



# Lessons from Exodus

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## INTRODUCTION

The books of Moses are not only valuable historical documents, but are filled with relevant lessons for the people of God today. St. Paul taught the church at Corinth that the things that happened to Israel in the days of their exodus from Egypt and their wandering in the wilderness were examples for them to learn by, and were recorded "for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (see I Cor.10:6 & 11).

The failures of the Israelites serve as warnings to us, not to follow their ways of habitual murmuring and unbelief. Moses, on the other hand furnishes a positive example whereby we may be inspired to a life of close communion with God, and a ministry of intercession for needy people around us. The tabernacle with its marvelous representations teaches us how desirous our God is to dwell in the midst of His people, while the judgments visited upon the Israelites underline the necessity for holiness as a condition of abiding fellowship with our God.

The book of Genesis covered a tremendous time period from the creation at the beginning to the death of Joseph 2369 years after the creation of Adam. The book of Exodus takes us forward to the year 2514 (from Adam), that is, it covers the next 145 years. Most of the book, however, records the events of about 1 1/2 years from the burning bush to the plagues and exodus and then to Sinai and the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness. It is our earnest prayer that those who read and study these lessons will be inspired to come out of the Egypt of worldliness and enter into a life of fellowship with their God by appropriating all the grace and glory of the new covenant.

These lessons were written for the Emmanuel Pentecostal Sunday School by the pastor, Robert D. Kalis. This series is now complete. The titles are listed below and are available to any and all:

**The Men and Women of Genesis**  
**Lessons From Exodus**  
**The Ten Commandments**  
**Wilderness Examples**  
**Possessing the Land of Promise**  
**The Days of the Judges**  
**Israel's Early Kings**  
**Lessons From the Kings**  
**The Captivity and Return**

**The Miracles of Jesus**  
**The Parables of Jesus**  
**The Personal Ministry of Jesus**  
**According to Luke- I & II**  
**We Beheld His Glory (John I)**  
**Full of Grace & Truth(John II)**  
**Holy Ghost Acts - I & II**  
**Matthew: The King & His Kingdom-I & II**

## ISRAEL IN BONDAGE

Read: Exodus 1 & 2

*Memory Verse: Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, (I Corinthians 10:1)*

### What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *God does not forget His promises. In His time they are fulfilled.*
2. *The bondage of Israel in Egypt is comparable to the slavery of humanity to sin.*
3. *The Lord worked in many ways to raise up a deliverer and to prepare Israel to claim the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*

**I God Does Not Forget His Promises:** When Abraham obeyed God and left his homeland and his father's house to sojourn in a strange land, God made a promise to him. The promise was that to Abraham's descendants would the land of his sojourn (Canaan) be given (Gen.17:8). God also made the larger promise that through Abraham all nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen.18:18). God's great desire was for the redemption of all humanity. God's true purpose in choosing the descendants of Abraham as a special people and nation was that all nations might see what He would do for a people who kept His commands and served Him alone. The first promise concerning the land of Canaan was not fulfilled until 470 years after it was first given. The children of Israel left Egypt exactly 430 years to the day after the promise was given to Abraham (Ex.12:41). The second promise concerning blessing to all nations was fulfilled in Jesus 2,000 years after the promise. Isaac was the son of Abraham's old age. To him, also, God renewed the promise. Isaac had two sons, but only Jacob followed the Lord. God renewed the promise of inheritance to Jacob also.

Toward the end of Jacob's life, he and all of his family moved to Egypt where Joseph had become a great ruler. They were given the area known as Goshen to live in. There they found relief from the widespread famine. Before Joseph died, he

reminded his children and brethren of the promise which God had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; "God will surely visit you and bring you out of this land...ye shall carry up my bones from hence" (Gen.50:24-25).

When Joseph died, he was embalmed in the remarkable way of the Egyptians, and put in a coffin. He probably was never buried in Egypt, but his mummified body was kept as a reminder of the promise of God. During this time the children of Israel were multiplying in the land of Egypt. When a new Pharaoh from a totally different background ascended the throne (which knew not Joseph) he recognized the potential danger of having so large an alien population in his country. They were multiplying rapidly (see Ex.1:7).

The new ruler observed that the Israelites were already more and mightier than the Egyptians. He cleverly conspired to force them to work very hard. Thus Israelites became virtual slaves. But the hard work failed to slow the growth of the population of the Jews. Pharaoh forced them to build the "treasure cities" of Pithom and Raamses. But the more the Egyptians afflicted them, the more the Israelites multiplied. The affliction was intensified so that the lives of the Israelites became bitter because of the rigor of their tasks.

When these measures failed the conspiracy worsened. The king ordered the midwives who served the Israelites to kill all male babies, hoping in this way to weaken Israel. But the midwives feared God and refused to obey the king's commandment. The Lord noted their courage and dealt well with them. It is recorded that God "made them houses." This probably means that God blessed and prospered their homes and families. Some scholars think that the midwives married into Israel and joined the people of God.

When this course failed, Pharaoh blatantly ordered all sons born to the Israelites to be drowned in the river (Nile). What a grievous affliction for the people of God. Surely it must have caused Israel to cry to God for deliverance. God's time was near for the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham. God had foretold to Abraham that before the promise was fulfilled that his descendants would be in bondage and evil entreated (Gen.15:13).

**II God Raises Up A Deliverer:** When a healthy boy was born to Amram and Jochebed (see Ex.6:20), they determined that they would do all possible to keep that child alive. These parents of the tribe of Levi had faith to overrule the king's proclamation (see Heb.11:23). When the strong baby's healthy crying could be hidden no longer, in faith

the mother put the babe into the river, not to drown, however, but rather in a watertight basket. She trusted God's love and mercy. The baby's sister, Miriam, watched as God worked wondrously to preserve this precious and important life. She saw Pharaoh's daughter come to bathe, and held her breath as the little ark was discovered and brought to shore. Probably wet and hungry, the little fellow was crying. The princess' heart was moved. She knew at once that it was a Hebrew child. Miriam cautiously appeared at the right moment and offered to supply a Hebrew "nurse" for the baby. When her offer was accepted Miriam, of course, brought the mother who then received wages to raise her own son for several years. Thus was her faith rewarded. Can you imagine the earnest care Jochebed gave to her son during those years. How she must have taught him of their glorious heritage as the "people of God."

Too soon the day came when he was taken to the palace. The princess named him Moses, which means, "drawn out" for she had drawn him out of the water. The name was altogether fitting, for God, too, had drawn him out from the sentence of death. He was indeed chosen of God.

When Moses was of age, he was interested in his own Hebrew people. He had been educated in all the wisdom and arts of Egypt. The culture of Egypt was very advanced. The art of writing was developed then. Engineering and embalming of that era are still a wonder to modern man. Moses was learned in all these areas and the people were exposed to this advanced culture. God arranged this all that Moses could record for all posterity the dealings of Jehovah with the Hebrew people.

Despite his Egyptian wisdom, Moses chose to identify himself with the afflicted and despised Hebrew slaves. He "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb.11:25). Let us follow this example and remember that no matter how high we may rise in the societies of earth, we have a surpassing obligation of loyalty to our Lord and His people. Let us not get too comfortable in this Egypt.

When Moses saw an Egyptian smite a Hebrew, he defended his Hebrew brother and smote and killed the Egyptian. When on another day he saw two Hebrew men striving together he reprimanded them and reminded them that they were brothers. The one who did the wrong resisted Moses' interference. "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" he demanded. "Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?" When Moses realized that his actions were known he understood that he was in deep trouble. The choice to cast his lot with the despised people of God was commendable but the violence, of course, cannot be condoned. Life is sacred. So

Moses had to flee until God's time was fulfilled. In the days of the Apostles, Stephen expounded to his accusers how Christ was a prophet "like unto Moses." He used this story and the words of this violent Hebrew, "who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" and explained that "This Moses, whom they refused, the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer." In like manner, Stephen reasoned that the Jews had rejected and refused to have Jesus reign over them but God raised Him from the dead and made Him to be both king and judge (Acts 7:35).

**III The Bondage of Sin:** The Israelites' bondage in Egypt is comparable to the bondage of all humanity to sin. God has "drawn out" of humanity one whom He sent to be our deliverer from this frightful bondage. Our Savior, like Moses was rejected at first. Our Lord indeed was slain, but God raised Him from the dead. Now all who will follow Him can be free from the slavery of sin. Let us avail ourselves of this right to liberty. Sin shall not have dominion over us. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies. The price is paid. We may go out from the house of bondage. Jesus, our Moses, paid it all.

In the details of the birth and safekeeping of Moses and his training and preparation to lead God's people, we have a splendid illustration of God's care for His own. He is interested in the smallest details. The little ark did not leak. The princess came to just the right place at just the right time. Miriam also was on the spot. Pharaoh's daughter had a soft heart. She was willing to have a Hebrew "nurse." All these "coincidences" illustrate clearly God's care for His children. He is not an impersonal God and creator of the Universe, but a concerned Father, watching over and caring for every one of His children. He is interested in preparing us to serve Him according to His will. Let Him have His way with you.

## THE CALL OF MOSES

Read: Exodus 3 & 4

*Memory Verse: And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; (I Corinthians 10:2)*

### What we should learn from this Lesson

- 1. A personal encounter with God is the greatest preparation for service to the Lord.*
- 2. When God calls an individual to a particular sphere of service, He provides all the necessary abilities to fulfill that call.*
- 3. God honors those who are truly working in obedience to Him.*
- 4. The Lord is aware of the afflictions which beset His people, and He knows their sorrows.*

**I Moses in the Land of Midian:** Moses fled from Egypt after he had impulsively slain an Egyptian. He thought the Israelites would understand that God had raised him up to deliver them from the bondage of Egypt. But it was not yet God's time. Moses' action was premature. Now he had to flee from Pharaoh who sought to slay him (Ex.2:15). Moses went to the land of Midian. There he helped seven young women who had come to a well to water their father's flock. The father was a priest and his name, Jethro, is a title of respect. He is also called Reuel or Raguel. He invited Moses to dwell with them. Moses kept the flock for Jethro and married one of his seven daughters. Two sons were born, Gershom, which means "a stranger here," and Eliezer, meaning "my God is a help."

Moses was forty years old when he fled Egypt and he dwelt for forty more long years in the land of Midian. Often, he must have wondered about the welfare of his people, Israel. No doubt, Moses felt the lonesomeness of being separated from his family and loved ones. Perhaps that loneliness motivated the naming of his firstborn, Gershom (a stranger here).



One day as Moses "led the flock to the backside of the desert" he came to Mount Horeb. There he saw a strange sight. A bush burned brightly yet was not consumed. He turned aside to investigate this strange phenomenon. As he drew near the bush, God called to Moses out of the midst of the burning bush. Moses answered, "Here am I." The Lord assured Moses that He was the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, who was now revealing Himself to Moses. Jesus quoted this passage to prove the reality of resurrection (see Matt.22:32). Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. The Lord revealed to Moses that He had seen the affliction of the children of Israel in Egypt and had heard their cry, and knew their sorrow (Ex.3:7). God told Moses that He had "come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them...unto a good land." The fact that God had "come down to deliver" Israel is a significant occurrence. When God "comes down" to do something, you can be sure it will be done. God "came down" to see the work of man at the tower of Babel and stopped their preposterous endeavor (Gen.18:5). He also "came down" to verify the sin of Sodom and destroy the wicked city. This expression assured deliverance for Israel and judgment for Egypt.

