflict is symbolic of our own prayer and praise posture before the Lord (Ps. 28:2; 1412:2; I Tim. 2:8). The believer fights his or her spiritual enemies with prayer.

*Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to You, when I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary. Psalm 28:2*

Just like Moses, we often can get faint in our prayers (Luke 18:1). When we do it is good to know that we have those who are called along side of us in prayer to support us, namely the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26) and Jesus Himself our Great High Priest (Heb. 7:25; Rev. 8:3).

- d. Here God instructed Moses to begin to write a record of victories to be rehearsed to future generations (Ex. 17: 14).

This is the first record of Moses writing things down that would eventually be part of our Scriptures.

- e. Here God revealed Himself to Israel as Jehovah Nissi—the Lord our Banner or the Lord our Victory (Ex. 17:14-16).

*And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner...*

Exodus 17:15

God’s plan for defeating Amalek teaches us a few things about spiritual warfare.

Salvation does not come from the North, the South, the East or the West, salvation comes from above in all cases.

When God revealed this name He was saying to His people, “You do not need to enter into battle alone. The battle is not yours it is Mine and I will lead you and strengthen you as you follow me.”

*I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God! For You*

*have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly. Salvation belongs to the LORD. Your blessing is upon Your people. Psalm 3:6-8*

Jesus wants to be our banner the same way that Jehovah was a banner for Israel (Is. 11:10, NIV).

*In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.*

5. Moses appointed additional rulers over the people (Ex. 18).

This section may be out of chronological order or else it may be a summary encompassing a couple of years (Compare Num. 10:11-12; 11:11-17; Deut. 1:6, 9, 13).

We cover this section more fully in our SOM course on Leadership, but for the sake of summary, notice three things from this chapter.

- a. We have what is sometimes called “the Jethro principle” of leadership—divide and conquer through team ministry (Ex. 18:21-22).
- b. We have the five-fold purpose for leadership (Ex. 18:19-20).
  - To take matters to God
  - To teach people the principles for living
  - To show them the way to walk
  - To show them the work to do
  - To raise up others to share in your work
- c. We have the qualifications for leadership (Ex. 18:21).
  - Men who are able
  - Men who fear God
  - Men who stand for the truth, honesty and integrity
  - Men without covetousness
- d. We have the results of this method of leadership (Ex. 18:23).
  - It will release others into leadership.
  - It will keep the leaders healthy and sane.
  - It will cause the people to find rest and peace.
  - It will release people into their place of function.

### **III. How did God provide supernaturally for the Israelites in the wilderness journey?**

There are many things that God did for His people to make their time in the wilderness successful (Deut. 8:4; 29:5; Neh. 9:19-21).

*Yet in Your manifold mercies You did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of the cloud did not depart from them by day, to lead them on the road; nor the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way they should go. You also gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, and did not withhold Your manna from their mouth, and gave them water for their thirst. Forty years You sustained them in the wilderness; they lacked nothing; their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.*

Nehemiah 9:19-21

All of these things were going to teach them humility and absolute dependence on God. These lessons would serve them well when it came time for them to possess their land of abundance. It is easy when you have nothing to acknowledge your dependence on God, but when you become rich it is easy to forget that without God you are still nothing (Deut. 8:7-17).

#### A. God provided manna.

God provided a strange new creation which they ended up calling “manna” which simply means, “What is it?” (Ex. 16:15).

Jesus indicated that He was the equivalent of “manna” or “bread from heaven” to us in the New Covenant. Just as this heavenly food would sustain the Children of Israel in their wilderness journey, feeding on Christ would sustain the believer during his or her earthly pilgrimage (John 6:31-40, 47-51).

*I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. 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.* John 6:47-51

Notice some things about manna that make for an apt parallel to Christ—the Word made flesh (John 1:14).

<b>Manna</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Christ</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Bread from heaven	John 6:31	Lord from heaven	I Cor. 15:47
The gift of God	Ex. 16:15	The gift of God	Rom. 6:23
Miracle bread, a new thing	Ex. 16:15	Miracle birth, a new thing	Is. 7:14
Came to where they were	Ex. 16:13	Came to where we were	Phil. 2:8
It was white—pure	Ex. 16:31	He was pure—sinless	I Pet. 2:22
It was to be fed upon	Ex. 16:8	He is to be fed upon	John 6:53
To be experienced daily	Ex. 16:4	To be experienced daily	Luke 11:3
Gathered in the morning	Ex. 16:13	Met with every morning	Ps. 5:3
Had the taste of oil	Num. 11:8	Holy Spirit upon Him	Acts 10:38
There was enough for all	Ex. 16:35	He is enough for all	I John 2:2
Provided health	Ps. 105:37	He provided for sickness	Mt. 8:17
Despised by some	Num. 11:4-6	Despised by some	Is. 53:3
It was ground and beaten	Num. 11:8	He was beaten and torn	Is. 53:5
It was the glory of the Lord	Ex. 16:7	He was the glory of the Lord	II Cor. 4:6

Further comparisons can be made between manna and the word of God (Deut. 8:3; Mt. 4:4; Jer. 15:16).

B. God provided quail (Ex. 16:13; Ps. 78:27-31).

It is probable that quail was not an ongoing provision because it appears that there was another giving of the quail later in their experience (Num. 11:4-6, 18-20; 31-35).

The children of Israel did have some animals with them but they evidently did not consider it wise to kill them for food otherwise they would not have the animals for other purposes including breeding, milk and sacrifices (Ex. 24:5; Lev. 8:2).

In addition, the Israelites seem to have bought or bartered for food and water from other peoples, such as the Edomites (Deut. 2:6-7).

C. God provided water from a rock (Ex. 17:3-7).

*Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. I Corinthians 10:1-4*

God providing water from a rock once again demonstrates that God does not need a lot to work with to provide for His people. Estimates have been made as to how much water it would take for a group of people that size with their flocks and herds in a wilderness. Experts have estimated that it would take about 11 million gallons of water or about 40 million liters.

The smitten rock is also a type of Christ. Note the following:

1. A rock is not a thing of natural beauty from which you would expect water (Is. 53:2).
2. This rock provided enough water for the entire camp (John 4:14).
3. This rock was the only true source of life to them (John 8:24).
4. This rock was smitten before it yielded water (John 19:34).
5. This rock was smitten for a rebellious people who murmured against God and who deserved no favor or grace from God (Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:1-8).
6. This water was provided based on God's covenant with Abraham (Ps. 105:41-42).

*He opened the rock, and water gushed out; it ran in the dry places like a river. For He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham His servant.*

7. This rock was only to be smitten once (Num. 20:7-11).

God judged Moses for smiting the rock the second time instead of speaking to it because he was disturbing one of God's types (Rom. 6:9-10; Heb. 9:23-28).

## Lesson 14

### Moses and the Law of God

#### I. What happened after the Children of Israel left Rephidim?

*In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai. For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain. And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel..." Exodus 19:1-3*

- A. They journeyed to the wilderness of Sinai (Ex. 19:1; Num. 33:15).

The wilderness was named after the mountain that would dominate this region of the country.

- B. They camped before Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:2).

This mountain is sometimes called Horeb.

“Horeb and Sinai were but one and the same mountain, which had two tops. Horeb was on the western side, near to which lay the plain of Rephidim; and Sinai was on the eastern side, on which the wilderness of that name bordered: so that the children of Israel, when they came from Rephidim, came from the western side, and took a circuit about and came to the eastern; which, according to a fore mentioned writer, was eight miles.” –John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible

Most scholars estimate that Sinai was the name for a mountain that was between 6000-7000 feet (2000+ meters) in elevation.

This is the same mountain on which Moses had received his call from God (Ex. 3:1).

- C. Moses went up to God upon the mountain (Ex. 19:3).

- D. God spoke to Moses from the mountain (Ex. 19:3).

#### II. What is the significance of the time frame for Moses ascension up the mountain?

The time frame for this event is in harmony with the feast of Pentecost and parallels the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts.

- A. Moses’ first encounter with God at Sinai was 50 days after Passover.

The days are accounted as follows:

The children of Israel left Egypt on the 15th day of the first month. There were 15 days left in the month. When you add another 30 days for the second month the total

comes to 45 days from Passover. They arrived at Sinai on the first day of the third month making the total 46 days (Ex. 19:1). Moses waited for three days for the people to be sanctified bringing the total to 49 days (Ex. 19:10-11). On the 50th day, God began to speak the words of the covenant to the congregation (Ex. 20:1).

- B. The disciples of Jesus experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit 50 days after Jesus death and resurrection.

Jesus showed Himself alive for 40 days (Acts 1:3). He ascended into heaven on the fortieth day (Acts 1:9-10). The disciples waited for 10 days until the Day of Pentecost had fully come (Acts 2:1-2) for a total of 50 days.

- C. There is an interesting correlation between what happened on Mount Sinai and what took place in the New Testament.

It should be noted that this event was not yet called “Pentecost” because there had been no giving of the law as yet. But it is significant that it did occur 50 days after the first Passover.

OT Pentecost	Reference	NT Pentecost	Reference
The Church in the Wilderness	Acts 7:38	The New Testament Church	
Quaking, Fire, Voice	Ex. 19:16-19	Wind, Fire, Tongues	Acts 2:2-4
Law written on tables of stone	Ex. 31:18	Law written on tables of heart	II Cor. 3:2-3
Law written by finger of God	Ex. 31:18	Law written by Spirit of God	Mt. 12:28
Aaronic Priesthood instituted	Ex. 28:1	Melchizedek Priesthood	Heb. 5:10
Ministration of death—3000	Ex. 32:28	Ministration of life—3000	Acts 2:41

### III. In the first giving of the law, how many times did Moses come up to the mountain?

The answer is a staggering seven times. Moses would have had to be pretty fit, because all of this took place over a span of about 10 days.

- A. The first time God revealed His desire to establish a covenant with Israel and make them a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:3-6).

*And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4 ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”*

Moses delivered God’s message from the people and the people made a commitment of obedience to God (Ex. 19:7-8).



*So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.*

- B. The second time (which is only implied) God communicated to Moses how he would speak to him so that the people would be able to know that he was indeed speaking to God (Ex. 19:9a).

*And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever."*

Moses came back to the people and told them what God had said (Ex. 19:9b).

- C. The third time God gave instruction to Moses regarding the preparation of the people for the receiving of the words of the covenant (Ex. 19:10-13).

God would come down to speak with Moses in the sight of all of the people from a thick cloud (smoke), but in preparation for this, the people had to get themselves ready to receive.

Note: I wonder how much preparation we go through before we open and read the Bible to receive the words of life.

1. God gave Moses instructions for the people to prepare themselves.
  - a. The people were to consecrate or sanctify themselves to the Lord.
  - b. The people were to wash their clothing.
  - c. The people were to wait for three days (presumably in fasting).
  - d. The people were to maintain a boundary around the base of the mountain.
  - e. The people were not to touch the mountain.
  - f. The people were to respond to the call of the trumpet to approach the mountain as one.
2. Moses went down the mountain and communicated this to the people (Ex. 19:14-15).
3. Moses also seemed to add another item to God's list which included the people abstaining from marital relations (Ex. 19:15; See also: I Cor. 7:5).

*And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not come near your wives."*

This instruction from Moses also suggests that this was a time of fasting and prayer.

*Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

4. After the preparation and the passing of three days things started to happen (Ex. 19:16-19). This included:
  - a. Thunder and lightning
  - b. A thick cloud of smoke
  - c. A loud and long trumpet blast
  - d. Trembling of the people
  - e. The Lord descending as fire in the midst of the smoke
  - f. Great quaking of mountain
  - g. God speaking to Moses

- D. The fourth time God called Moses back to the mountain to receive the terms of the covenant (Ex.19:20).

This was not a long visit. After Moses got up to the top of the mountain the Lord asked him to go back down almost immediately.

1. God asked Moses to go down to warn the people (Ex. 19:21-22).

- a. They were not to break through the barrier around the mountain.

This was a warning not to tear down the barrier around the perimeter that was restraining them from approaching the mountain.

- b. They were not to try to break through the smoke to get a better look at God.

*But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest He break out against them. Exodus 19:24b*

- c. The priests were to be sure that they were consecrated so that the Lord would not break out against them.

2. Moses argued for a moment with God (Ex. 19:23).

- a. Moses still believed that the people would be restrained because they had been warned.
- b. Moses still believed that the people would honor the barrier restrictions that had been placed before them.

3. God insisted that Moses go (Ex. 19:24).

God was growing impatient with Moses for his resistance to His instruction to go down (perhaps Moses is tiring from going up and down the mountain).

- a. Moses demonstrated his leadership naiveté.

He still thinks that the people will naturally respect the “Do Not Enter” sign around the mountain.

- b. God demonstrated His knowledge of the nature of mankind.

God could see what Moses could not see—the people out of control at the base of the mountain.

- c. God virtually rebuked Moses for not going quickly (Ex. 19:24).

*Then the LORD said to him, “Away! Get down and then come up, you and Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest He break out against them.”*

4. God instructed Moses to bring Aaron with him when he returned (Ex. 19:24).
5. Moses responded by going back down the mountain and speaking to the people (Ex. 19:25).
6. After Moses’ warning, God came down and audibly spoke to the whole nation giving them the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17).

- a. The people witnessed the supernatural display and were afraid (Ex. 20:18; Compare Ps. 77:18; Rev. 4:5; 8:5; 11:18).

- They were afraid of the thundering.
- They were afraid of the lightning flashes.
- They were afraid of the sound of the trumpet.
- They were afraid of the smoking mountain.
- They were afraid of the voice of God.

Let’s face it, they had a “sense overload” and they feared that if this continued they would die.

- b. The people asked not to be included in further revelation directly from God (Ex. 20:19; Heb. 12:18-21).

*For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. 20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: “And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.” 21 And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.”)... Hebrews 12:18-21*

The New Testament refers to Moses as the mediator of the Old Covenant. He was a mediator because the people could not receive directly from God (Acts 7:38; Gal. 3:19-20).

*Moses was with the assembly of God's people in the wilderness. He was the mediator between the people of Israel and the angel who gave him life-giving words on Mount Sinai to pass on to us. Acts 7:38, NLT*

- c. Moses encouraged the people not to be afraid (Ex. 20:20).
- d. Moses tried to explain why God made such an impressive show for them (Ex. 20:20).

*And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin." So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was. Exodus 20:20-21*

God was trying to induce in them a "fear of the Lord" to keep them from sinning and going against His commands." It was a fear tactic...that worked!

- e. The pressure was alleviated when the people agreed to stand afar off and Moses would go into the place where God was (Ex. 20:21).
- E. The fifth time Moses ascended the mountain he received additional laws from God (Ex. 20-23).

This appears to be somewhat unclear as to whether or not God spoke with Moses on top of the mountain or at the base of the mountain. However, when Moses recounts this incident in Deuteronomy, he makes it clear that he ascended the mountain (Deut. 5:5).

1. This giving of the law included instruction concerning some of the following:
  - a. Building of an altar to sacrifice to God (Ex. 20:22-26).
  - b. Master and servant relations (Ex. 21:1-11).
  - c. Dealing with intentional or accidental injuries inflicted to men or animals (Ex. 21:12-36).
  - d. Property rights, stealing and laws of restitution (Ex. 22:1-15).
  - e. General moral and social guidelines dealing with (Ex. 22:16-23:33):
    - Sexual relations outside of marriage (Ex. 22:16-17)
    - Sorcerers (Ex. 22:18)
    - Bestiality (Ex. 22:19)
    - Idolatry (Ex. 22:20)

- Mistreating strangers (Ex. 22:21)
- Treatment of widows and fatherless (Ex. 22:22-24)
- Lending and borrowing money and possessions (Ex. 22:25-27)
- Reviling God or cursing leaders (Ex. 22:28)
- Giving of firstfruits and firstborns (Ex. 22:29-30)
- Eating damaged meat (Ex. 22:31)
- Matters of justice and ethical treatment of others (Ex. 23:1-9)

f. Observance of the Sabbath (Ex. 22:10-13)

g. The Three Feasts (Ex. 22:14-19)

h. Rehearsal of Land Promises (Ex. 22:20-33).

2. After this revelation, Moses came down the mountain.

a. He told the people what God had said (Ex. 24:3).

b. The people committed themselves to obedience—twice (Ex. 24:3, 7).

*So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has said we will do." Exodus 24:3*

c. He wrote the words of the Lord in a book that would be called the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 24:4, 7).

d. He built an altar to the Lord at the base of the mountain (Ex. 24:4).

e. He set up twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes (Ex. 24:4).

f. He sent young men to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings (Ex. 24:5).

g. He consecrated the altar with the sprinkling of blood (Ex. 24:6).

F. The sixth time Moses went up the mountain he went with Aaron, his sons, the 70 elders (of which one was Joshua) (Ex. 24:9-10).

*Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel.*

1. It was at this time that they had a manifest revelation of the God of Israel, and under His feet was paving of sapphire stone that was almost translucent.

*There they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there seemed to be a pavement of brilliant sapphire, as clear as the heavens. Exodus 24:10, NLT*

2. It was at this time that God shared a covenant meal with the leaders of Israel (Ex. 24:11, NLT).

This was the feast of the covenant which was a meal celebrating the signing or sealing of the covenant between both parties.

*And though Israel's leaders saw God, he did not destroy them. In fact, they shared a meal together in God's presence!*

G. The seventh time Moses went up the mountain, God gave him the Ten Commandment in tablets of stone and further instruction (Ex. 24:12).

1. He asked the elders to wait at that point for him to return (Ex. 24:14).

*And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed, Aaron and Hur are with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them."*

Of course when Moses gave this instruction to them, he had no idea how long he would be gone. No doubt Aaron, Hur and the elders tired of waiting and returned to the camp. We find them there later when Moses eventually came down (Ex. 32:1).

*Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."*

2. He left Aaron and Hur in charge of the camp (Ex. 24:14).

3. He took Joshua with him much of the way (Ex. 24:13).

4. Moses saw the glory cloud and waited six more days outside of the cloud (Ex. 24:15).

5. On the seventh day God called to him to come higher into the midst of the cloud (Ex. 24:16-18).

6. He remained up there for forty days and forty nights (Ex. 24:18).

7. Joshua remained outside of the glory only to rejoin Moses when he came back (Ex. 32:17).

*So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.*

#### **IV. What did God do on this seventh trip of Moses to the mountain?**

A. God commanded Moses to build Him a sanctuary (Ex. 25:8).

*And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.*

1. He was to take an offering from the people for the materials needed to make it (Ex. 25:1-7).

*Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. Exodus 25:2*

This offering would include such things as:

- Metals of gold, silver and bronze
- Fabric of blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen
- Skins of goats' hair, ram skins dyed red, badger skins
- Acacia wood
- Oil, spices
- Gemstones especially onyx

2. He was to make all of the furnishings just as God described (Ex. 25:9, 40).

*According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.*

These furnishings included such things as:

- An ark of the covenant (Ex. 25:10-22)
- A table of showbread (Ex. 25:23-30)
- A lampstand with seven lamps (Ex. 25:31-40)
- Linen curtains, goats' hair curtains, rams' skin coverings (Ex. 26:1-14)
- Boards with their sockets (Ex. 26:15:25,29)
- Bars for support (Ex. 26:26-28)
- An inner and an outer veil (Ex. 26:31-37)
- A bronze altar (Ex. 27:1-8).
- An outer court of pillars, curtains, pegs for the curtains (Ex. 27:9-19)
- Oil for light (Ex. 27:20-21, Lev. 24:1-4)
- The golden altar of incense (Ex. 30:1-1-10)
- The bronze laver (Ex. 30:17-21)
- Garments for the priest including the breastplate (Ex. 28:1-43).
- Holy anointing oil (Ex. 30:22-33)
- Incense for the golden altar (Ex. 30:34-38)

3. He was to enlist skillful, anointed workers to help construct these items (Ex. 31:11).

*See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship.*

Exodus 31:2-5

4. He was to consecrate the priests for service to the tabernacle (Ex. 29:1-44)

5. He was to set it up just as God showed him (Ex. 26:30).

*And you shall raise up the tabernacle according to its pattern which you were shown on the mountain.*

B. God gave Moses instructions regarding the Sabbath (Ex. 31:12-17).

C. God gave Moses two tablets of stone (Ex. 31:18).

*And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.*

When people say that something is not “set in stone” they could not be referring to God’s commands which, in this case, were set in stone.

In a later class we will look at what the Children of Israel were doing as Moses delayed in coming down from the mountain. Most of Moses’ trips up and down the mountain had been very short in duration. Their faith would not be able to handle a 40 day delay.



## Lesson 15-17

### Moses and the Ten Commandments

#### I. What was God's purpose in giving the law to His people in the Old Testament?

A. The laws of God were to give insight into the character and nature of God.

There is a great website on the Ten Commandments ([bibletencommandment.org](http://bibletencommandment.org)) that explains this thought more fully under the question, "When did the Bible Ten Commandments come into existence?"

"The Bible Ten Commandments were not an afterthought by God, given to the Jews to keep them in line. The essence of the Ten Commandments has always been in existence, because they reflect the very nature and character of God. There are many references in the Bible that describe the Ten Commandment Law and that describe the character of God using the same words."

It also gives us this comparison:

- |                                 |                                      |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • God is Eternal (Rom. 16:26)   | • The Law is Eternal (Ps. 111:7-8)   |
| • God is Holy (Is 5:16)         | • The Law is Holy (Rom. 7:12)        |
| • God is Love (I John 4:8)      | • The Law is Love (Rom. 13:10)       |
| • God is Righteous (Ps. 145:17) | • The Law is Righteous (Ps. 119:172) |
| • God is Truth (Deut. 32:4)     | • The Law is Truth (Ps. 119:142)     |
| • God is Good (Luke 18:19)      | • The Law is Good (Rom. 7:12)        |
| • God is Light (I John 1:5)     | • The Law is Light (Pro. 6:23)       |
| • God is Pure (I John 3:3)      | • The Law is Pure (Ps. 19:8)         |
| • God is Great (Ps. 48:1)       | • The Law is Great (Hosea 8:12)      |
| • God is Spiritual (John 4:24)  | • The Law is Spiritual (Rom. 7:14)   |
| • God is Perfect (Mt. 5:48)     | • The Law is Perfect (Ps. 19:7)      |
| • God is Just (Deut. 32:4)      | • The Law is Just (Rom. 7:12)        |

Since the law reflects God's nature and character, it also reflects God's righteous standard for all of mankind.

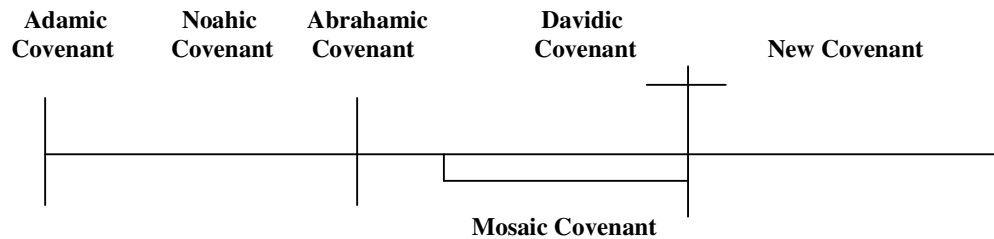
B. The laws of God were given to assist the Children of Israel in fulfilling and realizing the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant of grace (Gal. 3:15-18, NLT).

*Dear brothers and sisters, here's an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or amend an irrevocable agreement, so it is in this case. 16 God gave the promise to Abraham and his child. And notice that it doesn't say the promise was to his children, as if it meant many descendants. But the promise was to his child--and that, of course, means Christ. 17 This is what I am trying to say: The agreement God made with Abraham could not be canceled 430 years later when God gave the law to Moses. God would be breaking his promise. 18 For if*

*the inheritance could be received only by keeping the law, then it would not be the result of accepting God's promise. But God gave it to Abraham as a promise.*

1. The law or the Mosaic Covenant does not replace or change the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant.
2. The Mosaic Covenant was added along side of the Abrahamic Covenant in order that the seed promised in the Abrahamic Covenant would be insured.

Note the following chart:



- C. The laws of God were to reveal something of the nature and character of mankind (Gal. 3:19-22, NLT).

*Well then, why was the law given? It was given to show people how guilty they are. But this system of law was to last only until the coming of the child to whom God's promise was made. And there is this further difference. God gave his laws to angels to give to Moses, who was the mediator between God and the people. 20 Now a mediator is needed if two people enter into an agreement, but God acted on his own when he made his promise to Abraham. 21 Well then, is there a conflict between God's law and God's promises? Absolutely not! If the law could have given us new life, we could have been made right with God by obeying it. 22 But the Scriptures have declared that we are all prisoners of sin, so the only way to receive God's promise is to believe in Jesus Christ.*

1. Man is a prisoner of sin (Gal. 3:22).
2. Man is not capable of keeping God's requirements without assistance.

The man outside of Christ can only be humbled by the standard that God represents in His word. The law of God demonstrates to man his utter helplessness to fulfill its demands without divine assistance.

- D. The laws of God were to be a tutor for the people to lead them to Christ (Ga. 3:23-25, NIV).

*Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.*

Satan had always been out to pervert the godly seed line in order to make the promise of Genesis 3:15 impossible. The nation of Israel was that seed line and, therefore, would be the special object of Satan's attacks. Up to this point, Israel had demonstrated their weakness in keeping from idolatry.

God recognized Israel's bent toward rebellion and idolatry, and yet, He still was concerned about the fulfillment of His promises. In order to preserve the nation from pollution, He built a hedge around this nation.

1. This passage in Galatians indicates that the law was to guard us or to keep us in protective custody (Gal. 3:23).

The word for "kept" in this passage means "to guard, protect by a military guard, either to prevent hostile invasion, or to keep the inhabitants of a besieged city from flight." –Thayer's

2. This passage indicates that the law was to be a tutor (Gal. 3:24).

The meaning of this word in the Greek is literally "boy leader." It referred to a "guardian and guide of boys. Among the Greeks and the Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them before arriving at the age of manhood." –Thayer's

This boy guide was not the teacher, but his job was to make sure that the child got to the teacher or the desired destination.

3. This passage indicates that the goal was to prepare us or lead us to Christ.
  - a. The law does this by restraining us and keeping us on a moral path.
  - b. The law does this by introducing us to Christ in types and shadows (Heb. 8:1-8).
  - c. The law does this by showing us our need for Christ.

- E. The laws of God provided restraints on people who had no restraints.

God was never concerned about external righteousness, but God had to give external restraints because the people had no internal restraints.

1. The law was given because of lawlessness (I Tim. 1:8-11, NLT).

*We know these laws are good when they are used as God intended. 9 But they were not made for people who do what is right. They are for people who are disobedient and rebellious, who are ungodly and sinful, who consider nothing sacred and defile what is holy, who murder their father or mother or other people. 10 These laws are for people who are sexually immoral, for homosexuals and slave traders, for liars and oath breakers, and for those who*

*do anything else that contradicts the right teaching I that comes from the glorious Good News entrusted to me by our blessed God.*

2. There were a few people in history who understood what God was really after (Ps. 51:16-17; I Sam.15:22-23; Is. 1:13-15; Jer. 9:26).

*For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart--these, O God, You will not despise. Psalm 51:16-17*

## **II. What are the Ten Commandments and how are they divided?**

The fact that God the Father would give ten specific commandments on a tablet of stone should tell us that He is very serious about these specific commandments! They were to be “set in stone.”

All of the commandments have to do with relationships. We are reminded that when God created man, he wanted a family. He created us to have relationship with Him and relationship with each other. The Ten Commandments are given as a guide to make this a reality. Therefore we see the commandments divided into two sections or categories. The first commandments deal with man’s relationship to God. The remaining commandments deal with man’s relationship to his fellowman.

We could say that the primary purpose of the law is to restore relationships. It helps us to see how a sinful man can stand before a holy God and how sinful human beings can relate effectively one to one another.

Historically the commandments have been divided differently by different groups of people. The following chart will help to visualize this distinction.

#	Option 1	Option 2
1	You shall have no other gods before Me.	You shall have no other gods before Me.
2	You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.	You shall not make for yourself a carved image
3	Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.	You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.
4	Honor your father and your mother.	Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5	You shall not murder.	Honor your father and your mother.
6	You shall not commit adultery.	You shall not murder.
7	You shall not steal.	You shall not commit adultery.
8	You shall not bear false witness.	You shall not steal.
9	You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife	You shall not bear false witness.
10	You shall not covet your neighbor’s possessions.	You shall not covet anything that is your neighbors.

For the purpose of our study we will be using Option 1. Why? Because that is the way I learned them, that's why!

- A. The first commandment: You shall have no other gods before Me (Ex. 20:3-6; Deut. 5:7-10).

*You shall have no other gods before Me. 4 You shall not make for yourself a carved image--any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. Exodus 20:3-6*

Theme: Respect for Jehovah as the One True God

Many times in God's lists of things in the Bible, the first item on the list is the all encompassing one. Everything else flows from this first commandment which is the foundation of the whole list.

Note that the first in the list of the fruit of the Spirit is "love" (Gal. 5:22-23). The first in the list of the gifts of the Spirit is "word of wisdom" (I Cor. 12:7-10).

Faith in Jehovah as God is the key to our being able to have a relationship with God and it is the key to walking in the other nine commandments. Jesus indicated that this first commandment was both the first commandment and the greatest commandment (Mt. 22:35-38; Mark 12:28-31).

*Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. Matthew 22:35-38*

Faith in the one true God and loving God with all of heart means that we have no room left to worship other gods. The "other gods" to which God is referring are not just the gods made with wood and stone (although it includes that), but it also refers to the gods of self, money, possessions, power, popularity, sex, relationships or anything that takes the place of God in our lives. God is a jealous God and He wants to be number one in our lives.

*I am the LORD, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images. Isaiah 42:8*

Some of the gods that God would be referencing here included the gods that they encountered in Egypt, but it also included the gods that they would encounter that were worshipped by other nations. Many of these gods have a modern day counterpart. Note the following chart:

Pagan God	Reference	Definition	Modern Counterpart
<b>Teraphim</b>	Gen. 31:19, 30; Col. 2:18	Various angel-like figures used for consultation	Interaction with and worship of angels
<b>Leb</b>	Ex. 8:16-19	Egyptian earth god	Worship of nature
<b>Apis</b>	Rom. 1:25	Egyptian cattle god	Worship of creatures
<b>Molech Chemosh</b>	Lev. 18:21; 20:5; I Kgs. 11:7, 33	Gods to which parents would offer their children in sacrifice.	Abortion, infanticide
<b>Ishtar Astarte Ashtoreth Venus Aphrodite Isis</b>	I Kgs. 11:5; 11:33; Acts 19:35	Mother of earth and goddess of fertility usually depicted with exaggerated breasts. Prostitution was practiced in the worship of this goddess	Prostitution, sex clubs, pornography, augmentation and hyperawareness of sexual anatomy
<b>Tamuz Baal</b>	Judg. 6:25-32; I Kgs. 16:32	Male counterpart of Ishtar with male prostitutes in worship. Sex toys used in worship (as above also).	Sex and sex toy industry, infatuation with sex.
<b>Anat</b>	Not specifically mentioned in the Bible	A warrior goddess who often acted more like a male than a female.	Gender confusion, sex change, transgender styles.
<b>Queen of heaven,</b>	Jer. 7:18; 44:17-19	The heavens including the sun, moon and stars were worshipped	Astrology, Horoscopes
<b>Bacchus Dionysus</b>	Is. 5:22	Roman god of wine worshipped for its intoxicating and medicinal properties	Abuse of alcohol, drugs and other intoxicants.
<b>Epicureans</b>	II Tim. 3:4; Acts 17:18	Love of pleasure, living for pleasure and pleasure alone	Hedonism, party life, gluttony, sensuality
<b>Mammon</b>	II Tim. 3:2	Love of money and possessions	Materialism

1. God was so strong relative to this commandment that when it came to other gods, His people were not to...

- Mention the name of other gods (Ex. 23:13; Josh. 23:7).
- Enquire after their gods (Deut. 12:30).
- Prostitute themselves to other gods (Ex. 34:15).
- Bow down to other gods (Ex. 23:24).
- Sacrifice to or worship other gods (Ex. 34:14-16).
- Burn incense to other gods (Jer. 19:4; II Kgs. 22:17).
- Make any gods or representations of a god (Ex. 20:4; Lev. 19:4).
- Fear other gods (II Kgs. 17:37-38).

2. On other hand they were to...

- Destroy the altars and high places used for worshipping other gods (Ex. 34:13; Num. 33:52; Deut. 12:1-4).
- Burn other idols in the fire (Ex. 34:10-17; Deut. 7:25; 11:16).

God explained the reason for this when He called His own name “Jealous” (Ex. 34:14, NIV).

*Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.*

God also points out the stupidity of serving gods made with hands (Ps. 115:1-9; 135:15-18; Is. 44:7-20; 46:5-7).

*To whom will you compare me or count me equal? To whom will you liken me that we may be compared? 6 Some pour out gold from their bags and weigh out silver on the scales; they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god, and they bow down and worship it. 7 They lift it to their shoulders and carry it; they set it up in its place, and there it stands. From that spot it cannot move. Though one cries out to it, it does not answer; it cannot save him from his troubles. Isaiah 46:5-7, NIV*

- B. The second commandment: You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain (Ex. 20:7; Deut. 5:11).

*You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. Exodus 20:7*

In Israel this command was enforced rather severely (Lev. 24:10-16, Compare: Rev. 13:5-6 and Rev. 16:21).

*Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought each other in the camp. 11 And the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD and cursed; and so they brought him to Moses. (His mother's name was Shelomith the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.) 12 Then they put him in custody, that the mind of the LORD might be shown to them. 13 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 14 "Take outside the camp him who has cursed; then let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. 15 Then you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. 16 And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death.' All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the LORD, he shall be put to death. " Leviticus 24:10-16*

Theme: Respect God's name and the things that pertain to God

1. We honor the name of God by not using His name in a careless or frivolous way.

A person's name represents his nature and character. An ancient Jewish saying goes like this, "Himself is His name and His name is Himself." Proverbs teaches that having a good name is more precious than riches (Pro. 22:1). God wants His name to be exalted in the earth not denigrated (Ps. 148:13; Is. 12:4; Phil. 2:9).

2. We honor the name of God by honoring the things that are attached to His name.

This commandment is concerned about more than just our vocabulary. It is concerned about our attitude toward things that are holy to God and our personal devotion to Him. There are things that are precious to God that He wants us to see as deserving of respect in our attitude and conversation. Some of these things might include prayer, worship, the church, the word of God and the spiritual side of life in general (Think of comedians on TV).

3. We honor the name of God by living in a manner that is worthy of His name (Is. 48:1; Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; I Th. 2:12; I Tim. 6:1).

*Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. I Timothy 6:1*

In addition, the way we honor His name is by living in a manner that expresses to the world that God is number one in our lives. We drag God's name down when we profess to be followers of God but we do not live a life consistent with that profession (Luke 6:46; John 14:15).

*"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"*  
Luke 6:46

*"If you love Me, keep My commandments." John 14:15*

4. We honor the name of God by genuinely representing Him when we presume to speak in His name (Deut. 18:20; Ezek. 13:1-8).

*But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. Deuteronomy 18:20*

- C. The third commandment: Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy (Ex. 20:8-11; 31:12-18; 35:2-3; Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:12-15).

*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. Exodus 20:8-11*

God took this commandment very seriously and those who violated it could be put to death (Ex. 31:14).

*You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.*

Theme: Respect for God's priority system.



Kevin Conner in his book on law and grace calls this commandment the “Law of Rest and Refreshing.”

How does he come up with that title? I would think that if we go on the basis of how this commandment has often been interpreted, it should be called the “Law of Church Attendance.”

If you are a pastor or leader, you know that Sunday is no picnic and it is anything but a day of rest.