"Come now," the Lord called, "and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Ex.3:10). God's time had come at last.

**II Moses is Hesitant to Go:** Moses had been too zealous for the deliverance of Israel forty years before, but now he was too reluctant to accept the call. He was full of excuses. "Who am I," Moses asked, "that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" We might all ask the same thing of the Lord when He sends us forth to do His work. God's answer to Moses is as good for us as it was for him: "Certainly I will be with thee" (vs.12). We are workers together with God! "I can do all things *through Christ* which strengtheneth me" (Phil.4:13). "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Thank God, that without Him we don't have to do anything!

Next Moses objected that, if the Israelites asked who had sent him, and he replied that the God of their fathers had sent him, he did not know what the name of the Lord was. God told Moses to say that "I AM" had sent him. God the creator was known by the Hebrew name Elohim. Now God revealed Himself by His covenant name, Jehovah the very present help, I AM. This was a forward move in the progressive revelation of God to man. God is not only the Creator, but also our personal deliverer from the bondage of the world and the flesh and the devil. This

should have been enough to send Moses on his mission with confidence.

Yet, Moses had further objections to accepting the challenge of God. "But behold," Moses objected further, "they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice." God gave Moses two miraculous signs to convince the children of Israel that God, Jehovah, had indeed sent him. The first was to cast his shepherd's rod to the ground and see it transformed into a serpent. When Moses did this he fled from the serpent, but the Lord instructed him to take it by the tail and immediately it became a rod again in his hand. "The serpent was a conspicuous part of Egyptian mythology. It was the emblem of one of their goddesses, and in particular, the sign of royalty. So the flight of Moses from it was an apt illustration of his unwillingness to encounter the pride and power of Pharaoh in the effort to emancipate the Hebrews; while its becoming a rod in his hand was an indication of the ease with which the might of Egypt could be turned by God into weakness." (W. M. Taylor)

The second sign God gave Moses was to put his hand into his bosom and to draw it out fully recovered. Despite these two remarkable signs, Moses still objected.

"I am not eloquent...I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." Now it seems likely that God can use one slow of speech more readily than one who is too quick to speak. Nevertheless, God reassured Moses; "Who hath made man's mouth? Have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say." What a wonderful promise to Moses, and to you and to me! To us He gives unction of the Spirit. The miraculous sign of tongues and prophetic utterance. He made our mouths. He can put His words in them. Only let our mouths be filled with prayer and praise and be always yielded to Him.

When Moses still objected to his commission God's anger was kindled. Moses had a brother, Aaron, who was quick with words. God told Moses that Aaron would speak for him. This arrangement worked well until Aaron was left to himself. There he failed miserably. The arrangement was obviously only the permissive will of God and not His highest desire. Much honor that God intended for Moses was forfeited. Let us be sure to let God have His highest will in our lives.

**III Moses Returns to Egypt:** Finally, Moses agreed to go. He asked leave of his father-in-law and received his blessing. "Go in peace," Jethro said. So, Moses set out with Zipporah, his wife, and at least the eldest son, Gershom. Meanwhile the Lord sent Aaron to meet Moses and they met in the mount of God. Moses shared the wonderful dealings and revelations of God to him with Aaron and they went on to Egypt. They

met with the leaders of Israel and Aaron explained the mission of himself and Moses. The miraculous signs were shown before the elders of Israel.

Contrary to Moses' fears, the people believed, "and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped!" (ch.4:31).

**IV The Gospel Call:** Every born again believer, and doubly those who have received the infilling of the Holy Spirit, have the obligation to share the glad tidings. Jesus, our deliverer, has paid the price to set those in the bondage of sin free. The people of the world who are in darkness need to hear the good news and we are commissioned to go! Don't make excuses. Do as Isaiah did: say, "Here am I send me."

So at the age of eighty, Moses was sent forth by God to do a great work. God emptied Moses of self-sufficiency and when he knew he was unable in himself, then God took him and used him mightily. Sometimes God takes years to train and prepare a chosen vessel. But God is never too late. He can and will use you.

*"The heights by great men reached and kept  
Were not attained by sudden flight;  
But they, while their companions slept,  
Were toiling upward in the night.*

*Standing on what long we bore  
With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,  
We may discern--unseen before--  
A path to higher destinies.*

*Nor deem the irrevocable past  
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,  
If, rising on its wrecks, at last,  
To something nobler we attain."*

*--Longfellow*

## WORSE BEFORE BETTER

Read: Exodus 5 & 6

*Memory Verse: And did all eat the same spiritual meat; (I Corinthians 10:3)*

### What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *The enemy always resists the work of God.*
2. *The bondage of sin is a grievous taskmaster.*
3. *It often seems that afflictions worsen before deliverance.*
4. *Our God is a covenant keeping Lord. His promise is sure.*
5. *We must persistently claim the fulfillment of God's promises.*

**I Before Pharaoh:** Moses was encouraged when the elders of Israel believed him concerning his mission. The signs were shown in the presence of the people, and they bowed their heads and worshipped. So Moses and Aaron were encouraged to go in to see Pharaoh. They told him, "Thus saith the Lord (Jehovah) God of Israel, Let my people go that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness" (ch.5:1).

Pharaoh responded roughly, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord neither will I let Israel go" (vs.2). Pharaoh did not know the Lord at this point, but it was not long until he got to know Him. He might have gotten to know the Lord as a friend and helper, but because of his stubborn heart, Pharaoh learned to know the lord as a Judge and destroyer.

The negotiations opened in a most tactful way. "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us;" Moses and Aaron explained. "Let us go three days journey into the desert and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword" (vs.3). This was a very reasonable request. The Egyptians celebrated many holy days in deference to their numerous *gods*. The Hebrews had labored hard in Egypt and it was not an unreasonable demand to ask for a three day holiday to worship.

Pharaoh was given an opportunity to respond to this reasonable demand to spare his kingdom. It was God's mercy which provided such an opportunity to Pharaoh. Nor was this request deceitful, for God had specifically told Moses that as a sign that God would indeed be with him, the people would worship in this mountain (Ex.3:12) which was about three days journey into the wilderness. God was giving Pharaoh an opportunity to respond to the most reasonable of requests in order to spare the land which had sustained the Patriarchs in the time of famine.

The request of Moses and Aaron also contained a significant and subtle warning. If the Hebrews did not worship their God, it was suggested that He might punish them with pestilence or sword. But if God might do so to His people for not worshipping, what might He do to a nation which prevented the Israelites from worshipping? This, too, was a merciful opportunity extended to Pharaoh to avert judgment.

**II Pharaoh's Response:** The king responded very roughly to Moses and Aaron. "Wherefore do ye hinder the people from their work, get you unto your burdens," he demanded. He treated these ambassadors of the living God like slaves. But not only did Pharaoh learn to know God Jehovah in the days which followed, but he also learned to know and respect Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh attributed the desire of the people to worship to too much leisure. Now the people were forced to build for Pharaoh. They had built the treasure cities of Pithom and Raamses for him (see Ex.1:11). Probably at some other provocation the king had ordered that not only should they build but also make the brick which was used to build. Now the king ordered that the *idle* Hebrews should gather the straw for themselves that had hitherto been provided them for their brickmaking. Yet the required daily production of bricks was not to be reduced. Here is the "father" of today's company efficiency experts. While the children of Israel had no union to plead their cause, an Almighty God was working for them, though they found it difficult to understand at this point.

When they did not fill the daily quotas for bricks the Hebrew foremen were held responsible and beaten. They appealed to Pharaoh explaining that the fault lay with the Egyptian overseers who were withholding the straw necessary to make the bricks. The laborers were forced to search the whole country to find stubble for the brick making. This rendered it impossible to fulfill the daily quotas.

Pharaoh listened to their complaint and then accused them. "Ye are idle, ye are idle," he scolded, "therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord"

(Ex.5:17). He demanded that they get back to work at once and verified that no straw would be given them any more. Now the Israelites realized that the situation was very serious and that the deterioration of their circumstances was brought about because of the dealings of Moses and Aaron.

**III Perseverance Despite Discouragement:** When the leaders of Israel met Moses and Aaron after the interview with Pharaoh, they complained that Moses and Aaron had made Israel to stink in the estimation of Pharaoh. "The Lord look upon thee and judge," they cried. It was only the first of many complaints Moses was to hear from the leaders over the next forty years.

Moses, too, was downcast at the results of his obedience to God on behalf of Israel. "Why is it that thou hast sent me?" he asked of God. "Since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all" (ch.5:23). The circumstances of the children of Israel were much worse than before Moses came to bring them out. It was darkest for Israel in Egypt just before the dawn of the Exodus.

In seeking the Lord for sanctification, the same thing often occurs. We are determined to be delivered from the bondage of our evil nature. As we begin to seek deliverance in earnest all the bondage seems to become worse. Perseverance is essential. The more vivid our bondage becomes, the more desperately we seek deliverance. The promise is true! Sin shall not have dominion over us. As we keep dealing with God, the covenant keeping Lord Jehovah opens the prison doors and breaks the shackles to bring us out into the land of promised holiness. Let us be sure not to sink in despair, but keep dealing with our faithful Lord. He will not fail!

Moses kept dealing with the Lord and the Lord graciously renewed the commission. He repeated all the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and went on to encourage Moses by promising to reveal Himself as **Jehovah** (Lord-deliverer) in a way that even Abraham did not know Him. Then God told Moses clearly once again what He would do for Israel! 1."I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians; 2."I will rid you out of their bondage; 3."I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments; 4."I will take you to me for a people; 5."I will be to you a God; 6."I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; 7."I will give it you for an heritage; I am the Lord!" (see ch.6:6-8). What a list of promises! And all

vouchsafed by that wonderful name: **I AM THE LORD**. Yet when Moses shared this message with Israel, because of the anguish of their sore bondage and grievous labor they would not listen to him.

**IV Who Is the Lord?** Pharaoh boasted that he did not know the Lord and would not obey His voice. Moses and Aaron and Israel *did* know the Lord and as they obeyed Him (however reluctantly) they came to know Him in a new and glorious way. God's Presence was manifested to Israel as never before in the earth and Moses spake with God face to face. Israel indeed came to know the Lord in a greater way through the commandments and His dealings with them. But Pharaoh, too, came to know the Lord whose voice he refused to obey. He learned to know the Lord as a judge and destroyer.

We have the opportunity to know the Lord as our Deliverer and Redeemer. As we obey His voice, He leads us from victory to victory, fulfilling his new covenant promises. We shall be like Him. We shall be with Him. We shall be one with Him. Or, if we refuse to hearken to His voice and obey His commandments and believe His promises, we, like Pharaoh, will learn to know Him against our will, perhaps, as judge and destroyer. "Every eye shall see Him". Will it be as glorious Lord and Saviour or as a judge and destroyer? Choose Him as Lord today!

## PHARAOH'S HEART HARDENS -SIGNS AND PLAGUES-

Read: Exodus 7, 8, 9, & 10

*Memory Verse: And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:4)*

### What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *God directed His judgments against those things highly esteemed by the Egyptians.*
2. *Satan attempts to imitate the work of God.*
3. *God gives special protection to His own redeemed people.*
4. *Repentance, motivated by fear is seldom enduring or effective.*
5. *Unbelief is rooted in the heart, not the head.*
6. *To enter into a controversy with Almighty God and resist His omnipotent will is dangerous indeed.*

**I Let My People Go:** The Egyptian people and their king, Pharaoh, recognized and worshipped many gods, but they did not know nor worship the Lord Jehovah. The Lord revealed to Moses that the Egyptians would know that He was indeed *the* Lord when He brought the children of Israel out from their enslavement (ch.7:5). No nation until very recent times ever let its slaves go free voluntarily. Egypt was not about to let its slave labor go without a protest. It was not accomplished, however, until Egypt was devastated.

The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron and told them to show Pharaoh the miraculous sign of the rod turned into a serpent. Pharaoh called for his magicians and



they (Jannes and Jambres, according to Paul in II Tim.3:8) duplicated the miraculous sign. Aaron's rod, however, swallowed up the rods of the magicians. But Pharaoh's heart was hard and he refused to listen to the demands to let Israel go.

Then the Lord sent Moses to meet Pharaoh as he went to the bank of the river Nile in the morning. Moses and Aaron warned Pharaoh that the Lord had sent them to say, "Let my people go!" They warned him that if Israel was not permitted to go, the river would be turned to blood. They smote the river with the rod in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants and the river turned to blood, the fish died, and the people could not drink of the water. When Pharaoh's magicians produced similar results with their enchantments Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to let Israel go despite the plague of blood which continued for seven days.

Next, the rod was stretched out over the river and a plague of frogs came forth. The abominable croaking pests were everywhere. The magicians also produced frogs by their trickery. What would have been a real good trick would have been to get rid of the frogs. They surely didn't need more. Finally, Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron to ask that the plague of frogs be taken away. He promised to let the people go so that they might sacrifice to their Lord. Strangely, when Moses asked when Pharaoh wanted the frogs to go, he said "tomorrow". When the frogs disappeared, so did Pharaoh's willingness to let Israel go. "When Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart" (ch.8:15).

Then Moses and Aaron, without further warning to Pharaoh, stretched out the rod and smote the dust of the ground. It became alive with lice throughout the whole land of Egypt. The magicians attempted to do this also. This time they failed and told Pharaoh that this was indeed the finger of God. Pharaoh, however, had hardened his heart and would not listen to reason. The fourth plague to fall upon Egypt was a multiplication of flies and bugs. Swarms of them were everywhere. This time there was another remarkable manifestation. The plague did not affect the area of Goshen where the Israelites lived. God made a division between the people of Egypt and the children of God (ch.8:22,23). God watches over and cares for His people. Not long after the Exodus the Lord promised Israel: "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and will give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians" (Ex.15:26). The Psalmist also promises that those who dwell in the secret place of the most high, shall be divinely protected: "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

"Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked" (Ps.91:8,10). So pestilent were these swarms of insects that Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and conceded that they could make their sacrifice. He said however that they should do it in the land of Egypt. This Moses declined to accept. The animals which were to be sacrificed to God were sacred to Egyptians and so the sacrifice would be an abomination to them. No, the children of Israel must be permitted to leave Egypt.

**II Egypt is Destroyed:** The fifth plague fell upon the cattle and herds and flocks of the Egyptians. These animals were considered holy, and in some cases were worshipped. Now they were smitten with a deadly plague. All the cattle of Egypt died (ch.9:6). Yet not one animal belonging to Israel was affected. When Pharaoh discovered this, he nonetheless hardened his heart, and refused to let the people go.

Next, Moses and Aaron took ashes from the furnace (for brickmaking, no doubt) and at God's instruction cast them into the air. The enchanters of Egypt often cast ashes into the air to stop harmful situations. God reversed this procedure and caused evil to break out in boils and inflamed sores on the Egyptians everywhere. Even the magicians could not appear because of the boils on themselves. Still Pharaoh was intransigent. God was good enough to warn Pharaoh that worse was still to come, but nothing would move him.

Unprecedented hail was the next step in the destruction of Egypt. The hail was accompanied by lightning and thunder. The fiery lightning ran along the ground. Flax and barley crops were destroyed (ch.9:31). Trees and plants were destroyed. Yet in the land of Goshen there was no hail. The loud thunder terrified the people of Egypt. Finally, Pharaoh called for Moses and confessed that he had sinned. He begged for Moses to intercede that the terrifying thunder would cease. He promised to let Israel go. Moses was skeptical, but interceded for Pharaoh. As soon as the hail ended Pharaoh reneged. He wanted Israel to leave their children behind when they went to worship. He changed his mind again.

Then Moses and Aaron appeared before Pharaoh and warned him against refusing to humble himself. They threatened a plague of locusts on the land. Pharaoh's advisors pled with him to let the men go. "Knowest thou not that Egypt is destroyed," they chided (ch.10:7). So Pharaoh offered to let only the men go. This was not satisfactory, so the locusts came and destroyed all that had escaped the hail. Pharaoh repented but this repentance was motivated by fear. Such repentance is seldom lasting or effective. Too often we are more sorry for getting caught or for the

consequences of our sin than for the offending sin itself. May our repentance be so deep and so real from every offending thought, word, or action that we never fall into the same failure again. Pharaoh was only repentant while he was suffering. As soon as the affliction was removed the repentance disappeared likewise. May it not be so with us.

Next a plague of darkness extinguished the light in Egypt, but Israel had light in their dwellings. For three days the land of Egypt was immobilized. Again Pharaoh called for Moses and proposed to let Israel go if they would only leave their herds and flocks behind. "There shall not an hoof be left behind," Moses insisted. So hard was Pharaoh's heart that still he refused to let Israel go. His hardness of heart had blinded him to facts. Egypt was in chaos because of his stubbornness. Still he persisted. What folly to resist the working of Almighty God! The man who has God for his enemy is in big trouble. The first king of Israel, Saul, persisted in evil disobedience until he made God his enemy. The New Testament warns us that the Christian who is a friend of the world will have God for his enemy. God forbid that we should ever fall into that category.

The plagues were directed against the gods of Egypt (see Ex. 12:12). The Lord wanted the Egyptians to know that He was indeed the Lord God Jehovah and beside Him there was no other. The plagues also increased in their intensity. The last was the culmination of all of God's wrath upon Pharaoh and Egypt.

It is noteworthy that Pharaoh's unbelief was in his heart. He was not a madman, yet because his heart was hardened he could not react responsibly to the facts as they were. He persisted in his insane stubbornness until Egypt was ruined. Thank God for the covenant promise of a new heart!

## THE PASSOVER

Read: Exodus 11, 12, 13; Hebrews 11:27-28;  
I Corinthians 5:6-8

*Memory Verse: But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. (I Corinthians 10:5)*

### What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *The Lord intends to perfect fully the work which He begins.*
2. *It is futile and disastrous to resist the working of Almighty God.*
3. *The Passover lamb was a type of Jesus, the Lamb of God.*

**I The Last Warning:** Nine plagues had devastated Egypt. Its cattle and its crops were destroyed. Pharaoh's advisors had remonstrated with him, "Know ye not yet that Egypt is destroyed?" (Ex.10:7). But Pharaoh's heart was hardened. The people of Egypt had learned to respect and fear Moses and Israel and the Lord Jehovah, but Pharaoh still resisted God's word. When the Israelites asked for jewels of silver and gold from the Egyptian people they gave abundantly to them. This was in a measure equivalent to wages for the years of slavery without pay. The Hebrew word translated to "borrow" in our text should be "asked" (ch.11:2; 12:35).

The Lord gave warning to the Egyptians for the last time. The final plague was to be by far the most devastating of all. At midnight the angel of the Lord would go out into Egypt and all the firstborn of Egypt would die. From the family of Pharaoh to the family of the "maidservant that is behind the mill." Even the firstborn of cattle would die. After this plague the Egyptians would let Israel go. Despite the nine experiences of devastating plagues before this final one, Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let Israel go.

**II The Passover:** While Egypt was warned of the impending disaster, Israel was instructed how to obtain the protection and safety amidst the great slaughter. They

were told to take a lamb for each household. It was to be a male, without blemish, of the first year, either sheep or goat. It was to be selected on the tenth day of the month (Abib, the first month, equivalent to March-April) and it was to be slain on the afternoon of the fourteenth day of the month. The blood was to be sprinkled on the door posts and top of each entrance to the Israelites' dwellings. They were to remain within and eat the sacrifice after roasting it. They were also instructed to eat unleavened bread only, and they were to be dressed and packed and ready to travel at a moment's notice. The Lord explained to the Israelites what would happen in Egypt on that night and explained that, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."

The day selected by the Lord was not without significance. Since the months were lunar months, beginning with the new moon, the fourteenth day would bring about the full moon. This, of course, was ideal for the Exodus; the bright full moon to lighten the midnight as they left the land of their oppression. Also, the day of the Exodus, marked the exact date of the 430 years spoken of to Abraham (see Gen.15:13, 16). "At the end of 430 years, even the selfsame day, it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt" (ch.12:41).

When the Israelites had listened to the instructions of Moses and Aaron, they bowed and worshipped. They carefully obeyed every detail. Possibly some Egyptians also followed the instructions. It may be that some of the Hebrews had married Egyptians, at any rate, we are told that beside the six hundred thousand adult Israelites (not counting children), "a mixed multitude went up also with them" (ch.12:38).

**III Exodus:** In Goshen, all was in readiness. The blood was on every door. Think what you would have done in similar circumstances. No doubt, to be sure that the blood would be seen, large quantities were *painted* on the door posts. The sacrificial lamb was roasted. Belongings were packed. Unleavened bread was eaten.

Then at midnight the final plague struck. In every house of the Egyptians one died. There rose a cry throughout all the land. As more and more death was discovered, even the firstborn in every house, the wail became a crescendo of distress and fear. Quickly the word was sent for Moses to come, and Pharaoh at last agreed or rather insisted that Israel go forth from Egypt and worship the Lord their God. He agreed that they could take everything including their flocks and finally he said, "And bless me also," Like many other stubborn people, Pharaoh waited until it was too late

to seek the blessing of the Lord Jehovah whom he had so long despised and resisted.

So, Israel at last departed from a humbled Egypt which had kept them in slavery for many years. The full moon lit the way as their journey to the promised land began. They took the bones of Joseph with them (Ex.13:19), and the Israelites were divinely guided by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. The author of the book of Hebrews uses the Passover and the Exodus as an example of faith. "By faith he (Moses) forsook Egypt (the Exodus) not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood; lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them" (Heb.11:27,28). The faith of Moses and Israel concerning the Passover and Exodus is intended to be an inspiration to us to apply the blood of the better Passover Lamb and go out from the bondage of worldly and fleshly sin.

**IV Christ Our Passover:** The Passover was an historic event for the children of Israel. The Lord told them through Moses that the Passover feast was to be observed yearly throughout all their generations. The annual celebration would renew the remembrance of the great work of God in delivering Israel from the slavery of Egypt. It's observance would be an opportunity in generations to come to tell their children how marvelously God worked to redeem them from slavery. To the nation of Israel it was the declaration of independence and the emancipation proclamation all in one, "A night much to be remembered."

But if it was a great historic event, as cannot be denied, it was also a great prophetic event. It was prophecy in history. In writing to the church at Corinth, Paul says, "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Cor.5:7,8). John the Baptist also must have had the Passover lamb in mind when he pointed to Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

The original Passover observance parallels the greater Passover fulfillment in many striking and interesting ways. The lamb chosen for the Israelites' first observance was to be a male in the prime of life. Isaac Watts originally wrote: "When I survey the wondrous cross, On which the *young* prince of glory died." Yes, and not only was He young, but truly without blemish, "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners" (Heb.7:26). Just as the Israelites had to sprinkle the blood of their lamb upon their own personal dwellings, so must we personally appropriate the power of

the blood of the everlasting sacrifice. As the children of Israel were required to remain within their protected dwellings, so must the Christian not only apply the blood of Christ, but also abide in Christ.