I am sure that Kevin Conner calls it the “Law of Rest and Refreshing” because it actually has to do with rest and taking care of ourselves so that we can endure to serve God all the days of our lives. God’s justification for giving this commandment is the fact that when God created the world, He worked six days and rested on the seventh. Did God need to rest? Absolutely not! God rested to provide an example for us who do need to rest.

Those who think they are keeping the fourth commandment by going to church on Sunday or Saturday are in error. The Sabbath was a command to rest from labor as God did from His when He created the universe.

The Sabbath day is not about giving God our time. If it were it would likely have been consistent with the first fruits biblical principle and would have been instituted on the first day of the week (Sunday) rather than the last.

In their celebration of the Sabbath the people of God were not to work and conduct their normal business affairs (Neh. 13:15-22) or bear heavy burdens (Jer. 17:19-27).

*Thus says the LORD: “Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.”* Jeremiah 17:21-22

What was God’s intent in relation to the Sabbath day? (Incidentally, in Israel they had many Sabbaths, but this command is speaking primarily of the Sabbath day which was to be a weekly thing.)

Jesus indicated that the Sabbath was made for man not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27).

*And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”*

In other words it should be something that benefits man rather than is cumbersome to man. It should be something that is for the blessing of man not the cursing of man. It was meant to be a time to shut down from the normal routines. As such:

1. It was meant to be a day to celebrate God's act of creation (Ex. 20:11).

*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.*

2. It was meant to be a day of rest from labor (Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:14).

*...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 ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. Deuteronomy 5:14*

3. It was meant to be a time to reflect on their deliverance from bondage (Deut. 5:15).

*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.*

4. It was meant to be a reminder of how God had separated them from the other nations (Ex. 31:13).

*Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: "Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you."*

*Tell the people of Israel to keep my Sabbath day, for the Sabbath is a sign of the covenant between me and you forever. It helps you to remember that I am the LORD, who makes you holy. -NLT*

5. Like so many other things in the Old Testament, the Sabbath was meant to prepare them for Jesus—the Lord of the Sabbath (Mt. 12:8).

This commandment is never once repeated in the New Testament by Jesus or the Apostles. They did not preach the command, but the truth contained in the command (See: Rom. 14:5-6; Col. 2:14).

*One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. Romans 14:5-6a*

They preached Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath.

- a. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath because He existed before the Sabbath existed (Col. 1:15-17).

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.*

- b. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath because He made all of the days including the Sabbath (John 1:3).

*All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*

- c. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath because He was the instrument of God to give the Sabbath commandment to Moses in the first place (Acts 7:38).

*This is he [Moses] who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us...*

- d. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath because He came to bring to fulfillment the reality of the Sabbath (Mt. 11:28-30; Heb. 4:3-11; Is. 28:12).

*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. Matthew 11:28-30*

The instruction of this command is to keep the Sabbath “holy” or “separated.” It is so easy not to take such a day to meditate on the Lord, be refreshed and recreate as a natural family.

- D. The fourth commandment: Honor your father and your mother (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; Eph. 6:1-3).

*Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. Deuteronomy 5:16*

Theme: Respect for God-given authorities in our lives

This has a great deal to do with our parents, but it also speaks of our elders in general and our relationship to all of those in authority. We are instructed by God to give honor to whom honor is due (Rom. 13:7). In doing so we are setting ourselves up for success in life.

- 1. God has established authority for several reasons.
  - a. Authority has been established by God to help us properly relate to God.

At times it is difficult to relate to God who we have not seen. Duly appointed authorities in our lives who are functioning as God intended can help us to see “God in the flesh.”

- b. Authority has been given by God to help us develop wisdom, understanding, knowledge and character (Luke 2:49-52).

Even Jesus grew in these areas as He submitted to His earthly parents.

*And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*

- c. Authority has been given by God to help protect us from exploitation.

Being under rightful authorities in our life provides a spiritual covering to us that can ensure protection from forces that would seek to destroy us (Ps. 91:1-13).

In Psalm 91 we are promised protection, deliverance and a place of refuge. We are promised angels who will keep charge over us to guard us against plague, famine and enemy attack. But all these promises are conditioned upon our being properly related to God’s covering. According to this Psalm, we are protected because:

- We are dwelling in the secret place of the Most High (vs. 1).
- We are abiding under the shadow of the Almighty (vs. 1).
- We are taking refuge under His wings (vs. 4).
- We have made the Lord our habitation (vs. 9).

- d. Authority has been given by God to come along side of us to give guidance and direction to the critical decisions of our life (Pro. 6:20-23).

*My son, keep your father’s command, and do not forsake the law of your mother. 21 Bind them continually upon your heart; tie them around your neck. 22 When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you awake, they will speak with you. 23 For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life...*

- e. Authority has been established by God to maintain order and to assist us in fulfilling purpose.

Without an understanding of authority, it is possible for “everyone to do what is right in their own eyes.” This attitude will lead to chaos as self-will and self-centeredness will prevail.

“Everyone is under certain God-ordained authorities, such as parents, government, and the church. The purpose of God-ordained authority is to provide protection, direction, instruction, and provision.” –Bill Gothard

2. God has established several authorities in our lives which we are to honor.

a. We are to have a respect for God (John 5:22-23).

*For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.*

b. We are to have a respect for parents (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3; Mal. 1:6).

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” Ephesians 6:1-3*

c. We are to have a respect for spouses.

- Wives are commanded to reverence or respect their husbands (Eph. 5:33).
- Husbands are commanded to honor their wives as heirs together of the grace of life (I Pet. 3:7).

d. We are to have a respect for civil authorities.

- We are commanded to be subject to the higher powers and give honor to whom honor is due (Rom. 13:1-7).
- We are commanded to honor the king (I Pet. 2:17).

e. We are to have a respect for employers or masters (I Tim. 6:1-2; Mal. 1:6).

*Christians who are slaves should give their masters full respect so that the name of God and his teaching will not be shamed. If your master is a Christian, that is no excuse for being disrespectful. You should work all the harder because you are helping another believer by your efforts.*

I Timothy 6:1-2, NLT

f. We are to have a respect for church leaders.

- We are to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake (I Th. 5:13).

- The elders who rule well are to be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine (I Tim. 5:17).

3. God established this commandment with a promise (Deut. 5:16; Eph. 6:1-3).

*...that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. Deuteronomy 5:16b*

- A long life
- A prosperous way

As with all of the commandments God took it seriously enough to give the death sentence to violators.

You could be killed if you dishonored your parents in any of the following ways:

- Striking them (Ex. 21:15)
- Reviling or cursing them (Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9; Pro. 20:20)
- Uncovering their nakedness (Lev. 18:7-8)
- Giving up your virginity before marriage (Deut. 22:13-21)
- Playing the fool (Pro. 10:1; 15:20; 23:24)
- Stealing from them (Pro. 28:24)
- Living an indulgent life of revelry and drunkenness (Pro. 28:7)
- Hanging out with evil companions (Pro. 28:7)
- Not listening to instruction (Pro. 6:8-9, 20-23)
- Despising them when they are old (Pro. 23:22)

As you can see, this commandment is not limited only to the “young” or “dependent” child, but also applies to an adult child. Though an adult is not required to “obey” or “submit” to the rules and commands of his parents, an important element of honor is respecting and caring for them in their old age (I Tim. 5:8).

E. The fifth commandment: You shall not murder (Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17).

Theme: Respect for human life

God is concerned about all of life and all forms of life, but the highest form of life on earth is human life. God allowed man to exploit the bounty of the earth and the animal life for the purpose of providing food after the flood (Gen. 9:2-4). They were also to use animals for prescribed sacrifices in their worship to God. At the same time God made it clear that He would avenge both the man and the beast who took the life of another human being (Gen. 9:5-6, NLT).

*And murder is forbidden. Animals that kill people must die, and any person who murders must be killed. Yes, you must execute anyone who murders another person, for to kill a person is to kill a living being made in God’s image.*

It is ironic that in today's world we have people who are extremely passionate about saving certain green spaces (old growth timber) and animal species (whales, toads, etc.) yet they are careless when it comes to issues that affect the life of humans (abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide).

F. The sixth commandment: You shall not commit adultery (Ex. 30:14; Deut. 5:18).

Theme: Respect for marriage and family

The family is the fundamental building block of society. The marriage vows between a man and woman are a holy covenant that should not be violated by sexual unfaithfulness under any circumstances. This commandment is designed to protect the institution of the family (Heb. 13:4).

*Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. –NIV*

*Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery. –NLT*

In the New Covenant Jesus indicated that we violate this commandment with we have a heart of lust for a woman who is off limits to us (Mt. 5:27-28). In a sense all sexual sin is covered by this admonition.

*You have heard that it was said, “Do not commit adultery.” But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. –NIV*

Divorce, pornography, child abuse, and many other socially destructive evils are a result of breaking this commandment in our hearts.

Under the Mosaic Law many sexual sins were punished severely. Note the following:

<b>Moral Violation</b>	<b>Description of Violation</b>	<b>Biblical References</b>	<b>Imposed Penalty</b>
<b>Incest</b>	Immoral behavior within the family and extended family.	Lev. 18:6-18; 20:11-12, 17-18; Deut. 27:20	Death or Barrenness
<b>Sodomy</b>	Sexual behavior with same sex (especially male to male)	Lev. 18:22; 20:13; I Cor. 6:9	Death
<b>Bestiality</b>	Sexual relations with an animal	Lev. 18:23; 20:15-16	Death to both the animal and man
<b>Adultery</b>	Sexual relations with other than one's spouse	Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:25-27	Death
<b>Prostitution</b>	The exchange of sexual relation for money or favors	Lev. 19:29; 21:9; Deut. 23:17	Death
<b>Premarital Sex</b>	Sexual relations between two unmarried parties	Deut. 22:28-29	Payment to father & marriage

The New Testament adds the term “fornication” to his list which includes any sexual activity outside of the marriage covenant (I Cor. 5:18; Eph. 5:3-5; Col. 3:5-6; I Th. 4:3-8). The sexual experience was intended by God to function within the confines of marriage only.

G. The seventh commandment: You shall not steal (Ex. 20:15; Deut. 5:19).

Theme: Respect for the rights and possessions of others

This commandment encourages us to live a life of contentment with such things as we have and to maintain a commitment not to take something that belongs to another (Heb. 13:5).

God established laws of restitution for those who had confessed or had been found out in relation to this violation (Ex. 22:1-13). The only exception to this was if you stole or kidnapped a person. In that case you would be put to death (Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7).

Often we steal in very subtle ways. It is more obvious when we actually take something out of a store or someone’s home. But here are some things worth thinking about:

1. Stealing is taking something that belongs to your parents without their permission.
2. Stealing is taking a woman’s virginity.
3. Stealing is accepting wages for time that you did not work (idleness).
4. Stealing is charging a customer for more than you actually did (padding a bill).
5. Stealing is eating produce from a grocery without paying for it at the till.
6. Stealing is borrowing something and either not returning it or returning it in a damaged state.
7. Stealing is taking a loan from a friend or relative and not paying it back.
8. Stealing is not giving your tithe to the house of God (Mal. 3:8-12).
9. Stealing is cheating on your taxes by not giving the government their due.
10. Stealing is smuggling things across borders to avoid customs charges.
11. Stealing is taking things home from your workplace that belong to your employer.
12. Stealing is refusing to repay a legitimate debt.
13. Stealing is buying or acquiring pirated material (movies, CD’s, etc.).
14. Stealing is taking towels from the hotel when you leave.

The cure for stealing is honest labor and generosity to others (Eph. 4:28).

*Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.*

H. The eighth commandment: You shall not bear false witness (Ex. 20:16; Deut. 5:20).

*You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.* Exodus 20:16



*You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. –NIV*

Theme: Respect for truth, justice and the reputation of others

The primary intent of this commandment dealt specifically with a person's actual witness or testimony that is given in a legal sense. Jesus had false witnesses that were paid to testify against him. However, this commandment also extends to all that we say or speak in relation to other people.

We should not have to put our hands on a Bible and "swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." Nor should we have to begin every sentence with "honestly or truthfully."

The ninth commandment emphasizes the value of our neighbor's good name and our personal commitment to honesty and integrity in all of our relationships with others. It forbids lying to or about others, giving false testimony or accusations, slander, gossip, or any other form of conversation or action that would seek to deface or destroy the reputation of another.

According to the law, a false witness could be in serious trouble themselves if they were discovered to be lying (Ex. 23:1; Deut. 19:15-21).

*Never convict anyone of a crime on the testimony of just one witness. The facts of the case must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. 16 If a malicious witness comes forward and accuses someone of a crime, 17 then both the accuser and accused must appear before the priests and judges who are on duty before the LORD. 18 They must be closely questioned, and if the accuser is found to be lying, 19 the accuser will receive the punishment intended for the accused. In this way, you will cleanse such evil from among you. 20 Those who hear about it will be afraid to do such an evil thing again. 21 You must never show pity! Your rule should be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. Deuteronomy 19:15-20, NLT*

In the New Testament there are many sins of the tongue that the believer is to guard against. All of these could be seen to be violations of this commandment. They include:

1. Tale-bearing or telling others those things that were told to him in trust and confidence (Lev. 19:16; Pro. 18:8; 20:19; 26:20, 22; 16:28).
2. Backbiting or speaking evil of a person in their absence (Pro. 25:23; II Cor. 12:20; Rom. 1:30).
3. Gossip or speaking idly or with evil intent of the affairs of others (Rom. 1:29; II Cor. 2:20; I Tim. 5:13).
4. Whispering or speaking secretly of others to one individual at a time in a plotting manner (Pro. 16:28; Rom. 1:29; II Cor. 2:20).

5. Bitterness or speaking to others about someone else in a manner which denotes inward feelings of anger, hurt, indignation or repulsion (Eph. 4:31).
  6. Slander or speaking falsehoods or misrepresentations which have the effect of damaging another person's reputation (Ps. 101:5; Col. 3:8; I Pet. 2:1).
- I. The ninth commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor's wife (Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21).

*You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.* Deuteronomy 5:21

Theme: Contentment in Marriage

It is interesting that these last two commandments deal with something internal rather than external. Covetousness deals with the root of sin while most of the commandments deal only with the fruit of sin. Covetousness was the root of the first sin in the Bible, the first sin recorded in the conquest of the promised land (Josh. 7) and the first sin record in the early church (Acts. 5:1-2). Covetousness is the sin that led to the betrayal of Jesus by Judas.

- J. The tenth commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor's possessions (Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21).

*You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.* Exodus 20:17

Theme: Contentment in Possessions

The key to victory in this area is cultivating a heart of contentment based on a trust in the Lord that He has given me everything that I need for my present happiness (Phil. 4:10-13; I Tim. 6:6-10).

- Contentment is the opposite of envy, covetousness, worry, ambition and striving.
- Contentment is a rest of mind, satisfaction, freedom from worry and being at ease in one's situation.
- Contentment implies appeasement to the point where one is not disquieted or disturbed by a desire for what one does not have, even though every wish is not fully gratified.
- Contentment is limiting one's desires to what one has.
- Contentment is maintaining a spirit of peace and a quiet confidence in all circumstances.
- Contentment is accepting God's plan for one's life.

### III. What was Jesus' relationship to the Ten Commandments and the Mosaic Law?

As Moses was the lawgiver of the Old Covenant, Jesus became the lawgiver of the New Covenant. In the New Covenant, however, Jesus is seen as the greater than Moses (Heb. 3:1-6).

Moses himself had indicated that one would come who was greater than he (Deut. 18:15, 18; Acts 3:22-23; 7:37).

*“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’” And the LORD said to me: “What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.” Deuteronomy 18:15-18*

The prophecy of Moses was fulfilled in Jesus (John 1:45; 7:40).

*Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” John 1:45*

*Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, “Truly this is the Prophet.” John 7:40*

A. He was greater than Moses because Moses represented the shadow or the type and Jesus brought in the reality (Col. 2:16-17; Heb. 10:1).

*And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Colossians 2:13-17*

B. He was greater than Moses because He made the law honorable (Is. 42:21).

*The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will exalt the law and make it honorable.*

C. He was greater than Moses because He internalized the law (Mt. 5:20). The Law of Moses dealt with the fruit of sin or the external acts. Jesus dealt with the root or the inner attitude that motivated the external act.

Notice how Jesus redefined the law, especially notice the repeated phrase, “You have heard that it was said to those of old...But I say...” (Mt. 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44; Luke 6:27).

Law Topic	Moses Said	Jesus Said
<b>Murder</b>	Do not kill (Deut. 4:2)	Do not hate (Mt. 5:21-26)
<b>Adultery</b>	Do not commit adultery (Dt. 5:18)	Do not lust (Mt. 5:27-)
<b>Divorce</b>	Permitted for any cause (Dt. 24:1-5)	Greatly restricted (Mt. 5:31-32; 19:4-9)
<b>Oaths</b>	Swear to the truth (Num. 30:2)	Your word is truth (Mt. 5:33-37)
<b>Retaliation</b>	An eye for an eye (Lev. 24:19-20)	Turn the other cheek (Mt. 5:38-42).
<b>Enemies</b>	Hate (Ex. 17:14-16; Dt. 7:1-2)	Love, bless, pray for (Mt. 5:44-47)

D. He was greater than Moses because he summarized the Ten Commandments into two commandments (Mt. 22: 35-40; Luke 10:27).

*Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” 37 Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: “‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 22:35-40*

Notice the progression of commandments throughout the Bible.

1. One commandment given in the garden to mankind (Gen. 2:16-17).
2. Ten commandments given under Moses to the nation of Israel.
3. Two commandments given under Jesus (Mt. 22:35-40).
4. The new commandment can be summarized in one word—love (I Cor. 13; I John 5:2-3).

*By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. I John 5:2-3*

*The proof that we love God comes when we keep his commandments and they are not at all troublesome. –Msg*

E. He was greater than Moses because in Christ the Mosaic Law is fulfilled and superseded (Mt. 5:17-18; Gal. 3:22-25; Rom. 8:1-4).