The sacrificial blood was sprinkled on the door posts, and the lamb that was slain was roasted for food for their journey. Even so the Christian, not only applies the blood of Christ for the cleansing of sin, but also, "eats the flesh, and drinks the blood" of the Son of God as food for his spiritual life. The children of Israel were advised not to break the bones of the lamb. So when Jesus hung on the cross and the Roman soldiers came to hasten the death of their three victims by breaking their legs they found that Jesus had already expired. So they did not break His bones and the scripture type was preserved, "a bone of him shall not be broken" (John 19:36).

Then, too, the Israelites ate the Passover with their loins girt and with staff in hand. All was to be in readiness for their imminent journey. The Christian, too, is to be ready momentarily for the heavenly call, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord" (Luke 12:35,36).

The exclusion of leaven from the houses of the Israelites during the annual celebration of the Passover is not only interesting but very important in its meaning. Paul uses this peculiarity to teach Christians the necessity to seek out all sin and keep unspotted from the world and the flesh. He urges us especially to "keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Cor.5:8). Hypocrisy is intolerable in the Christian. It must be purged out that we may be true believers deceiving neither others nor ourselves. May God help us to be indeed faithful and true. The Christian life is to be a feast: a time of joy and rejoicing. So, let us live and rejoice in the redemption of our Lamb without blemish.

## THE RED SEA VICTORY

Read: Exodus 14, 15; Psalm 106:1-23

*Memory Verse: Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. (I Corinthians 10:6)*

### What we should learn from this Lesson

- 1. Though we might prefer not to face trials, the Lord allows them so that victories may be won and our enemy defeated.*
- 2. The Lord does not leave His people without Divine guidance. The Holy Spirit within is the portion of believers today, instead of the visible pillar of cloud and fire which led the Israelites.*
- 3. When we follow the leading of the Lord, we can count on His protection when danger arises.*
- 4. A song of thanksgiving and praise should follow every victory given by the Lord.*

**I Led Out by the Lord:** The children of Israel spoiled the Egyptians as though they had defeated them in a war. They left Raamses in Goshen on that fateful Passover night. Six hundred thousand adult Israelites, and their children, plus a "mixed multitude" journeyed to Succoth. Can you imagine the problems of moving such a crowd of people with much cattle and all of their possessions?

The Lord did not lead the children of Israel directly into the land of promise. He foresaw that if the people of Israel had to face war at once, that they would become discouraged and return to Egypt (Ex. 13:17). So the Lord led them through the wilderness toward the Red Sea. From Succoth they moved on to Etham. Now the Lord did a marvelous thing for the children of Israel. He manifested Himself in a pillar of cloud that went before the Israelites by day. At night the cloudy pillar



became a pillar of fire. This visible manifestation remained continually with Israel. Next, the Lord told Moses to lead the people to encamp before Pihahiroth, opposite Baal-zephon, near the Red Sea. The Lord told Moses that Pharaoh would regret having let Israel go and would pursue them. He promised to show the Egyptians that Jehovah was indeed the Lord. The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and supposing that Israel was "entangled in the land" he took his army and six hundred chariots and captains over every one of them. The formidable Egyptian force overtook Israel while they were camped at Pihahiroth.

How the hearts of the children of Israel sank when they saw the Egyptian chariots and army approaching! They were sore afraid, and they cried unto the Lord. He had led them every step of the way. His pillar of cloud was suspended at the head of their camp. But they were shut in. The sea before them, the Egyptians behind them. They began to murmur to Moses. "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" they sarcastically chided. They said they would rather have stayed in Egypt and be left alone. How quickly they forgot the horrible bondage!

But when we follow the leading of the Lord we can rest assured that He will not allow us to be defeated. The children of Israel had not gotten themselves into this predicament. The pillar of cloud was the visible assurance that God was with them. But they saw only the present danger. They were extremely agitated and probably were running to and fro seeking hiding places or some route for flight. But Moses, understanding that the deliverance was assured, spoke to the people, "Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." He assured the Israelites that they would never again see these stubborn Egyptians after this day. "The Lord shall fight for you and ye shall hold your peace" (Ch. 13:14).

**II Go Forward:** Moses then cried to the Lord. The Lord told Moses to speak to the children of Israel to go forward. But the Red Sea was before them. This was a formidable obstacle. What a valuable lesson for us to remember. When God calls us to go forward, no matter what obstacles may appear to hinder our obedience, He will show us how to overcome them. He makes a way where there is no way.

The Lord instructed Moses to stretch out his rod over the sea to divide it. The children of Israel then could pass over on dry ground. The pillar of cloud now went from before the Israelites to behind them. Now that manifestation of God's presence stood between them and the Egyptians. As night came on Moses stretched out the

rod over the waters. A strong east wind arose and drove back the sea. The waters divided and the wind dried the path. The pillar of fire shed light on the preparations of Israel to break camp and cross the sea. But the same pillar was darkness to the Egyptians so they could not encompass Israel that night. By morning the Israelites were ready and marched into the midst of the sea on dry ground. The waters were a wall to them on the right hand and on the left.

When the Egyptians realized what had happened, they foolishly decided to pursue Israel by the same path. But with Israel safely across, the Lord looked at the Egyptians in the morning watch from the separating pillar of cloud and began to trouble them. The ground became soft. The chariot wheels began to sink in the mud. Soon wheels were falling off and the Egyptians panicked. At God's command Moses stretched out his rod once again. With a thunderous roar and cascade of foam the waters returned to their normal condition, burying the horses, the chariots, and the Egyptians all at once. Soon Israel saw the bodies of the Egyptians washed up on the shore. Now Israel began to realize that God had done great things for them. They probably would have preferred to have no such trial of their faith. "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned" (Heb. 11:29). When it was all over, the Israelites were delivered forever from the Egyptians. The renown of this victory over powerful Egypt went before Israel to the enemies in Canaan and caused their hearts to melt (see Josh. 2:9-10). All Israel recognized at this point, that the salvation of the Lord was great, so the people feared the Lord and obeyed Him and His servant Moses (Ex. 14:31).

It is times of trial and affliction that reveal to us the glorious salvation and full redemption of our Lord. If we could choose, no doubt, we would spare ourselves and our loved ones and friends all the trials and tests and afflictions that God allows to come our way. But how then would we experience the great deliverance of our God. As we look back over years of Christian experience it becomes clear that it is indeed the trials and afflictions that befall us which bring us into the greater experiences of the reality and glory of our God. We need not pray for trials, but when they come, let us count it joy to prove again the faithfulness of our God.

**III After the Struggle, the Song:** "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown int the sea" (Ex. 15:1). Great victories are always popular themes for the ballads of men. This is the first such song

in the Bible. After recounting the details, the real point to the song becomes evident: "Who is like unto thee, O Lord among the gods?" It was especially to make the Lord Jehovah known to the generations to come and to the heathen round about. The hearts of the enemies of Israel must melt at the report.

Miriam, the older sister of Moses, led the women of Israel as they took up the chorus with timbrels and dancing. Years later Deborah and Barak also lifted their voices in a song of praise for the victory over Sisera and Jabin. Hannah, also, is famous for her song of praise to God for the answer to her prayer. David is the prince of all the praisers. We, too, must learn not only to call on the Lord with loud voice in time of trouble, but also lift up our voices in glad songs of praise. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men" (Psalm 107:8, 15, 21, 31).

*"The waters, Lord, perceived thee,  
The waters saw thee well;  
And they for fear aside did flee,  
The depths on trembling fell.*

*"The clouds in waters forth were poured,  
Sound loudly did the sky;  
And swiftly through the world abroad  
Thine arrows fierce did fly.*

*"Thy thunder's voice amongst the heaven  
A mighty noise did make;  
By lightnings lightened was the world,  
Th' earth tremble did and shake.*

*"Thy way is in the sea, and in  
The waters great thy path:  
Yet are thy footsteps hid, O Lord,  
None knowledge thereof hath.*

*"Thy people thou didst safely lead,  
Like to a flock of sheep;  
By Moses' hand and Aaron's thou  
Didst them conduct and keep."  
--from Scottish Psalter*

## GOD PROVIDES FOOD AND WATER

Read: Exodus 15:22-27; 16:1-36; 7:1-16

*Memory Verse: Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them, as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. (I Corinthians 10:7)*

### What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *God has promised to provide for our needs, both natural and spiritual.*
2. *The Christian life is not free from afflictions and problems.*
3. *The appetites of the body are not to control us, but rather serve us for the glory of God.*
4. *We ought to lift up the hands of our leaders, rather than murmur and complain against them.*

**I The Waters of Marah:** From the shores of the Red Sea, Moses led the children of Israel three days journey into the wilderness of Shur. They found no water during these days and finally exhausted their resources. Then they found water at Marah. What a relief it must have been to see this water. But, alas, when they tasted of it they found it to be undrinkable. As usual the people began to murmur against Moses. Truly, Moses was a man of great faith. He knew the wilderness well, having spent forty years in the region caring for his father-in-law's flocks. The desolation of the area was well known to him. The scarcity of water and sustenance was a problem for a flock of sheep. To lead two million people into this wilderness took great faith indeed. The problem was compounded by the nature of these people. Moses, knowing these difficulties full well, in obedience to God's directions led the people forth.

When the people murmured against Moses, he did what they all should have done. He cried to the Lord. This is what we must learn to do when difficulties or disappointments arise. Murmuring and finding fault with our leaders is a sign of

unbelief and a sin against the Lord. As Moses cried to the Lord, he was shown a tree to cast into the waters. When this was done the water was miraculously made fit to drink. Now we know, of course, there is not tree on earth that can change water like that. The source of the change was in God. The tree was an outward aid to faith. At any rate, the waters were healed and the people could drink to the full.

**II The Lesson of Marah:** At Marah when the waters were healed the Lord made an ordinance for Israel: "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Ex. 15:26). Here is recorded one of the covenant names of the Lord: Jehovah-Ropheka. This covenant name is still good today, for the Lord God does not change. He is still the Lord our healer and physician. The inspiration for this ordinance was the healing of the waters, and the logic was that if the Lord could heal the bitter waters of Marah, He could and would heal the bitterness of sickness. The promise was even preventive in nature. God would keep the diseases from His people. There were conditions, however, to this ordinance. We may also add the promise of James, that if the sick have committed sin, it shall be forgiven and the Lord will raise him up through the function of anointing with oil. Diligent obedience to the commandments of our Lord gives us confidence in prayer, and inspires our faith. It is important therefore, to keep the commandments of our Lord and to claim His promises concerning both the prevention of sickness and the healing of every disease.

The Christian life is not all afflictions and trials. There are glorious mountain top experiences. The children of Israel, after the failure at Marah journeyed on to Elim. There they found abundant water. Twelve wells and seventy palm trees marked this oasis. It is wonderful that the Lord, who brings us through every trial as we trust Him, also brings us to times of refreshing, as He did for the children of Israel at Elim.

**III The Bread of Heaven:** One month after leaving Egypt, the children of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin (*pronounced Zin*). Their provisions had run out and they began to remember the savory food of Egypt. The whole congregation began to murmur and complain against Moses and Aaron. "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did

eat bread to the full,; they grumbled. They accused Moses and Aaron of bringing them into the wilderness to kill them with hunger.

The two leaders must have gone right to God at this time, for the Lord spoke to them and assured them that He would "rain bread from heaven." Moses chided the people for their unbelief and murmuring. "Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord," he explained. Then he promised that at evening they would acknowledge that the Lord had brought them out of Egypt, and in the morning they would see the glory of the Lord.

So it was that the people saw the glory of the Lord in the cloud as God spoke to Moses and promised meat for the people that night and bread in the morning. The Lord had heard and noted the murmuring of the people. That night quails came up and fell upon the camp, covering it. The children of Israel had roast quail that night. Some time later, once again, the mixed multitude lusted for the foods of Egypt and the Lord sent quails enough for a month (see Num. 11). At that time judgment accompanied the provision of quails and many died. The Psalmist remarks of these incidents that the Lord "gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls" (Ps. 106:15). In the morning the people found the "bread". Like frost everywhere upon the ground there was the miraculously provided bread from heaven. They were to gather it daily, a stipulated amount for each person. It then could be prepared in various ways. On the sixth day of the week a double portion was to be gathered so that the people could rest on the seventh day. Since this experience took place before the law was given on Mount Sinai it is evident that the weekly day of rest and worship was a principle of God's kingdom from the beginning. The people of Israel did not follow the instructions about gathering the "manna," as the bread was named. Some tried to gather enough for several days at once, when the instruction was to gather it fresh daily. Then some went out on the sabbath day and angered the Lord with their persistent disobedience. this bread was called angels' food (Ps. 78:25). Later, a pot full of it was placed in the ark of the covenant. Israel ate of this miraculous provision for forty years. Without it they would have perished in the wilderness.

The Lord Jesus referred to this manna when He spoke to the Jews (see John 6). "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead," he explained. "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven." Jesus is to the souls of men what the manna was for the bodies of the Israelites. The parallel is clear: as the manna was heavenly in its origin, so Jesus is He "which cometh down from heaven and giveth

life unto the world." Just as the manna was abundant enough to satisfy all Israel, so the Lord Jesus is enough to meet the spiritual hunger of all mankind. The manna was easily gathered even as Jesus is readily found by every true seeker. The manna was to be gathered and eaten by each individual, and just so must everyone appropriate the provision of Jesus for himself. As the manna was given daily, so must we practice daily faithful communion for strength to live unto Him.

**IV Another Water Crisis:** From the wilderness of Sin the children of Israel followed the pillar of cloud to Rephidim. There they pitched camp. The supply of water ran out again and once more the people chided Moses. The Lord sent the elders of Israel with Moses some distance from the camp to the rock of Horeb. There, at the word of the Lord, Moses struck the rock and waters gushed out. No little trickle could have satisfied two million Israelites with all of their cattle. So abundant was this provision that the waters followed the children of Israel in a constantly flowing river of life. Our Rock, too, has been smitten at Calvary. The river of life has been flowing ever since, and all who will, may take of the water of life freely.

Enemies came to fight (probably for this water). The Amalekites fought against Israel. But as Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses, the Israelites prevailed. Joshua led the battle but the intercession of Moses with the help of Aaron and Hur was decisive. God sentenced the Amalekites to oblivion for their attack on Israel. So God fought for His people and provided for their needs.

The New Testament warns us not to take thought (worry) over the necessities of life. God provides for birds and flowers and we are of much more value to Him than they. Further, if God so bountifully provided the supply of our natural needs, how much more will He provide all that is needed for our spiritual perfection. Jesus Himself is that supply. Oh, let us be among the blessed ones who hunger and thirst for Him and His righteousness for they shall be filled. •

## GOD GIVES ISRAEL HIS LAW

Read: Exodus 19 & 20

*Memory Verse: Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. (I Corinthians 10:8)*

### What we should learn from this Lesson

- 1. God gives us His law because He loves us and desires to do much for us.*
- 2. Before we draw near to God some preparation is necessary.*
- 3. The blessings of the covenant which God offered to Israel are now offered to all believers.*
- 4. We enjoy the superior revelation of the Word of God spoken to us in a much less frightening way of God's Son.*
- 5. We ought to cherish and obey every word spoken by God to us.*

**I Israel Comes to the Mount:** When God called Moses from the burning bush, the Lord told him that the people of Israel would "serve God upon this mountain" (Ex. 3:12). Much happened in the meanwhile, but the promised token was fulfilled; Israel had returned with Moses to the mount where God had spoken from the burning bush. In the third month (they left Egypt on the 14th day of the first month) Israel came from Rephidim, where Moses had struck the rock and water was provided, to the wilderness of Sinai. There they pitched camp. Moses must have been anxious to visit the site of the burning bush once again. He went up the mountain to meet with God. God called to Moses from the mountain asking him to speak to Israel and propose to them a remarkable covenant.



**II The Covenant Proposed:** First of all, the Lord reminded Israel how He had delivered them from the bondage of Egypt. Then in miraculous fashion He had supplied their daily necessities and brought them to Himself. The Lord had given many proofs of His love for them before He asked them to accept His covenant and obey His commandments. He gave Himself to Israel before He asked Israel to give themselves to Him. The deliverance from Egypt really placed Israel under a debt of responsibility to the Lord who had so marvelously delivered them.

Yet the Lord did not demand, but He proposed a covenant whereby if Israel would diligently keep His commandments and obey His voice, He would make them the most blessed people on the face of the earth. "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people," was the first promised blessing. The sense of the word peculiar used here is, unique or unusual. The two-fold promise is next: "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests." The double offer here is that they should all be like kings and priests. Finally, the whole nation was to be holy if they would indeed accept and keep the covenant and obey voice of the Lord.

Moses brought this proposal to the people of Israel. He carefully put before them all these words. The people quickly responded, "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do." Their response was sincere, no doubt, but perhaps they did not realize the importance of their total commitment to obey the voice of the Lord.

It is noteworthy, that although Israel quickly (within 40 days) broke this covenant (see Ex. 32:6 & 19) and later God substituted a lesser covenant (see Ex. 34: 10-27), the original proposals have been applied to the true Israel of God: today's believers (see I Peter 2:9). The very same things are enumerated: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." So what was offered at first to Israel in Old Testament times has been realized by the true Israel of God in these last days. Let us make sure we do not follow their example of unbelief and disobedience. God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit are our provision for all we need to inherit all the fullness of God's promises.

**III God's Voice Shakes the Mountain:** The Lord instructed Moses to go to the people and sanctify them. This was to be done for two days. Probably it was accomplished by the sprinkling of the blood of a lamb upon the people. When Aaron and his sons were consecrated for the priesthood just a short while after this event, the blood of a ram was put upon the right ear and thumb and great toe and then sprinkled upon them and their garments. All this was done after they had been washed with water

at the door of the tabernacle. The children of Israel here at the Mount, too, were instructed to wash their clothing. The people were sternly warned not to go too near the Mount. The blood of the animal sacrifices could not give the people access to God. How fortunate we are to live in a time when the better blood of Christ, the lamb of God, has been shed and the way opened for us to draw near to God with boldness, there to make known our needs. The people were instructed that on the third day the Lord God would come down upon the Mount in the sight of all Israel. After the two days of sanctification the people were told to be ready on the third day. "Come not at your wives," the men of Israel were advised. This is a very interesting injunction, to say the least. It is worth consideration. What does it imply?

At any rate, on the third day there was thunder and lightning. The mountain was covered with smoke and the voice of the trumpet grew louder and louder while the whole Mount quaked greatly. When Moses spoke, God answered him audibly from the Mount and called him to come up into the awesome atmosphere. Moses was called to come up to the top of Sinai and to speak with the Almighty. God's first words with Moses bade him quickly return below and warn the people again not to come too close and break through the bounds. They were, despite the two days of sanctifying and washing, a sinful and defiled people. And without holiness no man shall see God. They endangered their own lives by presumptuously drawing too near. But after this second warning God spoke in a loud and clear voice so that all Israel could understand.

**IV The Ten Commandments:** What an experience! Israel had seen the manifestation of God's presence in the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire. Now they beheld a greater sight: the power of God causing Mount Sinai to smoke and quake, and even more wonderful, now they actually heard the voice of God speaking in their language words which they understood. "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Ex. 20:2).

God then spoke audibly in the ears of all Israel the ten commandments which we know so well. He also, inscribed them with His own finger on two tables of stone. This was the first time in the history of humanity that God's laws were enumerated and codified. This is not to say that these laws themselves were new. "Thou shalt not kill" was God's rule when Cain slew Abel. The possibility of adultery was punished in the house of Abimelech (Gen. 20). The perverted lust of the men of Sodom was judged long before the ten commandments were spoken and written on Mount Sinai,

but his was the first time that the law of God was completely articulated and transcribed. This was the great privilege which Israel enjoyed above all other nations. To them were committed the oracles of God (Romans 3:2).

The order of the commands is significant. The first four, which tradition says were on the one tablet dealt with man's duties to God: first to His being, second to His worship, then to His name and finally to His day. These four are summarized by the oft quoted general commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (see Matt. 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27). The duties to our fellow man begin in the home, and then flow out to our neighbor, having regard first to his life, second to his other self: his wife, third to his property, fourth to his general standing and position. The law begins with the state of the heart toward God and ends with the state of the heart toward our fellow-man. The last commandment forbidding coveting anything that is our neighbor's embraces the other commandments which tradition says were inscribed on the second tablet. They also are summarized by the oft repeated word. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (see Matt. 5:43, 19:19, 22:39, Mark 12:31, Luke 10:27, Romans 13:9, Galatians 5:14, James 2:8).

**V Israel's Response:** The people of Israel became frightened as God spoke audibly to them. They moved far off from the Mount. When the commandments were given and the display of God's power ended the people besought Moses that God should not speak to them directly any more lest they die. They preferred to have Moses get the word from God and relay it to them. Thus Moses became the mediator between Israel and God. The people promised to obey the word of the Lord as given to them by Moses. No doubt, they sincerely intended to obey, but their carnal natures soon rebelled.

In these last days God has spoken unto us by His Son. We are under a greater obligation to obey the word given to us than Israel was to the law given by Moses. How thankful we should be that the grace of God and the power of the Spirit are provided to us so that we may keep our Lord's commandments and be His peculiar people, kings and priests unto our God, a holy nation! Praise His name!

## MOSES AND THE TABERNACLE

Read: Exodus 24, 25, 26, & 27

*Memory Verse: Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. (I Corinthians 10:9)*

### What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *God desires to dwell with His people.*
2. *The primary purpose of gathering together for worship is to meet with God.*
3. *Defiled humanity cannot enjoy access to God without holiness.*
4. *The types and emblems represented by the tabernacle with its furniture and sacrifices are obsolete since Jesus offered Himself and ascended into heaven.*

**I God in the Midst of His People:** The children of Israel were so frightened by the awesome manifestations of God's presence at Mount Sinai that they told Moses to ask God not to speak with them directly any more. Thus they forfeited the great privilege of direct communion with God. From that time on, all was done through a mediator, mainly Moses, but also Aaron. God spoke to these leaders and they passed His word on to the people. After the audible voice of God spoke the ten commandments, much more detailed instruction was given to Moses (see Ex. 21, 22, & 23). Moses told the people all the words of the Lord and they responded, "All the words which the Lord hath said will we do" (Ex. 24:3).