*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*

Matthew 5:17-18

*But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept*

*under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. Galatians 2:22-25*

*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

Romans 8:1-4

## Lesson 18

### Moses and the Golden Calf

#### I. What happened in the valley while Moses was up on the mountain?

A. Moses delayed for forty days on the mountain (Ex. 24:18).

*So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.*

1. This forty day period would be for the testing of the hearts of the Israelites.

God often takes us into testing periods to see what is truly in our hearts. Delay is one of those tests. How we handle these delays tells us a lot about our own level of spiritual maturity.

Israel did not do well during this delay. Instead of this delay strengthening their faith and their resolve to wait for God's best, they allowed this delay to cause them to question the faithfulness of God and they began to entertain the idea of forsaking Him only to return to what was more familiar in the days of slavery.

Israel had served other gods when they were in Egypt (Josh. 24:13-14) and the flesh nature in them still craved those gods.

*I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant. Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD!*

2. The Israelites grew impatient waiting for Moses (Ex. 32:1).

*Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." Exodus 32:1*

They wondered if something had happened to him. They made a rash and uninformed decision that he was not returning. They decided that they wanted to worship a god that they could see (and even control).

3. The delay of Moses was only the occasion that exposed what was in the hearts of the people already (Acts. 7:38-41).

The reality is that they had already rejected the Lord God in their hearts.

*This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the*

*living oracles to give to us, 39 whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, 40 saying to Aaron, "Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." 41 And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.*

The fact that later God states that they "turned aside quickly" to other gods indicates that they did not wait long (Ex. 32:8). It would have taken a fair amount of time to complain, persuade Aaron, make the calf, build the altar, offer the sacrifices and enter into full calf worship prior to the return of Moses.

- B. The Israelites put pressure on Aaron to make another god (Ex. 32:1; I Cor. 10:6-7).

*These events happened as a warning to us, so that we would not crave evil things as they did or worship idols as some of them did. For the Scriptures say, "The people celebrated with feasting and drinking, and they indulged themselves in pagan revelry." I Corinthians 10:6-7, NLT*

1. The people seem to have been united in their wrong desire.
2. The people went to Moses' brother (Aaron) and designated "second-in-command" to put forth this unified request.

This passage once again emphasizes why God does not govern His people with a democratic style of government. Even though the vast majority of the people thought this choice of direction was a good idea, it was a very bad idea indeed.

- C. Aaron yielded to the pressure of an impatient people.

Aaron proved to be a weak leader. It is not difficult to see why God did not choose him over his younger brother to be the deliverer of God's people. It is a lot different being in the position of support ministry and senior ministry. It is one thing to be able to speak in public; it is another thing to lead a people to a destiny.

True leadership is not giving people what they want or what they feel they need. It is guiding people to God's best for their lives even if the path is difficult or unpopular.

Support ministries often are tempted with the thoughts that they would make a good senior leader and are often critical of those who serve in those capacities in their lives. However, the pressures on a senior leader are much more intense than those on a support ministry. It is much easier to watch and be critical than it is to actually do the work that true leadership requires.

The question is, can you stand alone and do what is right no matter what. Would Aaron be willing to resist public pressure to be true to what God had said? Moses had already passed this “peer-pressure” test at Marah (Ex. 17:1-5).

D. Aaron responded by fashioning a golden calf (Ex. 32:2-5).

*So Aaron said, “Tell your wives and sons and daughters to take off their gold earrings, and then bring them to me.” 3 All the people obeyed Aaron and brought him their gold earrings. 4 Then Aaron took the gold, melted it down, and molded and tooled it into the shape of a calf. The people exclaimed, “O Israel, these are the gods who brought you out of Egypt!” 5 When Aaron saw how excited the people were about it, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the LORD!” –NLT*

1. He ordered them to donate the materials to make a golden calf.

Notice how responsive the children of Israel were with giving an offering when it was for the wrong things. How much money do people spend on the “other gods” of their life compared to how stingy they are with the true and living God?

2. He oversaw the construction of the calf.

3. He presented the completed calf to the people.

He actually referred to this calf as “the gods who brought them out of Egypt”, even though this calf was made out of their own possessions and did not exist before this. It came out of Egypt alright, but it was in the earrings and bracelets worn by the people.

4. He built an altar to the calf for their worship (Compare: Ex. 20:22-26).

God had given the congregation instructions concerning how to build an altar of sacrifice to Him. It is sad to see that their first such altar was built to a god made with their own hands (It should be noted that Moses had built one at the base of the mountain—Exodus 24:4).

5. He called a special feast day to inaugurate calf worship.

This feast would more resemble the feast of the pagan worshippers to the Egyptian gods rather than a feast to a Holy God.

E. The people worshipped the calf (Ex. 32:6).

*So the people got up early the next morning to sacrifice burnt offerings and peace offerings. After this, they celebrated with feasting and drinking, and indulged themselves in pagan revelry. –NLT*

1. They worshipped the calf by rising early.



They served their god with great personal sacrifice and energy. People usually find a way to rise early for the things that are really important to them. This shows that Israel was willing to give their time, their sleep, and their money in the service of this idol.

It is often amazing how rigorous Muslims and Buddhists are in the service of their God. We Christians are a bit “whimpish.”

2. They worshipped the calf with burnt offerings and peace offerings.
3. They worshipped the calf with over-indulgent, pagan revelry.

These were not the worship forms that they had learned from service to the true God.

Unfortunately, this “pagan revelry” most likely included sexual immorality (possibly drunken orgies).

The people are describes as “unrestrained” which seems to support the idea that this was a situation out of control.

The word that is rendered “unrestrained” literally means “to let loose.”

Notice the various translations of this verse...

*...the people were naked...* --KJV  
*...the people were out of control...* --CEV  
*...the people ...were stripped...* --Darby  
*...the people had been committing adultery...* --LB  
*...the people were simply running wild...* --Msg

Note: Calf worship was later restored under the leadership of Jeroboam when he set up his counterfeit religions system after the kingdom was divided (I Kgs. 12:28-32). Jeroboam used the same words as Aaron when he presented his idols to the people.

*Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!*  
I Kings 12:28b

## II. What was God’s reaction to the sin of Israel?

*The people made a calf at Mount Sinai; they bowed before an image made of gold. 20 They traded their glorious God for a statue of a grass-eating ox! 21 They forgot God, their savior, who had done such great things in Egypt--22 such wonderful things in that land, such awesome deeds at the Red Sea. 23 So he declared he would destroy them. But Moses, his chosen one, stepped between the LORD and the people. He begged him to turn from his anger and not destroy them. Psalm 106:19-23, NLT*

A. God saw what Israel was doing in the valley (Deut. 9:11-12).

*And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant. Then the LORD said to me, "Arise, go down quickly from here, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly; they have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them; they have made themselves a molded image."*

While the commandments were in the making, they were also in the breaking. He not only saw everything, He heard everything that they said.

- B. God told Moses to get down the mountain and confront the people that he (Moses) had led out of Egypt (Ex. 32:7).

*And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For **your people** whom you **brought** out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves."*

- C. God wanted to disown them based on their breaking of the covenant (Ex. 32:7).

At this point God's covenant with Israel was a conditional covenant based on their obedience to God (Ex. 19:5-6).

*Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.*

- D. God expressed His desire to destroy the people for their disloyalty (Ex. 32:9-10).

*And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."*

- E. God told Moses that He would start again from him and his offspring (Ex. 32:10).

Along about now, this may have sounded pretty good to Moses if he was only thinking about himself. If this could indeed happen, Moses would end up being as significant as Abraham and would be revered on the same level for the rest of history.

- F. God told Moses to step out of the way and let God go to work (Ex. 32:10).

This now became another test for Moses. Would he act in his own self-interest? Would he consider what was best for others? Would he be at all concerned about a god who was ready to annihilate an entire people group?

### **III. What was Moses' response to God's reaction?**

Moses interceded on behalf of the people (Ex. 32:11; Deut. 9:19).

- A. In doing so he once again demonstrated how he was the mediator or the "go-between" in relation to the Old Covenant.

B. In doing so he reminded God of three things.

1. Moses reminded God that the Israelites were His people not Moses' people (Ex. 32:11, NLT).

*But Moses pleaded with the LORD his God not to do it. "O LORD!" he exclaimed. "Why are you so angry with your own people whom you brought from the land of Egypt with such great power and mighty acts?"*

2. Moses reminded God that His reputation and His name were at stake (Ex. 32:12).

*Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, "He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth"? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people.*

If God would have killed the Israelites at this point it would have given great credence to the argument made earlier by some that they were taken out in the wilderness to be killed (Ex. 16:3; 17:3).

3. Moses reminded God of the promises that he had given to Abraham, Isaac and Israel (Ex. 32:13; See also: Ex. 6:8).

*"Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'"*

This is interesting because this is the first time that the word "Israel" is used in connection with Abraham and Isaac. Up until now the third reference has always been to "Jacob" (i.e. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). We know that Jacob was renamed "Israel" but the children God were called Israel and not "Jacob." Moses is making a point that these promise were not just to him and his family but all of the peoples who descended from Jacob.

C. In doing so he persuaded God to change His mind (Ex.32:14).

*So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.*

*Then the LORD relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened. –NIV*

*So the LORD withdrew his threat and didn't bring against his people the disaster he had threatened. –NLT*

*For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was angry with you, to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me at that time also.*

Deuteronomy 9:19

Can God repent or change His mind? This seems to conflict with other clear passages (Num. 23:19; Tit. 1:2).

*God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*

Numbers 23:19

“This is spoken merely after the manner of men who, having formed a purpose, permit themselves to be diverted from it by strong and forcible reasons, and so change their minds relative to their former intentions.” –Adam Clarke

It is safe to say that God did not destroy Israel and He knew that He would not destroy Israel. Yet He deliberately put Moses into this crucial place of intercession, so that Moses would have an opportunity to display and develop God’s heart for the people, a heart of love and compassion.

Moses prayed just as God wanted him to. He prayed as if heaven and earth, salvation or destruction, depended on his prayer. This is how God waits for us to pray.

God was looking for someone who would stand in the gap for the sins of the people and He found such a man in Moses (Ezek. 22:30-31).

*“So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads,” says the Lord GOD.*

#### **IV. What did Moses do when he came down from the mountain?**

A. Moses rejoined Joshua at the base of the mountain (Ex. 32:15-17).

1. Joshua was the only one who waited for Moses while he was on the mountain.
2. Joshua was the first one to point out the strange noises coming from the camp (Ex. 32:17-18, NLT).

*When Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting below them, he exclaimed to Moses, “It sounds as if there is a war in the camp!” But Moses replied, “No, it’s neither a cry of victory nor a cry of defeat. It is the sound of a celebration.”*

B. Moses threw down the tablets of stone in anger (Ex. 32:19).

*So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing. So Moses’ anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.*

As soon as Moses got near the camp and saw the people dancing he got hot with anger.

1. This anger was not anger that was out of control.

It was not a reaction, it was calculated. By throwing down the tablets he was demonstrating in the natural what they had done in the spiritual realm.

Moses had acted at times in anger in the wrong way.

- a. In anger he had killed the Egyptian (Ex. 2:11-12).
  - b. In anger he struck the rock to get water (Num. 20:10-11).
2. This anger was the type of anger that God has (Ps. 4:4; Eph. 4:26).

*Be angry, and do not sin.* Psalm 4:4a

*Don't sin by letting anger gain control over you.* –NLT

- C. Moses ground the golden calf into powder and made the people drink it (Ex. 32:20; Deut. 9:21).

*Then I took your sin, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it and ground it very small, until it was as fine as dust; and I threw its dust into the brook that descended from the mountain.* Deuteronomy 9:21

1. This would demonstrate that their god had no power.
2. This would remove any possibility of the idol being restored.
3. This would provide an immediate judgment for their sin.

What would happen if you ground gold into a fine powder and put it in water to drink?

I found this explanation:

“Gold is insoluble in water, being nineteen times heavier with a specific gravity of 19.5. In fine powder it assumes a colloidal condition, and added to water results in a coloration that appears to be a solution. As the particles are made finer, the bulk is greatly increased and acquires an ‘apparent’ specific gravity permitting its suspension in water, giving the liquid a deep red color. Scientific records state that “colloidal” gold in water is a rose-red color when the particles are of 10 micron size in a dilution of 1 to 100,000 (10 microns equal .0003937 or 0.0004 inches). From this you will see that gold in “dust” size will color water as “blood”, which means this calf of gold need not have been very large to color sufficient water blood-red to furnish drinks to at least two or more million people.

“Colloidal gold can be made in many ways but the method of Moses is the best under the circumstances in the wilderness. The burning removed the impurities; the stamping (beating) reduced it to thin sheets because of the ductability of gold. Gold leaf can be made so thin that it requires 280,000 to make one inch. Sheets as thin as 0.000004 have been made. Then the grinding became easy, and further information proves that Moses ground it very fine, as fine as dust, reducing it to the size of colloidal gold; this cast into the brook would make the water blood-red. It was non-toxic (impurities having been burned out) and was inhibitory to germ life. The resultant waters would be blood-red and possess purifying qualities. All of this was a fitting type of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

### **Find source**

D. Moses rebuked Aaron for his faulty, unprincipled leadership (Ex. 32:21-24).

1. Aaron tried to minimize the situation (Ex. 32:22a).

*So Aaron said, “Do not let the anger of my lord become hot.*

*“Calm down, it is not as bad as you think!”*

*“Do not be angry, my lord,” Aaron answered. “You know how prone these people are to evil.” –NIV*

2. Aaron shifted blame to the people (Ex. 32:22b-23).

*You know the people, that they are set on evil. For they said to me, ‘Make us gods that shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’”*

3. Aaron lied and underplayed his role (Ex. 32:24).

*And I said to them, “Whoever has any gold, let them break it off.” So they gave it to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out.*

We put the gold in the fire and “out popped this calf.” It was a miracle!

*I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. –Amp*

*So they brought them to me and I threw them into the fire, and . . . well . . . this calf came out! –LB*

Actually, Aaron might have taken more responsibility had he known that it was only through Moses’ prior intercession that God did not kill Aaron (Deut. 9:20).

*And the LORD was very angry with Aaron and would have destroyed him; so I prayed for Aaron also at the same time.*

E. Moses was concerned how this sinful act might play into the hands of their enemies (Ex. 32:25).

When God's special people behave like the heathen they ruin their testimony among the world. Israel was called to be a special people so that they could be a nation of God's priests or God's representatives to the world. When David sinned as God's representative on the earth it did the same kind of damage (II Sam. 12:14).

*However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die.*

F. Moses challenged the people to take sides (Ex. 32:26).

*...then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, "Whoever is on the LORD's side--come to me!" And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him.*

This was very similar to the challenge by Elijah on Mount Carmel (I Kgs. 18:21).

*And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.*

1. Only the Levites responded.

Moses and Aaron were Levites and this may have played into their decision to follow Moses. However, it should be noted that there may have been some Levites who did not respond (Ex. 32:29).

2. On the basis of this response, God would eventually reward the Levites with the priesthood.

God's original plan was for the entire nation to be priests and the firstborn sons in all of the families of Israel would serve in the priestly office. After this incident, however, God choose one tribe in the place of the firstborn to act in His behalf (Num. 3:12; 8:14-18; 18:6).

*Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine... Numbers 3:12*

G. Moses ordered the Levites to take vengeance on God's behalf (Ex. 32:27-29).

1. The Levites were challenged to go through the camp and kill the idolaters (Ex. 32:27).

a. This meant that they would have to kill companions, friends and neighbors.

b. Since they only killed 3000 out of a potential three million, they most likely concentrated on the ring-leaders of the movement.

- c. Even though this judgment seems very harsh it was meant to instill a fear of the Lord that was needed for God's army. It also seems to have purged them from idolatry for the rest of the journey.
2. The Levites received a blessing from Moses for their loyalty to the Lord and their willingness to do the difficult thing (Ex. 32:29).

*Then Moses told the Levites, "Today you have been ordained for the service of the LORD, for you obeyed him even though it meant killing your own sons and brothers. Because of this, he will now give you a great blessing."*

*Then Moses told the Levites, "Today you have been ordained for the service of the LORD, for you obeyed him even though it meant killing your own sons and brothers. Because of this, he will now give you a great blessing." –NLT*

- H. Moses interceded once again for the people (Ex. 32:30-34).

*Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin--but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written." And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book. Now therefore, go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin."*

1. Moses rebuked the people and told them he would try to become an atonement for their sin (Ex. 32:30)
2. Moses returned up the mountain to intercede again in behalf of the people (Ex. 32:31-32).
  - a. Moses did not minimize what Israel had done but called it a "great sin" (Ex. 32:31).
  - b. Moses asked God to forgive them.
  - c. Moses asked God to blot his name out if He needed someone to punish.

Paul later expressed the same spirit when it came to his brethren the Israelites (Rom. 9:3-4a).

*For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites...*

3. The Lord indicated that He would bring judgment upon those who had sinned (Ex. 32:33-34).
  - a. Moses found out that a sinful man cannot provide atonement for another sinful man. The one who sinned must bear his own guilt (Ezek. 18:20).



*The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.*

G. God brought a further judgment upon the entire nation (Ex. 32:35).

*So the LORD plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made.*

I wonder how Aaron felt now?

## Lesson 19

### Moses and the Presence of God

#### I. What was God's instruction to Moses after the golden calf incident was over?

- A. God commanded Moses to go forward on their journey (Ex. 33:1).

*Then the LORD said to Moses, "Depart and go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.'"*

- B. God reaffirmed His purpose to take them into the land (Ex. 33:1-3).

- C. God indicated that He would send an angel to lead them instead of leading them personally (Ex. 33:2-3, NIV).

*I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way.*

The King James and the New King James are slightly different here and they lead us to believe that the angel was once again the Angel of the Lord by using the phrase "My Angel." But the Hebrew does not have the word "my" in it and in other places the Angel of the Lord leading them was equivalent to God leading them (Ex. 3:2; 14:19; 23:20; Is. 63:9).

*In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them and carried them all the days of old. Isaiah 63:9*

Most other translations simply say that God would send "an angel." Remember an angel is a divine messenger.