Moses also wrote all these instructions in "the book of the covenant" and after sending young men to make sacrifices to God, he read all the words again to the people. Once again they avowed, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Ex. 24:7). Moses then took the blood of the sacrifices which the young

men had offered, and sprinkled it on the people, saying "Behold, the blood of the covenant" (vs. 8). As wonderful as all this was, it pales to insignificance in the light of the better blood of Jesus, our better sacrifice of the better and everlasting covenant!

After this Moses was called by God to ascend the Mount. The seventy elders of Israel with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu ascended the Mount with Moses and they "saw the God of Israel" (vs. 10). Moses, and his servant Joshua were summoned to come higher up the Mount. The glory of the Lord covered the Mount for six days and on the seventh day Moses went into the midst of that cloud and was enveloped in its glory. He was in the Mount forty days and forty nights.

There, God spoke to him of the building of a tabernacle where the Lord, Jehovah could manifest His presence and glory to Israel. "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them," God graciously suggested (Ex. 25:8). What a blessed opportunity was given to Israel: to have the manifested presence of God right in the midst of their camp.

The Lord spoke in great detail to Moses and showed him a pattern of the tabernacle which was to be followed carefully. The Lord intended to set His presence in the midst of Israel very literally. Whenever their camp was pitched, Israel was to camp all around the tabernacle. To the east, three tribes were to set up their tents, on the south three tribes, on the west three tribes, and on the north three tribes (see Numbers 2). It is even more wonderful today that the Lord, not only manifests Himself where His people gather together to worship, but also that He is pleased to dwell in the individual tabernacles of our bodies. May we therefore keep our bodies "holiness unto the Lord" that they may be fit abodes for the thrice holy God.

**II The Tabernacle and Its Furnishings:** The description of the tabernacle begins with the ark of the covenant. It was to be made of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold. The size was two and a half cubits by one and a half, by one and a half. The mercy seat was to be made above the ark and the mercy seat was to be guarded by two golden cherubims. The tables of stone with the ten commandments inscribed on them were to be placed in the ark. Later, a pot of manna and Aaron's rod were also placed within the ark. From the mercy seat above the ark, God promised to commune with Moses in things pertaining to the governing of Israel. The room which contained the ark and its mercy seat was in the center of the tabernacle. it was called the most holy place or the Holy of Holies. It was separated from the holy place by a rich and thick curtain.

This second room, the Holy Place, contained three furnishings. There was a table for the shewbread, the altar of incense, and the golden lamp-stand. While the many various items of the tabernacle are made much of in regards to their representation, we must be content in this brief study to mention only the most important of them. Here, in the Holy Place, the altar of incense is a representation of prayer. It is by prayer that we approach God.

Just outside the Holy Place in the Outer Court, was the laver. Here those entering into the tabernacle proper, the Most Holy Place, and the Holy Place, had to stop to wash and examine themselves in the "looking-glass". Also in this Outer Court was the altar of sacrifice. Here the fire was never to go out. Daily sacrifices were to be offered morning and evening. All of the special sacrifices were offered here. For the Israelites who had so long dwelt in a land where many gods were worshipped, it was important to restrict their worship to one place under strict supervision. In this way the people had to learn that God was one and beside Him there was no other.

There are two obvious truths taught by the provision of the tabernacle for the worship of Israel. The first is, that God so loves His people that He desires to dwell with them and to be involved in all of their activities. This is just as true today for the believer as it was then for the children of Israel. Our Christian experience is not to be a compartment of our life which we enter once a week on Sunday and then abandon for the next six days, but the life of Christ is to be manifested in all the areas of our lives. Christ will make us better employees, better husbands and wives, better parents, better business people, better citizens. He wants to dwell with us always. What an unspeakable privilege is ours!

But the second truth is of great importance also: the manner of approach to God. Israel had renounced the privilege of direct communication with God. All had to be done through mediators. Even this was restricted because of their vile natures. Only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place, after diligently cleansing and sacrificing. Then, only once a year on the day of atonement could he enter. There he sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice for atonement on the mercy seat. In the Most Holy Place the High Priest communed with the Almighty God of Israel whose presence was manifested above the mercy seat, between the cherubims, by a cloud of glory. From the Most Holy Place, he brought to the waiting congregation the blessing and benediction of the Lord God Jehovah.

The Lord Jesus has opened for us a new and living way. His body was the veil that was torn asunder at Calvary that we might, by His holiness, enjoy access

to the Lord God with boldness. We may indeed come boldly because of that perfect holiness of Jesus which is imputed unto us as we believe!

The tabernacle structure as a whole is a sign-post directing us to God's Emmanuel (God with us). The white-robed priest is a shadow of Him who was white in more than vestments, for He was "holy, harmless, undefiled". Jesus is our High Priest. The bleeding lamb of sacrifice on the altar of the tabernacle is the likeness of that Lamb of God by whose precious blood we are redeemed from all iniquity. The Most Holy Place is a type of heaven into which our Lord has entered to administer the atonement for our sins. The Holy Place corresponds to our present life in this world. Here we may serve Him with prayers (altar of incense) with the light of our regenerated characters (the candlestick) and by the fruit of our labors for God (the shewbread).

This era of tabernacle worship was a step forward in the progressive revelation of God to man. Its lessons are of interest today still. Yet, we have come to enjoy an infinitely greater way. Israel failed so miserably that God ordered Moses to move the tabernacle far off from the camp of Israel. Let us be sure that we who once were "far off" and who have been made nigh by the blood of the better sacrifice, do not lose the glory of the indwelling Christ by careless and unholy living.

## AARON AND THE PRIESTHOOD

Read: Exodus 28, 29, 30; Hebrews 9

*Memory Verse: Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. (1 Corinthians 10:10)*

### What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *Those who minister as priests must themselves be sanctified.*
2. *The priest was to bear the names of Israel before the Lord and bring God's blessing to the people.*
3. *Under the everlasting covenant every believer has the privilege of serving as a priest.*
4. *Our great High Priest is superior to the high priests of Israel in many ways.*

**I God Chooses for the Priesthood:** When Israel came out of Egypt the Lord called attention to the fact that since all the firstborn of Egypt died, and all the firstborn of Israel were saved by the blood of the passover, these firstborn in a sense belonged to the Lord. The Lord proposed, however, that instead of all the firstborn serving as priests and servants of the tabernacle, the one tribe be chosen instead to take their place (see Num. 3:41). The tribe chosen was Levi, the tribe to which Moses and Aaron belonged. The Lord instructed Moses to count all the firstborn of Israel, every male from one month old and upward, and then also to number the tribe of Levi with the same limitations. The firstborn numbered 22,273 and the Levites numbered 22,000. The extra 273 firstborn were redeemed with money and God accepted the tribe of Levi as substitutes for the firstborn of Israel.

Levi had three sons, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. The duties of the tabernacle were divided between the descendants of these three sons of Levi. The de-



scendants of Kohath were chosen to serve in the most holy things. It was from this family that Moses and Aaron descended. Aaron and his sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar, were chosen to minister unto the Lord in the priest's office (Ex. 28:1). What an unspeakable privilege, and responsibility. The psalmist later wrote, "Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts" (Psalm 65:4).

**II The Garments of the Priesthood:** The priests were to wear special clothing when they functioned in their priestly offices. The high priest in particular was to be provided with very beautiful and meaningful attire. These garments included a breastplate, the ephod, a robe and a coat, a mitre of the head, and a girdle or belt. All were to be of the finest materials: gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.

The ephod was an interesting vestment. It was like a pullover vest. It was joined at the shoulders by two onyx stones set in gold and engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. Golden chains linked the onyx shoulder stones to the breastplate. This breastplate was made of matching material and workmanship to the ephod. Its size was one span by one span (extended little finger and thumb). Four rows, containing three settings of precious stones in each row (twelve, in all) were fastened to the breastplate. This plate with its twelve precious stones was linked to the shoulder whereon were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and was attached to the ephod by loops and a girdle (or belt). This complex garment was to be kept together. It may be that the names of the tribes were also engraved on the precious stones of the breastplate. The reason for this was that when the high priest entered the holy of holies, or the holy place, he would bear before the Lord the names of all the tribes of Israel. So all Israel would be represented in his clothing. This ephod and its attachments also is a figure of righteousness necessary to enter God's presence. That, however imperfect the figure, is the representation of the fine linen and the cunning craftsmanship. Paul likens the breastplate of his figure to righteousness (see Eph. 6:14).

Beneath the ephod was the priestly robe. This was made of blue. There was a hole in the top of it for the head of the priest and the hole was to be bound with a woven work to prevent it from tearing. At the hem of the coat were fastened ornaments alternately: a bell, and a pomegranate. The bells were functional. They could be heard as the priest discharged his duties behind the curtain of the holy of

holies. This was a reminder that death could claim a careless or unsanctified priest. The pomegranate probably represented fruitfulness. It is a prolific seed bearing fruit.

The headpiece was to bear a plate worn on the forehead inscribed with the words Holiness Unto the Lord. It was a reminder that all things, even the implements of worship and sacrifice, needed to be sanctified (made holy) by the sprinkling of blood. How suggestive too, for us, that over the forehead, the center of our intellect, should be placed these significant words and motto.

Finally, there was a coat of fine linen and breeches of linen. all these articles were to be worn whenever the priests served in the tabernacle "that they bear not iniquity and die" (Ex. 28:43).

**III The Consecration of the Priests:** Even with the wearing of this significant attire, Aaron and his sons could not minister until they had been personally sanctified and consecrated. First Aaron and his sons were to come to the outer court of the tabernacle. There at the laver they were to be washed and then clothed with the priestly vestments. Then Aaron was to be anointed with the oil. It was poured upon his head and is a type of the Holy Spirit who equips God's servants for the priestly ministry. Next a bullock was to be offered on the altar in the outer court as a sin offering. Aaron and his sons were to put their hands upon the head of the animal. This was to signify the transfer of their sins. The blood of this sin offering was then placed on the horns of the altar and the remainder poured out at the base of the altar. Another offering, a ram, was then offered as a burnt offering unto the Lord. The blood of this sacrifice was sprinkled "round about the altar." The third sacrifice was also a ram. This offering was for consecration. The blood of this offering was placed upon the right ear, the right thumb, and the right great toe of Aaron and his sons. From head to foot then they were ceremonially consecrated for their ministry.

**IV The Function of the Priests:** Aaron and his sons had the charge of all the sacrificial offerings. Daily, two sacrifices had to be made. One in the morning and another in the evening. They were charged with the duty of keeping the fire perpetually burning at the altar in the outer court of the tabernacle. The priests also made the sacrifices for all those who voluntarily made sin offerings or thank offerings as described in the first chapters of Leviticus. They performed the necessary duties on the holy days when special sacrifices were made. They also entered the holy place daily to dress the lamp there and to burn incense on the altar of incense. Once a week they placed new

shewbread on the table in the holy place. Once in the year, on the day of atonement, the high priest would enter, after cleansing himself and offering sacrifices, the most holy place. There he brought the incense and there he communed with God. He bore the names (representatively) of all Israel before the Lord and brought from that sacred meeting the blessing of Jehovah for the people. This priesthood was passed on to the descendants of Aaron and his sons, as the older priests died.

**V The Priesthood of Christ:** The Lord Jesus was of the tribe of Judah. His priesthood was not based on the Levitical heritage. His priesthood was after the order of Melchizedek. It is superior in many ways to the Levitical priesthood. The priesthood of Christ furnishes substance, while the Levitical priesthood provided only shadows and types.

Our priest lives forever while the Aaronic high priests died. Jesus has perfect and real righteousness, while the Old Testament priests were compassed with weakness and failure. Our Lord presents the blood of a better sacrifice than that of bulls and goats and His covenant is based on better promises than those given through the Old Testament covenant. Our High Priest has entered heaven itself while the old order of priests entered only the earthly tabernacle. The old order brought the blessing from God only once in a year to the people, but our Priest has opened the way of access to God the Father that we all may personally have communion and fellowship with Him continually.

**VI The Priesthood of all Believers:** The Christian believers are designated as a "kingdom of priests" and as such it is interesting to compare ourselves with the priesthood of Aaron's day. Our garments are the garments of praise and the robe of righteousness, not our own, but the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to us by faith. We are sanctified and equipped for our priesthood by the blood of Christ and the anointing of the Holy Ghost. Our duties do not include sacrifices for sin, for that is finished. But we do witness and teach of the efficacy of Christ's atonement for sin. We also burn the incense of intercession and prayer and praise. The blessing of the Lord God may flow from our lives to the needy world around us. May we fulfill our priestly calling even as our High Priest performs His, ever living to make intercession for us. •

## THE GOLDEN CALF

Read: Exodus 31 & 32

*Memory Verse: Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. (I Corinthians 10:11)*

### What we should learn from this Lesson

- 1. The deceitful and wicked human heart quickly and easily departs from the resolutions and promises to do good.*
- 2. It is always wrong to do wrong. Extenuating circumstances are not an excuse to do evil.*
- 3. In the long run it is better to take a stand for right.*
- 4. The consequences of sinful actions are usually much worse than at first appears.*
- 5. There is a beautiful, fruitful ministry interceding for others before the throne of God.*

**I Waiting for Moses:** Moses was in the Mount for at least forty days. There God revealed many things to him. The plan of the tabernacle, the order of the priesthood, and the manner of worship were carefully explained to Moses during the forty days in the Mount. God also engraved with His own finger, the ten commandments on two tables of stone.

At the very time that God was describing a great place of honor for Aaron, who was to be the high priest for all Israel, Aaron himself was weakly yielding to the sinful desires of the fickle multitude. The people had grown restless. Aaron could have taken the recently written "book of the covenant" (Ex. 24:7) and taught it to the people. He might even have arranged for copies to be made by those who could write.

The devil finds work for idle hands. Idleness was soon changed to restlessness. Where was Moses so long? Has some misfortune befallen Him? Representatives went to Aaron demanding that he make them some kind of gods which would go before them. It is not an uncommon fault among men, that some who are valuable workers when they are with other strong Godly leaders, fail miserably when left to themselves. For the ministers of the Gospel, there is real value in fellowship with Godly fellow-workers.

Aaron was a gifted helper to Moses. He was used especially because of his eloquence. But eloquence is a poor substitute for Godly character. It would have been good for Aaron to nip this sinful suggestion with strong reproof. He was obviously afraid of public opinion. Perhaps he even feared for his life. No doubt, the enemy, aware of Aaron's weaknesses, painted a dismal picture for him. Shamefully, Aaron made little or no protest against the evil proposition. He asked the people to break off their golden earrings and bring them to him. It may be that Aaron thought that the people would refuse this request and so the evil could be averted. If he did, he was caught in his own trap, for the people quickly complied and supplied him with the gold requested.

How fickle were the hearts of these Israelites. Certainly they were not chosen to be God's people for any virtue which they possessed. And how like them we are until filled by the power of the Holy Spirit. Less than forty days had passed since they had heard all the words from the book of the covenant. Just before that they had heard God speak from heaven in a loud and audible voice, pronouncing to them the ten commandments. On both occasions, all Israel had promised, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do, and be obedient." Yet, here, within forty days they are demanding that Aaron make them gods of gold to go before them. Thus they were blatantly disobeying the very first two of the commandments which they had so recently vowed to obey. Have we not sometimes quickly forgotten our vows to the Lord? We are quick to make them in time of great need and quick to break them when deliverance has been given. Thank God, there is regeneration from such weakness of character.

Evil conspiracy is much more easily resisted when it first begins, than when it has developed and enlarged. Aaron surely could have stopped this disastrous failure by strong reproof. He would have had God on his side. We can learn a valuable lesson here. Let us not be weak in standing up for righteousness and real holiness. Though contrary to popular opinion, it will always inspire some to step out to the Lord's side.

You don't know until you declare yourself to be a disciple of Christ how many others are hiding in the crowd, at work, or in the school. Stand up for Jesus! Don't be ashamed to acknowledge Him as your Lord. It will inspire others.

Aaron melted the gold and made a molten calf. Then he fashioned it with a graving tool. There were many such "gods" in Egypt. The people accepted the calf and blasphemously declared "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (Ex. 32.:4). Aaron compounded his sinful weakness by building an altar before the calf and proclaiming the next day "a feast to the Lord" (vs.5).

The next day the people rose up early, not to gather the manna which God mercifully provided despite their rebellious actions, but to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings. They gorged themselves with food and drink and then rose up to play (vs. 6). This "play" was of an unclean nature, for God told Moses on the Mount that the people had "corrupted themselves" (vs. 7). Taken with the other things noted about this feast: the people were asked (vs. 25), and the singing of drunken revelry which met the ears of Moses and his young servant, Joshua, as they descended from the mount, it seems obvious that a vile and drunken orgy was taking place. Naked dancing (vss. 19,25) and singing and naturally resulting indulging of lust marked the day which Aaron had proclaimed to be a feast to the Lord. What a scene of blasphemous confusion! Yet, not too unlike the wedding reception of some modern backslidden "Christians". Vows at the altar are exchanged; God's blessing is sought; and then a quick shift and the drinks are served, the worldly music plays and the people sit down to eat and drink and rise up to dance and play. Why? Deceitful and wicked human hearts and too many Aarons. Not enough leaders like Moses. God deliver us!

**II Moses Intercedes:** When God told Moses on the mountaintop what Israel was doing, His anger waxed hot. He would have destroyed them in a moment. He thought for a moment to make a new start from the descendants of Moses. But Moses interceded for Israel. He reminded the Lord of the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses suggested to the Lord what the Egyptians might think if Israel perished in the wilderness. Moses' pleadings prevailed with God and the Lord changed His mind (vs. 14). What power this man Moses had with God and man! Oh, that we, with the Holy Spirit to help our infirmity, might pray and prevail with God as Moses did.

**III Moses Sets Things Right:** As Moses approached the camp he heard the revelry,

then saw the shameful lewd dancing (see vs.19, 25). His anger waxed hot against Israel. He smashed the two tables of stone which God had given him, to the ground, breaking them. This was a significant act. Israel had broken their part of the covenant which they had so recently ratified. The smashing of the tables of stone signalled the annulment of that covenant. Natural Israel never regained the promises of that covenant. The true Israel of God, the believers, both Jew and Gentile, obtained what Israel forfeited here (see I Peter 2:7-10).

Moses took the golden calf and quickly ground it to powder. The gold dust was sprinkled on the drinking water and the people made to drink it. He reproved Aaron for this weakness. So feeble are the excuses and explanations of this son of Levi that we blush for shame when we read them. The author of Hebrews was merciful when he explained that those who served as High Priests under the law were men "which have infirmity" (Heb 7:28). Imagine, while God on the Mount was making a King and a Priest of Aaron, he was in the camp making a fool of himself.

Moses stood in the gate of the camp and called, "Who is on the Lord's side?" This is what Aaron should have done. Immediately there was a response. All the Levites stepped out. They were given the task of bringing judgment on Israel. They executed three thousand (vs. 28). Moreover the Lord continued to plague Israel because of the golden calf incident (see vs. 35). So the consequences of Israel's deceitful nature and desperately wicked hearts were devastating. Three thousand died at once. The record of Aaron was stained beyond repair. The plagues of the Lord continued in the camp. Worst of all; Israel forfeited the marvelous covenant so recently proposed by the Lord and ratified by Israel.

Consider yet the value of a strong leader. What Aaron was afraid to do when the conspiracy was just beginning and when it might easily have been nipped in the bud, Moses did in a few hours after descending from the Mount, and this when the conspiracy had developed into a great rebellion and orgy. Let us pray for leaders like Moses who, because they live holy and Godly lives themselves, have the great authority of God in their ministry. If weakness marks our character, there is a remedy, thank God. Where I am weak, I may be made strong by the power of the Holy Spirit within. •

## THE COVENANT BROKEN AND MOSES' INTERCESSION

Read: Exodus 33, 34; 32:7-14, 30-35;  
II Corinthians 3; Jeremiah 31:31-34

*Memory Verse: Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. (I Corinthians 10:12)*

### What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *The breaking of the tables of stone was symbolic of the breaking of the covenant so recently proposed and ratified.*
2. *The intercession of Moses procured a secondary covenant for Israel much inferior to the first which they forfeited by that idolatrous worship of the golden calf.*
3. *The glory of the Lord filled Moses as he interceded for Israel and sought to behold God's glory.*
4. *The glory of the New Covenant transcends that of the old.*

**I The Covenant Broken:** The children of Israel, and Aaron their High Priest, miserably failed in the very first trials they encountered. Twice Israel had promised to obey all the words of the Lord which had been spoken to them audibly and then written in the *book of the covenant* (see Ex.19:8 & 24:7). This covenant which God made with Israel was wonderful beyond description. A tremendous threefold blessing was promised to them on the condition of their obedience. Israel was to be God's own peculiar or unique treasure above and beyond all other nations; they were to be a kingdom of priests which implies access to God and they were to be a holy nation (Ex.19:5-6). These marvelous blessings were offered upon the condition of obedience to the ten commandments.

Israel saw the majestic manifestation of the Presence of God at Mount Sinai. They heard His voice of thunder and were moved to promise unfailing obedience. yet within forty days, while Moses was on the Mount in close communion with God, the people with Aaron fell into the most abominable idolatry of the golden calf and the



shameless rites with which the people worshipped it. They broke this marvelous covenant within forty days.

When Moses descended from the Mount, he had the tables of stone on which God Himself had inscribed the ten commandments. These laws were the basic obligation of Israel to obey in order to obtain the blessings of the covenant. When Moses saw the golden calf and the shameful nakedness and revelry accompanying the worship of this golden idol, his anger waxed hot and he dashed the tables of stone to the ground smashing them to pieces. This was a significant act. It indicated that the covenant so recently made was now broken. It was null and void. Never again was the threefold blessing promised or offered to the natural Israel. Only to the true Israel of God, the redeemed believers of *all* nations were these precious promises renewed (I Peter 2:9).

God was under no obligation to fulfill the conditional promises He had made to Israel for they had blatantly broken the conditions. However, the Lord had made unconditional promises to Abraham which He had to fulfill. To Abraham's seed was promised the earthly territory in which father Abraham had sojourned. Through Abraham's seed God had also promised that all nations would be blessed. These unconditional promises God could not set aside.

**II Moses' Effective Intercession:** The Lord was angry with Israel. He told Moses that Israel was a stiffnecked people (unteachable). "Let me alone --- that I may consume them," God threatened. But if God consumed all Israel what would become of the promises made to Abraham. God could not wipe Israel out completely, so He proposed to spare Moses alone (a direct descendant of Abraham) and start the nation anew. "I will make of thee a great nation," He said to Moses. In a sense God disowned Israel for He called them Moses' people, which Moses brought out of the land of Egypt (see Ex.32:7).