Up until now the Lord had led them with His Presence (Deut. 4:37).

*And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power...*

#### II. What was the response of the people to this news from God?

- A. The people mourned (Ex. 33:4-6).

*And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do*

*to you.”’ So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb.*

Sometimes when people sin they do not realize the full impact or the cost of their sin. Esau wept bitterly when he realized he had lost the birthright that he had despised (Gen. 27:38). Peter wept bitterly when he realized the disfavor of the Lord after his denial of Jesus (Mt. 26:75).

The Israelites may have wondered exactly what being led by “an angel” instead of “The Angel” would mean for them.

1. Would the pillar of cloud or fire no longer be there?
2. Would God still help them in battle?
3. Would the manna be taken away?

Remember that one of the names associated with the manna was “the glory of the Lord” (Ex. 16:7).

#### B. Moses sprang into action.

Rather than running away from the Presence of the Lord as Adam had (Gen. 3:8), he ran to the Presence of God.

1. Moses set up the tent of meeting (Ex. 33:7-11).

*Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp. 8 So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, that all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle. 9 And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses. 10 All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man in his tent door. 11 So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.*

- a. This tent was removed from among the people.
- b. This tent became Moses’ special place of communion with the Lord.
- c. This tent was a set place where God would speak to Moses face to face (Ex. 33:11; See also: Num. 12:8; Deut. 34:10).

*But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face... Deuteronomy 34:10*

We know that these face to face encounters were still somewhat veiled with a cloud, because the Bible declares that no one has ever seen God in His full majesty (John 1:18).

- Jacob had encountered God face to face (Gen. 32:30).
- Gideon had an encounter with God face to face (Judg. 6:22).
- One day we will all see God face to face (I Cor. 13:12).

*For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*

- d. This tent of the meeting would remain in place until the new tabernacle commanded by God had been erected.

In some ways it could be said that this tent of the meeting was incorporated into the tabernacle because the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place are referred to later as the “tent of meeting” (Ex. 39:40; 40:29).

2. Moses met with God and attempted to change His mind and not write the Israelites off as His People (Ex. 33:12-13).

*Then Moses said to the LORD, “See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people.’ But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.’ Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people.”*

- C. Moses found favor or grace in the sight of the Lord (Ex. 33:14-17).

*And He said, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” 15 Then he said to Him, “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. 16 For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth.” 17 So the LORD said to Moses, “I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.”*

1. He indicated that if God did not go with them that he was not going either (Ex. 33:15).
2. He argued that he would have no authority with the people without God’s presence in the midst (Ex. 33:16).
3. He indicated that it would be hard to convince people that he was truly walking in the favor of the Lord if God did not confirm that fact with an obvious manifestation of His presence among them.

Moses seemed to have a clear idea of what it was to have the grace and favor of God on one's life. If God's favor or grace is upon you...

- It should be evident to all.
- It should be seen by God's clear leading into His purposes.
- It should be confirmed by God's abiding presence (Ex. 34:9).

*Then he said, "If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we are a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance."*

It should be noted that the favor of God on Moses' life (the leader) proved extremely beneficial to those who followed Moses. God may have wanted to divorce the people for their spiritual adultery, but because He favored Moses He also blessed Moses' people.

### **III. What was Moses' attitude about the presence of God?**

- A. Moses first encountered the presence of God at the burning bush (Ex. 3:5; Acts 7:33).
- B. Moses was engulfed in the presence of God on Mount Sinai (Ex. 24:16).
- C. Moses longed for an inside look at the glory of the Lord (Ex. 33:18).

*And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."*

David had a similar desire (Ps. 27:4).

*One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.*

Moses had already witnessed an intimacy with God that had been second to none up to this point in history. But he was not satisfied...He wanted more!

- D. Moses was rewarded for his godly desire (Ex. 33:19-23, NLT)

*The LORD replied, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will call out my name, 'the LORD,' to you. I will show kindness to anyone I choose, and I will show mercy to anyone I choose. 20 But you may not look directly at my face, for no one may see me and live." 21 The LORD continued, "Stand here on this rock beside me. 22 As my glorious presence passes by, I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed. 23 Then I will remove my hand, and you will see me from behind. But my face will not be seen."*

This was fulfilled when Moses went back up to the mountain for the second giving of the law (Ex. 34:5-7).

God loves to respond to these kinds of desires in our hearts (Ps. 37:4).

*Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.*

- E. Moses knew that the worst judgment of all is to dwell outside of the presence of the Lord (Lev. 23:3; Ps. 51:11).
1. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord when he refused to repent (Gen. 4:16).
  2. Uzziah was banned from the presence of the Lord after his sin of presumption (I Chr. 26:16).

When we have sinned we often hide from the presence of God (Gen. 3:8). When we are running from the “will of God” we run from the presence of God (Jonah 1:3).

#### **IV. How did God manifest His presence in the wilderness?**

A. God manifested His presence in very positive experiences.

1. God manifested His presence in the pillar of cloud (Ex. 16:10).
2. God manifested His presence in the pillar of fire (Deut. 5:24).
3. God manifested His presence in the manna (Ex. 16:7).
4. God manifested His presence in the supernatural displays on the mountain (Ex. 20:18).
5. God manifested His presence at the tent of the meeting (Ex. 33:9).
6. God manifested His presence at the inauguration of the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-38).

B. God manifested His presence in some negative experiences.

1. God manifested His presence to Miriam and Aaron in rebuke (Num. 12:5).
2. God appeared to bring judgment upon Korah and his company (Num. 16:19).
3. God appeared when the congregation murmured against Moses and Aaron’s leadership (Num. 16:41-42).

#### **V. Why did God instruct Moses to build a Tabernacle?**

God asked Moses to build Him a sanctuary so that He could dwell among or in the midst of His people (Ex. 25:8).

*And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.*

- A. God's heart has always been to be in and with His people (Num. 35:34; I Kg. 6:11-14; Ps. 132:13-14; John 14:17).

This desire to be with His people is thoroughly consistent with God's expressed desire for relationship and a family.

*For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: "This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it."*

Psalm 132:13-14

He expressed this desire when He spoke to Solomon regarding the Temple,

*The word of the LORD came to Solomon: "As for this temple you are building, if you follow my decrees, carry out my regulations and keep all my commands and obey them, I will fulfill through you the promise I gave to David your father. And I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel."*

I Kings 6:11-13

- B. God has always made provision for His dwelling among His people.

1. The Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8).
2. The Gate of Eden (Gen. 3:24).
3. The Altar of Stone (Gen. 8:20; Ex. 20:24-25).
4. The Tabernacle of Moses (Ex. 25:8).
5. The Tabernacle of David (I Chr. 15:1; 16:1).
6. The Temple of Solomon (I Kg. 8:1-13).
7. The New Testament Church (Mt. 18:20; 28:20).
8. The New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1-3).

- C. God's dwelling with man has always been on His terms and according to His pattern (Ex. 25:9).

*According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.*

## **VI. What does the Tabernacle of Moses teach us about approaching God's presence?**

God has a proper way and an improper way of approach. If we are to experience His presence in full measure we must approach God the way He wants to be approached. He is the one that sets the terms for our relationship with Him.

- A. God is a God of order and has a plan and a pattern for everything that He does.

1. There was order in creation (Gen. 1-2).
2. There was a pattern for the first man (Gen. 1:26; 5:1).
3. There was a pattern or divine order for acceptable worship (Leviticus).
4. There was an order for conquest in the taking of the land (Joshua).

5. There was an order in the singers and ministry in the Tabernacle of David (I Chr. 6:32).

*They were ministering with music before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they served in their office according to their order.*

6. The New Testament church is to be a place of order (Col. 2:5).

*For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.*

- B. God is very detailed and exact about how he wants things done.

All you have to do is read the book of Leviticus to know that God is very detailed and exact about how He wants things done. People died by divine judgment when they did not follow some of those details. Many churches have good intentions, but they are not finding the blessing of God. If we are going to be successful we will have to be like David and seek Him after the due order (I Chr. 15:13).

*For because you did not do it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order.*

- C. God provided the pattern for every structure that He ever commanded to be built.

1. The Ark of Noah (Gen. 6:14-16)

*Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.*

2. The Tabernacle of Moses (Ex. 25:9,40)

*According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it. Exodus 25:9*

3. The Temple of Solomon (I Chr. 28:11-12, 19)

*Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; and the plans for all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, of all the chambers all around, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries for the dedicated things... "All this," said David, "the LORD made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans."*

4. Ezekiel's Temple (Ezek. 43:10-12)



*Son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern. And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the temple and its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, its entire design and all its ordinances, all its forms and all its laws. Write it down in their sight, so that they may keep its whole design and all its ordinances, and perform them. This is the law of the temple: The whole area surrounding the mountaintop is most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple.*

5. The New Testament Church (I Cor. 3:10)

*According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.*

6. The City of God (Rev. 21:15-7)

Note that everything had to be measured. It had to measure up to the Divine standard.

*And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.*

D. The glory of God can only fill that which is according to the pattern.

1. The Ark of Noah (Gen. 6:22; 7:1)

*Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.*

Genesis 6:22

*Then the LORD said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation." Genesis 7:1*

2. The Temple of Solomon (II Chr. 5:1-14)

*...indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying: "For He is good, for His mercy endures forever," that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God. II Chronicles 5:13-14*

3. Ezekiel's Temple (Ezek. 43:4-5)

*And the glory of the LORD came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east. The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple.*

4. The New Testament Church (Eph. 3:17-21; Col 1:27)

*...to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:19-21*

5. The City of God (Rev. 21:10-11)

*And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.*

E. The pattern of God cannot be violated if we are to experience the full blessing of God.

We may experience a measure of blessing, but the closer we can come to God's plan and pattern the greater the blessing will be. There are some who tampered with the pattern and found very negative results.

1. The Example of Cain (Gen. 4:1-16; Heb. 11:4)
2. The Example of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-2)
3. The Example of Hophni and Phineas (I Sam. 4)
4. The Example of Uzziah (I Chr. 26:16)

<b>VIOLATOR</b>	<b>VIOLATION</b>	<b>JUDGMENT</b>
<b>Cain</b>	His own form of worship And a bloodless offering	Banishment from the presence of God at the gate of Eden
<b>Nadab and Abihu</b>	Offering strange fire that was not kindled by God	Death
<b>Hophni and Phineas</b>	Uncleanness and improperly moving the ark	Death, Ark in Captivity
<b>Uzziah</b>	Presumption to enter into the priestly office	Leprosy and banishment from the House of God

**VII. How did God put His stamp of blessing on the Tabernacle?**

The rest of the Book of Exodus deals primarily with the construction of the tabernacle, its furnishing, its utensils and the priestly garments.

A. Moses was careful to do everything according to God's pattern.

The key phrase in Exodus 39-40 is "as the Lord commanded Moses." It is used at least 15 times in two chapters (See: Ex. 39:1, 4, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31, 42-43; 40: 16, 19, 21, 23, 24, 27, 32-33).

Note these special verses:

*Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished. And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did. Exodus 39:32*

*According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did all the work. Then Moses looked over all the work, and indeed they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, just so they had done it. And Moses blessed them. Exodus 39:42-43*

*Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did. Exodus 40:16*

*And he raised up the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the screen of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. Exodus 40:33*

B. God rewarded Moses for his carefulness by coming down in a glorious manifestation of His presence (Ex. 40:34-38).

*Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 36 Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. 37 But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. 38 For the cloud of the LORD was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.*

## Lesson 20

### Moses and the Ceremonial Law

#### I. What is the purpose for the ceremonial law?

When we use the term “ceremonial law” we are referring to that aspect of the law that God gave in addition to the civil and moral laws as reflected in the Ten Commandments and supporting laws. The ceremonial laws had more to do with worship and how a sinful nation could stay in right relationship to a holy God.

Kevin Conner in his book on law and grace offers some reasons for the ceremonial law (Conner, pages 60-61). What follows is a summary of some of his comments.

- A. The ceremonial law was given to provide a temporary remedy for sin (Heb. 10:11-14).

*And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. 14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.*

What the law provided included the sacrifice of animals to God for intentional and unintentional sins. However, God only accepted this arrangement in so far as these sacrifices and offerings pointed to the eventual sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

The blood of animals did not cleanse sin, it only covered sin until The Lamb who would take away and bear the sins of the world (Ps. 32:1; 85:2; John 1:29; I John 1:7; Heb. 9:9-15; 10:1-4).

*For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Hebrews 10:1-4*

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” John 1:29*

*But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. I John 1:7*

- B. The ceremonial law was given to teach Israel that there were conditions for God’s dwelling among His people.

Through the teaching of the tabernacle, priesthood and sacrifices God demonstrated that His glory and presence could only dwell among His people on

the basis of the blood atonement. God dwelt with His people based on the work of the high priest who offered the proper sacrifice and his sprinkling of the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant with the shed blood of the slain animal or sacrifice (Compare: Hebrews 9:11-15).

*But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*

- C. The ceremonial law was given to show Israel that the only acceptable way to approach, worship or serve God is through the passion kindled by God on the altar of repentance and sacrifice (See: Lev. 10:1-3; 16:1; Num. 3:4; 26:61).

*Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. And Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the LORD spoke, saying: ‘By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.’” Leviticus 10:1-3*

This passage indicates that the two sons of Aaron who served with Aaron in the priestly office offered “profane fire” before the Lord. Some other translations call this fire other things including...

- Strange fire (KJV)
- Strange and unholy fire (Amp)
- Illicit fire (NEB)
- Unlawful fire (Jerus)
- Unauthorized fire (NIV)
- Different kind of fire (NLT)

It is difficult to know exactly what happened in this case, however, we know that when it came to burning incense on the Altar of Incense in the Holy Place, the fire for that burning had to come from coals that had been kindled on the Brazen Altar that was ignited when fire came down from heaven (Lev. 9:23-24).

*And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, and fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.*

This fire was the fire that was to be kept burning even when they traveled (with fire pans) and this fire was to be used for all of the fire related services of the House of God.

“...this [strange] fire was not that which came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice, as related at the end of the preceding chapter, but common fire, and therefore called strange; it was not taken off of the altar of burnt offering, as it ought to have been, but, as the Targum of Jonathan, from under the trivets, skilllets, or pots, such as the flesh of peace offerings were boiled in, in the tabernacle.” —*John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*

- D. The ceremonial law was given to illustrate God's two primary ways of dealing with mankind (John 1:17; Ps. 85:10).

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" 16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. John 1:14-17*

God is a holy and righteous God, but He is also a God who is plenteous in redemption and mercy (Ex. 20:6; 34:6-7; Deut. 5:10).

*And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." Exodus 34:6-10*

1. God declared His righteousness and holiness through the law (Rom. 7:12).

*Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.*

Unfortunately the law shows us that we cannot please God by keeping the law, because we do not have it in us (Rom. 7:13-25). The law shows us our need for grace and redemption.

2. God declared His mercy and forgiveness through His provisions of grace.
- a. In the Old Testament this grace was dispensed by the priests based on the proper sacrifices and offerings for sin (Num. 6:23-27).
  - b. In the New Testament this grace came through Christ and His once and for all sacrifice for sin.

- E. The ceremonial law was given to teach man symbolically and prophetically about God's plan of redemption through Christ.

We will examine this more closely when we talk about the main aspects of the ceremonial law.

F. The ceremonial law was given to lead all to Christ (Gal. 3:22-25).

The primary purpose for all of these rites and ceremonies is to lead us to Christ. Jesus indicated that the law first and foremost spoke of Him (Luke 24:25-27, 44-45).

*Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself... 44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.*

Here Jesus mentioned that the three main sections of the Bible all speak of Him. Jesus said that we cannot comprehend or understand the Scriptures unless we see Him in them.

The only way we can understand the Bible is by seeing how it reveals Christ to us. The entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments, could be labeled the ***Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ***.

1. Notice the testimony of Philip (John 1:45).

*Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."*

2. Notice the testimony of Peter (Acts 10:43).

*"He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name."—NLT*

3. Notice the testimony of Jesus (Mt. 5:17-18; John 5:39, 45-47; Heb. 10:5-7).

*Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come--In the volume of the book it is written of Me--to do Your will, O God.'"*

Hebrews 10:5-7

*Then I said, "Look, I have come to do your will, O God--just as it is written about me in the Scriptures." Hebrews 10:7, NLT*

*"Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you--Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe*

*Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" John 5:45-47*

*You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. John 5:39*

*You search the Scriptures because you believe they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! –NLT*

*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Matthew 5:17-18*

## **II. How is Christ seen in the various aspects of the ceremonial law?**

The revelation of Christ was hidden in the symbols and types of the Old Testament. A type is a natural object or function that is a figure or representation of something to come.

“A type is a person or thing in the Bible which in the foreknowledge of God was designed to represent or prefigure some person, thing, or event that should appear in the future.” –Carl Harwood, *Handbook of Bible Types and Symbols*, pg. 7

Types are possible because of the omniscience and foreknowledge of God.

“A type is a real, exalted happening in history which was divinely ordained by the omniscient God to be a prophetic picture of the good things which He purposed to bring to fruition in Christ Jesus.” –Wayne Jackson

A. Christ is seen in the Tabernacle with its furniture.

1. The Tabernacle
2. The Brazen Altar
3. The Brazen Laver
4. The Lampstand
5. The Table of Shewbread
6. The Altar of Incense
7. The Ark of the Covenant
8. The Mercy Seat
9. The Veil

The veil of the temple is a type of Christ's flesh both of which were torn at the death of Christ (Mt. 27:51; Heb. 10:19-20).

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



For those who want to dig deeper into this area I refer you to the following books:

- The Tabernacle of Moses*, Kevin Conner
- The Tabernacle*, M.R. DeHaan
- The Tabernacle*, Henry Soltau
- The Tabernacle, Priesthood and Offerings*, I.M. Haldeman
- The Law of the Offerings*, Andrew Jukes
- The Feasts of Israel*, Kevin Conner
- Preaching from the Types and Metaphors of the Bible*, Benjamin Keach

B. Christ is seen in the Priesthood.

High priestly functions of the Old Testament can be seen as prophetic of Christ's function as our Great High Priest (Heb. 9:6-12).

*Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance; the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience-- concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. Hebrews 9:6-12*

The writer to the Hebrews helps us to see that the sacrifices of the Old Testament teach us about Christ's once-for-all sacrifice. It teaches us that the Aaronic priesthood gave way to a better priesthood of which we can all partake. The natural gives way to the spiritual. The shadow points to the image. The figure introduces us to the true. The temporal opens the door of understanding to the eternal.

Note the following chart (See key verses: Rom. 1:20; I Cor. 15:40-54; II Cor. 4:18; 5:1; Heb. 8:5; 9:1-28; 10:1-23):

Old Covenant	New Covenant
Natural	Spiritual
Flesh	Spirit
Shadow	Image
Figures	True
Visible (Seen)	Invisible (Unseen)
Made with Hands	Not Made with Hands
Patterns	Heavenly Things
Observed by Sight	Observed by Faith
Temporal	Eternal

This chart illustrates the relationship of the Old to the New. They are not separate entities or separate purposes. The Old Covenant gives place to the New Covenant. The New Covenant is an extension and fulfillment of the Old Covenant.

<b>Aaron's Priesthood--Leviticus</b>	<b>Christ's Priesthood--Hebrews</b>
Under Aaron God spoke through sacrifices, garments, symbols and types.	God has spoken to us by His Son (Heb. 1:1-2).
Aaron was a high priest who never completed his work.	Christ, our High Priest, sat down after His completed sacrifice (Heb. 4:14).
Aaron was a high priest who was subject to death.	Christ, our High Priest, conquered death and reigns forever (Heb. 5:6; 7:17).
Aaron was a high priest who was sinful and needed to sacrifice for his own sin.	Christ, our High Priest, is the sinless sacrifice and author of salvation (Heb. 5:9).
Aaron was a high priest who repeated ordinances year after year.	Christ, our High Priest, offered one sacrifice that finished the work (Heb. 8:8).
Aaron was a high priest who functioned in an imperfect sanctuary made with hands.	Christ, our High Priest, functions in the true heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 9:11).

1. The Priestly Anointing

Christ is the anointed one or The Messiah.

2. The Priestly Service

- a. Interceding for the people.
- b. Ministering for God.
- c. Cleansing the sins of the nation

3. The Priestly Garments

C. Christ is seen in the Five Offerings.

The sacrifices and offerings of the Old Testament can be seen as prophetic of Christ's once and for all sacrifice on Calvary (Heb. 10:11-14).

*And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.*

- 1. The Burnt Offering
- 2. The Sin Offering
- 3. The Trespass Offering
- 4. The Peace Offering
- 5. The Meal Offering

D. Christ is seen in the Three Feasts.

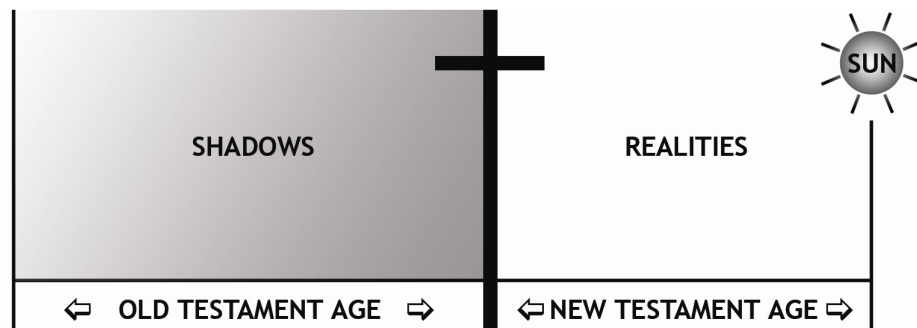
The feast days and holy days can be seen to be prophetic of the experience of Christ and the Church. There were three primary feasting seasons in Israel, the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles (I Cor. 5:7-8).

*Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

1. The Feast of Passover
2. The Feast of Pentecost
3. The Feast of Tabernacles

### III. How are we to relate to the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament?

It should be noted that the cross is the great dividing line between the natural and the spiritual, the shadow and the reality. When Jesus came He came as the transition point in history. This transition point has more significance than a mere change in the human calendar. This transition marks the entry into the age of fulfillment (See Chart).



- A. Jesus came to fulfill the letter of the law and introduce the spiritual principle that operated behind the law.

He came to fulfill the prophetic significance of the Passover Lamb by becoming the Passover Lamb to which all other previous lambs pointed.

- B. Jesus introduced us to better things in the new covenant. They are better because they are not shadows of the real, but they are the very realities themselves!

Once Jesus brought in the true or the realities, there was no more need for the shadow. In fact, to go back to the shadow after the true has been manifest is to regress and to devalue what God has provided in Christ.

Notice the “Better Things” that the writer to the Hebrews highlights for us:

1. Better Revelation (Heb. 1:1-4)
2. Better Hope (Heb. 7:19)

3. Better Priesthood (Heb. 7:20-28)
4. Better Covenant (Heb. 8:6)
5. Better Promises (Heb. 8:6)
6. Better Tabernacle or Temple (Heb. 9:11)
7. Better Blood (Heb. 9:11-14).
8. Better Sacrifices (Heb. 9:23)
9. Better Possessions (Heb.10:34)
10. Better Country (Heb. 11:16)

This is why we will never go back to animal sacrifice as an expression of our worship to the Lord. Every animal that was slain in the Old Testament as a sacrifice for sins only pointed to the One who would come to take away the sins of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ provided the better sacrifice that did not merely cover sin but it cleansed all sin. To go back to animal sacrifice after experiencing Christ would be to deny the power and efficacy of the eternal sacrifice of the Son of God. It would actually be an abomination to the Lord.

This same principle can be applied to all other aspects of the New Covenant. In the new covenant we have a better temple. It is not a temple made with hands like the Temple of Solomon, but it is a far superior temple composed of living stones (people) who have been fitly joined together for a habitation of God by the Spirit (Eph. 2:21-22).

## Lesson 21

### Moses and the Spies

#### I. What happened with Moses and the Children of Israel before they left Mount Sinai?

A. Moses ascended the mountain for the second giving of the law.

1. This time Moses was to cut the stones for the tablets (Ex. 34:1-4).

*And the LORD said to Moses, "Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke. 2 So be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain. 3 And no man shall come up with you, and let no man be seen throughout all the mountain; let neither flocks nor herds feed before that mountain." 4 So he cut two tablets of stone like the first ones. Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone.*

2. This time God revealed himself to Moses in a more personal way (Ex. 34:5-8).
3. This time Moses pleaded with God to travel among them even though they did not deserve it (Ex. 34:8).
4. This time God made a covenant with Moses to bring them into the land and drive out the Canaanites before them with miraculous displays of His power (Ex. 34:9-10).
5. This time God warned about making any compromises with the people of the land (Ex. 34:11-12).

*Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I am driving out from before you the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst.*

6. This time God commanded that they stay clear of idolatry and fully destroy all traces of pagan worship (Ex. 34:13-17).
7. This time God reminded them to keep the feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover) (Ex. 34:18-20).
8. This time Moses remained in the presence of the Lord another forty days and forty nights (Ex. 34:27-28).

*Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." So he was*

*there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.*

All of these things are the things that you would expect if the next step was to enter into the land of promise.

B. Moses came down from the mountain with the tablets of stone (Ex. 34:29).

*Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him.*

1. Moses came down with his face shining with a supernatural glow (Ex. 34:29-30; Compare: Mt. 17:2; See: II Cor. 3:7, 13).

This is not something that happened as a result of Moses' first 40 day visit to the mountain. The people were frightened by this (Ex. 34:30). Often when man is confronted with the holiness of God it makes him uncomfortable (Is. 6:5).

2. Moses delivered the commands to the people (Ex. 34:31-32).
3. Moses put a veil on his face except when he was in the presence of God (Ex. 34:33-35).

*And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.*

**Note: Because of the blending of accounts in Exodus and Numbers it is difficult to establish the actual order of the following events.**

- C. Moses led the workers in building the tabernacle and its furnishings, taking an offering and erecting the tabernacle (Ex. 35:10-Ex. 40:33; See also: Num. 7:1-8:22; 9:15-23).

- D. Moses did an official census of the people (Num. 1:1-46).

*Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying: "Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, every male individually, from twenty years old and above--all who are able to go to war in Israel. You and Aaron shall number them by their armies." Numbers 1:1-3*

The total census of men twenty years old and above came to 603,550 without the Levites (Num. 1:46). The total of the Levites added another 22,000, however, these included all the males of all ages (Num. 3:39).

- E. The Levites were excluded from the initial census and appointed over the service of the tabernacle (Num. 1:47-50; 2:33).

*But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel, just as the LORD commanded Moses. Numbers 2:33*

- F. God gave Moses instructions about how they were to travel and how they were to camp (Num. 1:51-2:31).
  - 1. They traveled and camped under their tribal banner.
  - 2. There was an order for their travel.

There are a couple of interpretations here.

- a. Sometimes the Ark led the way (Num. 10:33; Jos. 3:3).
    - b. Sometimes Judah led the way with the Ark near the front (Num. 10:14, 17).
  - 3. There was an order in the camp.
    - a. They camped with God in the midst (Num. 2:17).
    - b. The camp viewed from heaven formed a cross (See Appendix 1).
- G. The Levites and Aaron's family were appointed to the various functions relative to the service of the tabernacle (Num. 3:1-4:49).
- H. God gave additional instructions to the people regarding several things.
  - 1. The redemption of the firstborn (Num. 3:44-51).
  - 2. The laws concerning leprosy (Num. 5:1-4).
  - 3. Additional laws concerning unfaithfulness in marriage (Num. 5:6-31).
  - 4. The Nazirite vow (Num. 6:1-21).
  - 5. The silver trumpets (Num. 10:1-10).
- I. Moses and the people kept the Passover (Num. 9:1-14).

## **II. What events transpired on their journey between Mount Sinai and Kadesh Barnea?**

- A. The Children of Israel embarked on a three day journey following the direction of the Lord through the Ark of the Covenant (Num. 10:33-36).

B. The Children of Israel went forward murmuring all the way.

Note: We have already discussed most of these murmurings in Lesson 12 when we talked about the 10 tests of the Israelites in the Wilderness.

1. They complained about a lack of meat (Num. 11:1-15).
2. Moses complained about the burden being too large for him (Num. 11:11-15, 24-30).

Moses has come to the end of himself leading this murmuring people.

Notice his questions...

- Why have you afflicted your servant?
- Why have I not found favor in your sight?
- Why have you laid this burden of the people on me?
- Where am I to get meat to feed all these people?

Sounds like a lot of pastors on a bad day!

In this case God instructed Moses to gather seventy men who would be able to lead with him (Num. 11:16-17, 24-30).

3. Miriam and Aaron complained about Moses' leadership (Num. 12:1-16).

*Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. So they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it. Numbers 12:1-2*

This does not seem to be an apt description of Zipporah who was a Midianite, the daughter of Jethro. It is probable that it does refer to Zipporah who was evidently of darker complexion. Most commentators seem to agree that this was a racially motivated reference to Zipporah. Others raise the question whether or not Zipporah had died and Moses took another wife or that Moses may have taken a second wife from the mixed multitude that came out with them? Polygamy was not uncommon in those days.

- a. God seemed to judge Miriam more severely.

Evidently she was the ringleader of this rebellion. She is mentioned first and dealt with more harshly.

- b. Aaron once again demonstrated his weak leadership.

He followed the persuasions of his sister just as he had given in to the demands of the people in the matter of the golden calf.



c. Moses interceded for them to minimize God's judgment.

C. God instructed Moses to send spies into the land (Num. 13:1-2).

*And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them."*

1. These spies were to be notable leaders from their tribe (Num. 12:3b).

*So Moses sent them from the Wilderness of Paran according to the command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the children of Israel.*

*So at the LORD's command Moses sent them out from the Desert of Paran. All of them were leaders of the Israelites. –NIV*

2. There were twelve spies each representing one of the twelve tribes (See: Num. 13:4-15).

There is some debate as to whose idea the spies were. When you compare the passage in Deuteronomy it seems that spies were sent at the suggestion of the people and Moses approval (Deut. 1:22-23).

The only way to reconcile these two accounts is to put the incident in the following order:

- The people suggested that spies go in.
- Moses took the matter before the Lord.
- God agreed to give the people their request and commissioned Moses to send them out.

This could be similar to the account of Jethro's advise later being the same advice that God gave to Moses regarding the appointing of additional leadership to help him shepherd the people (Compare Ex. 18:13-23 with Deut. 1:9-18).

### **III. What was the purpose of sending spies into the land of promise?**

A. Moses sent the spies in at the approval of the Lord (Num. 13:3).

B. Moses made it clear what their specific purpose would be (Num. 13:17-20).

*Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, "Go up this way into the South, and go up to the mountains, 18 and see what the land is like: whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, few or many; 19 whether the land they dwell in is good or bad; whether the cities they inhabit are like camps or strongholds; 20 whether the land is rich or poor; and whether there are forests there or not. Be of good courage. And bring some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.*

1. They were to go up to the mountains and see what the land was like.
2. They were to see whether the people were strong or weak.
3. They were to see whether the people were few or many.
4. They were to see whether the land was good or bad.
5. They were to see whether the cities were like camps or strongholds.
6. They were to see whether the land was rich or poor.
7. They were to see if there were forests or not.
8. They were to bring back some of the fruit of the land.

#### IV. What happened when the spies came back from the land?

- A. The spies went out as Moses instructed them (Num. 13:21).
- B. The spies gathered figs and pomegranates and they cut down a cluster of grapes that was so large that it took two men to carry it (Num. 13:23-24).
- C. The spies returned to give a report of their factual findings (Num. 13:25-26).

After forty days of spying out the land, the spies returned with a report.

1. They reported the good news first (Num. 13:26-27).

*Then they told him, and said: "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit." Numbers 13:27*

2. They reported the bad news after that (Num. 13:28-29).

*"Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan."*

Both of these observations were factual to this point.

- D. The spies shared their interpretation of the facts (Num. 13:30-33).

1. Caleb gave his interpretation (Num. 13:30).

*Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."*

Perhaps Caleb is the one doing the speaking here because Joshua already had a reputation of siding with Moses. Caleb might have more sway with the people being considered a more "neutral" party.

2. The vast majority of the spies gave quite another interpretation (Num. 13:31-33).

*But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." 32 And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. 33 There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."*

Not only did they give a bad report they exaggerated their report even further to inspire fear. There is no record that anyone had actually interviewed a giant to see how they felt. Had they done so they might have had a different story (See: Josh. 2:9-11). Spiritual maturity is not just knowing the facts, but it is interpreting the facts with a divine perspective.

Rahab said to the two spies sent in by Joshua,

*"I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.*

Joshua 9:9-11

- E. The people chose to listen to the negative interpretation (Num. 14:1-4).

*So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! 3 Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" 4 So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."*

Here we have yet another example of how democracy in church decisions can keep us from our land of promise.

1. The people wept (Num. 14:1).
2. The people complained against Moses (Num. 14:2).
3. The people questioned the Lord's motive (Num. 14:3).
4. The people decided they needed a leadership change (Num. 14:4).
5. The people decided to go back to Egypt (Num. 14:4).

F. Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in front of the people (Num. 14:5).

They tried to convince them not to be swayed by what they saw with their eyes but to focus on the God who had worked for them in the past.

G. Joshua and Caleb appealed to the congregation (Num. 14:6-9).

*But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; 7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. 8 If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' 9 Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them."*

1. They tore their clothes (Num. 14:6).
2. They reminded people of the goodness and richness of the promise of God (Num. 14:7-8).
3. They cautioned the people about rebellion and fear (Num. 14:9).

H. The people indicated a desire to stone Joshua and Caleb (Num. 14:10a).

*And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel.*

## **V. How did God react to the response of the people?**

A. God came down in manifest presence (Num. 14:10b).

B. God indicated that He was ready to judge them immediately (Num. 14:11-12).

*Then the LORD said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."*

1. He was ready to strike them with pestilence (Num. 14:12).
2. He was ready to disinherit them (Num. 14:12).
3. He was ready to start again with Moses (Num. 14:12).

C. Moses interceded once again for the people (Num. 14:13-19).

D. God indicated that He would pardon them (Num. 14:20).

- E. God indicated that there would be consequences of their lack of faith and stubbornness (Num. 14:21-23, 26-29).

*...because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. Numbers 14:22-23*

1. God indicated that all of the people that were 20 years old and up would not enter the land but would die in the wilderness (Num. 14: 32, 35).

*“But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. 32 But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. 33 And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. 34 According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. 35 I the LORD have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.” Numbers 14:31-35*

This would include all of those who had been counted in the first census (Num. 1:2-3). It is ironic that the children that they had been most concerned about in the face of the giants, would be the very ones who would enter in by faith. These parents, however, would never see the land.

- a. Their carcasses would fall in the wilderness (Num. 14:32).
- b. Their children would be shepherds in the wilderness (Num. 14:33).
- c. Their children would bear the brunt of their unfaithfulness (Num. 14:33).
- d. They would wander for forty years, one year for every day that they spied out the land (Num. 14:34).

Most expositors agree that this forty year sentence is most likely inclusive of “time served” in the wilderness thus far, which would amount to about 1 ½ years, meaning that in the next 38 ½ years at least 1.2 million people would die (if no children died in any of the subsequent plagues).

Since there were 605,000 men and most likely an equal number of women in this number, this would mean that during this 38.5 year period an average of approximately 85 people died each and every day.

The New Testament refers to this incident as the “rebellion” or the “day of trial” (Heb. 3:7-19).

*Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray*

*in their heart, and they have not known My ways.’ 11 So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’”*

*12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”*

*16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

2. God indicated that Caleb and Joshua would enter in because of a spirit of faith (Num. 14:24, 30).

*But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it. Numbers 14:24*

Based on Joshua 14:1 which mentions Eleazar who was Aaron’s son and successor who functioned as the high priest in the Promised Land, some have suggested that Eleazar may also have gone in as member of an older generation. And on that basis there have been suggestions made that all of the Levites may have been exempted from this judgment. They suggest this for the following reasons:

- a. The Levites were not included in the original census.
  - b. The Levites were not numbered in relationship to going to war.
  - c. The Levites had been loyal to Moses in the golden calf incident.
  - d. The Levites did not have a representative spy going into the land.
- F. God brought a plague on the ten spies that gave the evil report and they died (Num. 14:36-38).

*Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the LORD. But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land.*

It is worthy of note here that when Joshua later led the people into the Promised Land, he also sent spies into the land to bring a report. However, in his case, he only sent two spies (Josh. 2:1).

## VI. What was the people's response to God's judgment?

- A. They mourned greatly (Num. 14:39).

*Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly.*

- B. They acknowledged their sin and now (when faced with the consequences) they changed their mind wanted to go in (Num. 14:40).

*And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised, for we have sinned!"*

- C. Moses warned them not to proceed or they would be defeated by their enemies (Num. 14:41-43).

*And Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the LORD? For this will not succeed. Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the LORD is not among you. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the LORD, the LORD will not be with you."*

In our life of faith there are doors of opportunity that God opens to us that are consistent with His will and purpose and are accompanied by supernatural grace to enter in. Unfortunately these opportunities can close just as quickly and we can miss our opportunity or "day of visitation."

- D. They presumed to go forward anyway and (as predicted) they were defeated (Num. 14:44-45; Deut. 1:41-45).

*But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop. Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed from the camp. Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah. Numbers 14:44-45*

The sin of presumption here was the Israelites expecting God's protection when they were walking in disobedience to God's clear command.

1. They were defeated because now they were moving in disobedience.
2. They were defeated because they moved forward without their leader, Moses.
3. They were defeated because the Ark of God did not go with them.

*And the LORD said to me, "Tell them, 'Do not go up nor fight, for I am not among you; lest you be defeated before your enemies.'" 43 So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen, but rebelled against the command of the LORD, and presumptuously went up into the mountain. 44 And the Amorites who dwelt in that mountain came out against you and chased you as bees do, and drove you back*

*from Seir to Hormah. 45 Then you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD would not listen to your voice nor give ear to you. Deuteronomy 1:42-45*

There are other instances where people tried to move ahead presumptuously. The Egyptians tried to cross the Red Sea through the door opened for the Israelites (Ex. 14:28) and the Israelites attempted to conquer Ai without the directions from the Lord (Josh. 7:1-2). Both had dismal consequences (Ps. 19:13).

*Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression.*

## **VII. What happened in the end?**

God directed them back into the wilderness (Num. 14:25).

*“Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valley; tomorrow turn and move out into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.”*

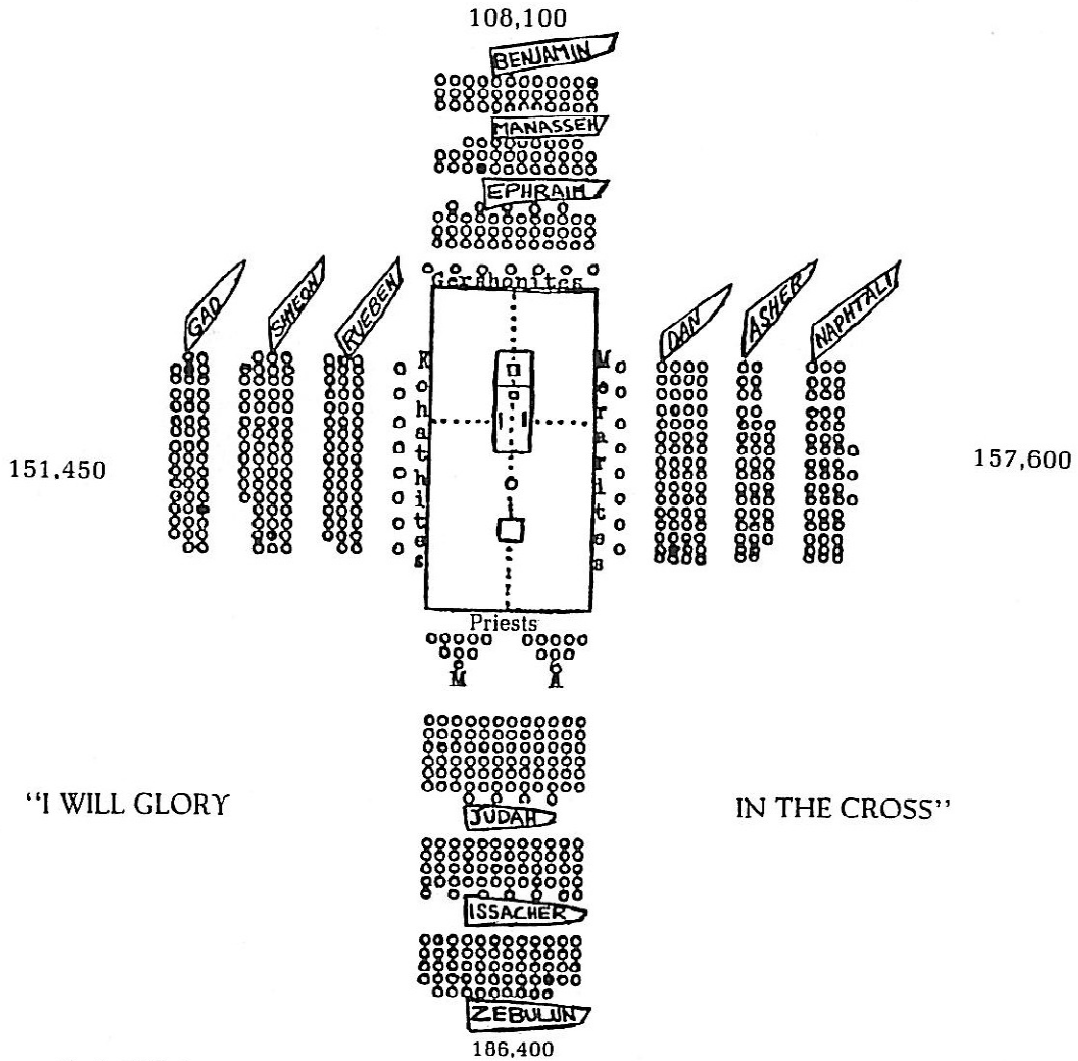
The Red Sea is where this all started. They were so close to entering in, now they will have to go back and start again.



**Appendix I, Lesson 21, The Order of the Camp**

The following is taken from *The Tabernacle of Moses* by Kevin Conner, page 12.

**A VIEW FROM THE MOUNT OF THE CAMP OF ISRAEL  
IN THE WILDERNESS**



Scale: 1000 : 0  
2 cu : 1mm

Diagram: Rev. Ray S. Jackson

**THE CROSS IN THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE CAMP**

## Lesson 22

### Moses and the Dying Generation

#### I. What was the agenda for the next nearly forty years?

The primary agenda for the next forty years was continued wandering and waiting for the death of a generation. It is interesting that the word “praise” is never once used in the book of Numbers.

As one writer puts it, “The forty years of wandering set it; and the many thousands, who came up from Egypt, with the gleam of expectation in their eyes, gradually die off, leaving a pathetic trail of carcasses beneath the hard crust of the wilderness.”

A. There were many ways that people had experienced death to this point.

Some of these experiences were the direct result of God’s judgment or sentence of death, but others were the result of their own presumption.

1. The Levites who stood with Moses were instructed to kill 3000 leaders of the rebellious leaders of the people after the golden calf incident (Ex. 32:27-28).
2. Others most likely died from the plague that followed the golden calf incident (Ex. 32:35).
3. Two of Aaron’s sons had been killed by holy fire when they offered “strange fire” before the Lord (Lev. 10:1-7).
4. Some of the complainers on the outskirts of the camp angered God and were killed by fire (Num. 11:1-3).

*Now when the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp. Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the LORD, the fire was quenched. So he called the name of the place Taberah, because the fire of the LORD had burned among them.*

5. Many people died from a plague that was brought on by the complaining and overindulgence of the people regarding the quail (Num. 11:33-34).

*But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague. So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.*

6. The ten spies who brought the evil report and stirred up the people against Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb were killed by a plague from God (Num. 14:36-38).

7. Presumably some also died when the Israelites tried to enter Canaan militarily without God's help (Num. 14:45; Deut. 1:44-45).
- B. There were going to be so many others that would eventually fall in the wilderness. In order for an average of 85 to die daily some would die off gradually and some would die off not so gradually.
1. Some of these individuals would simply die of old age and natural causes.

- a. Miriam (Num. 20:1)

*Then the children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh; and Miriam died there and was buried there.*

In the case of Miriam, very little is said about her death. She seems to have lost a lot of moral authority and stature among the people after her rebellion (Num. 12:1-16).

- b. Aaron (Num. 20:27-29)

*So Moses did just as the LORD commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. Now when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, all the house of Israel mourned for Aaron thirty days.*

In many demonstrations of bad leadership, Aaron had lost his right to the land. During his tenure the most notable violations was when he yielded to the people in building the golden calf and when he sided with his sister against Moses.

2. Some of these would no doubt die as a result of sins that they committed or laws that they violated.

There were a lot of things that could have transpired that required the death penalty. Certainly in the confines of the wilderness many of these would be inevitable.

Here are only a few laws that they could have easily violated, all required the death penalty:

- Murder (Ex. 21:12; Lev. 24:17)
- Adultery (Lev. 19:20; 20:10-16)
- Striking a parent (Ex. 21:15)
- Cursing a parent (Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9)
- Profaning the Sabbath (Ex. 31:14)
- Blaspheming the name of the Lord (Lev. 24:10-16)

- Unauthorized people touching priestly functions (Num. 1:51; 3:10, 38; 18:7)

*One day a man who had an Israelite mother and an Egyptian father got into a fight with one of the Israelite men. 11 During the fight, this son of an Israelite woman blasphemed the LORD's name. So the man was brought to Moses for judgment. His mother's name was Shelomith. She was the daughter of Dibri of the tribe of Dan. 12 They put the man in custody until the LORD's will in the matter should become clear. 13 Then the LORD said to Moses, 14 "Take the blasphemer outside the camp, and tell all those who heard him to lay their hands on his head. Then let the entire community stone him to death." 23 After Moses gave all these instructions to the Israelites, they led the blasphemer outside the camp and stoned him to death, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. Leviticus 24:10-14, 23, NLT*

3. Still others would fall because they were rebellious toward God.

We will look at some of these under our next point.

## **II. What are some of the creative ways that people perished in the wilderness?**

The following are examples of some notable incidents that occurred as one generation waited for another generation to perish.

### **A. The death of a Sabbath-breaker (Num. 15:32-36)**

*Now while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. 33 And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation. 34 They put him under guard, because it had not been explained what should be done to him. 35 Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man must surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." 36 So, as the LORD commanded Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died.*

This might seem a little "picky" on God's part, but He has a lot of people that have to go.

Most likely this man was killed for the reason given in the previous verses (Num. 15:30-31).

*But the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the LORD, and he shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of the LORD, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him.*

Verse 31 from the New Living Translation says...

*Since they have treated the LORD's word with contempt and deliberately disobeyed his commands, they must be completely cut off and suffer the consequences of their guilt.*

B. The rebellion of Korah and company (Num. 16:1-35)

1. Korah gathered 250 other men (some of whom were Levites) to confront Moses about his leadership (Num. 16:1-3).
2. Moses confronted these men with humility (Num. 16:4-5).
  - a. In this confrontation Moses challenged them to come up and present themselves before the Lord with their censers (Num. 16:5-7).
  - b. In this confrontation he encouraged them to allow the Lord choose between them (Num. 16:7).
  - c. In this confrontation Moses reminded them of the privilege that was already theirs by functioning in priestly service (Num. 16:8-11)
3. Those who were with Korah stubbornly refused to come up (Num. 16:12-14).
4. Moses became angry and asked God to side with him (Num. 16:15).
5. Eventually Korah and his company presented themselves with their censers before the Lord (Num. 16:16-19).
6. When they were all assembled the Lord came down in a manifested way (Num. 16:19).
7. God threatened to consume the whole congregation in judgment (Num. 16:20-21).
8. Moses and Aaron interceded for the people (Num. 16:22).
9. Moses was told to announce to the congregation to separate themselves from the rebels, their families and all that they possessed (Num. 16:23-27).
10. Moses issued the ultimate challenge to the five principle leaders (Num. 16:28-30).

*And Moses said: "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will. If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me. But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD."*

11. God judged the rebels by opening up the earth and swallowing them up (Num. 16:31-34).

*Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods.*

Numbers 16:31-32

12. God judged the remaining 250 who were offering incense by consuming them with fire (Num. 16:34).
13. God further judged the people who had reacted to and complained about God's judgment on Korah and his company (Num. 16:46-50).

In this case some 14,700 died before the plague was turned back by the intercession of Moses and Aaron.

C. Another rebellion against Moses (Num. 21:4-9)

*Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. 5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." 6 So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. 7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. 8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." 9 So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.*

1. The Israelites complained about the conditions in the wilderness. They hated the manna.
2. God sent poisonous snakes among the people and many died.
3. Moses once again interceded for the people.
4. God provided a remedy for the snake-bite—the bronze serpent lifted up on a pole.
5. This remedy for the snake bite speaks of God's remedy for the snake-bite of sin—Jesus lifted up on a cross (John 3:14-15).

*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.*

Evidently they kept this bronze serpent and brought it into to Promised Land as a reminder of God's deliverance. However, this bronze serpent eventually became a source of idolatry and had to be destroyed (II Kgs. 18:3-4).

*And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done. He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.*

D. The sin of adultery and idolatry (Num. 25:1-13, NLT)

*While the Israelites were camped at Acacia, some of the men defiled themselves by sleeping with the local Moabite women. 2 These women invited them to attend sacrifices to their gods, and soon the Israelites were feasting with them and worshiping the gods of Moab. 3 Before long Israel was joining in the worship of Baal of Peor, causing the LORD's anger to blaze against his people. 4 The LORD issued the following command to Moses: "Seize all the ringleaders and execute them before the LORD in broad daylight, so his fierce anger will turn away from the people of Israel." 5 So Moses ordered Israel's judges to execute everyone who had joined in worshiping Baal of Peor. 6 Just then one of the Israelite men brought a Midianite woman into the camp, right before the eyes of Moses and all the people, as they were weeping at the entrance of the Tabernacle.*

*7 When Phinehas son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron the priest saw this, he jumped up and left the assembly. Then he took a spear 8 and rushed after the man into his tent. Phinehas thrust the spear all the way through the man's body and into the woman's stomach. So the plague against the Israelites was stopped, 9 but not before 24,000 people had died. 10 Then the LORD said to Moses, 11 "Phinehas son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron the priest has turned my anger away from the Israelites by displaying passionate zeal among them on my behalf. So I have stopped destroying all Israel as I had intended to do in my anger. 12 So tell him that I am making my special covenant of peace with him. 13 In this covenant, he and his descendants will be priests for all time, because he was zealous for his God and made atonement for the people of Israel."*

This is one of the last recorded instances of mass death in the wilderness journeys. A total of 24,000 died in this incident. We are getting close to the accomplishment of the goal in preparation for entry into the Promised Land. At this point the 40 years trek in the wilderness is coming to an end.

Note: We will cover the death of Moses in our last session.

### **III. What was life like during those years in the wilderness?**

Life was very difficult.

A. It was very difficult because the plan of God was on hold.

Without a vision people become discouraged (Pro. 29:18).

B. It was very difficult because it involved constant moving (Num. 33).

According to Numbers 33 the children of Israel moved and camped about 42 times in those years. As soon as they got settled in one place they had to pick up at the whims of the Cloud and move to another camp ground.

C. It was very difficult because everyone was waiting for a generation to die off.

It must have been very eerie to be the last remaining members of the old generation that everyone was watching to see if they would die.



## Lesson 23

### Moses and the New Generation

The latter part of Numbers and most of Deuteronomy have to do with getting the new generation ready for entering into the Promised Land. The book of Deuteronomy is sometimes called the Book of Transition and consists of mostly the words of Moses and very little action.

Note the following transitions in Deuteronomy:

- Transition to a new generation
- Transition to a new leader—Joshua
- Transition to a new possession
- Transition to a new lifestyle (no longer tent dwellers)
- Transition to a new revelation of the love of God

#### **I. What were some of the ways the new generation was prepared for conquest of the land?**

In many ways these things can be seen as a way to prepare any new generation to walk into their future.

Note: As I outline this next section I will simply highlight a few key verses.

##### **A. There was a new numbering of the people (Num. 26).**

By the time we get to the end of Numbers 25 it appears that all of the first generation has died off and now God commanded Moses to take another census of the people (Num. 26:1-4).

The results of the census were quite similar to the first in that there were a little over 600,000 men counted. The actual number in the second census was only about 2000 less than the first census. There was, however, one significant change.

The most significant change was that the tribe of Simeon declined greatly (Num. 26:12-14).

Simeon lost over 60% of its population going from 59,300 to 22,200. Many believe that the tribe of Simeon may have experienced such a reduction in numbers because of the rebellion of Zimri who was a Simeonite. As a result of this rebellion 24,000 people died. It is likely that most of those who died came from the tribe of Simeon (Num. 25:9, 14). Because of where this account is positioned, it is likely that this occurred fairly close to the time of the second census.

It is also worthy of note that this new numbering was conducted the same way that the previous numbering had been conducted in that it only included the males, twenty years old and upward.

In light of this it is significant that with the exception of three individuals no one that was numbered in the first census was a part of the second census (Num. 26:62-65).

*Now those who were numbered of them were twenty-three thousand, every male from a month old and above; for they were not numbered among the other children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given to them among the children of Israel. 63 These are those who were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho. 64 But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest when they numbered the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai. 65 For the LORD had said of them, "They shall surely die in the wilderness." So there was not left a man of them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.*

**Transition Principle:**

Before we can transition into our future, we must take a personal inventory and see where we actually stand.

- B. There was a review of their history (Deut. 1:9-3:29).