But the selfless Moses, a true mediator, would not hear of it. He thought foremost of the glory of God. What would the Egyptians conclude if they heard that Israel had perished. Other nations, also, were well aware of the dramatic escape from Egypt and the ominous presence of Israel in Sinai. So Moses besought the Lord to turn from His fierce wrath. The Lord hearkened to the prayer of Moses and "repented of the evil which he thought to do unto His people (Ex.32:14).

All this took place before Moses descended to the shameful idolatrous scene below. Even though Moses had already procured mercy for Israel, he dealt very sternly and faithfully with them. To belittle this gross transgression because of God's mercy would only encourage more rebellion in the future. Moses destroyed the calf and made the people drink the water polluted by the burned and ground up calf. He reproved Aaron for his miserable weakness and then called for those who were on the Lord's side to step out. Only the tribe of Levi responded. They were given the task of executing judgment on Israel and as a result three thousand perished.

The next day Moses again dealt with the people reminding them of the great sin they had committed. He explained that he would go up once again into the Mount

to attempt to make an atonement for their sin.

In the Mount, Moses pled for Israel. He acknowledged their great sin. He pled with God to forgive them: "Yet now if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me I pray thee out of thy book" (Ex.32:32). It seems as if a great sob interrupted this fervent prayer. How like Jesus Moses was; offering himself for Israel's sin.

The Lord, however, instructed Moses that whoever sinned would be blotted out of His book. This first great breach of the covenant was included in the grounds for shutting out the older generation of Israel from the promised land. They ultimately perished in the wilderness. But now the Lord sent Moses back to lead Israel to Canaan. He proposed to send an angel with them to drive out the inhabitants of the land. The Presence of the Lord Himself, however, would no longer go with them. The people mourned when they heard this sad news. The Lord also made Moses remove the tent where He communed with Moses away from the camp because of their rebellious nature (Ex.33:7). The people watched as Moses went to commune with God in the tent far away from the camp. They saw the pillar of cloud descend to the door of the tent as Moses entered.

There, within that tent, Moses pled with God to be gracious to Israel. Moses wanted to know whom God would send with him to bring Israel into Canaan. God was again moved by Moses' intercession and said "My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest" (Ex.33:14). So the Lord consented to go with Israel once again because Moses found grace in His sight.

So glorious was this experience to Moses that he became more and more desirous to know the Lord better. "Show me thy glory," he pled. And the Lord took Moses up the Mount again and there placed him upon a rock. The Lord caused all His glory to pass by while He covered Moses in a cleft of the rock with His hand. The Lord proclaimed His name and passed by Moses. The faithful leader bowed and worshipped as he saw the back of the Lord as He passed by.

**III The Substitute Covenant:** The Lord then proposed a substitute covenant for Israel. This also was a conditional covenant. The Lord promised to maintain Canaan as the possession of Israel, *if* they would keep His law, observe His Sabbaths and renounce all idolatry and intermingling with the inhabitants of Canaan. These inhabitants were to be utterly destroyed. This covenant was not a blood covenant. It was very inferior to the original covenant which lasted ever so briefly. This, too, was broken in every respect by Israel. This caused their temporary captivity in Babylon and their final dissolution and dispersion at the destruction of Jerusalem. The door is, however, wide open to every Jew to be "grafted into their own olive tree." That is by repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, they may once again belong to those who make up the holy nation.

**IV The More Glorious New and Everlasting Covenant:** When Moses descended from the glorious fellowship on the Mount he was unaware that the skin of his face shown with a brilliant luminescence. The people were afraid of him. He had to wear a veil

over his face when he spoke with the people. This veil was worn, as explained by St. Paul, because the glory on Moses' face was fading. This fading glory was symbolic of the fading or temporary nature of the old covenant which was done away in Christ. The veil is also used as an illustration of the punishment meted out to Israel as a nation for their disobedience. When the Old Testament is read by Israelites, Paul testifies, the veil is on their hearts so they cannot see the clear testimony of Christ in its pages.

We are told that the glory of that old covenant which was so evident on the face of Moses, pales like the moon at noon in the glory of the risen Sun of Righteousness. The New Covenant was prophesied clearly by Jeremiah. *"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband to them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And...they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more"* (Jer.31:31-34).

A word of warning is given, however, by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, *"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation"* (Heb.2:1-3).

*"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot, the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"* (Heb.10:28-29).

Let us walk carefully in the Presence of our Lord, not abusing the grace of God in a way that causes us to live careless lives. The New Covenant cost the blood and life of the only begotten Son of God. To trample that blood and presumptuously abuse the mercy and grace of God is a dangerous thing indeed. Let us, with vehement desire and prayer, claim the promises of the new covenant: that God's laws shall be inscribed in our hearts and lives. He is able!

## BUILDING AND DEDICATING THE TABERNACLE

Read: Exodus 35-40

Memory Verse: Review I Corinthians 10:1-12

### What we should learn from this Lesson

- 1. Every believer has the opportunity to help the building of God's kingdom by generous giving.*
- 2. Our artistic abilities are useful when dedicated to the service of the Lord and His house.*
- 3. Just as the builders of the tabernacle were so careful to make everything as the Lord commanded Moses, so ought we to be careful to do exactly what the New Testament sets forth.*
- 4. As the many different parts and furnishings made up one tabernacle, so the many various ministries all serve one Lord.*

**I Willing Offerings:** The tabernacle for which Moses received the plans on the Mount, had to be actually built. It was of no value as a plan. But how could it be built out in a wilderness? Moses spoke to the people about building this place of worship. He spoke to them with the veil on his face. His first instruction was concerning the Sabbath. No work was to be done on that day (see Ex. 35:1-3). Next, Moses called for an offering to be brought to the Lord for the construction of the tabernacle. The Israelites were not earning wages at this time. Since they had been oppressed slaves in Egypt, there were very likely no wealthy families among them. All that they had was their personal possessions and those things which they had asked the Egyptians to give them when they went out that first Passover night. Some of this had no doubt been used to produce the golden calf. But now Moses called for those who had "a willing heart" to bring an offering for the work of the Lord. He called for various off-

erings: gold, silver, and brass; blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine linen and goats hair. These were things which were needed to build the tabernacle. Rams' skins, and badgers' skins for the coverings of the tabernacle were needed as well as fine acacia wood (revised version). Oil for the candlestick and oil for anointing, incense, onyx stones and jewels were all needed to complete the tabernacle and the priests' garments. They could not collect money and then buy these things. They were in the wilderness. All that was needed was in possession of the people somewhere. They had to willingly give these things as offerings to the Lord.

The hearts of the people were stirred up to do this and the general enthusiasm for the project made them willing to give (ch. 35:21-24). So generously did they give, that soon, more than enough was gathered to complete the work. Moses had to restrain the people from bringing any more offerings (ch. 36:5-7).

We too, have the privilege of giving to the work of the Lord. Our circumstances are different, but the principles are the same. Whether it be paying for a church building or an evangelistic outreach or a missionary project, or for the support of God's ministers, we ought to be stirred up to count it a great privilege to be useful in this way. The one stipulation Moses gave Israel was that they give willingly. Our offerings, too, should be given willingly. "God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9:7). Most of our giving today, is that of money for the work of God. Our tithes and offerings are used to purchase necessary items for the house of the Lord. Israel could not do this. They had no money and if they did have some, there was no shopping mall in Sinai's wilderness where they could buy necessary items. Miraculously, all that was needed was given.

When the Holy Spirit fell in the days of the Apostles the believers were moved to sell excess lands and houses and to give for the relief of the poor. This was never even asked for or suggested by the Apostles. May the Lord stir us to give what we can for the work of the Lord all over the world as well as in our place of service.

**II Consecrated Abilities:** Moses also called for "wise hearted" people to come to do the actual work of constructing the tabernacle. The first who are mentioned are "the women." The Levite men served in the ministry. No positions of honor were designated for women. When there was a need for consecrated workers, who are the first volunteers? "The women whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom" (ch. 35:26). They spun the blue and purple and scarlet. It is even so today. Our churches would be hard pressed if it were not for the willing hearted women who do so much for the

Lord. Often this is done behind the scenes and little or no recognition is given these faithful handmaidens of the Lord. Circumstances sometimes prevent these consecrated women from going to the mission field or serving in some public position. Thank God for the many consecrated women who do church office work and cleaning and who use their many and various talents to help the work of the Lord.

Two men were called of God by name for the artistic work of the tabernacle. Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah was named first and became the overseer of all the work. He was filled with the Spirit of God in wisdom and understanding and in knowledge for all manner of workmanship. God set within this chosen vessel the ability to teach (ch. 35:34). Aholiab, of the tribe of Dan, also was named to assist in this leadership capacity. Many willing workers volunteered their service and Bezaleel and Aholiab taught them and set them to work, to make all things according to the pattern showed to Moses in the Mount.

What a blessing, to have dedicated laborers to do all manner of work in the house of the Lord. It is inspiring to consider that God filled such a worker with His Spirit, not for preaching, but for artistic work in the house of worship. In a well ordered church, led and edified by the Holy Spirit, there should be a Bezaleel and an Aholiab as well as many helpers that endeavor to do first class work for the glory of God. Many years ago when a Christian brother was working in our church building, it was suggested to him that the workmanship should be of high quality. "Why?" he retorted, "it's only for the church." How terrible was that comment! His crude work also marred the building for several years. Golden domes and luxurious and exorbitantly expensive appointments are inappropriate when funds are sorely needed for evangelization, but artistic workmanship is in order. Whatsoever our hands find to do, let us do it with our might as unto the Lord.

**III As the Lord Commanded Moses:** Under the blessed and enthusiastic leadership of these two chosen men, everything was made. Great care was exercised that everything was made exactly as the Lord commanded Moses. The loops and hooks of the curtains were just as carefully made as the ark of the covenant.

In the elder days of art,  
Builders wrought with greatest care  
Each minute and unseen part  
For our God is everywhere.

As we build for eternity, we must be sure to build properly and on the right

then saw the shameful lewd dancing (see vss. 19,25). His anger waxed hot foundation. If we use wood, hay and stubble for building materials, the fire will burn up the work and we shall suffer loss. If we carefully build with gold, silver, and precious stones, the work will stand the test of fire and remain to bring us eternal reward. Many a church today is using entertainment to fill its pews. Corporate type organization is used where the power of the Spirit should operate. Let us stick to preaching the whole counsel of God and teaching holiness from the pages of the Bible. Growth may be slower, but if the work is of gold and silver and precious stones, that is, with pure motives for God's glory, the work will remain. Let us build on the rock of obedience to the Lord and not on the sands of doctrines of men.

**IV The Dedication:** Just two weeks under a year from the day in which Israel left Egypt, the tabernacle was set up. The curtains were hung, the tables of stone placed in the ark, and the ark in the Most Holy Place under the mercy seat and cherubims. The lamps were lit. Sweet incense was burned on the golden altar and the altar of burnt offering was set up and used for the first time. The priests were washed, clothed and anointed at the laver. All the work was finished.

Most important of all, when everything was ready, the cloud which manifested the Presence of God descended and filled the entire tabernacle so that Moses could not enter. That is all important. Of what use is a beautiful house of worship without the Divine Presence. The amazing temple building of Jesus' day was void of God's presence. "Your house is left unto you desolate," Jesus told the Jewish chief priests. Let us seek and insist on the manifestation of the Presence of the Lord in our meetings. In the same way let us insist upon practicing the Presence of our Lord in the temple of our bodies. "If thy Presence go not with me, carry me not up hence."