*For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing. Deuteronomy 2:7*

**Transition Principle:**

Before we can transition into our future, we must have a true understanding of the past and how we got to this point.

- C. There was a renewed challenge of obedience (Deut. 4:1-40).

*And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power, 38 driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land as an inheritance, as it is this day. 39 Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. 40 You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time.*

Deuteronomy 4:37-40

It is in the Book of Deuteronomy that we are first told of God's love for man (Deut. 4:37; 7:8, 13; 10:15; 23:5). It is interesting that in the middle of the book,

when God had every right to reject His people, He reassures His people and confirms His love.

**Transition Principle:**

Before we can transition into our future, we must renew our commitment to the Lord and realize that all success will be based on doing things God's way and walking in His love.

- D. There was a rehearsal of the Ten Commandments (Deut. 5:1-33).

The word "Deuteronomy" literally means "second law."

**Transition Principle:**

Before we can transition into our future, we must establish our boundaries and determine to function within the confines of God's law.

- E. There was a challenge to pass these precepts on to the next generation (Deut. 6:1-25).

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

**Transition Principle:**

Before we can transition into our future, we must develop a strategy that makes provision for our vision to outlive us and to incorporate the next generation into what we are doing in the present.

- F. There were warnings about intermarrying and maintaining their separation from the other nations (Deut. 7:1-26).

*Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers. 13 And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you. 14 You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be a male or female barren among you or among your livestock. 15 And the LORD will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known, but will lay them on all those who hate you. 16 Also you shall destroy all the peoples whom the LORD your God delivers over to you;*

*your eye shall have no pity on them; nor shall you serve their gods, for that will be a snare to you.* Deuteronomy 7:12-16

Through the laws and precepts that were given to the people by God they were to be a separated people. There were many ways that God provided to ensure their separateness.

God set them apart from the rest of the world in five main areas:

- In their geographical location
- In their worship
- In their diet
- In their dress
- In their marital laws

### **Transition Principle:**

Before we can transition into our future, we must realize that our strength as believers is in our separation from anything that is unclean.

- G. There was a challenge not to forget the miracles that God had done for them (Deut. 8:1-20).

*Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, 12 lest--when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; 13 and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; 14 when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage...17 then you say in your heart, "My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth." 18 And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.*

Deuteronomy 8:11-14, 17-18

### **Transition Principle:**

Before we can transition into our future, we must acknowledge that without God's supernatural intervention we cannot take the steps needed to possess our future.

- H. There was a reminder as to why God was allowing them to dispossess another people and enter the Promised Land (Deut. 9:1-29).

*Therefore understand today that the LORD your God is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said to you. 4 Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, "Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land"; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out from before you.5 It is not because of your righteousness or the*

*uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Deuteronomy 9:3-5*

**Transition Principle:**

Before we can transition into our future, we must make sure that we understand why God's hand is upon us so that we do not presume to walk away from the Lord.

- I. There was an admonition to love the Lord always from the heart (Deut. 10:12-11:1).

*And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good? 14 Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it. 15 The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day. Deuteronomy 10:12-15*

**Transition Principle:**

Before we can transition into our future, we must make sure that our priorities are right, keeping God as first and foremost in all that we do.

- J. There were promises given to those who served the Lord in the land (Deut. 11).

*And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, 14 then I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil. 15 And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled. 16 Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, 17 lest the LORD's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you. 18 Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. Deuteronomy 11:13-18*

- 1. They would possess the land (Deut. 11:8).
- 2. They would prolong their days in the land (Deut. 11:9, 21).
- 3. They would experience the watchful care of the Lord (Deut. 11:12).
- 4. They would experience the rain in its seasons (Deut. 11:14).
- 5. They would have plenty of grass for their livestock (Deut. 11:15).

6. They would be able to have everything that they claimed (Deut. 11:24).
7. They would have total victory over their enemies (Deut. 11:22-23, 25).

**Transition Principle:**

Before we can transition into our future, we must cling to the promises that God has given to us personally and prophetically.

- K. There was the development of cities of refuge (Num. 35:1-15; Deut. 4:41-43; 19:1-13).

*Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 11 then you shall appoint cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the manslayer who kills any person accidentally may flee there. 12 They shall be cities of refuge for you from the avenger, that the manslayer may not die until he stands before the congregation in judgment. 13 And of the cities which you give, you shall have six cities of refuge.’” Numbers 35:9-13*

**Transition Principle:**

Before we can transition into our future, we must understand that there is a place of refuge in God when we seem to be overwhelmed.

- L. There were instructions regarding conquest (Deut. 20:1-20)

*When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God is with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. 2 So it shall be, when you are on the verge of battle, that the priest shall approach and speak to the people. 3 And he shall say to them, “Hear, O Israel: Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them; 4 for the LORD your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.”*

Deuteronomy 20:1-4

These instructions can be summarized in five main challenges:

1. Do not fight on the basis of what you see with your eyes (Deut. 20:1).
2. Do not allow yourself to be ruled by fear (Deut. 20:2-3).
3. Look to the Lord to fight for you (Deut. 20:4).
4. Stay focused on the goal and eliminate possible distractions (Deut. 20:5-9).
5. Seek a peaceful solution before resorting to violent takeover (Deut. 20:10-18).

**Transition Principle:**

Before we can transition into our future, we must realize that if we are walking in the will of God, God will fight for us and we can go forward with focus and boldness.

## **II. What were the keys to their keeping God’s favor and their possession of the Promised Land?**

A. The keeping of their land inheritance had certain conditions (Deut. 28:9).

*The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways.*  
Deuteronomy 28:9

1. The Israelites could inherit blessings on every side and remain in the land through obedience (Deut. 28:1-14).

*Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God...”* Deuteronomy 28:1-2

These blessings included the following:

- a. They would be blessed in both the city and the country, wherever they chose to live.
- b. They would be blessed in all that they produced including offspring, crops and herds.
- c. They would be blessed with continual and abundant provision.
- d. They would be blessed in their travel and moving about.
- e. They would be blessed with victory over all those who would oppose them.
- f. They would be blessed in every business transaction and every endeavor.
- g. They would be blessed with weather patterns that brought life to the land.
- h. They would be blessed with surplus to become lenders and not borrowers.
- i. They would be blessed by being in a position above and not beneath.
- j. They would be both the envy and the dread of every other nation.

2. The Israelites could inherit curses on every side and be expelled from the land through disobedience (Deut. 28:15-68).

*But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you...*

Deuteronomy 28:15

These curses included the following:

- a. The opposite of all of the above.  
They would be cursed in all of the areas where they had been blessed.
- b. They would experience cursing, confusion and rebuke in all that they set their hands to do until they perished quickly (Deut. 28:20).
- c. They would build houses but not live in them.
- d. They would plant vineyards but not reap the produce.
- e. Their animals will be stolen from them.
- f. Their crops will be destroyed by mildew, locust and worms.
- g. Their land would be turned to dust.
- h. They would have extraordinary plagues and serious and prolonged sickness cling to them (fever, consumption, inflammation, tumors, boils, blindness, the scab and the itch).
- i. They would experience mental and emotional problems (madness, confusion).
- j. Their carcasses would be devoured by wild beasts.
- k. They would experience domestic problems.
- l. They would experience financial problems and become debtors to many.
- m. They would experience closed heavens over their life.
- n. They would be plundered and oppressed continually by other nations.
- o. They would be put to flight by their enemies.
- p. They would be dispossessed of the land and taken into captivity.
- q. Their children will go into slavery to other nations.
- r. They would become a sore spot for all of the nations of the earth.
- s. They would experience hunger, thirst and nakedness.



- t. They would be enslaved and killed by other nations.
  - u. They would be scattered among the other nations and lose their national identity.
  - v. They would find no peace or rest but would experience a trembling heart, anguish of soul, fear day and night and no assurance of life.
  - w. They would become an astonishment, a proverb, a byword, a sign and a wonder among the nations as a testimony of what it means to abandon the Lord (Deut. 28:37, 45-46).
- B. The Israelites could be restored through repentance and returning to the Lord (Deut. 30:1-10).

*Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you.*

Deuteronomy 30:1-3

## Lesson 24

### Moses' Last Words and Death

#### I. Why did Moses miss out on going into the Promised Land?

*Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 8 "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." 9 So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him. 10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" 11 Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. 12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." 13 This was the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel contended with the LORD, and He was hallowed among them. Numbers 20:7-13*

##### A. Moses disobeyed the Lord at Meribah (Num. 20:11).

Disobedience of a direct command is serious in God's mind. It is even considered more serious if you are a leader of the people. In fact, God equates this to the sin of witchcraft (I Sam. 15:23).

##### B. Moses demonstrated impatience with the people (Num. 20:10; Ps. 106:32-33).

*They angered Him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses on account of them; because they rebelled against His Spirit, so that he spoke rashly with his lips.*

This passage in the Psalms seems to indicate that this rash speaking was a bigger deal to God than is sometimes taken into account. How often don't we hear that Moses did not go into the land because he smote the rock? Yet, it seems that the statements that he made had an equally negative effect.

##### C. Moses took glory that belongs only to God (Num. 20:10).

Moses made it appear by his comments that it was the work of Aaron and Moses to provide water from the rock, even though we know that this miracle could only be done by the Lord.

##### D. Moses demonstrated a lack of faith in front of the people (Num. 20:12).

Moses might have had more faith to hit the rock as if by his own power he could bring forth water since he had done that once before. Speaking to the rock required more faith on his part. This would be done in front of the people and the pride in Moses did not want to fail publically. He was comfortable smiting the rock, but this was a new level that would require greater faith.

## II. Was this judgment too severe?

No! This judgment by God was not too severe. There are several reasons to say this.

### A. Because God is a God of justice.

The truth is, no one deserved to go into the Promised Land. Where was Caleb during the golden calf incident? Everyone that went in went in due to God's grace and mercy.

Sometimes people ask, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" This presumes that sinful man deserves better than he gets when in reality no matter who we are, we always get better than we deserve. The question should be, "Why do not more bad things happen to us?"

### B. Because Moses gave in to his anger.

Moses had already exhibited some serious problems with his anger when he was younger. He had killed the Egyptian in anger. He had now allowed his anger to get control of him. The fact that he wanted to hit something and hit something twice coupled with his remarks seems to support the fact that he was a bit out of control.

*Dead flies will cause even a bottle of perfume to stink! Yes, a small mistake can outweigh much wisdom and honor.* Ecclesiastes 10:1, LB

### C. Because Moses dishonored God in front of the people (Num. 20:12-13, NIV).

*But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them." These were the waters of Meribah, where the Israelites quarreled with the LORD and where he showed himself holy among them.*

### D. Because God had a different plan for Moses.

God had another plan for Moses. He reserved a special honor for him which we will discuss later. God has a unique plan for every one of us and it is not good to compare what God is doing with us with what God is doing with someone else.

### E. Because Moses had accomplished his mission.

Moses finished the assignment for which God had prepared him. It was time for the Joshua generation (Timothy, Elisha) to carry on the work.

### F. Because Moses had already lived longer than any of his generation.

Moses had already lived up to twice as long as those who had died in the wilderness and nearly 40 years longer than Joshua and Caleb.

G. Because Moses damaged one of God's prophetic types (I Cor. 10:1-3).

We already know from the New Testament that the rock from which water came was a type of Christ the source of living water. But Christ was only struck once for us to provide that water. From that time forward we are to speak to the rock and we will receive refreshing.

H. Because Moses' life serves us as an example from which to draw (I Cor. 10:11).

In a sense we could say that God made an example out of him.

### **III. How did Moses prepare Joshua to be his successor?**

A. Moses used Joshua to lead the people into battle (Ex. 17:9-14).

B. Moses used Joshua as his assistant (Ex. 24:13; Num. 11:28).

People became very used to seeing Joshua and Moses together.

C. Moses took Joshua into places where others did not go (Ex. 33:11).

Most specifically, he took him into the tent of the congregation in the presence of the Lord.

D. Moses laid his hands on Joshua and put his spirit upon him (Num. 27:15-21).

*Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying: 16 "Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, 17 who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd." 18 And the LORD said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; 19 set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. 20 And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. 21 He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the LORD for him by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him--all the congregation."*

Notice that this verse seems to imply that Moses was to put "some" of his authority on him. Moses would still be the final man in charge, but Joshua would function with his authority.

E. Moses honored Joshua in front of the people (Num. 27:22-23).

*So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him, just as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.*

F. Moses gave Joshua challenges of faith (Deut. 3:21, 28; 31:3-7).

God had encouraged Moses to do this (Deut. 3:28).

*But command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.*

1. Moses used their experiences in the wilderness to build Joshua's faith for future conquests (Deut. 3:21-22).

*And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, "Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so will the LORD do to all the kingdoms through which you pass. You must not fear them, for the LORD your God Himself fights for you."*

2. Moses assured Joshua and the people of God's victorious power to go before them (Deut. 31:1-7).

*Then Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel. 2 And he said to them: "I am one hundred and twenty years old today. I can no longer go out and come in. Also the LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross over this Jordan.' 3 The LORD your God Himself crosses over before you; He will destroy these nations from before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua himself crosses over before you, just as the LORD has said. 4 And the LORD will do to them as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites and their land, when He destroyed them. 5 The LORD will give them over to you, that you may do to them according to every commandment which I have commanded you. 6 Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." 7 Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. 8 And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed."*

G. Moses presented Joshua before the Lord (Deut. 31:14-15, 23).

*Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, the days approach when you must die; call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting, that I may inaugurate him." So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of meeting. 15 Now the LORD appeared at the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood above the door of the tabernacle.... 23 Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you."*

As a result of Moses preparation of Joshua, the people responded to Joshua just as they had to Moses (Deut. 34:9).

*Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.*

#### **IV. What were the last words of Moses to the people?**

A. Moses prepared some songs for the Israelites to sing in his absence.

1. Moses wrote some of the Psalms (Ps. 90, 91).

Psalms are written in poetic form and are meant to be sung or chanted.

2. Moses wrote a song after coming through the Red Sea (Ex. 15:1-18).
3. Moses prepared two special songs for his departure.
  - a. His first song was to inspire faith in God and His power to bring them into their inheritance (Deut. 31:22, 30; 32:1-43).
  - b. His second song was meant as his blessing on the people and an admonition to stay true to the Lord (Deut. 33:1-29).
4. Moses used songs for a reason.
  - a. So that people could be continually reminded of God's deliverance (Ps. 32:7).
  - b. So that people could continually teach, exhort and admonish each other (Col. 3:16).
  - c. So that God's goodness could be passed on to the generations to follow.
5. Moses' songs will be sung in eternity (Rev. 15:3-4).

B. Moses gave them some last words of challenge (Deut. 32:45-47).

While in a sense the whole book of Deuteronomy comprises the last words of Moses to the people to prepare the new generation for the land, this portion is his very last recorded words.

*When Moses had finished reciting these words to Israel, he added: "Take to heart all the words I have given you today. Pass them on as a command to your children so they will obey every word of this law. These instructions are not mere words-- they are your life! By obeying them you will enjoy a long life in the land you are crossing the Jordan River to occupy." –NLT*

#### **V. How did Moses die and where was he buried?**

The record of Moses death is found in the last chapter of Deuteronomy. Joshua most likely recorded these events and finished the Book of Deuteronomy. We actually know very little except that...

A. God called Moses up to a mountain one last time (Deut. 33:48-52).

*That same day the LORD said to Moses, 49 “Go to Moab, to the mountains east of the river, and climb Mount Nebo, which is across from Jericho. Look out across the land of Canaan, the land I am giving to the people of Israel as their own possession. 50 Then you must die there on the mountain and join your ancestors, just as Aaron, your brother, died on Mount Hor and joined his ancestors. 51 For both of you broke faith with me among the Israelites at the waters of Meribah at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin. You failed to demonstrate my holiness to the people of Israel there. 52 So you will see the land from a distance, but you may not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel.”*

B. Moses went up Mount Nebo in obedience to God (Deut. 34:1).

*Then Moses went to Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab and climbed Pisgah Peak, which is across from Jericho. And the LORD showed him the whole land, from Gilead as far as Dan; 2 all the land of Naphtali; the land of Ephraim and Manasseh; all the land of Judah, extending to the Mediterranean Sea; 3 the Negev; the Jordan Valley with Jericho--the city of palms--as far as Zoar. 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, “This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I told them I would give it to their descendants. I have now allowed you to see it, but you will not enter the land.” 5 So Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in the land of Moab, just as the LORD had said. 6 He was buried in a valley near Beth-peor in Moab, but to this day no one knows the exact place. 7 Moses was 120 years old when he died, yet his eyesight was clear, and he was as strong as ever. 8 The people of Israel mourned thirty days for Moses on the plains of Moab, until the customary period of mourning was over.*

Deuteronomy 34:1-7

C. God showed Moses the land from the top of the mountain (Deut. 34:1-4).

D. Moses died (Deut. 34:5).

1. He died at the age of 120 (Deut. 34:7).
2. He died in great health (Deut. 34:7).

E. God buried him (Deut. 34:6).

The place of his burial was unknown.

## **VI. What surprise awaited Moses that was a great reward for his faithfulness?**

- A. Three times Moses had expressed his grief about not being able to go into the land (Deut. 1:37; 3:23-27; 4:21-24).

God finally had to tell him, “Enough of that. Not another word from you on this” (Deut. 3:26, Msg).

- B. God had allowed him to see the land from afar (Deut. 3:27; 34:1-4).

Up to this point I have usually felt rather sorry for Moses. But wait...

- C. God finally brought Moses into the land after nearly 1500 years (Mt. 17:1-4).

*Six days later Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain. 2 As the men watched, Jesus' appearance changed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothing became dazzling white. 3 Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking with Jesus. 4 Peter blurted out, “Lord, this is wonderful! If you want me to, I'll make three shrines, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”*

Let's see...who would you rather be with in the Promised Land? Three million murmuring people or Elijah, Jesus and three pillar apostles of the New Testament Church.

In order to do this he had to raise Moses from the dead (Jude 1:9).

*Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”*

Moses thus became a type of all those who die in faith awaiting a future resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ.